

# Job Crafting, a brain drain antidote in Public Universities in Nigeria

Arachie Augustine Ebuka<sup>1\*</sup>, Nzewi Hope Ngozi<sup>2</sup>, Chiekezie Obianuju<sup>3</sup>, Nwakoby Nkiru Peace<sup>4</sup>

Department of Business Administration, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Department of Cooperative Economics and Management, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria<sup>4</sup>

[ae.arachie@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:ae.arachie@unizik.edu.ng)<sup>1\*</sup>, [hn.nzewi@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:hn.nzewi@unizik.edu.ng)<sup>2</sup>, [np.nwakoby@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:np.nwakoby@unizik.edu.ng)<sup>4</sup>



## Article History

Received on 20 October 2021

1<sup>st</sup> Revision on 22 October 2021

2<sup>nd</sup> Revision on 22 November 2021

3<sup>rd</sup> Revision on 8 December 2021

4<sup>th</sup> Revision on 23 December 2021

Accepted on 18 March 2022

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study examined job crafting (JC) and the role it could play in reducing brain drain in universities in Nigeria.

**Research Methodology:** -it adopted a survey research design, with its population consisting of 8051 academic staff of six selected universities in the Southeast. A sample size of 367 was determined using [Krejcie and Morgan's \(1970\)](#) formula. The source of data collection was a structured questionnaire. A combination of descriptive and inferential statistics was used for data analysis.

**Results**—among others, the result revealed that there are ways academics can craft their jobs in universities in Nigeria and that there is a significant mean difference among the various dimensions of job crafting activities carried out by academics.

**Limitations:** The study looked at a particular section of Nigeria, thereby, limiting the inference power of the findings.

**Contributions:** None of the previous studies seem to have focused solely on how job crafting is done and which one is more prominent among lecturers in Nigeria. Similarly, none also appear to have looked at job crafting and how it can be used to reduce brain drain in Nigerian Universities.

**Keywords:** Academics, Brain drain, Employee retention, Employee turnover, Human capital, Job crafting, Public universities, Southeast

**How to Cite:** Ebuka, A. A., Ngozi, N. H., Obianuju, C., and Peace, N. N. (2022). Job Crafting, a brain drain antidote in Public Universities in Nigeria. *Annals of Human Resource Management Research*, 2(1), 1-13.

## 1. Introduction

It is no longer news that human capital in organizations is the most important capital that all forms of organization can possess; this is notwithstanding the kind of organization. Organizations cannot achieve meaningful results without the input of employees ([Ulabor & Bosede, A. I. \(2019\)](#)). In manufacturing firms, employees are needed to manipulate and direct the functionality of equipment and machinery. The significance of employees is even more evident in service rendering firms like banks and institutions of higher learning, where the universities in the southeast are domiciled. Hence, the performance of employees and their commitment to duty determines to a great extent the sustainability of organizations. A great factor in the performance of employees is the way the job they do is designed and structured. Over the decades, we have been made to leave with and condone a top-down job design mechanism where employees are handed over what to do, how and when to do it by business owners and people in higher authority. This system still holds sway in many organizations in different sectors of the economy in Nigeria and globally. The traditional job design approach is a top-down design process as [Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson \(2011\)](#) posit. They opine that job design as it used to be, is the process of putting together a range of tasks, duties, and responsibilities for individuals to undertake in their work and to regard as their own. Here, employees play no part in the designing and arrangement of duties and jobs.

Buttressing this point more succinctly, [Berg, Wrzesniewski, and Dutton \(2013\)](#) posit that traditionally, "job design theory and researches have focused on the top-down approach which indicates that

managers need to design jobs for employees” (p. 158). Jobs have previously been designed without any form of contribution from workers ([Arachie, Agbaeze, Nzewi, & Agbasi, 2021](#)). However, with improved education, globalization, and increasing employee demand for better work conditions, a new job design approach has been gathering momentum and capturing the interest of many business owners, managers, scholars, and human resource experts. This new concept is called Job Crafting (JC).

With the introduction of JC by [Wrzesniewski and Dutton in 2001](#), the traditional static idea of job design is being jettisoned for a more encompassing and employee-focused approach. Here, employees play a significant role in designing their jobs and how it is to be executed. In the past, when employees get disillusioned with their jobs, two options are usually considered. Either to grudgingly continue, a choice which often culminates to burnout and dissatisfaction or to quit the job in a bid to search for a better alternative that suits the employees. An innovative third option has rarely been considered, which is to essentially change the makeup of their current job to be more personally meaningful and suited to their idiosyncrasies, which is what JC proposes ([Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013](#)).

Job crafting is a concept that allows employees to play an active role in originating changes to the physical, cognitive, or social features of their jobs ([Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013](#)). It is a design or redesign process that empowers staff to inculcate autonomy into their job and gives recognition to individual differences in the execution of functions ([Arachie, et. al., 2021](#)). It is a form of proactive behavior, driven by employees rather than management ([Grant & Ashford, 2008](#)). It recognizes that although employees rarely have the ability to redesign their jobs and tasks, almost any job will provide possibilities for employees to make adjustments to activities, interactions, or the way they think about their work to make it more personally engaging ([Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013](#)).

The importance of the principles of JC seems to have been continually neglected by academics in southeast Nigeria, despite its silent enshrinement into their job doctrine. Lecturers are one of the very few workers in Nigeria that have the leeway to craft their jobs in “their image”. They are given the liberty to choose lecture time, lecture-style and techniques, whom to interact with, how and when, when and where to publish articles or textbooks, etc. However, despite this seeming autonomy, the rate of turnover among young lecturers seems to be high as opposed to what it should be, given the autonomy their jobs afford them. The reason for this high rate of turnover and its concomitant cost to the institutions and the students have over the years been attributed to poor salaries, poor working conditions, incessant strikes, and a quest for greener pasture. This has continued apparently unabated and this could take an even more dangerous dimension with Brexit and the lowering thereof of entry requirement in their search for skilled personnel occasioned by loss and shortage of skilled manpower. This could have a negative effect on the education system in the country, if not addressed properly, as more lecturers may leave. It is against this forgoing that this study was necessitated to see how JC characteristics embedded in the jobs of academics could help to stem the tide of brain drain in the public universities in Nigeria. Specifically, the work seeks to:

- a) Identify the various ways academics craft their jobs in public universities in Nigeria.
- b) Determine the effect of job crafting dimensions on employee retention in public universities in Nigeria.
- c) Examine if there is a mean difference among the various dimensions of job crafting activities carried out by academics in public universities in Nigeria.

## **2. Literature review**

### ***Job Crafting (JC)***

[Wrzesniewski and Dutton \(2001\)](#) introduced the term job crafting to describe the physical, relational and cognitive changes people make in their work. Through the changes, employees introduce to the physical, mental, and relational aspects of their work, they experience better meaning and fit to their jobs. However, it is important to note that for the changes made in a job to be considered a job crafting change, it has to be initiated and executed by the employees themselves. Capturing it more succinctly, [Debus, Gross, and Kleinmann \(2019\)](#) aver that it is a self-directed approach to shape jobs in a firm by the employees themselves. This characteristic of JC was captured by [Berg, Dutton, and Wrzesniewski \(2013\)](#) who aver that job crafting is what workers do to redefine and reimagine their job to make it more

personally meaningful. Similarly, [Tims and Bakker \(2010\)](#) opine that it is a proactive shift in work design rather than a set of negotiated agreements with the company. It refers to employees redesigning jobs in response to job criteria. ([Dutton & Heaphy, 2003](#); [Tims & Bakker, 2010](#); [Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001](#)).

It is the actions that employees take to shape, mold, and redefine their jobs ([Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001](#)). Buttressing this point, [Chandrani and Khandelwal \(2017\)](#) aver that JC is initiated by the employee, from the bottom-up, and not by the manager from the top-down. [Van-Wingerden, Derks, and Bakker \(2015\)](#) posit that it is a recent bottom-up approach in designing ways that jobs are done and it makes for better personal and corporate level output. It involves creating or initiating change to the job, as opposed to reacting to or responding to change in the job ([Grant & Ashford, 2008](#); [Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007](#)).

### ***Dimensions of job crafting***

[Tims, Bakker, and Derks \(2012\)](#) point out that JC can be categorized into some techniques; first, workers may modify task-related aspects of their jobs, such as the amount or content of tasks they have; second, workers may alter relationship aspects of their jobs, for example, the amount and strength of connection with co-workers or customers; and finally, employees may tailor their thoughts about their jobs to improve the meaning of their work. Going by the foregoing, JC could be classified into three (3) broad types which are task, relational and cognitive crafting.

- a) **Task Crafting:** this involves changing the physical working conditions of the jobs employees perform throughout the day. This may include things such as changing how tasks are done or taking on additional responsibilities at work. This aspect of job crafting is concerned with the job's physical molding or alteration. Employees may attempt to change the shape, scope, and quantity of jobs they are involved in while working in terms of physical bounds. ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2007](#); [Tims, Bakker and Daantje, 2014](#)). [Wrzesniewski, LoBuglio, Dutton and Berg \(2013\)](#) opine that it may entail adding or removing tasks, altering the amount of time or effort spent on specific tasks, or revamping some aspects of the work (for example, a teacher who devotes time to learning new classroom technologies in order to pursue his interest in Information Technology (IT)).
- b) **Relational Crafting:** this is concerned with interpersonal relationships at work; like altering the tasks of the job so that the employee can interact with customers or colleagues more, or less frequently ([Kirkendall, 2013](#)). [Wrzesniewski, LoBuglio, Dutton, and Berg \(2013\)](#) opine that job crafters may redefine the relational boundaries that govern interpersonal relationships in the course of their work. It refers to changes in interpersonal contacts at work while carrying out a task, such as when, how, and with whom to interact ([Surbhi & Chandrani, 2017](#)). Changes to the quality or quantity of contacts with others at work, as well as changes to the type of relationships in ways that affect one's job, are all examples of shaping the social environment at work ([Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001](#)).
- c) **Cognitive Crafting:** Cognitive crafting is more perceptual than physical, and it entails altering one's perceptions of the job. According to [Slemp and Vella-Brodrick \(2013\)](#), cognitive crafting differs from the task and relational crafting in that it requires changing how one sees one's job in order to make it more meaningful (e.g., attempting to recognize the impact one's work has on the organization's or community's performance). Employees' perceptions of their occupations and how they think about them are affected by changes in cognitive limits. ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2007](#); [Tims et al., 2014](#)). An example is a construction worker may enjoy that he is performing a traditionally masculine role. Also, a prison warden may rationalize that he is helping society by keeping criminals away from the streets.

### ***Motivation for Job Crafting***

Job crafting activities are not carried out by all employees in organizations, therefore, there are triggers that lead to partaking in activities that could be termed JC. These things that trigger employees to carry

out JC activities are called the motivations behind crafting activities. [Wrzesniewski and Dutton \(2001\)](#) identify three motivating factors for engaging in job crafting.

1. To maintain interest in their job and motivation at work: employees engage in JC activities so as to maintain interest in their jobs. Jobs that no longer appeal to or interest employees could be modified by the employees to add flavor and fun to them in order to be more meaningful and engaging to the employees, thereby increasing the motivation of the employees to continue working with or in the organization.
2. To protect and enhance their self-image by shaping the job to suit their needs: in crafting jobs, employees recalibrate the physical and mental aspects of a job so as to improve their self-image and esteem. Employees change their mindset and thoughts to build a mental picture that connotes and adds meaning and enthusiasm to the task they perform.
3. To enrich social interactions at work: employees having interaction issues in an organization may engage in JC activities to change the situation. People that do not relate well with co-workers may engage in changing their friends and people to spend more time within an organization so as to assuage their thirst for association and belongingness thereby engaging in crafting activities.

[Bowling \(2012\)](#) identified two scenarios in which employees may decide to use job crafting:

1. To improve job satisfaction: When an individual's satisfaction level is threatened, job crafting can be utilized to enhance satisfaction levels in a reactive situation. It may also be triggered if the level of satisfaction is declining. ([Bowling, 2012](#)).
2. To sustain satisfaction: In proactive circumstances, JC activities would be deployed continuously to ensure that the satisfaction level stays high, or above the threshold ([Bowling, 2012](#)). Here, the employee continually modifies the different boundaries of the job whether physical or psychological in a bid to maintain the level of satisfaction they are already experiencing in their jobs.

### ***Job crafting and its implication on retention of human capital***

The employee retention construct has been generating a lot of discussion over the past few decades. This is because of the negative vibes associated with people leaving an organization. The cost of recruitment, training, lost man-hour, and its social, psychological, and image effect on an organization. And so, people have devoted much effort to know how to combat the issues of the mobility of workers. [Yin-Fah, Foon, Chee-Leong, and Osman \(2010\)](#) write that turnover intention remains a persistent problem in organizations, no matter the type of industry, or the size of that organization. Actual voluntary turnover has drawn the attention of practitioners and researchers as an expensive and prevalent problem ([Huffman, Casper and Payne, 2014](#); [Hom, Mitchell, Lee & Griffeth, 2012](#); [Law, 2010](#); [Maertz & Boyar, 2012](#); [Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013](#); [Steel & Lounsbury, 2009](#)).

Many reasons have over the years been given for frequent turnover of employees. People leave in search of better work conditions, better pay, to get a sense of meaning and fulfillment with the job, and for growth and development. And so, strategies for tackling turnover have focused on these issues. However, until recently, some form of autonomy and leeway to employees has not been considered as a way of tackling turnover issues. This form of leeway is encapsulated in JC.

The outcome of JC may be seen in employees being more satisfied with what they do. Employees that engage in JC activities could get more meaning from their jobs, improve their sense of fulfillment, relate better with co-workers, and build a better self-image for their jobs. All these could culminate in retaining employees in their jobs. Aligning with this position, [Wrzesniewski and Dutton \(2001\)](#) explicate that as an outcome, workers who craft their job are more satisfied and experience more meaning at work. It helps in changing the parameters of one's job to suit personal needs, preferences, and abilities and thus reduces the intentions of the employees to leave ([Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013](#)).

### ***Empirical evidence***

[Arachie, Agbaeze, Nzewi and Agbasi \(2021\)](#) did a study on job crafting and the embeddedness of lecturers in their jobs in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design with a population of 8,051

academic staff of six public universities selected at random, while the sample size of the study was 367 staff. The major source of data was the primary source and analyzed with the help of regression analysis. The findings indicated that all the dimensions of job crafting have task crafting has a statistically significant relationship with dimensions of job embeddedness in the studied institutions.

[Robledo, Zappalà, and Topa \(2019\)](#) did a time-lagged study, using the framework of the JD-R model, tested the mediating role of job crafting measuring: at T1, work engagement, workaholism, and emotional exhaustion; at T2, job crafting; and, at T3, flourishing, job performance, and job satisfaction. The respondents for the study consisted of 443 employees working in different companies in Spain. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested through a hierarchical regression methodology while Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis. The results revealed that job crafting mediates the correlation between work engagement and some of its outcomes.

[Villajos, García-Aeland, Topa \(2019\)](#) looked into the existing relationships between labor union representatives' work performance and their well-being and health in Spain. A group of 78 people who had been involved in labor union activities for an average of 12.62 years took job satisfaction and engagement surveys. Each of the variables in the study was subjected to descriptive analysis. The stepwise method was also used to evaluate how the variables were connected and the effect of the dimensions of job crafting on job satisfaction and work engagement using correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analyses. The findings showed that job crafting aspects predicted participants' job satisfaction.

[Surbhi and Chandrani \(2017\)](#) assessed how job features, job crafting, and work engagement affected performance. The research focused on hotel managers in their mid-level positions. The study used a correlation design and had a sample size of 90 participants. Data were examined using regression analysis. All three predictor variables (job attributes, job crafting, and work engagement) had a positive and substantial link with both task and contextual performance, according to the findings. Furthermore, regression analysis found that the most important factor in job success was work engagement.

### 3. Research methodology

This study adopts a survey research design because data for the study were collected from a sampled respondent using questionnaire. The study was narrowed down to the academic staff of public universities in the southeast. Six universities were randomly selected from a list of 10 Federal and State universities in the region, therefore, the population of the study consists of 8051 academic staff of the six universities. The sample size is determined using [Krejcie and Morgan's \(1970\)](#) sample size determination and it is put at 367. The instrument for data collection was tested for validity using the content and face validity method with the help of experts in instrument and measurement and lecturers in two universities in the region. For consistency parameter, the instrument was put through CronbachAlpha test and a coefficient value of .899 was obtained. A total of 367 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, 311 were returned and 302 copies representing 82% of the sample size were deemed usable for the study. A combination of descriptive statistics (mean) and inferential statistics (Chi-Square and Analysis of Variance) were used for data analysis and hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance.

### 4. Results and discussion

#### Data analysis

##### Descriptive Statistics

##### a) Distribution of responses for ways of crafting jobs by academics

Table 1. Ways academics craft their jobs

S/N	WAYS OF CRAFTING JOBS	MT (4)	ST (3)	RA (2)	NE (1)	Mean	Individual Remark	Cum Rank
	<b>Task Crafting</b>							
1	Using technology to aid teaching in my class.	55	181	45	21	2.89	4 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
2	Rearranging topics to suit the moment and to flow well.	102	176	16	8	3.22	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>



3	Choosing a time and day that best suits me.	121	153	24	4	3.29	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
4	Using new lecturing strategies that suit the students and me.	36	96	116	54	2.38	6 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
5	Taking up courses that I am more competent in.	121	140	41	-	3.26	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
6	Learning and developing myself in a particular area for more proficiency.	21	139	112	30	2.50	5 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
	<b>Grand Mean (position)</b>					<b>2.92</b>		<b>(1<sup>st</sup>)</b>
	<b>Relational Crafting</b>							
7	I choose the people I spend time with at work.	115	119	34	34	3.04	3 <sup>rd</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
8	I collaborate with lecturers that have similar ideas and interests with me.	102	132	59	9	3.08	2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
9	I build relationships with colleagues that have expertise in different areas to compliment me.	121	122	48	11	3.17	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
10	I go for social events and gatherings to make new friends from different areas.	70	79	13	140	2.26	6 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
11	I avoid contact with people I do not rapport well with.	89	103	68	42	2.79	4 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
12	I choose to be lively and friendly with people.	79	117	45	61	2.71	5 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
	<b>Grand Mean (position)</b>					<b>2.84</b>		<b>(2<sup>nd</sup>)</b>
	<b>Cognitive Crafting</b>							
13	Engaging in image redefinition of the importance of my work.	56	79	46	121	2.23	J. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	J 14 <sup>th</sup>
14	Discussing in positive terms about the value of my job to the society.	40	89	80	93	2.25	1 <sup>st</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
15	Choosing to feel positive about my job in all situations.	49	67	90	96	2.23	J 2 <sup>nd</sup>	J 14 <sup>th</sup>
16	Recalibrating my future prospect to align with my organization's future.	20	67	94	121	1.95	5 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>
17	Being realistic about the expectations from my organization.	35	79	62	126	2.08	3 <sup>rd</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>
18	Perceptual modification about the purpose of the university to the world.	40	49	78	135	1.98	4 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
	<b>Grand Mean (position)</b>					<b>2.12</b>		<b>(3<sup>rd</sup>)</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2020

**Keys: MT:** Most times; **ST:** Sometimes; **RA:** Rarely; **NE:** Never; **Cum Rank:** Cumulative Ranking; **Dec:** Decision

Table 1 shows the ways academics craft their jobs in the selected universities in the southeast. The various ways of crafting were divided along the line of the dimensions of job crafting. The analysis is based on the mean of the individual questionnaire items with the benchmark of acceptance being 2.5. That is based on descriptive statistics. Any questionnaire item with a mean of 2.5 and above should be accepted while those with less than 2.5 mean should be rejected.

Starting from questions that measured how the respondents craft their jobs along the task crafting dimension of job crafting, the respondents agreed with a mean of 2.89 that they use technology to aid teaching in their class and it is the 7<sup>th</sup> most crafting activity undertaken by the respondents. Similarly, with a mean of 3.22, the respondents overwhelmingly accepted that they rearrange topics to suit the moment and to flow well in classes and the overall rank of this crafting activity is 3<sup>rd</sup>. Occupying the 1<sup>st</sup> position in the overall crafting activities of the lecturer-respondents is choosing a time and day that best suits them with a mean of 3.29. However, in the 11<sup>th</sup> position in the whole gamut of crafting activities and by extension rejecting its applicability with a mean of 2.38 which is less than the threshold of acceptance of 2.5 is using new lecturing strategies that suit the students and the lecturers. With a mean of 3.26 and coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the whole mix of crafting activities is taking up courses that they are more competent in. In the 10<sup>th</sup> position and marginally scaling through with a mean of 2.50 is learning and developing themselves in a particular area for more proficiency in that area.

For questionnaire items used in measuring how the respondents craft their jobs along the line of relational crafting, with a mean of 3.04, the respondents agreed that they choose the people they spend time with at work and this came at the 6<sup>th</sup> position. Coming at the 5<sup>th</sup> position and with a mean of 3.08, the respondents agreed that they collaborate with lecturers that have similar ideas and interests with them. Similarly, when it was inquired if they build relationships with colleagues that have expertise in different areas to complement themselves, a mean of 3.17 shows that they do and this activity comes in the 4<sup>th</sup> position. They, however, rejected that they go for social events and gatherings to make new friends from different areas with a mean of 2.26 which is lesser than the threshold of 2.5 used and this makes it come in the 12<sup>th</sup> position in the overall JC activities. With a mean of 2.79 and at the 8<sup>th</sup> position, the respondents agreed that they avoid contact with people they do not rapport well with. Coming at the 9<sup>th</sup> position and with a mean of 2.71, signaling that the respondents choose to be lively and friendly with people.

#### Hypotheses one

On the cognitive crafting activities and the questionnaire items used in capturing it, the respondents rejected that they engage in image redefinition of the importance of their work with a mean of 2.23 and coming joint 14<sup>th</sup>. Similarly, coming in the 13<sup>th</sup> position and concomitantly being rejected with a mean of 2.25 is the respondents discussing in positive terms about the value of their job to the society. This implies that cumulatively, the respondents rejected that they do not discuss the importance of their jobs to society. Also in the same line of rejection is that the respondents choose to feel positive about their job in all situations with a mean of 2.23 and coming joint 14<sup>th</sup>. Coming a distant 17<sup>th</sup> position and making it the least activity carried out by the respondents is recalibrating their future prospect to align with their organization's future with a mean of 1.95. In the 15<sup>th</sup> position with a mean of 2.08 is the questionnaire item that quizzed if the respondents are usually realistic about the expectations from their organization. The respondents also rejected that they engage in perceptual modification about the purpose of the university to the world with a mean of 1.98 effectively making it the second least crafting activity carried out by the respondents and placing it in the 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### b) Response distribution for the effect of job crafting on employee retention

Table 2. Distribution of responses for job crafting effect in retaining academics

S/N		5 (VGE)	4 (GE)	3 (S)	2 (LE)	1 (VLE)	Mean
<b>To what extent does job crafting play a role in retaining the academics in the universities?</b>							
1	The autonomy I have in my job makes me want to remain in the university.	158	79	4	49	12	4.07
2	My remaining in the university is influenced by my being able to redesign it to suit me.	90	106	-	77	29	3.5
3	The opportunity my job affords me to determine people I relate with influence my staying in the job.	34	30	12	121	105	2.23
4	The freehand I have at my workplace influences my desire to remain in the organization.	19	70	10	88	115	2.30
5	My perception of the prestige in my job makes me not to desire to quit the job.	78	96	11	89	28	3.35
6	People's value for academics influences my choice to retain the job.	58	101	45	18	80	3.13

Source: Field Survey, 2020

**Keys: VGE:** Very Great Extent; **GE:** Great Extent; **S:** Seldomly; **LE:** Low Extent; **VLE:** Very Low Extent

Table 2 shows the distribution of responses for the role job crafting play in retaining academics to their jobs in the selected universities in the southeast. The same descriptive statistics (mean) that was applied in the responses of respondents in Table 1 above will also apply here, this time, with a threshold of acceptance of 3. When it was inquired if the autonomy the respondents have in their jobs makes them

want to remain in the university, their responses were in the affirmative with a mean of 4.07 which is above the benchmark of acceptance. They were also in the affirmative when it was enquired if their remaining in the university is influenced by their being able to redesign it to suit them with a mean of 3.5.

However, a mean of 2.23 indicates that the respondents do not agree that the opportunity their job affords them to determine people relate to the influence of their staying in the job. Similarly, the respondents disagreed that the freehand they have at their workplace influences their desire to remain in the organization as indicated by a mean of 2.30. They, however, agreed that their perception about the prestige in their job makes them have no desire to quit the job with a mean of 3.35. In the same direction of thought, the respondents agreed that people's value for academics influences their choice to retain the job as shown by a mean of 3.13 which is higher than the benchmark of 3.

### ***Test of hypotheses***

#### ***Hypotheses one***

H<sub>a1</sub>: there are ways academics can craft their jobs in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria.

Table 3. Chi-Square Test for hypothesis four

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1531.843 <sup>a</sup>	51	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1656.125	51	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	621.500	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	5444		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 59.41.

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Computation: SPSS Ver. 20

Table 3 shows the chi-square result for the test of hypothesis one which states that there are ways academics can craft their jobs in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria. The decision rule is to accept the alternate hypothesis when the p-value obtained is less than the significant level (p-value < 0.05), or reject when the same is greater than the significant level (p-value > 0.05). Emanating from the Table, the asymptomatic significance which is the p-value in Pearson Chi-Square column is .000 and the Pearson Chi-Square Coefficient is 1531.843. Hence, going by the decision rule, it reveals that statistically (not by chance), there are ways academics can craft their jobs in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria.

#### ***Hypothesis two***

H<sub>a2</sub>: there is a significant mean difference among the various dimensions of job crafting activities carried out by academics in selected universities in Southeast Nigeria.

Table 4. ANOVA

<b>ANOVA</b>					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.346	2	1.173	12.010	.001
Within Groups	1.465	15	.098		
Total	3.810	17			

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Computation: SPSS Ver. 20

Table 4 is the ANOVA table which tests the differences in the mean of the various crafting activities carried out by academics in the selected universities in the southeast. From Table 4 above, the between-



group sum of squares is 2.346, the mean square is 1.173, the F- statistics is 12.00 and the sig is .001 (p-value < .05). With a p-value that is less than .05, it shows that the mean differences observed between groups are statistically significant. Going by this, therefore, we state that there is a significant mean difference among the various dimensions of job crafting activities carried out by academics in selected universities in Southeast Nigeria.

Table 5. Actual Mean differences

MEAN			
Student-Newman-Keuls			
JCA	N	Subset	
		1	2
COGNITIVE	6	2.1200	
RELATIONA	6		2.8417
L			
TASK	6		2.9233
Sig.		1.000	.657

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Computation: SPSS Ver. 20

**Key: JCA:** Job Crafting Activities

Table 5 shows the students-Newman-Keuls test which shows where the differences observed in the mean lies. From the table, it shows that there are two groups of means. Group one contains Cognitive crafting activities while group two contains relational crafting activities and task crafting activities. This shows that there is a significant difference between cognitive activities (group one) and relational/task crafting activities (group two).

### *Hypothesis three*

H<sub>a3</sub>: Job crafting has an effect on retaining academics in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria.

Table 6. Chi-Square Test for hypothesis five

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	556.034 <sup>a</sup>	20	.000
Likelihood Ratio	578.361	20	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	48.166	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1812		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.67.

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Computation: SPSS Ver. 20

Table 6 shows the chi-square result for the test of hypothesis three which states that job crafting has an effect in retaining academics in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria. The decision rule is to accept the alternate hypothesis when the p-value obtained is less than 0.05. From the Table, it shows that the asymptomatic significance which is the p-value in Pearson Chi-Square column is .000 and the Pearson Chi-Square Coefficient is 556.034. Going by this, therefore, it is stated that indeed, job crafting has an effect in retaining academics in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria.

Table 7. Effect Size Table

Symmetric Measures		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.554	.000
	Cramer's V	.277	.000
N of Valid Cases		1812	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Computation: SPSS Ver. 20

Table 7 reveals the effect size of job crafting on retaining academics in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria using Phi and Cramer's V test statistics. The Phi coefficient as indicated in the Table is .554 and the p-value is .000 which implies that job crafting has a 55% effect on retaining academics in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria. This result is also supported with a Cramer's V coefficient of .277 and a p-value of .000 indicating a 28% effect size of job crafting on retaining academics.

### *Discussion of findings*

The first objective is to identify the various ways academics craft their jobs in public universities in Nigeria. From the analysis of the questionnaire responses, it shows that cumulatively, academics engage more in task crafting with a grand mean of 2.92 followed by relational crafting with a grand mean of 2.84, and lastly by cognitive crafting with a grand mean of 2.5. Task crafting is engaged more by academics probably because it is more physical and simpler to do while cognitive crafting which is the least crafting activity engaged by academics is more perceptual, emotional, and mental and could explain why it is the least form of crafting by academic. The hypothesis of the study tested using parametric  $\chi^2$  shows that the p-value is .000 and the  $\chi^2$  is 1531.843. Going by this, therefore, it reveals that statistically, there are ways academics can craft their jobs in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria.

Objective number two is to determine the effect of job crafting dimensions on employee retention in public universities in Nigeria and the matching hypothesis states that job crafting has an effect on retaining academics in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria. This was tested with  $\chi^2$  and the result shows that the p-value is .000 and the  $\chi^2$  is 556.034. This goes to show that indeed, job crafting has an effect in retaining academics in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria, and therefore, the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The result was further buttressed by testing the effect size of job crafting on retention of academics in the selected universities using the Phi coefficient as indicated in the Table is .554 and the p-value is .000 which implies that job crafting has a 55% effect on retaining academics in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria. This result shows that job crafting plays a role in retaining academics in their jobs.

The opportunity to change certain physical and perceptual aspects of their job makes them want to stay longer because not all jobs would give them such an opportunity. Hence, many academics are still in their job because they do not want to go to an uncertain job or jobs that will cage them and not give them the opportunity to craft their jobs to suit their idiosyncrasies. This result agrees with that of [Robledo, Zappalà, and Topa \(2019\)](#) whose results revealed that job crafting mediates the correlation between work engagement and some of its outcomes. By extension, therefore, an employee who is very engaged in the job as a result of job crafting activity will have the tendency to want to remain in the organization for a long time. Similarly, the study follows that of [Villajos, García-AelandTopa \(2019\)](#) who indicated that job crafting dimensions predicted participants' job satisfaction and engagement.

The third objective was to examine if there is a mean difference among the various dimensions of job crafting activities carried out by academics in selected universities in Southeast Nigeria. The hypothesis formulated for this is that there is a significant mean difference among the various dimensions of job crafting activities carried out by academics in selected universities in Southeast Nigeria. The test

statistics for this is a One-way ANOVA which tests differences in the mean between categorical independent variables (task crafting, relational crafting, and cognitive crafting) and continuous dependent variables (mean of the variables). From the result of the test, it shows that the between-group sum of squares is 2.346, the mean square is 1.173, the F- statistics is 12.00 and the sig is .001. with this result (p-value < .05), it shows that the mean differences observed between groups are statistically significant. Going by this, therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted and it states that there is a statistically significant mean difference among the various dimensions of job crafting activities carried out by academics in selected universities in Southeast Nigeria. This implies that the level of engagement of academics in crafting their jobs along the line of different dimensions differs. That is, the engagement of lecturers in different forms of crating activities is not the same. This supports the earlier findings of the study that academics engage more in task crafting than relational crafting and cognitive crafting. They engage less in cognitive crating than others. This is also supported by the students-Newman-Keuls test which shows where the differences observed in the engagement of academics in job crafting lies. The result shows that there are two groups or categories. Group one is made up of cognitive crafting activities while group two contains relational crafting activities and task crafting activities. This shows that there is a significant difference between cognitive activities and relational and task crafting activities together. The difference observed lies between group one (cognitive crafting) and group two (relational and task crafting).

## 5. Conclusion

The study concludes that JC could be a veritable tool to make academics to be embedded in their jobs only if the importance of these job characteristics enjoyed by academics is given a policy backing by the university by documenting its enshrinement in the job characteristics of lecturers and its importance made vivid to them. This is because as against the top-down design process practiced in other organizations, that of university academics is a bottom-up design strategy that has been found to have a positive effect on the engagement of employees and improved job satisfaction and performance, but apparently has not been properly harnessed by the university system to embed academic staff to their jobs, hence, the constant turnover of academics to greener pastures outside the shores of Nigeria and to other seemingly more lucrative sectors within the economy.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- a) Different forms of job crafting activities need to be undertaken by lecturers to make their work more satisfying.
- b) That the management of universities in the southeast need to create massive awareness about the job characteristics of lecturers, which allow them to craft their job in order for them to explore it, as this could embed them in the job.
- c) That the characteristics of JC embedded in the jobs of academics be gradually inculcated to that of the non-teaching staff to make them have more fulfilling job experience.

## References

- Arachie, Agbaeze, Nzewi, and Agbasi. (2021). Job crafting, a bottom-up job characteristic of academics with an embeddedness potential. *Management Research Review*. DOI 10.1108/MRR-07-2020-0432.
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The job demands-resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22, 309–328.
- Bakker, A. B., & Oerlemans, W. G. M. (2019). Daily job crafting and momentary work engagement: A self-determination and self-regulation perspective. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 112(2019), 417–430.
- Berg J. M., Dutton J. E&Wrzesniewski, A. (2013).Job crafting and meaningful work. In: Dik B.J., Byrne Z.S. & Steger M.F. (Editors) *Purpose and Meaning in the Workplace*. American Psychological Association, Washington DC, 81-104.
- Bowling, N. A. (2012). *Creating sustained job satisfaction: Descriptive and prescriptive perspectives on job crafting and the quest for happiness at work*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

- Chandrani, S., & Ruchi, K. (2017), Workplace Well-Being: The Role of Job Crafting, Perceived Organizational Support and Perceived Autonomy Support. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 90-99.
- Debus, M.E., Gross, C., & Kleinmann, M. (2019). The power of doing: how job crafting transmits the beneficial impact of autonomy among overqualified employees, *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 35(3), doi: 10.1007/s10869-019-09625-y.
- Dutton, J. E., & Heaphy, E. D. (2003). The power of high-quality connections. In: Cameron, K. S., Dutton, J. E., Quinn, R. E. (Eds.) *Positive Organizational Scholarship* (pp. 3-13). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Grant, A. M., & Ashford, S. J. (2008). The dynamics of proactivity at work. *Research in Organizational Behaviour*, 28, 3-34.
- Griffin, M. A., Neal, A., & Parker, S. K. (2007). A new model of work role performance: Positive behaviour in uncertain and interdependent contexts. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 327-347.
- Hom, P. W., Mitchell, T. R., Lee, T. W., & Griffeth, R. W. (2012). Reviewing employee turnover: focusing on proximal withdrawal states and an expanded criterion. *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(5), 831-858.
- Huffman, A. H., Casper, W. J., & Payne, S. C. (2014). How does spouse career support relate to employee turnover? Work interfering with family and job satisfaction as mediators. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 35(2), 194-212.
- Kirkendall, C. D. (2013). "Job Crafting: The pursuit of happiness at work". browse all theses and dissertations. Paper 705.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W., (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30, 607-610.
- Law, P. (2010). Examination of the actual turnover decisions of female auditors in public accounting. *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 25(5), 484-502.
- Maertz, C. P., & Boyar, S. L. (2012). Theory-driven development of a comprehensive turnover-attachment motive survey. *Human Resource Management*, 51(1), 71-98.
- Maynard, D. C., & Parfyonova, N. M. (2013). Perceived over-qualification and withdrawal behaviours: Examining the roles of job attitudes and work values. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 86(3), 435-455.
- Robledo, E., Zappalà, S., & Topa, G. (2019). Job crafting as a mediator between work engagement and wellbeing outcomes: A Time-lagged study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(1376), 1-15.
- Slemp, G. R., & Vella-Brodick, D. A. (2013). The job crafting questionnaire: A new scale to measure the extent to which employees engage in job crafting. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 3(2), 126-146.
- Steel, R. P., & Lounsbury, J. W. (2009). Turnover process models: Review and synthesis of a conceptual literature. *Human Resource Management Review*, 19(4), 271-282.
- Surbhi, D., & Chandrani, S. (2017). The Role of job characteristics, job crafting and work engagement on job performance: a study on service industry. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22(17)36-42.
- Tims, M., & Bakker, A. B. (2010). Job crafting: Towards a new model of individual job redesign. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 36, 1-9.
- Tims, M., Bakker, A. B., & Daantje, D. (2014). "Daily job crafting and the self-efficacy performance relationship". *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 29(4), 490 -507.
- Tims, M., Bakker, A. B., & Derks, D. (2012). Development and validation of the job crafting scale. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 80(1), 173-186.
- Torrington, D., Hall, L., Taylor, S., & Atkinson, C. (2011). *Human Resource Management*. 8th Edition. Harlow: Pearson.
- Ulabor, E. A., & Bosede, A. I. (2019). Employee commitment and organizational performance in selected fast food outlets in osun state. *International Journal of Financial, Accounting, and Management*, 1(1), 23-37.

- Van-Wingerden, J., Derks, D., & Bakker, A. B. (2015). The impact of personal resources and job crafting interventions on work engagement and performance. *Human Resource Management*, 56(1), 51-67.
- Villajos, A., García-Ael, C., & Topa, G. (2019). Job crafting among labour union representatives: its impact on work engagement and job satisfaction. *Social Science*, 8(20), 1-11.
- Wrzensniewski, A., & Dutton, J. E. (2001). Crafting a Job: revisioning Employees as active crafters of their work. *The Academic of Management Review*, 26(2), 179—201.
- Wrzesniewski, A., LoBuglio, N., Dutton, J., & Berg, J. (2013). Job crafting and cultivating positive meaning and identity in work. *Advances in Positive Organizational Psychology*, 1, 281–302.
- Yin-Fah, B. C., Foon, Y. S., Chee-Leong, L., & Osman, L. (2010) An Exploratory Study on Turnover Intention among Private Sector Employees. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5(8), 57-64.