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Does it Take Two to Tango? Combined Effects of Relational Job Crafting and Job Design on Energy and Performance

Wiebke Doden

King's Business School, King's College London, 30 Aldwych, WC2B 4BG London, United Kingdom, wiebke.doden@kcl.ac.uk

Uta Bindl

King's Business School, King's College London, 30 Aldwych, WC2B 4BG London, United Kingdom, uta.bindl@kcl.ac.uk

Dana Unger

UiT The Arctic University of Norway, PO Box 6050 Langnes, 9037 Tromsø, Norway, dana.unger@uit.no

Author Note

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Correspondence should be addressed to Wiebke Doden, King's Business School, King's College London, 30 Aldwych, London WC2B 4BG, United Kingdom, Email: wiebke.doden@kcl.ac.uk

Does it Take Two to Tango? Combined Effects of Relational Job Crafting and Job Design on Energy and Performance

Despite an extensive body of research on job crafting, our understanding of how bottom-up job crafting behaviors interact with top-down job design in influencing employee effectiveness remains limited. Drawing on conservation of resources theory, we developed and tested a theoretical framework to examine the implications of daily promotion- versus prevention-oriented relational job crafting on employees' energy and subsequent task performance, in the context of relational job design (i.e., task interdependence). To test our theorizing, we conducted two experience-sampling studies over 10 workdays with full-time employees across various organizations (Study 1: $N_{\text{day-level}} = 845$, $N_{\text{person-level}} = 126$; Study 2: $N_{\text{day-level}} = 793$, $N_{\text{person-level}} = 108$). Multilevel path modeling indicated promotion-oriented relational job crafting was positively associated with subsequent task performance by increasing energy levels (Study 2), particularly when task interdependence was low (Study 1). In contrast, prevention-oriented relational job crafting was energy depleting in low-task-interdependent contexts (Study 2) but increased employees' energy in high-task-interdependent contexts (Study 1). Our findings suggest different forms of day-to-day relational job crafting behaviors are relevant for employees' energy and performance, but their effectiveness may depend on the relational job-design context.

Keywords: job crafting, conservation of resources, job design, energy, task performance, experience sampling method

Does it Take Two to Tango? Combined Effects of Relational Job Crafting and Job Design on Energy and Performance

Social interactions and connections are essential in organizational life (Grant, 2007; Grant & Parker, 2009). A large body of research suggests that social interactions and connections at work are shaped by the relational job design context (Grant, 2007; Grant & Parker, 2009) because it provides employees with interpersonal interactions and connections in a formal, top-down approach designed by the organization (Parker et al., 2017). However, research also indicates that employees engage in efforts to craft social interactions and connections at work bottom-up, referred to as relational job crafting (Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Relational job crafting is defined as self-initiated, proactive behaviors through which employees make changes in how they interact and build relationships with others at work (Bindl et al., 2019; Rofcanin et al., 2019). They may pursue these changes in two independent and distinct ways: promotion-oriented relational job crafting is aimed at expanding the type, number, or quality of interactions, while prevention-oriented relational job crafting is aimed at actively limiting the overall number of interactions and connections at work and focusing on trusted and familiar relationships only (Bindl et al., 2019; Higgins, 1997; Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019).

Across studies, promotion-oriented relational job crafting has been predominantly associated with a wide range of positive work outcomes, including task performance and well-being (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019). In contrast, research has taken an overall negative stance on prevention-oriented forms of job crafting, including relational job crafting (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017). For example, some research has found that actively limiting interactions and relationships at work may deteriorate task performance, suggesting that prevention-oriented relational job crafting may be harmful to both individuals and

organizations (Rofcanin et al., 2019). Theory and initial empirical evidence, however, suggest that both promotion- and prevention-oriented forms of proactivity, including relational job crafting (Parker & Collins, 2010), may represent meaningful work behaviors that help employees to achieve desirable goals (Bindl et al., 2019; Spsychala & Sonnentag, 2011). While this research has created awareness that also prevention-oriented forms of proactivity may be purposeful and desirable at work, it remains unclear how, and in which contexts, either form of relational job crafting may be (most) beneficial for employees and their organizations. Our focus here is, therefore, on exploring a contextualized perspective of employees' engagement in daily relational job crafting and its implications at work.

More specifically, we aim to demonstrate *when* and *how* daily promotion- versus prevention-oriented relational job crafting are beneficial for a key outcome at work: task performance. Conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) provides the theoretical framework for our research. A central tenet of COR theory is that individuals are motivated to protect and build their resources for goal attainment (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). In the workplace, *energy* is a vital resource that enables employees to complete their work and attain their goals, leading to higher task performance (Quinn et al., 2012; Quinn & Dutton, 2005). Defined as the subjective feeling of vitality and aliveness (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), energy fluctuates daily (Demerouti et al., 2012) and may be influenced by an employee's job crafting behavior (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019). Focusing on within-person processes, we argue that daily relational job crafting may help employees create the social circumstances to protect and build their energetic resources, which may positively influence task performance. We further argue that these effects are shaped by the top-down relational job design context indicated by task interdependence (i.e., the degree to which employees need to rely on each other to perform their tasks; Pearce & Gregersen, 1991).

Based on the notion that positive social interactions are experienced as *energizing* (Owens et al., 2016), we propose that promotion-oriented relational job crafting is beneficial for employees' energy and subsequent task performance, particularly in settings with low task interdependence where employees may feel socially more disconnected. Conversely, limiting social interactions by engaging in prevention-oriented relational job crafting in such situations may lead to further social isolation and, in turn, contribute to energy depletion, which is detrimental for task performance. However, in contexts with high task interdependence, which often involve excessive relational demands (e.g., emotional labor; Trougakos et al., 2015), we propose that daily prevention-oriented relational job crafting may instead conserve employees' energy, consequently improving task performance. We have tested our theoretical reasoning, depicted in Figure 1, with two experience sampling studies, each conducted over 10 consecutive workdays.

Our research offers several contributions to the existing literature. First, our research enhances our understanding of how employees' self-initiated, bottom-up relational job crafting behaviors interact with the overarching top-down relational job design context. Although scholars have acknowledged that job crafting is embedded in and shaped by the context of work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), thus far, contextual factors have received only scant empirical attention (see Dierdorff & Jensen, 2018). Our contribution lies in expanding a contextualized perspective of job crafting by highlighting that the effectiveness of distinct forms of relational job crafting may depend on the relational job design context designed top-down by the organization (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Specifically, our framework specifies how task interdependence shapes distinct effects of relational job crafting on energy and subsequent task performance. This contextualized lens provides more comprehensive insights into *when* distinct forms of relational job crafting behaviors will be effective in achieving desirable outcomes in the organization.

Second, building on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we advance a within-person, resource-based perspective of relational job crafting and identify energy as a pivotal mediator that explains the effectiveness of either form of daily relational job crafting—in certain job design contexts. Thus, our research advances an understanding of *how* relational job crafting behaviors may affect employee performance on a daily basis. In this regard, our research contributes to ongoing discussions on the within-person dynamic nature of job crafting (Rofcanin et al., 2019) and demonstrates that employees may use relational job crafting to protect and build their energy at work from day to day with positive implications for task performance.

Finally, our research contributes to the ongoing debate on whether promotion- versus prevention-oriented job crafting can be considered “good” versus “bad” forms of job crafting, respectively (e.g., Zhang & Parker, 2019). By adopting a within-person perspective and accounting for the relevant job design context, our research reframes the predominant view of prevention-oriented (relational) job crafting as overall undesirable for organizations (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Instead, our research helps to establish prevention-oriented forms of proactivity as purposeful work behavior (Barrick et al., 2013) that may enable employees to cope with excessive job demands (Tims et al., 2013; Tims & Bakker, 2010), and as such, may be beneficial for organizational outcomes. In a similar vein, our theoretical framework suggests that the perspective of promotion-oriented relational job crafting as universally effective (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019) may also need to be refined, to the extent that the effectiveness of promotion-oriented proactive behaviors may also vary as a function of the job design context.

Energy as a Key Mechanism in the Relational Job Crafting to Task Performance Link

The notion of individuals as active crafters of their jobs was originally introduced to complement a predominantly top-down perspective of job design managed by the

organization. Job crafting, as bottom-up job design, refers to a process by which employees actively choose to “shape, mold, and redefine their jobs” (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 180). Thus, job crafting represents voluntary action by employees to change their jobs in ways that satisfy their own needs and interests (Bindl et al., 2019). Research suggests that job crafting is ubiquitous across jobs and occupations (Nielsen & Abildgaard, 2012) and may impact various outcomes at work (e.g., Rudolph et al., 2017). Relational job crafting captures how individuals proactively adjust who they seek connections with at work and how they do so.¹ Individuals may engage in relational job crafting by actively expanding a wider range of high-quality relationships and interactions at work (i.e., promotion-oriented relational job crafting) or by actively limiting interactions and connections and focusing, instead, on relationships that are most valuable to them (i.e., prevention-oriented relational job crafting; Bindl et al., 2019). Examples of promotion-oriented relational job crafting are an employee seeking to spend more time with a wide variety of people in the organization or making efforts to get to know more people at work better. By facilitating access to important resources at work (e.g., social support), these behaviors have been found to predict positive outcomes at work, including work performance (Rofcanin et al., 2019; Weseler & Niessen, 2016).

Prevention-oriented relational job crafting involves employees actively minimizing social interactions with others at work, such as by avoiding those they do not know well and do not get along with, as well as by focusing on already familiar and trusted relationships at work. Although prevention-oriented forms of job crafting were originally proposed as effective strategies for employees to cope with excessive job demands (Tims et al., 2013;

¹ While our core theorizing addresses employees’ proactive behavior to adjust social interactions at work by focusing on relational job crafting, previous job crafting research also acknowledges other types of job crafting, that is, task crafting (i.e., changing the number, scope, or type of job tasks), skill crafting (i.e., changing the skills at work to better carry out the job), and cognitive crafting (i.e., changing the way employees think about their job; Bindl et al., 2019; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Tims & Bakker, 2010)—and some research also points to their adaptive functions for performance-related outcomes (Bindl et al., 2019)—empirical research predominantly suggests that prevention-oriented job crafting is either harmful or insignificant for work outcomes (e.g., Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019). Indeed, research has shown that prevention-oriented relational job crafting is overall negatively associated with work outcomes such as job performance (Rofcanin et al., 2019; Weseler & Niessen, 2016). In this context, prevention-oriented job crafting has often been described as a form of withdrawal behavior that may reduce employees' access to workplace resources, such as social support, ultimately leading to adverse effects on their work performance (Demerouti et al., 2015; Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019).

In this research, we take a different perspective on how different forms of relational job crafting may impact task performance by establishing energy as a key mechanism. Drawing from existing research on social interactions (Owens et al., 2016) and proactivity (Strauss & Parker, 2018) within the framework of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we posit that both forms of relational job crafting may constitute purposeful daily work behaviors aimed at enhancing and protecting one's energetic resources. This, in turn, may lead to positive performance outcomes. Specifically, we suggest that relational job crafting affects employees' energy levels, with potential implications for task performance (in specific relational job design circumstances). COR theory postulates that individuals are motivated to protect and build resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). Energy is an important type of resource in organizations (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989) that reflects an individual's capacity to invest effort and enables employees to complete their work and successfully attain their goals (Owens et al., 2016; Quinn et al., 2012). Energy is here defined as the subjective feeling of vitality and aliveness (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), reflecting an individuals' state of physical and mental energetic activation (Quinn et al., 2012). Although

proactive behavior, such as relational job crafting, may consume initial energy (Fay & Hüttges, 2017; Frese & Zapf, 1994), COR theory postulates that individuals must invest resources to gain resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Hence, employees may invest in relational job crafting and thereby enhance their energy. According to COR theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989), employees with greater psychological resources, such as energy, are prone to reinvest these resources into the organization (Hobfoll, 1989), as evidenced by enhanced work performance (Quinn et al., 2012). Energy is not static, but fluctuates daily (e.g., Demerouti et al., 2012). Hence, on days when employees are more energized, they may show more excitement and interest in their work, which enables them to invest more effort and work longer (Quinn & Dutton, 2005), leading to optimal functioning and performance (Carmeli et al., 2009; Quinn, 2018; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). When employees are more energized, they also tend to be more focused and believe in their capabilities to perform the targeted task, which ultimately leads to better job performance (Carmeli, 2009). However, we argue the effects of both forms of daily bottom-up relational job crafting on energy levels and subsequent task performance needs to be considered within the overarching context of the top-down relational job design context.

Task Interdependence as a Boundary Condition in the Relational Job Crafting to Energy and Performance Link

We propose that the implications of daily promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting on individuals' energy levels and task performance do not occur in a vacuum but should be considered in the broader context of one's work (Dierdorff & Jensen, 2018; Johns, 2006). An essential work context for bottom-up relational job crafting is the complementary top-down relational job design context in which employees are embedded (Grant & Parker, 2009; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Relational job design reflects the social architecture of interpersonal connections and interdependent interactions at work that

is created by top-down, managerial job design (Grant, 2007). A key feature of relational job design is task interdependence (Kiggundu, 1981, 1983), which reflects the degree to which a job requires reliance on others for task completion (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Hence, task interdependence exposes employees to a predefined degree of social interaction with co-workers and determines an important part of their relational context at work (Grant & Parker, 2009). While in low task-interdependent contexts employees work mostly in isolation of others, high task interdependence typically demands intensive interpersonal communication, coordination, and consultation (Somech et al., 2009). In this regard, task interdependence may draw significant personal and regulatory resources, in the form of “internal energy that is consumed when regulating attention, persevering at difficult tasks, and managing emotions” (Lanaj et al., 2016, p. 1098). Hence, we propose the top-down relational job design context, in the form of task interdependence, may determine the effectiveness of both bottom-up promotion- and prevention-oriented forms of relational job crafting on employees’ daily energy levels and, in turn, on their performance at work.

In particular, we expect the positive effect of daily promotion-oriented relational job crafting on employees’ energy levels will be pronounced under circumstances of low task interdependence. Research suggests that high-quality social interactions are important for employees’ well-being (Spreitzer et al., 2005) and that employees benefit from greater energy levels when they experience positive interactions with others (Owens et al., 2016). Low-task-interdependent work contexts lack explicit predefined social relationships and interactions, which likely lead to employees feeling more disconnected from each other and experiencing greater social isolation at work (Rico et al., 2011). In this context, we argue that employees may feel particularly energized by proactively seeking a wider range and greater quality of social interactions and connections at work. Thus, on days when employees engage in promotion-oriented relational job crafting behaviors in low-task-interdependent contexts,

they cultivate a more socially enriched work environment that enhances their energy levels (Dutton, 2003). Our arguments align with research indicating that micro-breaks in the form of nonwork-related social interactions at work can enhance positive affect and productivity (Kim et al., 2018). Hence, we suggest that individuals' greater engagement in promotion-oriented relational job crafting on a given day positively affects their energy levels and that this effect is pronounced in low-task-interdependent work contexts:

Hypothesis 1: *The positive relationship between within-person promotion-oriented relational job crafting and energy is moderated by task interdependence, such that the relationship is stronger when task interdependence is low (vs. high).*

Further, considering that energy is a fundamental resource for performance (Quinn et al., 2012), we propose that the effects outlined above will also extend to task performance. According to COR theory, employees with greater psychological resources, such as high levels of energy, are more likely to channel these resources back into their work-related tasks and responsibilities (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). For example, research has shown that employees with higher levels of energy tend to exhibit better work performance (Quinn et al., 2012). Hence, on days when employees proactively seek a wider range of social interactions and connections in their organization and subsequently experience greater energy levels at work, they will become more involved in their work tasks (Dutton, 2003) and perform their jobs more successfully (Carmeli, 2009). As outlined above, we further expect this effect will be pronounced in contexts of low task interdependence, where increased social isolation allows employees to particularly benefit energetically from promotion-oriented relational job crafting, with subsequent positive effects on their task performance. In sum, we propose:

Hypothesis 2: *Task interdependence moderates the positive indirect effect of within-person promotion-oriented relational job crafting on task performance via energy, such that*

the conditional positive indirect effect of promotion-oriented relational job crafting on task performance via energy is stronger when task interdependence is low (vs. high).

Turning to day-level prevention-oriented relational job crafting, we argue that it will likely be detrimental for employees' energy in contexts with low task interdependence but may enhance employees' energy in contexts of high task interdependence. First, and in line with research indicating overall negative effects of prevention-oriented job crafting on work outcomes (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017), including energy (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019), we argue that actively limiting social interactions on a given day in low-task-interdependent contexts will be detrimental to individuals' energy levels. Job crafting, as a proactive, self-regulatory behavior, inherently requires energy (Fay & Hüttges, 2017). In addition, when employees engage in prevention-oriented relational job crafting in low-task-interdependent work contexts, where predefined social relationships and interactions are lacking, they may inadvertently exacerbate feelings of social isolation at work (Rico et al., 2011). Social isolation at work can have detrimental effects for employees' well-being (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Therefore, we expect prevention-oriented relational will deplete employees' energetic resources and leave them feeling drained in low-task-interdependent contexts.

By contrast, we argue that prevention-oriented relational job crafting may be beneficial in preserving one's energy levels in high-task-interdependent contexts because it helps maintain healthy relational boundaries in these situations. In high-task-interdependent contexts, employees are required to interact frequently with co-workers in coordinating efforts to perform their tasks effectively and achieve common work goals (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006), which involves a great amount of social interaction. Research suggests high levels of social interaction also come at a cost (Shockley et al., 2021; Windeler et al., 2017). Even if interpersonal interactions are perceived as enjoyable and beneficial, they are

effortful and require regulation of one's own emotions and behaviors and monitoring of others' emotions (Côté, 2005; Trougakos et al., 2015), which is energy consuming (Deery et al., 2002). In other words, excessive social interaction in environments characterized by high task interdependence may drain employees' energy due to various factors such as collaboration overload (Cross et al., 2016) and increased emotional labor demands (Trougakos et al., 2015), which may shift the energizing effect of social interactions (Owens et al., 2016) to an energy-depleting process (Shockley et al., 2021). Because energetic resources are not infinitely available, they need to be recharged regularly (Hunter & Wu, 2016). Consequently, we propose that daily prevention-oriented relational job crafting in high-task-interdependent contexts may constitute an effective daily strategy that helps employees to actively restore their energy. Limiting the number of (unfamiliar) social interactions and connections on a given day through prevention-oriented relational job crafting may enhance employees' energy, because it reduces demands on energy resources caused by excessive social interactions in high-task-interdependent situations (Shockley et al., 2021), thus providing the opportunity for these resources to recover. Prevention-oriented relational crafting also includes focusing on positive interactions within familiar and trusted relationships. In these relationships, social interactions require less emotion regulation and can instead generate new individual resources (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Sonnentag, 2001), which may be beneficial for employees' energy. In sum, we propose that daily prevention-oriented relational job crafting will enhance employees' energy in high-task-interdependent contexts, while it will deplete energy in low-task-interdependent contexts.

Hypothesis 3: *The relationship between within-person prevention-oriented relational job crafting and energy is moderated by task interdependence, such that the relationship between prevention-oriented relational job crafting and energy is positive (vs. negative) when task interdependence is high (vs. low).*

Analogous to Hypothesis 2, we further expect the effects of prevention-oriented relational job crafting on a given day on employees' energy levels will influence subsequent task performance, because energy is essential for performance (Quinn et al., 2012). Limiting social interactions or purposefully focusing on familiar and trusted relationships may exert restorative effects on individuals (Sonnentag, 2001) in high-task-interdependent contexts and may help redirect more energy into accomplishing work-related tasks, resulting in higher task performance. Conversely, we expect energy depletion as a result of prevention-oriented relational job crafting in low-task-interdependent contexts will, in turn, lead to lower task performance. In sum, we propose:

Hypothesis 4: *Task interdependence moderates the indirect effect of within-person prevention-oriented relational job crafting on task performance via energy, such that the conditional indirect effect of prevention-oriented relational job crafting on task performance via energy is positive (vs. negative) when task interdependence is high (vs. low).*

Drawing on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we proposed complementary effects between relational job crafting and task interdependence in shaping task performance, primarily through their impact on energy levels. However, we also acknowledge the potential for synergistic effects between relational job crafting and task interdependence under alternative theoretical frameworks. For example, the job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) may alternatively suggest that promotion-oriented relational job crafting is more beneficial for task performance in contexts of high task interdependence, to the extent that successful task completion in these contexts relies on effective social interaction and mutual support (Pearce & Gregersen, 1991). However, promotion-oriented relational job crafting is not necessarily a task-oriented behavior. Based on COR theory, we therefore expect promotion-oriented relational job crafting will be overall more beneficial for employees' energy levels, and hence, for their task performance, in low-task interdependent

contexts. This is because it provides employees with positive social interactions as a form of micro-break that help boost employees' daily energy, thereby enhancing their task performance (Kim et al., 2018; Owens et al., 2016).

Similarly, it may be argued that prevention-oriented crafting might be beneficial for task performance in low-task-interdependent contexts by helping individuals to limit potential social distractions and maintain focus on their work tasks (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). However, we expect prevention-oriented relational job crafting to enhance task performance in high-task-interdependent contexts. High-task interdependent contexts are prone to the potential downside of excessive social interaction (Shockley et al., 2021) beyond which additional social interaction may become counterproductive and may deplete employees' daily energetic resources due to cognitive load and emotional labor (Troughakos et al., 2015). Based on COR theory, prevention-oriented relational job crafting may help employees in these contexts to maintain their relational boundaries to preserve their energetic resources. This may in turn help in redirecting more energy into accomplishing work-related tasks, ultimately resulting in higher task performance. In sum, while synergistic effects between relational job crafting and task interdependence for performance may exist, we propose that considering energy as a key mechanism in the interaction between daily relational job crafting and the relational work context on task performance reveals complementary effects as more likely.²

Study 1

Method

Sample and Procedure

We conducted a daily diary study with professionals in the UK working full-time

² We tested interaction effects between forms of relational job crafting and task interdependence on task performance to account for potential synergistic effects (see supplemental analyses).

across different organizations. Our sample consisted of employees who had recently started to work predominantly from home because of the first nationwide COVID-19 lockdown (in the spring of 2020). The sudden shift to remote work for most employees during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic created a unique opportunity to investigate daily relational job crafting because employees had to adjust to new ways of interacting with others at work. However, the COVID-19 context also introduced unique challenges and circumstances that likely impacted various aspects of employees' well-being, job performance, and general work experiences. While we believe the context of this study was particularly interesting and relevant to explore employees' relational job crafting, we addressed potential concerns of generalizability beyond the COVID-19 context by conducting a second daily diary study post-pandemic (see Study 2).

Study 1 participants completed an initial screening and baseline survey, followed by two daily surveys, administered at the beginning and end of each workday over two consecutive workweeks (Mondays through Fridays). We recruited participants via *Prolific Academic*, a high-quality online panel provider (Peer et al., 2017, 2022). In accordance with the ethical procedures of the first author's institution, we offered small financial incentives for participation (Gabriel et al., 2019). In total, 312 individuals completed the initial screening survey. In line with the purpose of our study design, to be included in the final sample, participants had to be based in the UK and work from home, in order to ensure lockdown measures and remote working arrangements were equally relevant. Participants also had to work full time and during regular working hours to ensure that the beginning of the workday was consistent across our sample. Based on the initial screening steps, we invited 172 participants to complete the baseline survey, of which 148 participants (86.05%) accepted the invitation. We included attention check items to ensure careful responding (Meade & Craig, 2012), leading to five participants being excluded from further analyses.

For the daily diary surveys, we instructed participants to complete the beginning- and end-of-the-workday surveys within the first 30 minutes and the last 30 minutes of work, respectively. In total, 131 individuals (76.16%) provided data in 1,230 beginning-of-the-workday surveys and 1,204 end-of-the-workday surveys. For our analyses, we only included daily survey responses if participants worked from home on the respective day, attention check items were answered correctly, and the time lag between beginning- and end-of-the-workday surveys was at least four hours (Bindl et al., 2022). Further, participants needed to provide at least two complete sets of daily surveys so we could compute a mean for all variables (McCabe et al., 2012; Newman, 2014). Our final sample consisted of 845 daily observations (maximum number of daily observations = 172 participants \times 10 days; response rate on Level 1: 49.13%) nested within 126 individuals (response rate on Level 2: 73.26%). On average, participants (68% female) were 31.55 years old ($SD = 7.65$) with an organizational tenure of 4.22 years ($SD = 4.54$). Participants worked in a wide range of industries, such as education and teaching (21.8%), professional, scientific, and technical services (13.4%), information and communication (10.4%), and public administration (9.9%).

To detect potential attrition bias, we tested whether participants who dropped out ($N = 22$) differed in demographics from those in the final sample ($N = 126$). The results of a series of unpaired t-tests revealed no significant differences between groups (age: $t = 0.22$, $df = 146$, $p = .41$; gender: $t = 0.49$, $df = 146$, $p = .31$; work hours: $t = 0.08$, $df = 146$, $p = .47$; tenure: $t = 1.33$, $df = 146$, $p = .09$).

Measures

Relational Job Crafting. We assessed promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting with the 7-item measure by Bindl et al. (2019) at the end of each workday to ensure individuals could report their behavior for the whole day (Wehrt et al., 2020).

Promotion-oriented relational job crafting was measured with 4 items and prevention-

oriented relational job crafting was assessed with 3 items. Sample items are “Today, I tried to spend more time with a wide variety of people at work” (*promotion-oriented relational job crafting*; within-level $\alpha = .87$; between-level $\alpha = .97$; for the estimation of multilevel reliability coefficients see Geldhof et al. (2014)) and “Today, I minimized my interactions with people at work that I did not get along with” (*prevention-oriented relational job crafting*; within-level $\alpha = .78$; between-level $\alpha = .97$; 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *a great deal*). We conducted multilevel confirmatory factor analyses (Dyer et al., 2005), which supported the distinction between promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting. That is, the hypothesized two-factor solution (TLI = .982, CFI = .989, RMSEA = .045, SRMR = .029) had a significantly better fit than the alternative one-factor solution (TLI = .398, CFI = .599, RMSEA = .261, SRMR = .204; Satorra-Bentler scaled $\Delta \chi^2$, $\Delta df = 347.29$, 1, $p < .001$).

Energy. We measured energy at the beginning of the next workday using the established seven-item scale by Ryan and Frederick (1997). A sample item is “Right now, I feel energized” (within-level $\alpha = .91$; between-level $\alpha = .94$; 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Task Performance. We assessed task performance at the end of the next workday with four items from Williams and Anderson (1991). A sample item is “Today, I adequately completed assigned duties” (within-level $\alpha = .80$; between-level $\alpha = .96$; 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Task Interdependence. We assessed the cross-level moderator task interdependence in our baseline survey with a measure developed by Pearce and Gregersen (1991). In line with other studies (Liden et al., 1997), we used an abbreviated 3-item version of the original scale. The items are “I work closely with others in doing my work”, “I frequently must coordinate my efforts with others”, and “My work requires me to consult with others fairly frequently” (between-level $\alpha = .88$; 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Control Variables. In our analyses, we controlled for relevant variables at the day level. In line with recommendations for experience sampling methods, we included the *day of the week* to account for any systematic trends in our main variables across the workweek. In addition, we controlled for *previous-day task performance* to account for autocorrelation and strengthen the causal interpretation of our results (Beal, 2015; Gabriel et al., 2019).

Transparency and Openness

Data, analysis code, and research materials of Study 1 are available at [link to repository masked for peer review]. Data were analyzed using Mplus version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017).

Results

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics as well as bivariate and intraclass correlations of the key study variables. To test our hypotheses, we conducted multilevel path analyses (Hox, 2010). At the within-person level, we added the hypothesized paths from promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting to energy, and from energy to task performance, as well as direct paths from forms of relational job crafting to subsequent task performance. In addition, the paths from promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting to energy were modeled as random and moderated by task interdependence assessed at the between-person level. At the within-person level, we added our controls for previous-day task performance and for the potential day-of-the-week effects. We person mean-centered all independent day-level predictors and performed maximum-likelihood estimation. To assess the significance of the conditional indirect effects in our model, we estimated 95% confidence intervals using Monte Carlo simulation in *R* (Preacher & Selig, 2012).

In Hypothesis 1, we proposed that task interdependence moderates the relationship between promotion-oriented relational job crafting on a given day and subsequent energy, such that the positive relationship is stronger when task interdependence is low (vs. high). As

shown in Table 2, we found evidence of the proposed interaction effect between promotion-oriented relational job crafting and task interdependence ($\gamma = -.11$, $SE = .053$, $p = .045$). We interpreted the interaction by plotting the simple slopes at one standard deviation above and below the mean of the moderator variable task interdependence. Figure 2 shows that promotion-oriented relational job crafting was positively associated with energy at low ($\gamma = .17$, $SE = .06$, $p = .005$) but not at high ($\gamma = -.01$, $SE = .06$, $p = .917$) levels of task interdependence, thereby partially supporting Hypothesis 1.

According to Hypothesis 3, task interdependence moderates the relationship between prevention-oriented relational job crafting on a given day and energy, such that the relationship between prevention-oriented relational job crafting and energy is positive when task interdependence is high and negative when task interdependence is low. As indicated in Table 2, we found a significant interaction effect of prevention-oriented relational job crafting and task interdependence on energy ($\gamma = .12$, $SE = .049$, $p = .011$). Figure 3 illustrates the interaction at one standard deviation above and below the mean of task interdependence. In partial support of Hypothesis 3, prevention-oriented relational job crafting was positively associated with energy at high ($\gamma = .12$, $SE = .06$, $p = .032$) but not at low ($\gamma = -.08$, $SE = .06$, $p = .143$) levels of task interdependence.

Hypotheses 2 and 4 proposed that the indirect effects of promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting on a given day on subsequent task performance via increased energy are impacted by levels of task interdependence. In partial support of Hypothesis 2, the conditional indirect effect of promotion-oriented relational job crafting on task performance via energy was significantly positive at low levels of task interdependence (indirect effect = .02, 95% CI [.004, .038]) but not at high levels of task interdependence (indirect effect = -.00, 95% CI [-.015, .014]). The index of moderated mediation was -.012 (95% CI [-.027, -.0002]). Further, the conditional indirect effect of prevention-oriented relational job crafting on task

performance via energy was significantly positive at high levels (indirect effect = .01, 95% CI [.001, .021]) but not at low levels (indirect effect = -.01, 95% CI [-.025, .003]) of task interdependence, partially supporting Hypothesis 4. The index of moderated mediation was 0.014 (95% CI [.003, .029]).

Supplemental Analyses

To account for potential synergistic effects of job crafting forms (promotion- vs. prevention-oriented) with task interdependence on task performance (see the end of the theory section), we modelled effects of the interaction terms of job crafting forms and task interdependence on task performance in addition to our hypothesized, complementary effects of the interaction between job crafting forms and task interdependence on energy levels at work (and, in turn, on task performance). We did not find any evidence for an alternative, synergistic effect of job crafting forms with task interdependence on task performance, while our key findings remained robust. Details of these additional analyses are available from the authors.

Interim Discussion

In Study 1 we found initial support for our theoretical model, such that the effectiveness of promotion- versus prevention-oriented relational job crafting for energy and task performance was contingent on the relational work design context, indicated by task interdependence in the job. Specifically, we found that promotion-oriented relational job crafting was positively associated with energy, and subsequent task performance, in low (but not in high) task-interdependent contexts. While we also found that prevention-oriented relational job crafting was positively related to energy, and subsequent task performance, in high task-interdependent contexts, we did not find the expected negative association of prevention-oriented relational job crafting with energy in low task-interdependent contexts.

Study 1 also had a few limitations that informed the design of Study 2. First, we must acknowledge the distinctive context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sudden shift to remote work provides an interesting context for exploring relational job crafting within the context of relational work design, because employees had to adjust to new ways of interacting with others at work. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the findings of Study 1 may have been influenced by the unprecedented organizational changes and disruptions during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic introduced unique challenges and circumstances that likely impacted various aspects of employees' well-being, job performance, and general work experiences, including their interactions with others at work (Kniffin et al., 2021). For example, the implementation of physical distancing measures and remote work arrangements might have contributed to social isolation (Wang et al., 2021), potentially limiting opportunities for some forms of job crafting behaviors. This may be particularly relevant for promotion-oriented relational job crafting, which may be facilitated in non-virtual work settings. Moreover, navigating changes in terms of increased workload and personal responsibilities as well as higher levels of stress and uncertainty could have affected employees' energy and performance (Hur & Shin, 2023), especially in the early days of the pandemic (Chong et al., 2020). To address concerns of the generalizability of our findings, we conducted a second, independent experience sampling study with employed professionals across several industries and occupations, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic when employees had returned to their "normal" work settings, including working face to face.

Second, in Study 1 we spaced out the daily questionnaires, separating the independent variables, mediator, and dependent variable throughout the day and across days, according to best practices for addressing common method biases (Podsakoff et al., 2003). While the temporal spacing is a strength of our research, measuring the mediator (energy) and outcome

(task performance) variables on the next working day could also constitute a further limitation of our study design. Specifically, the proposed mechanism of relational job crafting may include potential immediate effects on energy levels, possibly through emotional contagion effects (Owens et al., 2016). However, these effects being sustained to the start of the next workday could have been influenced, for example, by social activities outside of work, which were not accounted for in our analyses. In Study 2, we therefore examined the momentary effects of relational job crafting on energy levels by collecting data at three time points on one workday (at the beginning of the working day, after the lunch break, and the end of the working day).

Finally, in Study 1 we examined how general task interdependence in the job shapes the relationship of daily relational job crafting on energy and, in turn, task performance. However, scholars have revealed that characteristics of the job design can also exhibit meaningful fluctuations within individuals (Kühnel et al., 2012). Thus, it could be argued that individual's daily perception of task interdependence may shape the effects of different types of relational job crafting on energy levels.³ We therefore assessed task interdependence as a within-person variable on the same working day in Study 2.

Study 2

Method

Sample and Procedure

To complement Study 1, we conducted a second experience sampling study in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (in April 2023) with 108 full-time employees from diverse organizations and occupations. Our sample was recruited via *Prolific Academic* and participants were offered small financial incentives for participation in accordance with the ethical procedures of the first author's institution (Gabriel et al., 2019).

³ We thank an anonymous reviewer for this valuable suggestion.

Study participants completed an initial screening and baseline survey, followed by three daily surveys, administered at the beginning of each workday, after the lunch break, and at the end of each workday over two consecutive workweeks (Mondays through Fridays). In total, 292 individuals completed the initial screening survey. To be included in the final sample, participants had to be based in the UK and work full-time and during regular working hours, to ensure that what constituted the beginning of the workday was consistent across our sample. Based on the initial screening steps, 135 participants were eligible to participate in our diary study. We also included attention check items to ensure careful responding (Meade & Craig, 2012), leading to a further six participants being excluded. As a result, 129 participants (95.56%) were invited to take part in the diary study.

For the daily diary surveys, we instructed participants to complete the beginning-of-the-workday survey within the first 30 minutes of starting to work, the lunchtime survey within the first 30 minutes after returning from lunch break and the end-of-the workday survey within the last 30 minutes of work. In total, 123 individuals (91.11%) provided data in 1,041 beginning-of-the-workday surveys, 1,004 lunchtime surveys, and 1,071 end-of-the-workday surveys.

For our analyses, we only included daily survey responses if the time lag between the lunchtime- and end-of-the-workday surveys was at least two hours, in order to allow for a meaningful time frame for the main variables in our model. Further, participants were only included if they provided at least two complete sets of daily surveys to be able to compute a mean for all variables (McCabe et al., 2012; Newman, 2014). Our final sample consisted of 793 daily observations (maximum number of daily observations = 135 participants \times 10 days; response rate on Level 1: 58.74%) nested within 108 individuals (response rate on Level 2: 80.00%). On average, participants (35.6% female) were 37.91 years old ($SD = 10.87$) with an organizational tenure of 6.86 years ($SD = 7.70$). Participants worked in a wide range of

industries, such as information and communication (14.3%), professional, scientific, and technical service (15.3%), education and teaching (10%), health and social services (8.8%) and finance and insurance (11%).

In order to assess the possibility of attrition bias, we conducted a series of unpaired *t*-tests comparing participants who dropped out from the study ($N = 27$) with those who remained in the final sample ($N = 108$). The results indicated no differences regarding demographics (age: $t = -0.72$, $df = 133$, $p = .24$; gender: $t = 0.27$, $df = 133$, $p = .40$; work hours: $t = 0.21$, $df = 133$, $p = .42$; tenure: $t = -0.02$, $df = 131$, $p = .98$).

Measures

Relational Job Crafting. We assessed promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting in the lunchtime survey with the same 7-item measure as in Study 1 developed by Bindl et al. (2019). We asked participants to report their relational job crafting behavior for the first half of their workday. Sample items are “So far, I tried to spend more time with a wide variety of people at work” (*promotion-oriented relational job crafting*; within-level $\alpha = .88$; between-level $\alpha = .99$) and “So far, I minimized my interactions with people at work that I did not get along with” (*prevention-oriented relational job crafting*; within-level $\alpha = .72$; between-level $\alpha = .96$; 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *a great deal*). We conducted multilevel confirmatory factor analyses (Dyer et al., 2005), which supported the distinction between promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting. That is, the hypothesized 2-factor solution (TLI = .962, CFI = .976, RMSEA = .072, SRMR = .049) had a significantly better fit than the alternative 1-factor solution (TLI = .220, CFI = .480, RMSEA = .325, SRMR = .198; Satorra-Bentler scaled $\Delta\chi^2 = 209.799$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001$).

Energy. We measured energy in the lunchtime survey using the same seven-item scale as in Study 1 by Ryan and Frederick (1997). A sample item is “Right now, I feel

energized” (within-level $\alpha = .90$; between-level $\alpha = .96$; 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Task Performance. We assessed task performance at the end of the workday with the same four items as in Study 1 from Williams and Anderson (1991). A sample item is “This afternoon, I adequately completed assigned duties” (within-level $\alpha = .73$; between-level $\alpha = .94$; 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Task Interdependence. We assessed task interdependence in the lunchtime survey. We used the same three items by Pearce and Gregersen (1991) as in Study 1, adapted for the day level. A sample item is “So far, I worked closely with others in doing my work” (within-level $\alpha = .89$; between-level $\alpha = .99$; 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Control Variables. In our analyses, we controlled for possible confounding factors at the day level. We included the *day of the week* to account for any systematic trends in our main variables across the workweek. We also controlled for beginning-of-the-workday *energy* to reduce autocorrelation and ensure a more cautious evaluation of our hypothesis testing (Gabriel et al., 2019). Energy was measured in the beginning-of-the-workday survey using the 7-item scale by Ryan and Frederick (1997).

Transparency and Openness

Data, analysis code, and research materials of Study 2 are available at [link to repository masked for peer review]. Data were analyzed using Mplus version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017).

Results

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics as well as bivariate and intraclass correlations of the key study variables in Study 2. To test our hypotheses, we conducted multilevel path analyses (Hox, 2010). All variables were modeled on the within-person level. We added the hypothesized paths from promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting to energy

and from the moderator task interdependence to energy, from energy to task performance, as well as direct paths from forms of relational job crafting to task performance. In addition, we added the interaction of promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting and task interdependence on energy. We also added our controls for the potential day-of-the-week and beginning-of-the workday energy levels effects. We person mean-centered all independent predictors on the within-person level and performed maximum-likelihood estimation. To assess the significance of conditional indirect effects in our model, we estimated 95% confidence intervals using Monte Carlo simulation in *R* (Preacher & Selig, 2012).

In Hypothesis 1, we proposed that task interdependence moderates the relationship between promotion-oriented relational job crafting on a given day and subsequent energy, such that the positive relationship is stronger when task interdependence is low (vs. high). As shown in Table 2, we did not find a significant interaction between promotion-oriented relational job crafting and task interdependence ($\gamma = .01$, $SE = .056$, $p = .744$) on energy; promotion-oriented relational job crafting was, however, directly positively associated with increased energy levels ($\gamma = .09$, $SE = .046$, $p = .040$)⁴. Thus, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were not supported.

According to Hypothesis 3, task interdependence moderates the relationship between prevention-oriented relational job crafting and energy on a given day, such that the relationship between prevention-oriented relational job crafting and energy is positive (vs. negative) when task interdependence is high (vs. low). As shown in Table 4, we found evidence of the proposed interaction between prevention-oriented relational job crafting and task interdependence on energy ($\gamma = .19$, $SE = .056$, $p = .001$). We interpreted the significant interaction of prevention-oriented relational job crafting and task interdependence by plotting

⁴ Although not specifically hypothesized, the indirect effect of promotion-oriented relational job crafting on task performance via energy was significant and positive: indirect effect = .01, 95% CI [.002, .030]).

the simple slopes at one standard deviation above and below the mean of task interdependence. Figure 4 shows that prevention-oriented relational job crafting was negatively associated with energy at low ($\gamma = -.24$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$) but not at high ($\gamma = .07$, $SE = .07$, $p = .297$) levels of task interdependence. Together, these findings provide partial support for Hypothesis 3.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 proposed that the indirect effects of prevention-oriented relational job crafting on a given day on subsequent task performance via increased energy at work are positive at high and negative at low levels of task interdependence. Our results show that the conditional indirect effect of prevention-oriented relational job crafting on task performance via energy was significantly negative at low levels (indirect effect = $-.04$, 95% CI $[-.077, -.006]$) but not at high levels (indirect effect = $.01$, 95% CI $[-.012, .042]$) of task interdependence, partially supporting Hypothesis 4. The index of moderated mediation is 0.029 (95% CI $[.011, .051]$).

Supplemental Analyses

Similar to Study 1, we also accounted for potential synergistic effects of job crafting forms (promotion- vs. prevention-oriented) and task interdependence on task performance (see the end of the theory section) in Study 2. We modelled the effects of the interaction terms of job crafting forms and task interdependence on task performance in addition to our hypothesized, complementary effects of the interaction between job crafting forms and task interdependence on energy levels at work (and, in turn, on performance). We did not find any evidence for an alternative, synergistic effect of job crafting forms with task interdependence on task performance, while our key findings remained robust. Details of these additional analyses are available from the authors.

General Discussion

Although relational job crafting is ubiquitous in modern workplaces (Bindl et al., 2019; Bruning & Campion, 2018; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Zhang & Parker, 2019), previous research has provided only limited insights into how bottom-up job crafting behaviors interact with top-down job design in influencing employee effectiveness. Integrating theorizing on proactivity (Strauss & Parker, 2018) and social interactions (Owens et al., 2016) under the umbrella of COR theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989), we developed and tested a framework of when and how relational job crafting may affect task performance. Our findings of two daily diary studies demonstrate the pivotal role of energy in explaining how different forms of daily relational job crafting are related to task performance. Importantly, our findings also suggest that these relationships are partly shaped by the top-down relational job design context, underscoring the interconnected nature of bottom-up job crafting and top-down job design in influencing performance. Below, we describe how our findings inform both theory and practice.

Theoretical Implications

Our research offers several important implications for theory advancement. First, our research framework helps to establish a more contextualized perspective of job crafting. Specifically, we aim to advance our understanding of how relational job crafting and relational job design interact to influence work outcomes. While a contextualized view is not common in job crafting research, it is not entirely new either: scholars have started to investigate the role of context in job crafting (Dierdorff & Jensen, 2018) and have discussed its theoretical significance (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Our findings on the interactive effects of bottom-up relational job crafting and the complementing top-down relational job design context contribute to this discussion by illustrating how employee-driven relational job crafting and managerial-led relational job design jointly contribute to relevant work

outcomes. That is, we found promotion-oriented relational job crafting to be beneficial for employees' energy and task performance (Study 2), especially in work contexts characterized by low levels of task interdependence in the job (Study 1). These findings corroborate the idea that employees derive energy from social interactions, which positively impacts their performance (Owens et al., 2016). We further found that the context of top-down relational job design plays a crucial role in determining the effects of prevention-oriented relational job crafting. More specifically, engaging in daily prevention-oriented relational job crafting was found to enhance employees' energy in work contexts characterized by high task interdependence (Study 1), while depleting employees' energy in low-task-interdependent contexts (Study 2). In sum, our findings indicate a higher context-sensitivity for prevention-oriented relational job crafting.

These findings represent a further theoretical implication stemming from our research, namely, the theorizing and evidence for the "good" side of prevention-oriented relational job crafting for work outcomes. Most research to date has taken a generally negative stance on prevention-oriented forms of job crafting (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017), and has suggested that limiting interactions and relationships with co-workers may cause task performance to deteriorate because employees are less engaged in their work (Rofcanin et al., 2019). Based on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), Study 1 shows that daily prevention-oriented relational job crafting may protect employees' energetic resources in high-task-interdependent contexts. Our findings meaningfully align with the original notion of prevention-oriented job crafting as an effective strategy for employees to deal with excessive job demands (Tims et al., 2013; Tims & Bakker, 2010). Indeed, related research has shown that while employees may generally feel energized through social interactions and connections at work (Owens et al., 2016), excessive demands associated with too much interaction may lead to burnout (Shockley et al., 2021). In such

situations, individuals may choose to reduce the number of social ties to cope with greater levels of emotional exhaustion (Jo et al., 2021) or focus on familiar and trusted relationships to replenish their energy (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Sonnentag, 2001). Our research advances this perspective by demonstrating that in job design contexts characterized by high task interdependence, prevention-oriented relational job crafting may help employees to proactively cope with excessive relational demands and help them in restoring their energy with positive implications for their performance. Overall, our findings suggest that accounting for the job-design context is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of *when* each relational job crafting form constitutes a purposeful work behavior (Barrick et al., 2013; Johns, 2006). Future research may now extend our theorizing to other types of job crafting (e.g., task crafting, skill crafting), as well as to additional work design characteristics, which will help to better understand the implications of bottom-up job crafting efforts as they occur in the wider, top-down, work design of organizations.

A further key implication of our research is the identification of energy as a novel mechanism for understanding the effectiveness of relational job crafting in organizations. Across two daily diary studies, we showed how energy explains why different forms of daily relational job crafting influence task performance. In this regard, our findings integrate the literature on job crafting (e.g., Bindl et al., 2019) and relational energy (Owens et al., 2016) under the umbrella of COR theory. While interactions with others at work can be experienced as energizing (Owens et al., 2016), research also shows that high demands of excessive interaction may drain employees' energy (Shockley et al., 2021). We advance this research by showing that different proactive relational strategies influence employees' energy levels on a given day. Seeking a wider range of or deepening interactions and connections with others (i.e., promotion-oriented relational job crafting) energizes employees and, in turn, leads to higher task performance (Study 2) (Baker, 2019; Owens et al., 2016; Shockley et al.,

2021), particularly in contexts with low task interdependence where employees are more likely to feel isolated from other people at work (Study 1). Conversely, purposely minimizing further interactions and connections (i.e., prevention-oriented relational job crafting) appears to enhance one's energy in high-task-interdependent contexts, as shown in Study 1. However, the same type of behavior may lead to energy depletion in low-task-interdependent situations, as evidenced in Study 2. Overall, both studies consistently reveal that different forms of daily relational job crafting hold important implications for employees' energy levels and for subsequent task performance. Thus, our research framework helps to establish *how* promotion- versus prevention-oriented job crafting may be effective for task performance on a day-to-day basis.

We also observed some noteworthy differences in our findings across the two studies. In post-pandemic times, promotion-oriented relational job crafting had an overall positive effect on energy at work, irrespective of task interdependence (Study 2), aligning with earlier research suggesting positive implications of promotion-oriented job crafting in organizations (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019). In contrast, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, such crafting efforts only benefited employees' energy levels when task interdependence was low (Study 1). This finding suggests that during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic when many employees were transitioning to remote work and facing increased isolation, proactively cultivating relationships in low-task-interdependent work contexts had a particularly beneficial impact on employees' energy. In these unique circumstances, promotion-oriented relational job crafting may constitute a coping strategy enabling a more resourceful social environment leading to greater feelings of energy. In contrast, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, promotion-oriented relational job crafting continued to be effective for employees' energy also in high-task-interdependent contexts. During the pandemic employees experienced a sudden shift from in-person to

virtual interactions with others at work. Virtual interactions during the COVID-19 lockdown were found to be associated with increased cognitive demands and exhaustion (Shockley et al., 2021). This suggests that engaging in promotion-oriented relational job crafting during the pandemic may require more effort in high-task-interdependent contexts, potentially counteracting the positive effects of energizing interactions through promotion-oriented relational job crafting.

We also found some noteworthy differences across the two studies with regard to prevention-oriented relational job crafting. Specifically, during the first COVID-19 lockdown, engaging in daily prevention-oriented relational job crafting led to greater energy when employees worked in a high-task-interdependent environment (Study 1). Especially in the early days of the first COVID-19 lockdown, employees who worked in high-task-interdependent jobs, had to adjust to the novelty of frequent online interactions, which often caused high levels of exhaustion commonly referred to as “Zoom fatigue” (Shockley et al., 2021). In this context, prevention-oriented relational job crafting might have helped employees to effectively manage the social demands associated with virtual collaboration, ultimately contributing to higher energy levels. In Study 2, conducted in the aftermath of the pandemic, we found that prevention-oriented relational job crafting was energy-depleting in low-task-interdependent contexts, in line with our theorizing. While we did not find a positive effect of prevention-oriented relational job crafting under circumstances of high task interdependence, it is noteworthy that there was also no observed negative effect. Overall, our findings highlight a more nuanced role for work outcomes of relational job crafting and stretch the importance of the relational job design context in shaping the implications of different forms of relational job crafting.

Practical Implications

Our findings offer some practical implications that may help employees (and their organizations) to navigate social interactions and connections at work in ways that support employees' energy levels and subsequent task performance. Dependent on the top-down relational job design context, employees may consider engaging in specific types of relational job crafting to effectively manage their energy levels. In particular, our findings suggest that promotion-oriented relational job crafting is beneficial for employees' energy (Study 2), particularly when employees work in low-task-interdependent jobs (Study 1). To benefit from relational energy and subsequent performance (Owens et al., 2016), employees are advised to take a proactive approach in engaging with others at work, for example by actively participating in (virtual) social activities or making an effort to connect with colleagues at work (remotely). Organizations can support promotion-oriented relational job crafting efforts by offering job crafting interventions (e.g., van den Heuvel et al., 2015) or by creating systematic opportunities for formal and informal social interactions and connections such as through shared working spaces (Garrett et al., 2017), regular group meetings (Cohen & Prusak, 2002), an office layout lending itself to meaningful interactions with others (Sailer & McCulloh, 2012), or social events at work where employees can proactively connect with colleagues, mentors, and professionals in their field. Because teleworking may be attractive to organizations as a means to save costly office space and commuting time (Baruch, 2000), organizations are also encouraged to find ways to provide equivalent opportunities in a virtual work environment. Similarly, employees are also encouraged to proactively connect with others at work online, such as initiating virtual coffee-break sessions to enable socializing among colleagues.

Our findings from Study 1 also suggest that prevention-oriented relational job crafting might help employees in high-task-interdependent jobs to better deal with relational demands, such as collaboration overload (Cross et al., 2016) or frequent (online) meetings

(Bennett et al., 2021). Employees in high-task-interdependent situations may consider limiting further interactions to enhance or preserve their energy, which also has relevant implications for their task performance. By setting relational boundaries, employees may prevent exhaustion from excessive relational demands in these contexts. Organizations may want to be more understanding of employees' choice to limit interactions or focus on familiar relationships at work on a given day, as well as working to prevent negative reactions from others toward the job crafter (Tims & Parker, 2020). However, while prevention-oriented relational job crafting seems an effective strategy in coping with excessive relational demands in high-task-interdependent contexts, employees and organizations may need to be aware that these behaviors can also be detrimental to employees' energy in low-task-interdependent contexts (Study 2). Overall, these findings suggest that employees need to remain flexible in their approach to craft relationships and interactions on a daily basis. To maintain both well-being and performance at a high level, it is recommended to adapt the job crafting strategy and to align it with the (changing) demands of employees' job design.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study has certain limitations that suggest potentially useful avenues for future research. First, a limitation might be that our study variables were self-report in nature, which raises concerns about common method variance and self-presentational bias. While common method variance might be an issue, this concern is alleviated by the fact that our surveys in both studies were spaced out in time (Podsakoff et al., 2003) and that common method variance is unlikely to explain the interaction of relational job crafting and task interdependence (Siemsen et al., 2010). In line with previous daily diary studies published in high-impact journals (e.g., Gerpott et al., 2022), we employed self-report measures to assess task performance, which could potentially introduce self-presentational bias (Mabe & West, 1982). This bias might also contribute to the observed high mean values of task performance

across our studies. While obtaining daily external ratings or objective performance criteria would be ideal, within-person research is generally less susceptible to the influence of self-presentational bias in performance self-ratings than between-person research (Beal et al., 2005). Moreover, a meta-analysis on job crafting and job performance found that self-reported performance was generally consistent with supervisory ratings of performance (Rudolph et al., 2017). These findings may alleviate concerns about self-presentational bias influencing the relationship between daily relational job crafting and daily task performance.

Second, while our findings indicate that both promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting were linked to energy and subsequently task performance (at different levels of task interdependence), we did not account for the quality or content of each of these individual job crafting efforts (Bindl et al., 2019). Instead, we focused on the overall extent to which employees engaged in daily relational job crafting. While most research assumes that positive relationships at work are energizing (Fritz et al., 2011; Owens et al., 2016), we cannot infer whether the relational job crafting efforts indeed resulted in positive interactions and connections on each occasion. However, given that job crafting efforts are voluntary and self-initiated employee behaviors (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), we expect relational job crafting to provide employees with positive rather than negative interactions. Nevertheless, future research may take an episodic approach in investigating different relational job crafting efforts, including their content and outcomes, in greater depth.

Third, we acknowledge that the shortened scale of task interdependence in Study 1 may raise concerns about measurement validity (Heggestad et al., 2019). However, in Study 2, we conducted our analysis using both the full 5-item and the shortened 3-item scale of task interdependence. Notably, the results from both scales yielded consistent findings for the full research model, affirming that the abbreviated version captured the essence of the original scale effectively. To ensure measurement consistency across both studies, we also used the 3-

item measure in Study 2 across both studies to ensure measurement consistency.

Fourth, while we did not find evidence for potential synergistic effects of forms of relational job crafting and task interdependence on task performance, it is important to note that the absence of a significant interaction does not rule out the possibility of more complex relationships leading to synergistic effects. For instance, other potential mediators were not explored in our study. Future research may benefit from examining several mechanisms to further understand the dynamics between relational job crafting and task interdependence in influencing task performance.

Finally, while our study contributes much-needed insights into the role of context for relational job crafting at work (see Dierdorff & Jensen, 2018), our research did not explicitly focus on the role of individual differences in how employees may respond to combinations of bottom-up and top-down relational job design. Future research may investigate more specifically how individual differences, such as extraversion, may help gain an even deeper understanding for whom promotion- versus prevention-oriented job crafting may be particularly beneficial. On the one hand, introverted individuals could potentially find it more challenging to cope with an abundance of social interactions in their workplace (Wilmot et al., 2019), making prevention-oriented relational job crafting more effective under circumstances of high task interdependence. On the other hand, extroverted individuals have been shown to develop more energizing ties (Cullen-Lester et al., 2016). Hence, they might experience greater energy as an outcome of promotion-oriented relational job crafting in low-task-interdependent jobs (Tett & Burnett, 2003) due to their general inclination toward social interaction (Costa & McCrae, 1992). We also acknowledge the potential influence of self-selection bias on our findings. According to the Attraction-Selection-Attrition model, individuals with specific personality traits or needs may naturally gravitate toward certain job contexts (Schneider, 1987). For instance, those high in extraversion (or need for affiliation)

may be more prone to seek out jobs that involve working with others, potentially aligning with jobs characterized by high task interdependence. In contrast, introverted individuals may prefer roles with minimal interaction demands, where they can focus on completing tasks independently. We encourage future research to provide an even more comprehensive perspective of how the implications of job crafting are driven not only by different job design contexts but also by individual differences.

Conclusion

Our research contributes to the job crafting literature by providing insights into how the effectiveness of bottom-up relational job crafting is influenced by the top-down relational job design, indicated by task interdependence. We conducted two independent daily experience sampling studies across diverse organizations and occupations to study the impact of promotion- and prevention-oriented relational job crafting on employees' energy levels and, in turn, task performance under different levels of task interdependence. Our research illuminates the importance of tailoring job crafting strategies to the specific job design context and highlights the pivotal role of energy in explaining the effectiveness of either form of relational job crafting in these contexts. By understanding these dynamics, employees and organizations need to acknowledge that employees' job crafting efforts will interact with the organization-provided relational context in shaping work outcomes.

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Table 1*Intercorrelations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Intraclass Correlations (Study 1)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Day-level main variables</i>							
1 Promotion-oriented relational job crafting (throughout the workday)	-	-.07	.04	.01	.03	.08	
2 Prevention-oriented relational job crafting (throughout the workday)	.01	-	-.00	.00	-.21	-.04	
3 Energy (start of the workday, t + 1)	.12	-.01	-	.05	.10	-.01	
4 Task performance (throughout the workday, t + 1)	.05	-.05	.07	-	.10	.00	
<i>Day-level control variables</i>							
5 Day of the week (Monday-Friday)	-.03	-.01	-.00	-.01	-	.12	
6 Previous-day task performance (throughout the workday, t – 1)	.04	-.03	.07	.23	-.01	-	
<i>Person-level variable</i>							
7 Task interdependence	.05	-.08	-.02	.07	-.06	.05	-
<i>M</i>	1.67	1.64	3.05	4.12	5.88	4.11	4.06
<i>SD</i>	0.87	0.94	0.85	0.70	2.75	0.70	0.81
1-ICC (proportion of day-level variance)	.54	.48	.61	.51	1.00	.53	-

Note. t = time. ICC = intraclass correlations. Correlations below the diagonal are person-level correlations ($N = 126$). Correlations above the diagonal are day-level correlations ($N = 845$). Numbers in bold $p < .05$.

Table 2

Unstandardized Path Coefficients from Moderated Mediation Analyses Predicting Task Performance from Promotion- and Prevention-Oriented Relationship Job Crafting via Energy, Moderated by Task Interdependence (Study 1)

Predictor variables	Energy			Task performance		
	γ	SE	p	γ	SE	p
<i>Within-level variables</i>						
Promotion-oriented relational job crafting	.08	.04	.051	.02	.03	.454
Prevention-oriented relational job crafting	.02	.04	.650	.02	.03	.485
Energy				.11	.03	< .001
Previous-day task performance				-.05	.04	.190
Day of the week	.01	.01	.167	.01	.01	.044
<i>Between-level variables</i>						
Intercept	2.99	.07	< .001	4.03	.06	< .001
Task interdependence	-.03	.06	.637	.11	.06	.044
Task interdependence \times Promotion-oriented relational job crafting	-.11	.05	.045			
Task interdependence \times Prevention-oriented relational job crafting	.12	.05	.011			

Note. $N_{Day-Level} = 845$; $N_{Person-Level} = 126$.

Table 3*Intercorrelations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Intraclass Correlations (Study 2)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Day-level main variables</i>							
1 Promotion-oriented relational job crafting (throughout the first half of the workday)	-	0.09	0.37	0.31	0.05	0.02	0.25
2 Prevention-oriented relational job crafting (throughout the first half of the workday)	-0.06	-	0.01	-0.06	-0.07	0.01	-0.05
3 Task interdependence (throughout the first half of the workday)	0.25	-0.04	-	0.24	0.03	0.04	0.23
4 Energy (lunchtime)	0.08	-0.07	0.05	-	0.08	0.02	0.37
5 Task performance (throughout the second half of the workday)	0.06	-0.06	0.06	0.06	-	0.00	0.07
<i>Day-level control variables</i>							
6 Day of the week (Monday–Friday)	-0.03	-0.06	-0.02	0.03	0.04	-	0.03
7 Previous energy (start of the workday)	0.07	-0.05	0.07	0.18	0.06	0.14	-
<i>M</i>	2.15	1.78	3.25	3.30	4.28	2.99	3.02
<i>SD</i>	1.14	0.98	0.86	1.12	0.64	1.40	0.96
1-ICC (proportion of day-level variance)	.42	.46	.44	.60	.50	1.00	.53

Note. ICC = intraclass correlations. Correlations below the diagonal are person-level

correlations ($N = 108$). Correlations above the diagonal are day-level correlations ($N =$

793). Numbers in bold $p < .05$.

Table 4

Unstandardized Within-Person Path Coefficients from Moderated Mediation Analyses Predicting Task Performance from Promotion- and Prevention-Oriented Relationship Job Crafting via Energy, Moderated by Task Interdependence (Study 2)

Predictor variables	Energy			Task performance		
	γ	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	γ	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	3.24	.08	< .001	3.76	.22	< .001
Promotion-oriented relational job crafting	0.09	.03	.003	0.07	.03	.014
Prevention-oriented relational job crafting	-0.08	.05	.067	-0.09	.04	.024
Task interdependence	-0.00	.03	.924			
Promotion-oriented relational job crafting \times Task interdependence	0.01	.05	.793			
Prevention-oriented relational job crafting \times Task interdependence	0.19	.07	.007			
Day of the week	0.00	.02	.822	0.01	.01	.423
Start-into-the-workday energy	0.33	.03	.000	0.04	.04	.281
Energy				0.15	.06	.012

Note. $N_{\text{Day-Level}} = 793$; $N_{\text{Person-Level}} = 108$.

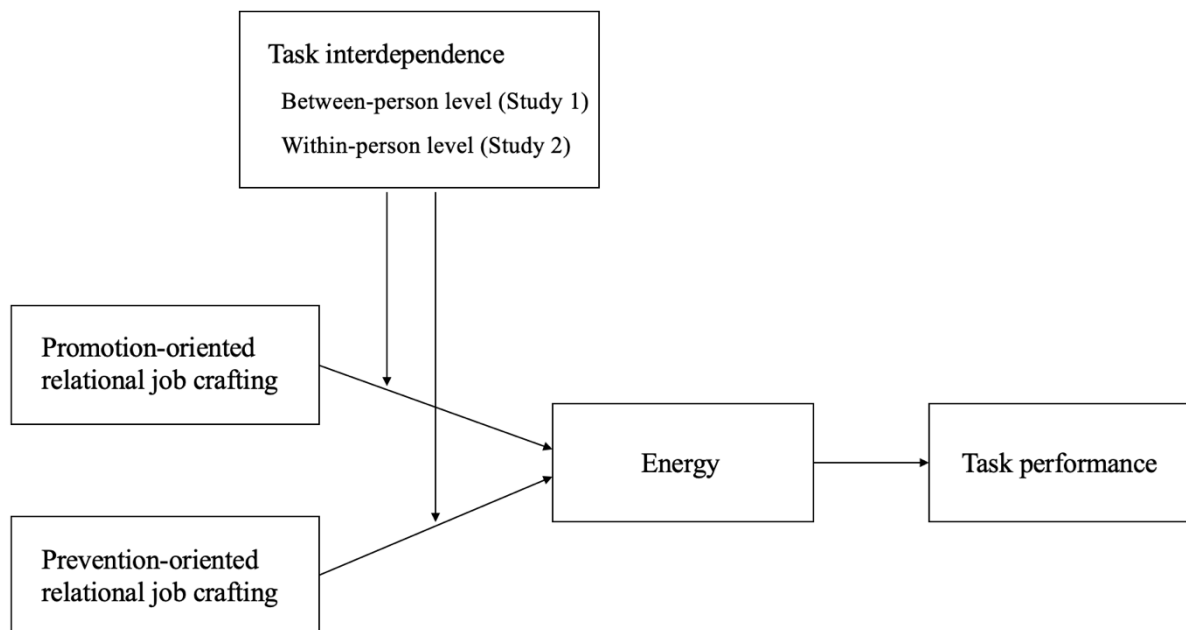
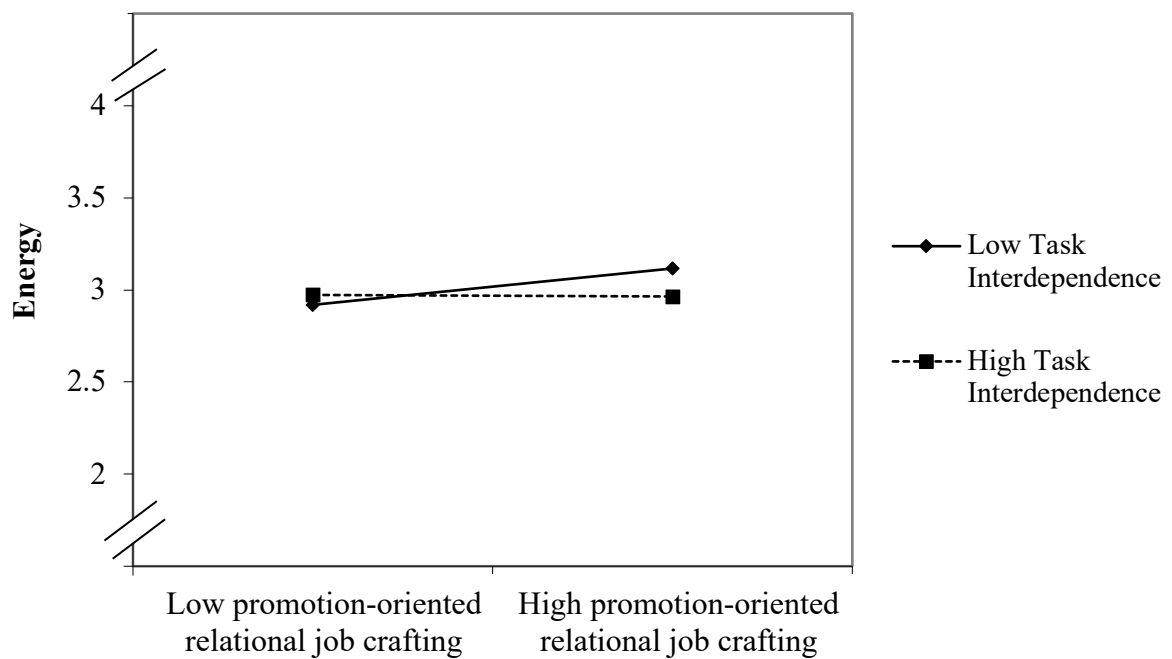
Figure 1*Model of Hypothesized Relationships*

Figure 2

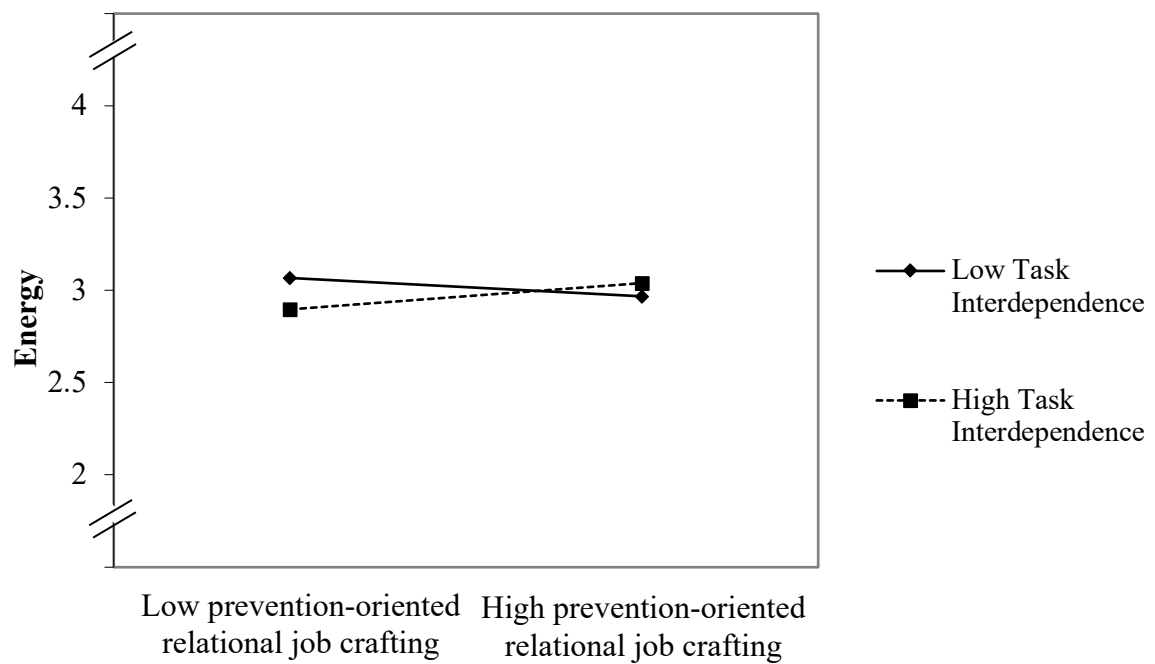
Moderating Effect of Task Interdependence on the Relationship between Promotion-Oriented Relational Job Crafting and Energy (Study 1)



Note. Predicted energy is shown, adjusted for model covariates.

Figure 3

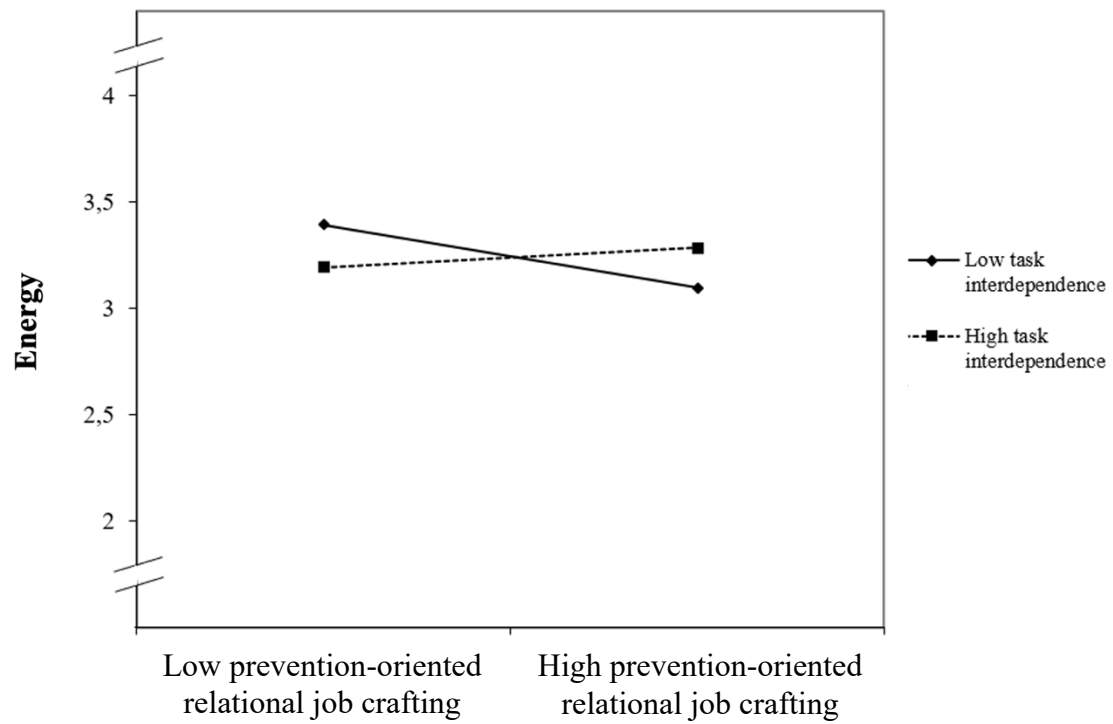
Moderating Effect of Task Interdependence on the Relationship between Prevention-Oriented Relational Job Crafting and Energy (Study 1)



Note. Predicted energy is shown, adjusted for model covariates.

Figure 4

Moderating Effect of Task Interdependence on the Relationship between Prevention-Oriented Relational Job Crafting and Energy (Study 2)



Note. Predicted energy is shown, adjusted for model covariates.