



# The impact of age-inclusive human resource management on job crafting

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**Abstract.** The aging of the population and the implementation of the delayed retirement policy have all made the market labor force structure aging. Effectively motivating older employees and fully developing and managing elderly human resources have become one of the problems that enterprises need to solve urgently. Through the questionnaire survey of the elderly employees over 45 years old, this study found that AHRM can positively influence their work remodeling behavior, contribute to the career development of the elderly employees in the later career period, and is an effective mechanism for enterprises to fully develop and manage the elderly human resources, which provides practical enlightenment for the sustainable development of Chinese enterprises in the plight of the aging labor force.

**Keywords:** AHRM, job crafting, older employees, age diversity

## 1 Introduction

With the continuous development of social economy, the continuous improvement of medical security level, the steady increase of human life expectancy, coupled with the continuous decline of fertility rate, China's population age structure is unbalanced, the population aging process is accelerating, and the development of deep aging. Changes at the population level affect the composition of the workforce in the workplace, that is, the proportion of older employees in the labor market structure continues to expand, and the age structure of employees in the workplace tends to be aging. This change makes it even more important to harness the working capabilities of older workers, and these older worker assets must become employable and productive to compensate for the decline in the number of younger people. In this sense, age-inclusive HRM (AHRM) is a good practice to combat Age barriers, promote age diversity and unlock the potential of older workers.

People are shapers of themselves and their environment and are able to actively change the environment to meet their needs and maintain their independence. Based on this, organizational behavior scholars put forward the concept of "job crafting". Job

crafting can not only help employees improve their interpersonal environment, enhance their happiness, but also provide intrinsic motivation<sup>1</sup> for innovative behavior. At the same time, it can help employees to shape personalized work styles, meet their own needs, be more active in work, and improve initiative behavior<sup>2</sup>. At present, job crafting has become a new strategy for organizations to develop and motivate employees, which can help employees improve work efficiency, increase positive emotions and sense of<sup>3</sup> work meaning. To sum up, this paper intends to explore the influence of AHRM on job crafting, so as to make a beneficial exploration for the full development and management of elderly human resources.

## 2 Theoretical Analysis and Research Hypothesis

Job crafting refers to the employee's self-initiated changes to the job in order to achieve the job objectives<sup>4</sup> by increasing the available resources and reducing the job requirements. From the perspective of work resource theory, Tims et al. (2012) proposed that job crafting includes four types of strategies: increasing structural work resources, such as improving work ability, seeking development opportunities and autonomy; Increasing social work resources, such as enhancing communication and interaction with colleagues, seeking feedback and support from leaders and colleagues, etc. Increasing challenging work requirements, such as taking on more responsibilities and trying new areas of work; Reducing obstructive work requirements, such as easing work-family conflict and reducing negative emotions at work.

According to resource conservation theory, in order to prevent resource loss, individuals will invest resources to obtain more valuable resources<sup>5</sup> Human resource management practice is a key source for employees to feel that the organization is fair and just in resource allocation and other aspects. Strong human resource management practice can promote employees' work reshaping behavior, increase work resources, and reduce obstructive work requirements<sup>6</sup> Today, the meaning of work and the learning and development opportunities offered by the organization are priorities for many, and in the case of older workers, who may not necessarily progress in their jobs, they still want to be invested in training and development activities to prevent job skills from becoming obsolete or contracting<sup>7</sup> The AHRM does not exclude older employees in providing training opportunities and development programs, but values their value and contribution in the same way as younger employees, and helps older employees to update their job skills, learn new knowledge, and increase structured work resources; Or help older employees maintain the current level of function, avoid negative changes in work status, reduce obstructive work requirements, so as to achieve better work results. At the same time, in the AHRM, employees of different age groups do not have to compete for their own career development, creating an age inclusive atmosphere, for example, older employees can tolerate the mistakes made by younger colleagues at work, and listen to others' suggestions with an open mind; Younger employees can respect older employees and be willing to help and support them when they encounter difficulties, which helps to improve the quality of contact between older and younger employees and increase social work resources<sup>8,9</sup> In addition, under the influence of the

incentive and inclusive atmosphere of the managers, and based on their own work experience and relevant cognition, the older employees believe that they have the ability to take on the big picture, and take the initiative to take on new projects, increase challenging work requirements, explore new areas, and seek innovation and breakthroughs. Based on this, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: AHRM has a positive effect on job crafting.

## 3 Method

### 3.1 Sample

In this study, on-the-job employees over 45 years old in Jiangsu were selected for questionnaire survey. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and 131 were effectively recovered. In terms of sample characteristics, 59 were male, accounting for 45%, and 72 were female, accounting for 55%; In terms of age distribution, 21 were from 45 to 50 years old, accounting for 16%, 68 were from 51 to 55 years old, accounting for 51.9%, 37 were from 56 to 60 years old, accounting for 28.2%, 4 were from 61 to 65 years old, accounting for 3.1%, and 1 was over 66 years old, accounting for 0.8%. In terms of working years, 18 people were from 8 to 12 years old, accounting for 13.7%, 21 people were from 13 to 17 years old, accounting for 40%, 40 people were from 18 to 22 years old, accounting for 30.5%, 34 people were from 23 to 27 years old, accounting for 26%, 18 people were from 28 years old or more, accounting for 13.7%; In terms of positions, there are 40 ordinary employees, accounting for 30.5%, 48 grass-roots managers, accounting for 36.6%, 34 middle managers, accounting for 26%, 5 senior managers, accounting for 3.8%, and 4 other managers, accounting for 3.1%; In terms of the industry, there are 5 people in manufacturing industry, accounting for 3.8%, 19 people in medical industry, accounting for 14.5%, 6 people in engineering industry, accounting for 4.6%, 45 people in education industry, accounting for 34.4%, 3 people in logistics industry, accounting for 2.3%, 14 people in financial industry, accounting for 10.7%, 23 people in service industry, accounting for 17.6%, and 5 people in high-tech industry. 3.8 percent, other 11 people, 8.4 percent.

### 3.2 Measures

In addition to the basic personal information, AHRM and job remodeling were all conducted on the Linker 7-point scale.

(1) AHRM: The age-inclusive human resource management practice scale developed by Boehm et al. (2014) was adopted, which contained five items, such as "providing age-independent recruitment activities"<sup>10</sup>. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.839

(2) Job crafting: The scale compiled by Tims et al. (2012) was adopted, with a total of 21 items, such as "I strive to develop my ability" and "I will take the initiative to apply for joining a project when I find it interesting"<sup>4</sup>. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.962

In addition, the employee's age, gender, years of service, position, and industry were used as control variables.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis results of this study are shown in Table 1, in which AHRM is significantly positively correlated with increasing structural work resources ( $r=0.770$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), reducing obstructive work requirements ( $r=0.788$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and increasing social work resources ( $r=0.783$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and significantly positively correlated with increasing challenging work requirements ( $r=0.781$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). These results provide preliminary support for verifying the relevant hypotheses of this study.

**Table 1.** Results of descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients (N=131)

	Mean Value	Standard deviation	1	2	3	4	5
1.AHRM	4.704	0.960	1				
2 Add structure	5.180	0.875	0.770**	1			
3 Be less obstructive	5.092	0.918	0.788**	0.846**	1		
4 Be social	4.915	1.045	0.783**	0.839**	0.811**	1	
5 Increase the challenge	4.876	1.087	0.781**	0.814**	0.805**	0.821**	1

\*\* . At level 0.01 (two-tailed), the correlation is significant.

### 4.2 Hypothesis Testing

In this study, SPSS25.0 software was used for hierarchical regression analysis. As can be seen from Table 2, AHRM has a significant effect on increasing structural work resources ( $\beta=0.633$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), reducing obstructive work requirements ( $\beta=0.714$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), increasing social work resources ( $\beta=0.745$ ,  $P <0.001$ ), and improving structural work resources ( $\beta=0.633$ ,  $P <0.001$ ).  $p<0.001$ ) and increasing challenging job requirements ( $\beta=0.859$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) had significant positive effects. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is supported and verified.

Table 2. Results of regression analysis

Variables	Increase resources for structured work		Reduce resources for obstructive work		Increase social work resources		Increase challenging job requirements	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
	Gender	0.095	0.010	0.021	0.116	0.166	0.067	0.170
Age	0.535	0.130	0.567	0.111	0.820	0.344	0.551	0.002
Years of service	0.311	0.139	0.345	0.151	0.367	0.164	0.375	0.141
Position	0.207	0.102	0.130	0.011	0.191	0.067	0.200	0.057

The in- dustry you are in	0.029	0.031	0.022	0.024	0.010	0.013	0.006	0.003
AHRM		0.633**		0.714**		0.745**		0.859**
R <sup>2</sup>	0.254	0.641	0.205	0.651	0.278	0.653	0.182	0.643
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	0.254	0.387	0.205	0.446	0.278	0.375	0.182	0.461
F	8.534	36.882	6.443	38.492	9.624	38.929	5.575	37.151

Note: \*\* p<0.001

## 5 Conclusions

This paper finds that AHRM can positively affect employees' job crafting behavior. This finding not only opens a new perspective for enterprises to manage the resources of older employees, but also helps to stimulate the potential of older employees and promote their further development in the workplace.

First, the AHRM provides a more equitable and inclusive work environment for older workers by focusing on their specific needs and strengths. This kind of management can help alleviate the problems caused by age discrimination and make older workers feel respected and recognized by the company, thereby enhancing their job satisfaction and sense of belonging. In this positive work atmosphere, older employees are more motivated to explore new ways of working to adapt to the changing market environment and business needs.

Second, the AHRM emphasizes training and development for older workers to help them upgrade their skills and knowledge. Through training, older employees can better understand the company's strategic goals and business needs, so that they can more accurately define their roles and values. At the same time, training also helps older employees master new work skills and methods, improve work efficiency and quality, and further leverage their experience and wisdom.

In terms of practical implications, there are a number of measures that managers can take to encourage and support older workers to engage in job reinvention behavior. Managers can provide formal or informal personal feedback, so that older employees can understand their strengths and weaknesses, understand the potential and improvement direction in work reshaping, so that older employees have a clearer understanding of themselves, so as to carry out more targeted work reshaping. In addition, managers can develop a library of successful job reinvention projects, including methods for change, case studies, and experience sharing. This project library can provide a learning and application platform for older employees to learn about job reshaping practices in different fields and positions, thereby broadening their horizons and increasing their knowledge base. Through the work among employees, the opportunity to share knowledge and experience is reshaped, and the communication and cooperation between employees are strengthened, which is conducive to promoting the sustainable development of enterprises.

In conclusion, the positive effect of AHRM on employees' job crafting behavior has important theoretical and practical significance. It not only helps enterprises to better

manage the resources of older employees, but also stimulates the potential of older employees and promotes their further development in the work. Therefore, in the future business management practice, more attention should be paid to the application and promotion of AHRM to create a better working environment and development opportunities for older employees.

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