Can job crafting be a remedy for struggling with work alienation? The moderator effect of perceived supervisor support[*]

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Abstract

Drawing on self-determination theory, this study focuses on the relationship between job crafting and work alienation and the moderating effect of perceived supervisor support. Based on theoretical discussions, this study examines (1) whether a negative relationship exists between job crafting and work alienation; (2) whether and how perceived supervisor support moderates that relationship. Findings are based on the data collected from a survey of 203 participants working in Turkey. The results indicate job crafting's negative association with work alienation. Perceived supervisor support is a moderating variable, fostering employee job crafting that, in turn, leads to reduced work alienation.

Introduction

Its origins in philosophy and sociology define work alienation as the separation, detachment and disconnection from the work-related world (Kanungo 1979; Mottaz 1981; Hirschfeld/Feild 2000). Alienated employees are less interested in their work, spend less energy on it, do not perform at the desired level and do not desire to contribute to the organisation (Moch 1980; Michaels/Cron/ Dubinsky/Joachimsthaler 1988). In other words, work alienation leads to highly undesirable consequences for organisations. The literature has mainly focused on the context and working conditions that create the sense of work alienation (Khan/Jianguo/Mann/Saleem/Boamah/Javed/Usman 2019) and the negative effects on several job attitudes and behaviours, such as job performance (Clark/ Halbesleben/Lester/Heintz 2010; Muttar/Ahmad/Siron 2015; Shantz/Alfes/Bailey/Soane 2015), organisational commitment (Hirschfeld/Feild 2000; Tummers/Dulk 2013), organisational citizenship behaviour (Suarez-Mendoza/Zogh-

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bi-Manrique-de-Lara 2007) and work-family enrichment (Tummers/Dulk 2011). Work alienation also causes high levels of counterproductive work behaviour (Shantz et al. 2015), burnout (Usman/Ali/Yousaf/Anwar/Waqas/Khan 2020) and workplace cynicism (Abraham 2000). However, theory and empirical evidence of the relationship between work alienation and job crafting are scarce. Considering that the current management literature inadequately addresses the concept of work alienation (Nair/Vohra 2009; Shantz et al. 2015; Singh/Randhawa 2018), the first purpose of this study is to conceptualise work alienation by looking at it through the lens of job crafting.

Job crafting enables employees to shape their job boundaries and the meaning of the job, by creating, shaping, changing and improving their tasks (Berg/ Wrzesniewski/Dutton 2010; Slemp/Vella-Brodrick 2013). Employees who play an active role in designing their jobs have an opportunity to create their work environment and match their skills with the job characteristics (Tims/Bakker/ Derks 2014). Based on self-determination theory, job crafting may provide an opportunity for employees to satisfy some basic psychological needs (Slemp/ Vella-Brodrick 2014). Regarding the assumptions of self-determination theory, we posit the possibility that employees may change, improve or shape their duties, based on their psychological needs. By crafting their jobs and, consequently, feeling less alienated by their work, they increase job crafting's potential role in preventing work alienation.

This study's second substantial purpose is to identify the potential moderating effect of perceived supervisor support on the relationship between job crafting and work alienation, by drawing on self-determination theory. Perceived supervisor support refers to employees' perceptions of their supervisor caring for and valuing their well-being, due to their contributions and efforts (Kottke/Sharafinski 1988). It has a key role in shaping the perceptions of employees related to the organisation (DeConinck/Johnson 2009) and creating a positive work environment (Erdeji/Jovičić-Vuković/Gagić/Terzić 2016). By comprehending supervisor support, organisations better realise their employees' needs, which, in turn, results in positive job attitudes and behaviours (Boyer/Edmondson/Artis/Fleming 2014). Besides paving the way for beneficial employee outcomes (Dysvik/ Kuvaas/Buch 2014), it also buffers negative job demands (Kossek/Pichler/Bodner/Hammer 2011; Montani/Dagenais-Desmarais 2018) and hinders negative job attitudes and behaviours, such as turnover intentions (Maertz/Griffeth/Campbell/Allen 2007; Newman/Thanacoody/Hui 2012), withdrawal behaviour and workplace deviance (Khan/Mahmood/Kanwal/Latif 2015). Considering its crucial function, which previous studies demonstrate, perceived supervisor support may play an instrumental role in facilitating and enhancing job crafting and struggling with work alienation. To our knowledge, the moderating role of perceived supervisor support in the association between job crafting and work alienation is untested and remains unaddressed. Therefore, investigating per-

ceived supervisor support as the likely moderator that regulates the link between job crafting and work alienation represents a notable advance in extending this line of research.

This study contributes to the following aspects of the literature. First, it attempts to rejuvenate the neglected concept of work alienation by conceptualising and empirically showing its relationships with job crafting. Second, it makes an original contribution to the literature on organisational behaviour, by theorising and empirically verifying that perceived supervisor support is an important mechanism underlying the relationship of job crafting and work alienation. Lastly, this study makes a contribution to the literature of self-determination theory, by presenting supporting evidence for the presence and satisfaction of basic psychological needs. To summarise, this study emphasises the important role of job crafting and perceived supervisor support in overcoming feelings of work alienation.

Literature review

Work alienation

Alienation occurs with the deterioration of the natural structure of humanity and creativity, due to various working conditions in modern societies (Erikson 1986). It is a very important concept in both social and organisational life. With a rooted philosophical and sociological history, alienation is a product of modern industrial societies, according to Karl Marx (1988). Marx (1988) argues that human beings must work in order to fulfil their true nature, and in this context, they produce and construct something by which to see, evaluate and even know themselves. In other words, human beings define and see their reflection in the world with the things they put forth. On the other hand, Marx claims that industrialisation and capitalism disrupt the natural order of human beings. Industrial society and capitalism brought with them the concept of private property, and the individual's own production and labour became the property of others (Overend, 1975; Ferguson/Lavalette 2004). At this point, according to Marx (1988), the individual becomes alienated from his/her own labour and the work he/she does; therefore, the work becomes meaningless to the worker, who loses control over his/her work.

Although philosophy and sociology strongly debate it, the concept of alienation has not attracted enough attention from organisational studies (Nair/Vohra, 2009; Shantz et al. 2015; Singh/Randhawa 2018). The management literature defines the concept as the individual's detachment from the work-related world and the loss of work's meaning, the psychological disconnection from work,

distancing from work and numbness (Kanungo 1979; Mottaz 1981; Hirschfeld/
Feild 2000; Farahbod/Azadehdel/Chegini/Ashraf 2012).

A multidimensional structure generally characterises work alienation (Cey-
lan/Sulu 2011). Seeman, whose 1959 work is one of the most accepted studies
on work alienation in the relevant literature, examines work alienation in five
dimensions. He defines *powerlessness* (little control or lack of control over the
work), *meaninglessness* (the thought that the work does not serve an important
purpose and loses its meaning), *normlessness* (anomie resulting from thinking
that the work-related goals cannot be achieved), *isolation* (no feeling of belong-
ing to the goals, employees and the organisation itself) and *self-estrangement*
(the work is below the individual's potential and does not meet the worker's
ideals). Like Seeman's (1959) work, Mottaz (1981) also makes valuable con-
tributions to clarifying the concept of work alienation by examining it with
variable job conditions, in several occupational settings. According to Mottaz
(1981), an individual's ability to express himself/herself in his/her work requires
a certain level of autonomy and a sense of purpose regarding actual task perfor-
mance. In other words, when employees do not have control over their work and
perceive that they cannot achieve a goal as a result of performing the work, then
powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement
arise. For this reason, the perception of the lack of control over the work, the
opinion about the meaninglessness of the work and the characteristics of the
work are among the main sources of work alienation (Banai/Reiselb/Probstc
2004).

The existing literature also points to the important issue of drivers of work
alienation. While some studies focus on the effect of organisational settings,
others dwell upon the social effects of relationships in a work environment.
Kanungo (1992) contends that organisational structure and job characteristics
shape the sense of work alienation. Shantz et al. (2015) state that job variety
and autonomy, social relationships and task identity are the most evident drivers
of work alienation. In their theoretical model, Singh and Randhawa (2018)
argue that job characteristics (i.e. task significance, skill variety, task identity,
feedback, autonomy), role stressors and organisational cynicism are important
antecedents of work alienation. Pollock (1982) notes that organisational activ-
ities that include social interaction with immediate relationships affect work
alienation. Han, Ya-ling and Wei-zheng (2013) also emphasise that relationships
with superiors influence work alienation more than job characteristics and con-
ditions.

Because work alienation leads to many undesirable individual and organisational
outcomes, such as abnormal psychological states, high-level deviant workplace
behaviour and low-level job performance (Shantz et al. 2015; Özer/Uğurluoğlu/
Saygılı/Sonğur 2019), preventing it is critically important for organisations.

These explanations lead to the contention that the concept of job crafting—enabling the individual to make various arrangements in his/her job—offers a sense of control and autonomy regarding the job, making the job meaningful and affecting the level of work alienation.

Job crafting

Job crafting has emerged as an alternative to traditional job-design theory (Rudolph/ Katz/Lavigne/Zacher 2017). It is a key strategy that enables employees to stay connected to their jobs by shaping them and, therefore, having the organisation for which they work value them (Tims/Bakker/Derks 2015). Traditional job design includes jobs structure and modification, as well as the effects of these structures and changes on individual, group and organisational outcomes (Grant/Pakker 2009) and contributions to positive organisational outcomes, such as job satisfaction and efficiency (Campion/Mumford/Morgeson/Nahrgang 2005). From this perspective, managers design jobs in a top-down process (Campion/McClelland 1993), a view based on Frederick W. Taylor's (1911) *Principles of Scientific Management*. Its main thesis is that managers design all jobs so employees can do their work efficiently (Zareen/ Razzaq/Mujtaba 2013). Another perspective, by Kulik, Oldham and Hackman (1987), brought new insight into job-design studies—namely, employees actively participate in changes in their jobs to enhance the match between their needs and their skills (Rudolph et al. 2017). Thus, employees in a passive role started to play an active role in job design. In addition, Katz and Kahn's (1966) studies on role innovation, Bell and Staw's (1989) sculpting activities and the concepts of task revision that Staw and Boettger (1990) propose appear in the first studies that paved the way for the concept of job crafting.

Job crafting is a process that shapes job boundaries, the meaning of the job and work identity (Slemp/Vella-Brodrick 2013). By this means, employees can actively create, shape, change and improve their tasks (Berg et al. 2010). With an informal and continuous process, employees start to design their work and, thus, a process that progresses from the bottom to the top emerges (Berg/Dutton/Wrzesniewski 2008). By exhibiting self-initiated behaviours, employee involvement in the job-design process has altered the route of job-design studies from a manager-initiated approach to an employee-initiated approach. The main mechanism that differentiates job crafting from traditional job design is a more holistic approach, including not only how the work is done but also relational issues, the meaning of the work and work identity (Wrzesniewski/Dutton 2001). With the organisation's expectations that employees will exhibit behaviours beyond their job descriptions, employee roles within the organisation have changed, and proactive behaviours have come to prominence (Lee/Lee 2018). Active involvement in job design gives employees an opportunity to

create their work environment and match their skills with job characteristics, thereby preventing possible negative outcomes that may occur in the organisation (Tims et al. 2014). Job crafting enables employees to design their jobs in ways that result in positive organisational outcomes (Berg et al. 2008).

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) introduce a job-crafting model based on the view that the employee takes a proactive role in job design. They define job crafting as physical and cognitive changes that employees make to identify the boundaries of the tasks or relationships in their jobs. They also identify three forms of job crafting, namely, cognitive, task and relational job crafting. While task crafting is increasing, decreasing the number of employee tasks (Wrzesniewski/Dutton 2001) and changing the task type (Slemp/Vella-Brodrick 2013), cognitive job crafting changes the meaning of the job (Wrsezniewski/Dutton 2001). Relational job crafting is possible by changing the number and intensity of interactions with people inside and outside of the organisation (Wrsezniewski/Dutton 2001).

Perceived supervisor support

Social support in the workplace represents employee perceptions of care, well-being, valued efforts and rewards for contributions (Eisenberger/Huntington/Hutchison/Sowa 1986). Employees who feel support from their organisation or supervisors struggle more to achieve organisational objectives (Eisenberger/Armeli/Rexwinkel/Lynch/Rhoades 2001; Kurtessis/Eisenberger/Ford/Buffardi/Stewart/Adis 2015). Perceived supervisor support has become more of an issue since it was evaluated as one of the antecedents of perceived organisational support (Shi/Gordon 2020). The perception of supervisors as agents of the organisation (Eisenberger/Stinglhamber/Vandenberghe/Sucharski/Rhoades 2002) gives prominence to perceived supervisor support regarding employees' job outcomes. From the social-exchange perspective, employees who have a high level of perceived supervisor support feel more obliged to meet job expectations and struggle beyond job descriptions (Kang/Gatling/Kim 2015). In the organisational-behaviour literature, the perceived supervisor support relates to positive job outcomes, such as organisational citizenship behaviours (Tang/Tsaur 2016), job embeddedness, reduced turnover and job performance (Dawley/Houghton/Bucklew 2010; Kang et al. 2015; Li/Kim/Zhao 2017).

Model conceptualisation and hypotheses development

Job crafting and work alienation

Self-determination theory represents a broad theoretical perspective for exploring the underlying dynamics of the relationship between job crafting and work alienation. Self-determination theory is a meta-theory of human motivation that

explains the growth tendencies and innate psychological needs of individuals (Ryan/Deci 2000). According to this theory, evaluating and adopting the attitudes and behaviours that individuals encounter in the process of social interaction occurs through motivation mechanisms (Grolnick/Deci/Ryan 1997).

Self-determination theory posits individuals naturally and actively orienting themselves towards growth and self-regulation (Legault 2017). Basic psychological-need theory, a central mini-theory within the framework of self-determination theory (Ryan/Deci 2017; Vansteenkiste/Ryan/Soenens 2020), mainly considers three basic psychological needs that motivate the self to initiate behaviour and satisfaction towards well-being (Deci/Ryan 2000; Tang/Wang/Guerrien 2020). These needs are competence, autonomy and relatedness, regarded as essential, universal, and nutrient for psychological well-being (Martela/Ryan/Steger 2018). Competence (or mastery) relates to efficacy, success and growth (Vansteenkiste et al. 2020). Additionally, competence includes feelings related to the capacity to express the self constantly and accomplish tasks (Rigby/Ryan 2018). Autonomy includes the feeling of making a choice, initiating actions and self-regulation (Ryan/Deci 1996; Arvanitis/Kalliris/Kaminiotis 2020)—being the author of one's life and having a sense of choice (Rigby/Ryan 2018). Relatedness is the fundamental need to feel connected, respected and valued, including belonging to others (Ryan/Deci 2017). Satisfaction of these psychological needs provides motivation, personal growth, integration and well-being; conversely, lack of that satisfaction hinders optimal growth, motivation and well-being (Duprez/van der Kaap-Deeder/Beeckman/Verhaeghe/Vansteenkiste/Van Hecke 2020; Tang et al. 2020).

Based on self-determination theory, job crafting may be associated with the employees' sense of work alienation. Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that the failure to provide supports for competence, autonomy and relatedness hampers employee motivation, personal growth and well-being, which, in turn, paves the way for the formation of alienation. In other words, psychological-need deprivation and dissatisfaction may lead to alienation. In the organisational context, to gain the feeling of growth towards career goals, employees want to persistently improve their abilities (Rigby/Ryan 2018). Thus, employees deprived of the satisfaction of psychological needs in the organisational context are likely to feel a sense of work alienation. On the other hand, job crafting is a tool for providing employees with the opportunity to shape and change their job boundaries and meaning, by improving their tasks (Slemp/Vella-Brodrick 2013). Moreover, job crafting enables employees to participate actively in initiating changes to their job, based on their needs, interests and desires, and it satisfies their basic psychological needs (Slemp/Vella-Brodrick 2014).

Cotgrove (1972) argues that when the work occurs in a structure that includes boring and monotonous tasks (i.e. no variety) and employees receive no oppor-

tunity to control the job, alienation will increase further. On the other hand, job crafting enables employees to find their job more meaningful, to express themselves in their job and autonomously organise their tasks (Dash/Vohra 2019). Since the meaninglessness of work and its characteristics and lacking control over the work are the main sources of work alienation (Banai et al. 2004; Shantz/Alfes/Truss 2014), job crafting may be a key mechanism for creating and enhancing the satisfaction of basic psychological needs that constitute the perception of self-determination. In turn, it decreases work alienation. We infer that job crafting satisfies the basic psychological needs whose deprivation would lead to work alienation. In line with these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1.   Job crafting is negatively associated with work alienation.

The moderating role of perceived supervisor support

Since they are perceived as the agents of the organisation and have immediate relationships with subordinates, supervisors have strong effects on employees' attitudes and job outcomes (Eisenberger et al. 2002). Thus, whether the perception of the supervisor is positive or negative makes a difference. Perceived supervisor support includes the positive perceptions of the supervisor caring and valuing the employee (Kottke/Sharafinski 1988). Accordingly, it makes several positive impacts, such as buffering negative job demands (Montani/Dagenais-Desmarais 2018), creating opportunities to develop and strengthen new skills, leading employees' career goals and encouraging proactive behaviours (Cakmak-Otluoglu 2012). Therefore, supervisor support will likely enhance the opportunities beneficial for developing employees and help them to prevent negative job outcomes.

According to self-determination theory, failing to provide supports for the psychological needs of employees contributes to alienation (Ryan/Deci 2000; Legault 2017). Supervisor support, an important source of social support in organisations (Kurtessis et al. 2015), helps to create a working environment that enables employees to realise the satisfaction of these psychological needs (Rigby/Ryan 2018). Perceived supervisor support may facilitate fulfilling the need for autonomy, relatedness and competence. Employees whose supervisors support their autonomy find their job more meaningful and important (Gillet/Gagné/Sauvagère/Fouquereau 2013; Rigby/Ryan 2018). The need for relatedness includes feeling supported and valued by immediate supervisors; conversely, employees, who lack relatedness feel isolated and irrelevant at work (Rigby/Ryan 2018). Kanungo (1992) and Banai et al. (2004) point out that the direct interaction and relationship with the immediate supervisor has a large impact on the sense of alienation. In addition, perceived supervisor support enhances employees' effectiveness at work (Kossek et al. 2011), providing them with

adequate assistance and feedback in improving their expertise and accomplishing their tasks (Shanock/Eisenberger 2006). Accordingly, perceived supervisor support may enable satisfying employees' desire for competence.

In addition, as perceived supervisor support provides enhancement of employee self-confidence and self-efficacy, it appears to be an important factor in fostering job-crafting behaviour (Sharma/Nambudiri 2020). Employees feeling supervisors supporting them while crafting their jobs paves the way for empowerment, new duties (Vogt/Hakanen/Brauchli/Jenny/Bauer 2016) and accommodating their job crafting (Berg et al. 2010). This leads to more dedication to their work (Arasli/Arici/Ilgen 2019) and enables them to meet the job requirements more successfully (Arasli/Arici 2019), which, in turn, may prevent alienation towards work. Accordingly, we infer that employees' perception of supervisor support may be a key moderator that fosters more expansive job crafting, leading to reduced work alienation. In other words, we argue that the effect of job crafting on work alienation depends on the degree of perceived supervisor support. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2.   Perceived supervisor support will moderate the relationship between job crafting and work alienation.

The research model developed on the basis of the theoretical background and hypotheses appears in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research model
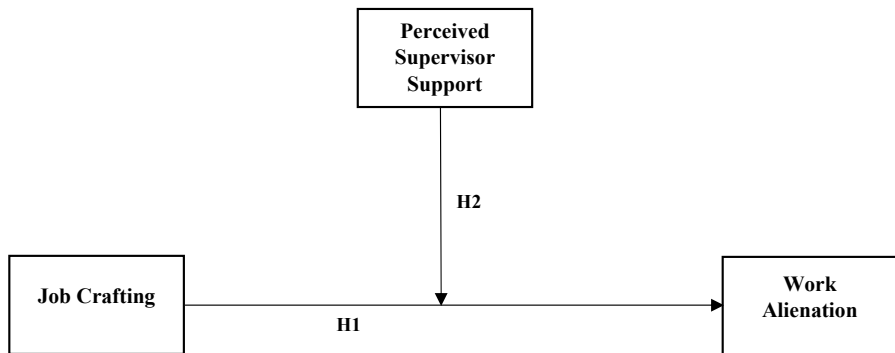
Methodology

Sample

Study data were collected from 203 participants working in various sectors in Turkey, such as education, banking, finance and the defence industry (R&D and production departments). Identified using convenience sampling, participants

completed an electronic questionnaire that included scales for job crafting, work alienation and perceived supervisor support scales. Of the 280 surveys mailed to the participants, 203 were returned. To gain better insight into the sample, the questionnaire collected respondent demographic information, including gender, age, education and organisational tenure. As employees in R&D and production departments in the defence industry and in the education sector often are highly educated, the percentage of participants in our sample with a doctoral degree was relatively high. Table 1 presents the sample demographic characteristics.

Table 1.   Demographics of respondents

Demographics		n	%
Gender			
	Male	103	50.7
	Female	100	49.3
Age			
	18 to 25	13	6.4
	26 to 35	84	41.4
	36 to 55	97	47.8
	56 and over	9	4.4
Education			
	High school	3	1,6
	College	7	3.4
	Bachelor's degree	80	39.4
	Master's degree	34	16.7
	Doctorate degree	79	38.9
Organizational tenure			
	1 to 5 years	42	20.7
	6 to 10 years	54	26.6
	11 to 15 years	32	15.8
	16 and more years	75	36.9

Measurement instruments

Job crafting, work alienation and perceived organisational support scales were used to test the research model. All the original scales were translated into Turkish and validated before the current study. Confirmatory factor analyses of the scales were measured with AMOS 21.0. All other analyses were conducted using SPSS 17.0.

Job Crafting Scale: The scale that Yavuz and Artan (2019) developed was used to measure the level of job crafting. The three-dimensional scale consists of 27 items, namely, cognitive, task and relational job crafting. In this study, the

scale functioned as a one-dimensional scale, a 5-point Likert scale with choices ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). Sample items were 'I try to discover new methods to reduce my workload' and 'I change the content of my duties to make them more attractive for myself'. The Cronbach alpha was.91.

Work Alienation Scale: Nair and Vohra (2010) developed and Güler, Turgut and Basım (2018) translated into Turkish the study's eight-item scale. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The sample items were 'Work to me is more like a chore or a burden' and 'Facing the daily work is a painful and boring experience'. High scores indicate high levels of work alienation. The Cronbach alpha was.88.

Perceived Supervisor Support Scale: We used a perceived supervisor support scale, consisting of three items from the scale that Tate, Whatley and Clugston (1997) developed and three items from Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) scale, which Tüzün and Kalemci (2012) adapted into Turkish. The six-item scale consisted of such items as 'My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments at work'. The extent to which participants agreed with items on the scale corresponded to a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The Cronbach alpha of the scale was.92.

Control variables: In the current study, control variables were gender, age, education and organisational tenure, all handled as dummy variables. Gender was coded as '1' for female and '2' for males; age as '1' for individuals between the ages of 18 and 25, '2' for those between 26 and 35, '3' for ages 36 to 55, and '4' for individuals 56 years old and over. Education was coded as '1' for individuals holding a high-school degree, '2' for individuals holding a college degree, '3' for individuals holding a bachelor's degree, '4' for individuals holding a master's degree and '5' for individuals holding a doctoral degree. Organisational tenure was coded as '1' for 1–5 years, '2' for 6–10 years, '3' for the 11–15 years and '4' for 16 or more years.

Test results

Confirmatory factor analyses

We first performed confirmatory factor analyses for the validity of the scales. Model fit indices of the scales showed that scales had adequate fits (see Table 2).

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis results

Variables	χ^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	GFI
Job crafting	1.68	.05	.91	.89
Work alienation	2.57	.08	.96	.95
Perceived supervisor support	2.70	.08	.98	.96

Hypotheses testing

We used hierarchical regression analyses to test all hypotheses. Before testing hypotheses, correlations among variables were measured. As Table 3 shows, age correlates positively with perceived supervisor support (r=.20; p<.01) and job crafting (r=.167; p<.05). Organisational tenure correlates negatively with work alienation (r= -.17; p<.05). Moreover, perceived supervisor support had a significant positive correlation with job crafting (r=.349; p<.01), and work alienation had a significant negative correlation with perceived supervisor support (r=-.39, p<.01) and job crafting (r=-.49; p<.01). The results also indicated that participants had high levels of perceived supervisor support (Mean= 3.88) and job crafting (Mean= 3.96), and low levels of work alienation (Mean= 2.06).

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	.50	.51							
2. Age	2.53	.63	.01						
3. Organizational tenure	3.02	1.11	.09	.006					
4. Education	2.84	1.17	-.10	.05	.207**				
5. Perceived supervisor support	3.88	1.02	.01	.20**	-.05	-.06	(.92)		
6. Work alienation	2.06	.87	-.08	-.08	-.17*	-.10	-.39**	(.88)	
7. Job crafting	3.96	.55	-.03	.167*	-.001	-.06	.349**	-.49**	(.91)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, N=203, * Cronbach's alpha for each scale is shown in parentheses on the diagonal.

We performed hierarchical regression analyses by establishing three different models to test our hypotheses (Table 4). In model 1, we entered the control variables age, gender, education and organisational tenure into the model and work alienation as the dependent variable. Results showed that age, gender and education had no significant effects on work alienation, whereas organisational tenure had a negative significant effect on work alienation (β=-.12, p<.05). In model 2, after entering control variables (step 1), we inserted job crafting into the analysis where work alienation was the dependent variable (step 2). Findings revealed that job crafting significantly predicted the decrease in work alienation (β=-.50, p<.01). In other words, crafting jobs reduced the level of work alienation, supporting Hypothesis 1. In model 3, control variables were inserted into the model (step 1) where work alienation was the dependent variable; then, job crafting and perceived supervisor support were entered into the analysis (step 2) and, third, the interactive term of job crafting and perceived supervisor support was added. Results indicated that perceived supervisor support had a moderator effect on the relationship between job crafting and work alienation (β=.11, p<.05), supporting Hypothesis 2. The moderator effect of perceived supervisor

support on the association between job crafting and work alienation appears in Figure 2.

Table 4. Hierarchical regression results

Dependent variable	Work alienation								
	Model 1 (1 step)			Model 2 (2 steps)			Model 3 (3 steps)		
Independent variables	β	t.	Sig.	β	t.	Sig.	β	t.	Sig.
Age	-.12	-1.17	.24	.008	.083	.93	.06	.69	.48
Gender	-.15	-1.06	.28	-.19	-1.60	.11	-.17	-1.5	.13
Education	-.07	-1.04	.29	-.11	-1.90	.058	-.11	-2.02	.04
Organizational tenure	-.12	-2.1	.03	-.12	-2.25	.026	-.12	-2.47	.01
Perceived supervisor support							-.27	-4.45	.000
Job crafting				-.50	-8.27	.000	-.40	-6.47	.000
Interactive term							.11	1.96	.004
R^2		.04			.29			.368	
R^2 change		.047			.24			.01	
F		2.42			16.30			16.2	
Sig.		.04			.000			.000	

Figure 2. The Moderator effect of perceived supervisor support on the relationship between job crafting and work alienation
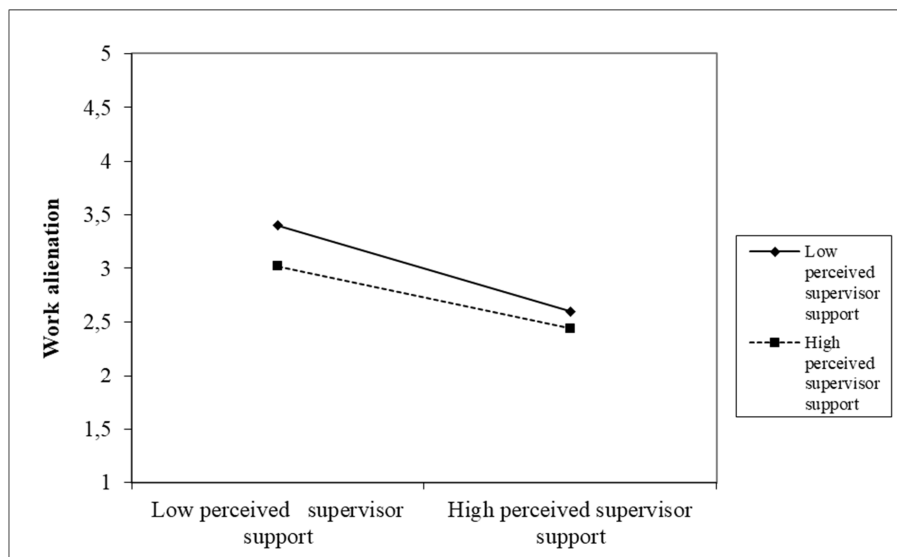
Discussion and conclusion

Key findings

In this study, we utilised self-determination theory to develop our understanding of the relationship between job crafting and work alienation. Moreover, we hypothesised that perceived supervisor support was a key moderator that strengthened the negative relationship between job crafting and work alienation.

Our results provided supporting evidence for our hypotheses. First, they showed that job crafting negatively affects work alienation. Although few studies examine the relationship between job crafting and work alienation, our results are consistent with existing findings. Dash and Vohra (2018), Wang, Lu and Wang (2019) and Babadag (2020) reveal that job crafting reduces work alienation. Thus, considering job crafting as a tool for preventing work alienation extends this line of research on its association with reduced work alienation.

Furthermore, we discovered that perceived supervisor support has a moderator effect on the relationship between job crafting and work alienation. In other words, perceived supervisor support fosters and facilitates job crafting that, in turn, reduces work alienation. Although we found no research that investigated the moderator effect of perceived supervisor support on the relationship between job crafting and work alienation to compare with our results, our findings are consistent with suggestions that perceived supervisor support fosters job crafting (Berg et al. 2010; Vogt et al. 2016; Arasli et al. 2019) and hinders work alienation (Ryan/Deci 2000; Abdel-Qader 2017; Legault 2017). By exploring its moderator effect, our results provide empirical evidence of the important role of perceived supervisor support in the relationship between job crafting and work alienation.

Theoretical implications

The first aim of this study was to explore the relationship between job crafting and work alienation, and we generally confirm that job crafting reduces work alienation. We contribute to alienation literature by examining work alienation, which has not attracted enough attention in organisational studies (Nair/Vohra 2009; Shantz et al. 2015; Singh/Randhawa 2018). There, it mostly appears in discussions of theoretical propositions (Uçanok-Tan 2016), empirically revealing job crafting as a remedy for work alienation from the theoretical perspective of self-determination theory. Our findings support self-determination-theory assumptions, suggesting that satisfaction of basic psychological needs provides motivation, personal growth, integration and well-being, hindering the formation of alienation (Ryan/Deci 2000; Duprez et al. 2020). Since job crafting creates a working environment that provides employees with opportunities to match

their needs with their skills (Rudolph et al. 2017), it may function as a tool and facilitator for satisfying basic psychological needs, hindering work alienation.

Another important contribution of this study is revealing the important role of supervisory support in work environments. Our findings add to the growing body of research concluding that supervisor support has a moderator effect on the relationship between job crafting and work alienation. The interactive effect of perceived supervisor support and job crafting on work alienation suggests that supervisory support has considerable influence on employees' job design and adjustment actions, which, in turn, reduces work alienation. Our findings also present evidence regarding self-determination theory, emphasising the substantial role of support in satisfying basic needs. Our results reinforce this theoretical assumption by revealing that perceived supervisor support creates and enables a supportive environment for job crafting, reducing work alienation. To our knowledge, the role of perceived supervisor support in the relationship between job crafting and work alienation has not been investigated in the context of the work environment. Thus, exploring supervisor support's moderator role in this relationship may advance the value of existing studies.

Although culture is not a variable in this study, it has an essential role in evaluating our findings, since it creates a context. Erez (2010) emphasises that cultural values that differ across cultures affect job crafting. From this point of view, the cultural value of collectivism may influence our results. Boehnlein and Baum (2020) argue that support is an important factor about which job crafters care in collectivist societies. Our findings justify this assumption; Turkey is a relatively collectivist country. In collectivist cultures, the distinction between the treatment of in-group and out-group members is greater than in individualist cultures (Triandis/Brislin/Hui 1988). Subordinates perceive supervisors as more like them than different from them (Stephan/Stephan/Saito/Barnett 1998). Employees who tend to consider their supervisor as a member of their in-group become highly dependent on superiors (Fink/Meierewert 2004). Accordingly, they may need supervisor support to initiate job-crafting behaviour. Also, collectivist cultures require loyalty to hierarchical relations (Ayçiçeği-Dınn/Caldwell-Harris 2013), which may increase the need for supervisor support to display job-crafting behaviour in Turkey. Thus, further studies may produce similar findings in studies conducted in relatively collectivist countries in Eastern Europe such as Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Practical implications

The present study has several practical implications. Its findings suggest that organisations may prevent work alienation by creating a working environment that allows and enhances job-crafting activities. In other words, organisations may use job crafting as a coping strategy for managing work alienation. Sarros,

Tanewski, Winter, Santora and Densten (2002) point out that work alienation is an outcome of bad management practices that disable employees and their contributions. From this point of view, organisations should apply appropriate job-crafting activities that enable employees. Thus, it is crucial for organisations to formulate and implement strategies for best applying job crafting, to overcome work alienation.

Our findings also reveal supervisors' prominent role in the relationship between job crafting and work alienation. Since perceived supervisor support moderates the relationship between job crafting and work alienation, organisations should pay particular attention to the training of supervisors for their role in creating a supportive organisational climate and fostering a working environment that enables job crafting, to prevent work alienation. Thus, supervisors with a supportive management style may facilitate participation in job-crafting activities and contribute to overcoming work alienation.

Limitations and future research directions

This study has some limitations originating in self-report measures, participant characteristics and social-desirability tendencies. Moreover, the use of cross-sectional data collected only from employees working in Turkey prevents us from generalising the results, as cultural context might affect them. As relatively high levels of in-group collectivism characterise Turkish culture, further studies in Central European countries, such as Germany and Austria, with low levels of in-group collectivism and high levels of individualism, could test the same research model. This may provide better insight into generalising results and comparing the differences between cultural contexts, to augment the explanatory power of the model. Furthermore, future research could include a longitudinal study to discover the causal relationship between variables. Also, future studies could further extend this research by examining the moderator role of other social-support sources in organisational contexts, e.g. perceived organisational support or co-worker support. In addition, the use of supplementary other-report evaluations would contribute to understanding the dynamics of these relationships.

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