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The potential importance of social capital and job crafting for work engagement and work satisfaction among health care employees

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Introduction

Recent research in health care has sought to find out how employee health and engagement can best be promoted. There is longitudinal evidence that social capital play an important role for employers' work engagement. In fact, social capital is an important interpersonal resource that predicts not only work engagement, but also job satisfaction. Besides social capital, the research literature indicates that job crafting have a potential role in the promotion of work engagement and job satisfaction. There is, however, limited knowledge about the mechanisms with which social capital within work groups is conceptually linked to individual job crafting, job satisfaction and work engagement.

Aim

The aim was to examine the intermutual influences of work-group social capital, individuals' job crafting, work engagement, and job satisfaction.

Material and methods

The sample included 240 employees, recruited from 22 health care workplaces in Sweden, who filled in a questionnaire at two points in time (i.e. T1 and T2), 6-8 months apart. Data were analyzed in two steps. First, a longitudinal panel design that tested for effects of T1 work-group social capital on T2 job crafting, work engagement, and job satisfaction respectively were analyzed with a structural regression model that controlled for both temporal and concurrent relations. Second, mediational effects of job crafting were tested following a four-step procedure.

Results

The results confirmed that social capital within work groups was predictive of job satisfaction and work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication, and attention. Adding to previous research, the results also showed that social capital was predictive of both cognitive and relational job crafting.

Relational job crafting had a relatively large mediating effect between social capital and work engagement, whereas the association from social capital to work satisfaction was mediated by cognitive and relational job crafting.

Conclusions

Both relational and cognitive job crafting was enhanced by a strong social capital within the work group. As these kinds of crafting also mediated work engagement and work satisfaction, the result show that health care organizations should prioritize aiming to enhance a positive social capital and enable crafting behavior within relational and cognitive crafting.