

Why do Negative Career Shocks Foster Perceived Employability and Career Performance: A Career Crafting Explanation

Abstract

Studies of negative career shocks have generally overlooked the proactive pathway underlying the link between negative career shocks and employee career outcomes. Drawing on the career crafting perspective, we theorized a mediated moderation model that links negative career shocks to two career outcomes: perceived employability and career performance. Using data from 478 casino dealers in Macau, we found support for our hypotheses that negative career shocks had a positive relationship with career crafting and this relationship was moderated by employee proactive coping. When the casino dealers' proactive coping was high, they engaged in more career crafting. Moreover, the associations between negative career shocks and career outcomes (i.e., perceived employability and career performance) were mediated by career crafting. Insights and implications for hospitality research on the proactive pathway of negative career shocks are provided by this study.

Keywords

Negative career shocks, proactive coping, career crafting, perceived employability, career performance

1. Introduction

Scholars and professionals strive to support hospitality employees' career development to create a sustainable pipeline for the industry's future labor force (Lee, Mistry, Ponting, Wang, & Leung, 2023). However, these efforts are threatened by unanticipated career shocks. Like many other industries, the global hospitality industry has been ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic that broke out in 2020. According to UNWTO (2020), millions of direct tourism jobs were in jeopardy during the pandemic, leading to a high economic cost. The hospitality and tourism sectors, Macau's biggest employer, experience significant workforce reductions. Macau Statistics and Census Service (2022) reports that the unemployment rate of local residents reached a staggering rate of 5.4% in July, compared to only 1.7% in 2019. Though the government and concessionaires in the gaming sector devise strategies to manage the industry's recovery and resurgence (Loi, Lei, & Lourenço, 2021), the surviving workers have reevaluated their career trajectories after experiencing this career shock, which has caused them to question their careers (Ren, Islam, & Chadee, 2023).

Career shocks have been conceptualized as relatively infrequent and extraordinary career events that are outside the individual's control, which can be either positively or negatively valenced (Akkermans, Seibert, & Mol, 2018). Though positive career shocks (e.g., receiving an unexpected promotion) have generally been associated with positive career outcomes, how exactly employees react to negative career shocks is not readily apparent. Negative career shocks refer to events that disturb the employees' career pathways, such as organizational restructuring and unpredictable downsizing (Akkermans et.al, 2018). Some past work (e.g., Hofer, Spurk, & Hirschi, 2021; Ali & Mehreen, 2022) has identified that negative career shocks deplete

1 employees' personal resources and therefore, pose a significant threat to their career
2 pathways. This might lead us to expect the “dark side” of negative career shocks,
3 suggesting that negative career shocks are uniformly hindering employee career
4 development (Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020). Nevertheless, as emerging
5 research on employee proactivity suggests, employees can be proactive and strive to
6 assert themselves in their career paths rather than simply accepting their careers in a
7 passive manner (Ramaprasad, Rao, Rao, Prabhu, & Kumar, 2022). In this regard, a
8 recent study found that negative career shocks can boost employees' perceived
9 employability through engaging in networking behavior (Zhou, Jiang, Khapova, &
10 Qu, 2023).

11 A basic tension in the career shocks literature is highlighted by these competing
12 streams of research, and it is typified by the question: For whom are negative career
13 shocks good or bad, and why? Accordingly, our study attempts to establish a
14 consensus amongst these disparate research streams by examining the proactive
15 adaptation process underlying the relationship between negative career shocks and
16 career outcomes. Such a proactive mechanism has implications for hospitality
17 employees' career decisions, development, and success, thus highlighting the
18 importance of considering the “bright side” of negative career shocks. Specifically,
19 we proposed a model that employees can proactively manage and navigate their own
20 career paths when they experience negative career shocks, which benefits their career
21 outcomes.

22 Drawing on career construction theory (Savickas, 2005), we argue that negative
23 career shocks drive employees to enhance their employability and career performance
24 through career crafting. Individuals take proactive measures to manage their careers
25 and find the best potential person-career fit, a process defined as career crafting (Tims

1 & Akkermans, 2020). A recent study in hospitality literature has examined how the
2 hospitality workforce responds to career disruptions by enhancing their career
3 adaptability (Lee et.al, 2023). Instead of passively accepting the fixed career path,
4 employees can pursue their careers in a more proactive way (Ramaprasad et.al, 2022).
5 As career paths become less prescribed in the hospitality industry, managers may
6 encourage employees to take an active stand and craft their career, such as developing
7 new skills and seeking out opportunities instead of passively accepting a one-time
8 career pathway (Akkermans et.al, 2020; Janssen, van der Heijden, Akkermans, &
9 Audenaert, 2021; Liu-Lastres, Huang, & Bao, 2023a).

10 Grounded in career construction theory (Savickas, 2005) and career crafting
11 literature (Tims & Akkermans, 2020), we also explore under which situation
12 employees are more inclined to craft their careers when exposed to negative career
13 shocks. Specifically, we propose that proactive coping can serve as a moderator to
14 strengthen the proposed positive pathway underlying the link of negative career
15 shocks to their career crafting. Proactive coping refers to actions taken by an
16 individual to strengthen their resilience in the face of persistent stressful conditions
17 (Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002). Proactive coping serves as a positive profile that
18 highlights the individual need for growth and advancement (Koen & Parker, 2020) as
19 well as active coping styles (Chang, Chien, & Shen, 2021) and favorable reactions to
20 career outcomes (Langerak, Koen, & van Hooft, 2022; Ślebarska & Flakus, 2020).
21 Here, we consider that proactive coping provides employees with the resources to
22 take initiative and take future-focused actions, such as career crafting, to master and
23 alter their current career situations (Grant & Parker, 2009; Parker, Bindl, & Strauss,
24 2010).

25 The resulting model provides several contributions to theory and practice in the

1 hospitality literature, enabling us to address the concerns of why and for whom
2 negative career shocks may result in beneficial career outcomes. First, although mass
3 layoffs and furloughs may adversely affect hospitality employees' career pathways
4 (e.g., Lee et.al., 2023), our study argues that such negative career shocks may bring
5 about opportunities for hospitality employees' new work arrangements, career
6 development, and skill upgrades through career crafting, resulting in better career
7 outcomes (i.e., career performance and perceived employability). From a theoretical
8 standpoint, examining the proactive mechanism linking negative career shocks to
9 career outcomes is important because it shows that the same stimulus (i.e., negative
10 career shocks) can also induce a positive reaction that influences employee career
11 outcomes, offering a more thorough explanation of career shocks. By doing this, we
12 add to the growing literature on the favorable career outcomes of negative career
13 shocks (Akkermans et.al., 2020).

14 Second, we identify career crafting as the mediator explaining why negative career
15 shock affects employee career performance and their perceived employability. Little
16 research to date has examined the proactive processes underlying the associations
17 between negative career shocks and career outcomes. Neglecting employee proactive
18 coping mechanisms is one factor in the paucity of studies on the benefits of negative
19 career shocks. By introducing career construction theory (Savickas, 2005) as an
20 overarching approach, our investigation informs managers and employees about
21 strategies to self-manage their careers and achieve person-career fit through career
22 crafting. Therefore, we add to the body of literature by presenting a fresh viewpoint
23 on how individuals might actively deal with their challenging employment situations
24 by engaging in career crafting under certain circumstances. Moreover, identifying
25 proactive coping as a critical boundary factor amplifying the positive responses to

1 negative career shocks further adds to the understanding of the causes of positive
2 career outcomes in the context of rapid career changes in the hospitality industry.

3 Third, our study has important implications for managers. We show that those who
4 encountered negative career shocks can use a proactive adaptation strategy to ensure
5 their employability throughout the course of their career and achieve jobs and careers
6 in line with their values and current and future needs, especially in the hospitality
7 industry. This result might persuade managers to abandon their pessimistic layoff
8 outlook in favor of actively encouraging their employees to engage in career crafting.
9 This shift in perspective could have an impact on managerial decisions about hiring,
10 training, and performance evaluation at a time when the hospitality sector is
11 characterized by limited career advancement (Rasheed, Okumus, Weng, Hameed, &
12 Nawaz, 2020). Our theoretical model is shown in Figure 1.

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14 Insert FIGURE 1 about here
15 -----

16 **2 Literature review and hypotheses development**

17 **2.1 Positive reactions to negative career shocks: A career crafting perspective**

18 The pandemic has had an immediate negative effect on the tourism and hospitality
19 industries, causing hospitality organizations to consider or even carry out layoffs and
20 furloughs (Lee, Xu, & Yang, 2021). These career shocks leave hospitality employees
21 uncertain about their pay, employment status, and even career growth, which could
22 have a negative impact on their careers (e.g., Hofer et al., 2021). However, previous
23 study suggested that negative career shocks may allow for positive outcomes, thus
24 calling for scholars to study and understand the positive implications of negative
25 career shocks (Akkermans et al., 2020). Indeed, Rummel and colleagues (2021)
26 suggested that negative career shocks evoke entrepreneurial behavior because

1 graduates actively reflect on their careers. In the hospitality context, negative career
2 shocks, as unpredictable and uncontrollable events, signify the need to interrupt or
3 change ongoing career routines and demand that individuals modify and adapt their
4 behaviors or beliefs (Yang, Chen, Roy, & Mattila, 2020). In this study, we take the
5 career crafting perspective to examine the mechanism underlying negative career
6 shocks and employee career outcomes.

7 The career crafting perspective places a strong emphasis on the importance of
8 individual initiative at work as well as individual agency and ownership in one's
9 career growth (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017). It is essential that individuals reflect on
10 and are mindful of their career aspirations and motivation and make decisions that can
11 impact both short-term (e.g., career performance) and long-term career outcomes
12 (e.g., objective and subjective career success) (Chadee, Ren, & Tang, 2021). Though
13 negative career shocks are discouraging and ego-threatening to employees, these
14 career shocks might encourage them to initiate exploration of potential new career
15 pathways (Seibert, Nielsen, & Kraimer, 2021). Our study recognizes that individuals
16 actively adapt how they make career decisions and how their careers can be
17 developed through career crafting, which sustains their career outcomes.

18

19 **2.2 Negative career shocks and career outcomes**

20 Recent changes in the hospitality industry have had a profound impact on employee
21 career decisions, transitions, and outcomes (Liu-Lastres, Wen, & Huang, 2023b).

22 Career performance is gaining increasing attention in the hospitality literature (e.g.,
23 Ren & Chadee, 2020). Career performance is defined as actions that help employees
24 develop their careers, like learning new skills and looking for career opportunities
25 (Zacher, 2015), while perceived employability refers to the extent to which one
26 believes that they could obtain employment (Vanhercke, De Cuyper, Peeters, & De

Witte, 2014). In the modern career environment, the hospitality industry does not promise job security and career growth (Zheng, Wu, & Zhao, 2022). Hospitality employees often experience career shocks, which may interfere with their career-related goals and career development (Yang et.al., 2020).

From a career construction perspective, our study argues that employees can take active approaches to develop, implement, and monitor their career paths, thus improving their career outcomes (i.e., career performance and perceived employability). Career crafting is relevant in hospitality organizations where employees frequently adjust their career pathways (Rasheed et.al., 2020). When confronted with negative career shocks, employees may not passively react to the status quo. Rather, they may be willing to face changes and take on new responsibilities, and deal with job insecurity through career crafting behaviors. For example, employees invest time and effort in seeking career information, dealing with career development issues, and building social networks (Zhou, Hu, Li, & Wen, 2022). Through these adapting behaviors, employees may see ongoing improvement in their current career performance and enhance their employability (Chen, 2020). We therefore hypothesize as follows:

Hypothesis 1a: *Negative career shocks are positively related to perceived employability.*

Hypothesis 1b: *Negative career shocks are positively related to career performance.*

2.3 Negative career shocks and career crafting

A recent study suggests that negative career shocks, such as experiencing a reduction in workforce during the pandemic, have proven to strikingly impact one's career (Hite & McDonald, 2020). However, such unpredictable and disruptive events in people's lives may relate to one's career proactivity. For example, negative career

1 shocks trigger career deliberations and raise the possibility of adopting a new
2 professional strategy to more effectively advance their career goals (Seibert, Kraimer,
3 Holtom, & Pierotti, 2013). Akkermans et.al., (2018) argued that career shocks--events
4 that trigger career reflection--may lead to proactive career behavior.

5 Drawing on career construction theory (Savickas, 2005), our model focuses on
6 career crafting as a coping strategy used by employees as a reaction to negative career
7 shocks. Career construction theory illustrates the dynamic nature of individuals'
8 vocational behaviors across their careers (Savickas, 2005; Wehrle, Kira, & Klehe,
9 2019). According to this theory, the career construction process follows a logical
10 progression from individuals' adaptable readiness and willingness, via adaptability
11 resources and competencies, to adaptive coping strategies, and finally to career
12 adaptation (Seibert et.al., 2021). We suggest that employees' adaptive coping
13 responses, that is, career crafting, can help them cope with involuntary, radical, and
14 socially undesirable career shocks.

15 Hospitality employees often find themselves forced to shift jobs, companies, or
16 even careers as a result of unexpected career shocks (Chen, Tsai, & Chen, 2023). It
17 forces employees to acquire new knowledge, skills, and other attributes to adapt to
18 new jobs, organizations, or occupations. In the hospitality context, for instance, a
19 casino dealer who retrain to become an administrative staff is undergoing a radical
20 career change, considering the salary and the knowledge and skills that are required.
21 Under this circumstance, employees with greater adaptability are better equipped to
22 make adaptations to meet such challenges. According to earlier studies, given the
23 present societal, economic, and technological changes, it has become more desirable
24 to be able to adapt, change, or show adaptability (Sony & Mekoth, 2016).

25 Moreover, through career crafting, employees actively sought out information

about their potential for future employment, created new possibilities, and planned their careers in the future (Janssen et.al., 2021). Career crafting comprises two main components: proactive career reflection and proactive career construction (Tims & Akkermans, 2020). Proactive career reflection addresses the degree of awareness of and personal reflections on the career (Tims & Akkermans, 2020). Employees can reflect on their motivation and enthusiasm for their careers through career reflection, in addition to their strengths and limitations in their chosen career paths. Thus, employees can handle negative career shocks more effectively. Career construction recognizes and attends to vocational choice, adjustment, and development as a dynamic process of finding matches, developing meaning, and making it all matter to oneself and society (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Hartung, & Taber, 2008). Career construction guides employees to the path of self-discovery and personal fulfillment, which helps them cope with negative career shocks. We therefore hypothesize as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Negative career shocks are positively related to career crafting.

2.4 Career crafting and perceived employability

Employability self-perceptions take a central role in theories of individual career behavior. Employees can achieve their career objectives and improve their employability by putting proactive career strategies into action. For example, Chughtai (2019) suggested that employees engaged in proactive career behavior, such as career planning, can enhance their employability. Career construction theory implies that individuals can actively manage their career success and assume responsibility for their career (Savickas, 2005). Career crafting suggests a new way of looking at the idea of occupation choice, moving our focus away from a once-in-a-lifetime career choice toward how to continuously explore the career possibility and

1 make progress in every stage of their career (Suarez-Bilbao, Andresen, Crowley-
2 Henry, & O'Connor, 2023). Thus, career crafting can be viewed as proactive behavior
3 intended to enhance person-career fit and optimize career results.

4 Earlier research on career crafting has suggested that employees enhance their
5 career sustainability and employability through career crafting. Career crafting can
6 increase an employee's chances for advancement, give them access to new contacts
7 and potential job opportunities, and increase their exposure by putting them in contact
8 with influential people both inside and outside the organization (Akkermans &
9 Hirschi, 2023). Employees may thus reflect their knowledge and skills for career
10 development. For instance, employees can improve their skill sets by investing in
11 training and education, which will increase their marketability on the job market and,
12 as a result, enable them to achieve more favorable career outcomes. Moreover, by
13 constructing their career through career crafting, employees can actively look for
14 chances for additional career development and competencies while also growing their
15 professional networks. Thus, we put forward the following hypothesis:

16 ***Hypothesis 3. Career crafting is positively related to perceived employability.***

17

18 **2.5 Career crafting and career performance**

19 According to career construction theory (Savickas, 2005), by engaging in proactive
20 career behavior, individuals are more competent and have more psychosocial
21 resources, which help them cope with and handle changes in their jobs and careers
22 (Zacher, 2015). Through career crafting, employees may benefit from accessing
23 career information and resources, which positively impact their tasks and career
24 performance (Savickas, 2013). Research has suggested that the ability of employees
25 to solve problems and complete tasks is improved by accessing information and
26 resources, which can lead to positive career outcomes (Ren & Chadee, 2020). An

employee can better adapt to and more successfully handle the pressures of their work and career via career crafting. This, in turn, should result in higher levels of career performance. In contrast, employees should struggle more with career demands on days when they are unable or do not have chances to shape their careers, which should lead to lower their career performance. Thus, we posit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4. *Career crafting is positively related to career performance.*

2.6 The mediating role of career crafting

As discussed in the preceding paragraphs, negative career shocks can lead to positive career outcomes (i.e., perceived employability and career performance). Negative career shocks present opportunities for individuals to reflect and build their careers since these shocks awaken individuals to appraise the negative event and explore other career pathways. Thus, employees who experience unfavorable career shocks may view career crafting as a coping mechanism to address the situation. Employees use career crafting to find and maintain a better person-career fit, allowing them to use their strengths (Janssen et.al., 2021; Parker & Liao, 2016). As a result, proactive employees should experience higher levels of career success. Moreover, individuals who actively manage their careers should be more employable and better able to adapt to changing work requirements than those who are less likely to do so because they take the initiative to advance their knowledge and skills (Parker & Liao, 2016). Hence, it is believed that individuals who take more initiative at work will feel more career-fitted. In line with this, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 5a. *Career crafting mediates the relationship between negative career shocks and perceived employability.*

Hypothesis 5b. *Career crafting mediates the relationship between negative career shocks and career performance.*

2.7 The moderating effect of proactive coping

According to career construction theory, individual differences can help to explain individuals' efforts to engage in proactive career behavior in a variety of ways. Here, we suggest that proactive coping strengthens employees' willingness to engage in career crafting. Employees with high proactive coping may act as active agents to build resources and acquire skills to address a particular negative career shock. Given the focus on individual agency, the idea of proactive coping was put forth to describe the propensity of individuals to take the initiative to recognize chances outside of themselves and modify their working contexts (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant, 2000). Proactive individuals work hard to advance their careers and are more likely to succeed in their career endeavors (see Fuller & Marler, 2009 for a review). Moreover, individuals with high proactive coping will continue their career exploration efforts and ultimately place more emphasis on their ability to adjust to new situations and jobs (Cai et.al, 2015).

We propose that proactive coping strengthens the positive relationship between negative career shocks and career crafting. Individuals who exhibit proactive coping spend more time considering their career options in order to accomplish desired professional outcomes and demonstrate a sense of control over the career development process. Because proactive coping reflects one's positive behavioral tendencies and action orientations to achieve personal goals, individuals with it are more inclined to take action to pursue those goals (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Thus, we suggest that proactive coping strengthens employee willingness to engage in career crafting to handle negative career shocks. However, employees with low proactive coping may be less likely to craft their careers.

Hypothesis 6. *The relationship between negative career shocks and career crafting is*

1 *moderated by proactive coping, such that the relationship will get stronger as*
2 *proactive coping is higher.*

3 Since career crafting mediates the associations between negative career shocks and
4 employability and career performance, as we discussed above, employees' proactive
5 coping styles can also strengthen the indirect impacts of negative career shocks on
6 these career outcomes.

7 ***Hypothesis 7a.*** *The indirect relationship between negative career shocks and*
8 *perceived employability is moderated by proactive coping, such that the indirect*
9 *relationship will get stronger as proactive coping is higher.*

10 ***Hypothesis 7b.*** *The indirect relationship between negative career shocks and career*
11 *performance is positively moderated by proactive coping, such that the indirect*
12 *relationship will get stronger as proactive coping is higher.*

13

14 **3 Methods**

15 **3.1 Participants and data collection**

16 This investigation was part of a research project which studied the human resources
17 management issues in the tourism and hospitality industry in Macau. Specifically,
18 casino dealers in Macau were defined as the population in this study. Negative career
19 shocks are pronounced among casino dealers in Macau because thousands of
20 employees have lost their jobs in the downsizing and closure of VIP gambling rooms
21 since the pandemic. Like the hospitality industry all over the world, the Macau
22 hospitality industry's current employment instability and lack of opportunities for
23 career progression have emphasized the importance of employee career development
24 (Liu-Lastres et.al., 2023a; Vong, 2022).

25 We collected data from casino employees employed by six gaming operators with
26 the help of the Macau Gaming Employee Association. This data collection method

1 was chosen because it increases the likelihood that the survey could reach out to all
2 six gaming operators' casino dealers in Macau (García-Rodríguez, Dorta-Afonso, &
3 Gonzalez-de-la-Rosa, 2020). We explained to responders that taking part in the study
4 was entirely voluntary. Respondents are invited to complete a paper-pencil survey and
5 they are randomly selected. We asked five research assistants to thoroughly study the
6 survey items before we launched the survey and to let us know if any sentences or
7 words did not make sense. We made some minor adjustments to sentences and the
8 pretest revealed that participants were able to understand the survey items clearly.
9 Data collection was undertaken in February 2023 when most casino employees were
10 struggling between the decision to change their career pathway and continuing their
11 current gaming dealer career.

12 We distributed questionnaires to 534 casino dealers for the survey. In the final
13 sample of 478 dyads (89.5% response rate), Table 2 showed that nearly 55% of the
14 respondents identified themselves as female. It was also found that the average age of
15 respondents was 41.48 (SD=8.58). The respondents had extensive experience in the
16 hospitality industry, as the average years of experience was 14.03 (SD=7.12). It was
17 also found that 41.21% of the respondents obtained a high school diploma, while only
18 1% obtained a master or above degree. This information is congruent with the public's
19 impressions of casino occupations as having a low entry bar and wide entry gate
20 (Vong, 2022).

21 22 **3.2 Measures**

23 All measures in this survey were adopted from scales originally created in English.
24 Back translation methods (Brislin, 1986) were used to create a Chinese version of the
25 questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha ratings for all five were high, and proactive coping
26 had the highest reliability score out of the five variables ($\alpha = 0.94$). The result

1 suggests that measurement scales used in the study are a reliable predictor of the
2 constructs. All measures were conducted using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 =
3 *Strongly disagree* to 5 = *Strongly agree*).

4

5 **3.2.1 Negative career shocks**

6 2-item developed by Seibert et al. (2013) was used to assess negative career shocks.
7 A sample item is “*Your organization went through a significant negative event such*
8 *as a reduction-in-workforce*” ($\alpha = .80$). We used a Likert-type scale with a range of 1
9 to 5 (1 = *Have not experienced it*; 5 = *Have large impacts*) for measures.

10 **3.2.2 Career crafting**

11 The eight-item scale created by Tims & Akkermans (2020) was used to measure
12 career crafting. A sample item is “*I spend time reflecting on my passions in my work*
13 *and career*” ($\alpha = .93$). A 5-point Likert-type scale was employed to measure career
14 crafting in the current study (1 = *Never*; 5 = *Always*).

15 **3.2.3 Perceived employability**

16 De Cuyper et.al., (2011) developed four items to assess perceived employability.
17 One sample item is: “*Given my qualifications and experience, getting a new job*
18 *would not be very hard at all*” ($\alpha = .85$).

19 **3.2.4 Career performance**

20 We assessed career performance with a scale with four items compiled by
21 Welbourne, Johnson, & Erez (1998). A sample item is, “*Making progress in his/her*
22 *career*” ($\alpha = .82$).

23 **3.2.5 Proactive coping**

24 We measured proactive coping using 14-items developed by Greenglass et.al.,
25 (1999). One sample item of the Proactive Coping Inventory scale is, “*I am a "take*

1 *charge" person."* ($\alpha = .94$).

2 **3.2.6 Control Variables**

3 We used employees' age, gender, education, and tenure as controls. We controlled
4 the employees' demographics because they are related to perceived employability
5 (e.g., Berntson & Marklund, 2007) and career performance (e.g., Ren & Chadee,
6 2020).

7

8 **4 Results**

9 **4.1 Test of the Measurement Model**

10 We carried out confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) to evaluate the discriminant
11 validity of the measures. The five-factor base model provided a significantly better fit
12 to the data ($\chi^2 = 655.38$, $df = 454$, $RMSEA = .03$, $CFI = .98$, $TLI = .97$, see Table 1)
13 compared to alternative models. For example, a four-factor model in which negative
14 career shocks and career crafting were loaded onto a single factor had a worse fit than
15 the hypothesized five-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 221.47$, $p < .001$, see Table 1). These
16 findings support the notion that our study variables were distinct and conceptually
17 unique.

18

19

Insert TABLE 1 about here.

20

21

The descriptive statistics and correlations are shown in Table 2.

22

23

Insert TABLE 2 about here.

24

25

26

Harmon's single-factor test was performed. Results showed that no single factor
emerged and the first factor accounted for around 28.67% (i.e. less than 40%) of the

27

variance, suggesting that common method bias did not pose a serious problem

28

(Podsakoff, Mackenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012).

1 **4.2 Test of Hypotheses**

2 We conducted path modeling in Mplus, mean-centering the independent and
3 moderator variables and creating interaction terms by multiplying the two mean-
4 centered variables to minimize the potential multicollinearity issue following
5 recommendations from Aiken, West, & Reno (1991). As hypothesized, negative
6 career shocks were positively associated with perceived employability ($r = 0.39, p$
7 $<.01$, see Table 2) and career performance ($r = 0.42, p <.01$, see Table 2). Thus,
8 Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported.

9 As hypothesized, negative career shocks were positively associated with career
10 crafting ($B = 0.32, p <.001$; Model 1, see Table 3), supporting Hypothesis 2. Career
11 crafting positively related to perceived employability ($B = 0.49, p <.001$; Model 3, see
12 Table 3) and career performance ($B = 0.52, p <.001$; Model 5, see Table 3),
13 supporting Hypotheses 3 and 4.

14 We employed the Monte Carlo approach with 20,000 replications to test the
15 indirect effects (Preacher, Zyphur, & Zhang, 2010). The results (Table 4) showed that
16 career negative shocks had significant indirect effects on perceived employability
17 through career crafting (estimate = 0.14, 95% CI [0.10, 0.18]; Hypothesis 5a
18 supported). Moreover, the results (Table 4) showed that career negative shocks had
19 significant indirect effects on career performance through career crafting (estimate =
20 0.16, 95% CI [0.12, 0.20]; Hypothesis 5b supported).

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22 Insert TABLE 3 and TABLE 4 about here
23 -----

24 We introduced interaction terms between negative career shocks and proactive
25 coping into the model to test the moderation hypotheses (i.e., Hypothesis 6). The
26 results (presented in Table 3) indicated that the interaction of negative career shocks

1 and proactive coping on career crafting was statistically significant ($B = 0.18, p$
2 $<.001$; Model 2). To further investigate this and other interactions in the study, we
3 used Aiken et al., (1991)'s approach of plotting 1 SD above and below the mean. As
4 depicted in Figure 2, the relationship between negative career shocks and career
5 crafting was stronger among employees with high proactive coping than among those
6 with low. Simple slope tests revealed that the relationship between negative career
7 shocks and career crafting was positive and significant when proactive coping was
8 high (1 SD above the mean; $B = 0.53, p <.001$) and when moral efficacy was low (1
9 SD below the mean; $B = 0.15, p <.001$).

10 -----
11 Insert FIGURE 2 about here
12 -----

13 Finally, we tested the moderated mediation hypothesis (i.e., Hypothesis 7) with
14 20,000 Monte Carlo replications. The results (presented in Table 4) revealed that
15 proactive coping moderated the indirect effects of negative career shocks on
16 perceived employability through career crafting. Specifically, the indirect effect of
17 negative career shocks on perceived employability was found to be positive and
18 significant when the level of proactive coping was high ($B=0.22, 95\% [0.16, 0.28]$).
19 However, the effect was less favorable when the level of moral efficacy was low
20 ($B=0.07, 95\% [0.03, 0.11]$). These findings provided support for Hypothesis 7a.

21 The results (presented in Table 4) also revealed that proactive coping moderated the
22 indirect effects of negative career shocks on career performance through career
23 crafting. Specifically, the indirect effect of negative career shocks on career
24 performance was found to be positive and significant when the level of proactive
25 coping was high ($B=0.23, 95\% [0.18, 0.29]$). However, the effect was less favorable

when the level of moral efficacy was low ($B=0.07$, 95% [0.03, 0.11]). These findings provided support for Hypothesis 7b.

5. Discussion

Employees in the hospitality industry who experience negative career shocks may feel uncertain about their pay, job status, or even future career advancement. As such, it is commonly believed that negative career shocks are the prototypical example of unfavorable working experiences that impede employee career outcomes (e.g., Hofer et. al, 2021). However, scholars have noted that negative career shocks can incur positive career outcomes, suggesting that individuals can respond and adapt to successfully deal with such career shocks (e.g., Rummel et. al, 2021; Zhou et. al, 2023). Our findings reveal that negative career shocks are associated with positive career outcomes via the proactive adaptation process, which goes beyond the fleeting resource consumption mechanism in the prior studies. When viewed through the lens of career construction theory, employees facing negative career shocks can engage in career crafting to cope with career challenges.

We draw on career construction theory (Savickas, 2005) to examine the mediating role of career crafting in the association between negative career shocks and career outcomes (i.e., perceived employability and career performance). Our results reveal that negative career shocks are not necessarily threatening; rather, employees' career crafting behavior can help them to improve their perceived employability and career performance. Such a proactive pathway is stronger in employees with higher proactive coping. In the following section, we will discuss the theoretical and managerial implications of this study.

5.1 Theoretical implications

1 By viewing negative career shocks through the lens of career construction theory,
2 we were able to understand how negative career shocks affect hospitality employees'
3 career outcomes in a positive way. Our work thus enriches hospitality management
4 literature in three important ways. First, we contribute to the literature by taking a
5 career construction perspective on the effects of negative career shocks. This
6 perspective is under-investigated in career shock literature as most of this research
7 focuses on the resource-consuming nature of negative career shocks on the basis of
8 the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). This stream of research
9 has focused on the negative career consequences, but as shown in the present work,
10 negative career shocks can incur positive career outcomes as well. Given that
11 employees in the hospitality industry are required to adjust to rapid career changes in
12 the age of boundaryless career era (Rasheed et. al, 2020), investigating the positive
13 outcomes of negative career shocks therefore extends our current understanding of
14 how individuals adapt to and recover from unanticipated career challenges. Our
15 findings should be applicable to other service industries or organizations facing
16 similar career shocks.

17 Second, we identified and tested the mediating role of career crafting that converted
18 unfavorable career shocks into favorable career outcomes. Specifically, previous
19 research has focused on negative perceptions (e.g., job insecurity and reduced
20 adaptability) linking the effects of negative career shocks on employee career
21 outcomes (e.g., Mansur & Felix, 2021). We go beyond this COR framework by
22 regarding the agentic process in which individuals can be able to construct their
23 careers proactively. In the hospitality context, negative career shocks can serve as a
24 “wake up call”, motivating employees to enhance their perceived employability and
25 career performance by reflecting on their outdated and fixed career pathways,

1 identifying alternative career opportunities, and crafting their careers. Our findings
2 support those of Chen, Liu, Tang, and Hogan (2021), who found that employees are
3 more inclined to improvise to seize opportunities and "think outside the box" when
4 they encounter a novel and critical negative workplace event.

5 Interestingly, our results suggest that negative career shocks are moderately
6 correlated with positive career outcomes. The potential explanation is that the
7 gambling companies in Macao promise to promote local employment and work with
8 their employees to assist those who are struggling with their career development (To
9 & Huang, 2022). For example, gaming companies in Macau have increased their
10 corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts during the pandemic by asking their local
11 staff to take voluntary unpaid leave instead of implementing mass layoffs (Loi et al.,
12 2021; To & Huang, 2022; Wan, Li, Lau, & Dioko, 2022). For this reason, our results
13 suggest that negative career shocks are positively related to career outcomes.

14 Third, we found that employee proactive coping served as a boundary condition,
15 qualifying the impact of negative career shocks on employee career outcomes. By
16 examining such effects, we respond to calls to offer a detailed picture of when
17 employees adapt to career changes in the hospitality industry (e.g., Rasheed et.al.,
18 2020). Thus, our result acts as a starting point for more research into how individual
19 differences prompt employees' proactive behavioral responses to negative career
20 shocks.

21 22 **5.2 Managerial implications**

23 For those in tourism- and hospitality-related enterprises, our study provides two key
24 managerial implications. First, managers in the hospitality industry need to understand
25 that both present employees and potential future employees are going through
26 negative career shocks. Due to the unpredictability of career changes in the hospitality

1 industry (Ren, Islam, & Chadee, 2023), what occurs in the wake of major crises (like
2 the COVID-19 case) implies that what was formerly unique (abnormal) will become
3 common practice. In light of this "New Normal," managers and HR practitioners of
4 the hospitality industry can lessen negative career shocks by talking to employees
5 about their perceptions of chances for career development and offering resources
6 through organizational career management workshops (Janssen et.al., 2021). Since the
7 career pathway is limited in the hospitality industry, employees may benefit most
8 from engaging in career crafting, such as proactively reflecting and constructing their
9 career. Our findings indicate that employees may not always react negatively to
10 negative career shocks and managers should support employees' efforts to craft their
11 career. For example, organizations could deploy career interventions that support
12 individuals during negative organization-related career shocks. Even though career
13 crafting is inherently self-initiated, hospitality firms can stimulate and support these
14 behaviors by offering career management workshops. Specifically, a career crafting
15 workshop can be introduced by an organization to help people understand how to
16 reconstruct their careers, identify their strengths and interests, and then discover
17 practical ways to improve the alignment between their careers and their personal
18 interests and strengths. People who participate in a career crafting intervention can
19 assess their own potential person-career misfits and create their own personal goals to
20 improve that fit. Employees can learn how to use different career crafting behaviors in
21 the workplace and how to control these behaviors by focusing attention and
22 mobilizing sustained effort over time through career crafting instruction. Such career
23 crafting interventions can help employees better adapt to the constrained conditions
24 for career growth present in the hospitality sector while also improving their career
25 performance and perceived employability.

Furthermore, our findings on the moderating role of proactive coping suggest that practices that enhance proactive coping may increase employees' efforts to engage in career crafting when they experience negative career shocks. The studies by Glaub et.al., (2014) on personal initiative training and Strauss and Parker (2018) on proactive skill development training may be helpful in this regard. These two studies demonstrate that through carefully planned initiatives, employees' proactive coping ability can be developed. For example, organizations in the hospitality industry might implement a proactive coping development program that helps foster employee motivation for growth and learning. A period of intense instruction, with participants divided into small groups, emphasizing the promotion of personal resources that will aid the employees' adoption of the usage of proactive coping strategies. The training approach may consist of hands-on activities, role-playing scenarios, and colleague experience sharing. In addition, recruitment and HR professionals in the hospitality industry might make an effort to hire candidates that demonstrate high levels of proactive coping.

5.3 Limitations and future directions

First, as the data were collected from Macau, the sampling approach may limit the generalizability of the study's findings. To investigate similarities and differences between the results of this study and those from others, samples from a wider range of people and workplaces might be helpful. As such, we can better understand the negative career shocks on a broader base.

Second, given the possibility for self-enhancement bias among respondents, utilizing a self-report questionnaire may have increased the incidence of common method variance. This study distributed an anonymous questionnaire to every respondent, which may have helped reduce some of the social desirability bias in

1 surveys. Nevertheless, we encourage future studies to test and prove causality for all
2 of the pathways in our model through longitudinal field studies or experiment
3 approaches.

4 Third, our research did not specifically address that employees' cognitive appraisal
5 may be a significant factor in shaping their attitudes and behaviors in response to
6 negative career shocks. For example, employees may respond more favorably if they
7 see negative career shocks as challenge stressors. If, however, the employee appraises
8 such career shocks as hindrance stressors, he or she may be more likely to respond
9 negatively. Therefore, it's necessary to examine more detailed and relevant
10 psychological mechanisms (e.g., affective and cognitive experience) underlying the
11 relationship between negative career shocks and employee career outcomes.

12 Fourth, the Covid-19 pandemic has a long-lasting effect on employee career
13 development (To & Huang, 2022). As our survey was conducted in February 2023,
14 the economic, social, and psychological impacts of COVID-19 on employees' career
15 paths in the hospitality industry were still manifesting themselves. It is necessary to
16 replicate the survey through the dynamics approaches so as to identify changes in
17 employees' perceptions of negative career shocks and the reflection of career
18 outcomes.

19 Finally, we do not know how long such a proactive coping strategy can be
20 maintained, despite the fact that our findings showed that employees can cope with
21 unfavorable career shocks by engaging in career crafting. Employees may stop
22 engaging in career crafting and even start engaging in negative behaviors after an
23 extended period of negative career shocks.

24 In conclusion, despite potential career drawbacks in the hospitality industry, our
25 research emphasizes the significance of transforming negative career shocks into

1 constructive career responses. Our findings add to the body of hospitality
2 management literature by indicating that negative career shocks can be turned into
3 positive career outcomes through promoting career crafting. Proactive coping can
4 strengthen such effects.

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TABLE 1 Comparison of measurement models

Model	Descriptions	χ^2	df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$
Model 1	Five factors: Negative career shocks, proactive coping, career crafting, perceived employability, and career performance	655.38	454	0.97	0.98	0.03	
Model 2	Four factors: Negative career shocks, career crafting were combined into one factor.	876.85	458	0.94	0.95	0.04	221.47***
Model 3	Three factors: Proactive coping, career crafting, and career performance were combined into one factor.	4051.21	461	0.56	0.59	0.13	3395.83***
Model 4	Two factors: Negative career shocks, proactive coping, career crafting, and career performance combined into one factor.	4404.578	463	0.52	0.55	0.13	3749.20***
Model 5	One factor: Negative career shocks, proactive coping, career crafting, perceived employability, and career performance were loaded into a single factor.	5174.40	464	0.42	0.46	0.15	4519.02***

Note. χ^2 = chi-squared value; df = degree of freedom; Δ = change relative to the measurement model; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = comparative fit index. *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics and study variable intercorrelations (n=478)

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Gender	.46	.51	1								
2	Age	41.48	8.58	-.12**	1							
3	Tenure	14.03	7.12	-.02	.53**	1						
4	Education	12.16	2.63	.06	-.30**	-.07	1					
5	Negative career shocks	2.25	1.12	.05	-.05	-.03	.06	1				
6	Proactive coping	2.85	.57	-.14**	.16**	.09*	-.13**	.06	1			
7	Career crafting	2.74	.78	.05	-.07	-.04	.14**	.47**	.17**	1		
8	Perceived employability	2.95	.73	.05	-.07	-.01	.11*	.39**	.09	.53**	1	
9	Career performance	3.40	.71	.02	.04	.07	.09	.42**	.01	.57**	.43**	1

Note. Gender (men = 0, women = 1); education (9=middle school; 12=high school; 15= college education; 16 = undergraduate degree, 18 = graduate degree). * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 3 Results of path analysis

Variables	Career crafting		Perceived employability		Career performance	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)
Constant	1.69(.28)***	2.36 (.26)***	1.53 (.26)***	1.73 (.26)***	1.59 (.24)***	1.81 (.24)***
Gender	.03 (.06)	.07 (.06)	.03 (.06)	.02 (.06)	-.00 (.05)	-.02 (.05)
Age	-.00 (.01)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Education	.03(.01)*	.03(.01)**	.01(.01)	.01 (.01)	.01(.01)	.01 (.01)
Tenure	-.00 (.01)	-.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.00)
Negative career shocks	.32 (.03) ***	.34 (.03) ***		.13 (.03) **		.14 (.03) **
Career crafting			.49 (.04) ***	.41 (.04) ***	.52 (.03) ***	.44 (.04) ***
Proactive coping		.13(.03)***				
Career crafting *		.18(.03)***				
proactive coping						
R ²	.23 ***	.31 ***	.28 ***	.31 ***	.34 ***	.37 ***

Note. n = 478. Unstandardized coefficients are presented. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

TABLE 4 Indirect effects based on 20,000 Monte Carlo replications

Negative career shocks-Career crafting-Perceived employability		
	B	95% CI
Indirect effect	.14	[.10, .18]
Moderated mediation effect	.08	[.05, .10]
High proactive coping (+1 SD)	.22	[.16, .28]
Low proactive coping (-1 SD)	.07	[.03, .11]
Negative career shocks-Career crafting-Career performance		
	B	95% CI
Indirect effect	.16	[.12, .20]
Moderated mediation effect	.08	[.05, .11]
High proactive coping (+1 SD)	.23	[.18, .29]
Low proactive coping (-1 SD)	.07	[.03, .11]

Note. n = 478. CI = confidence interval.

Indirect effect was significant if the confidence interval did not contain zero.

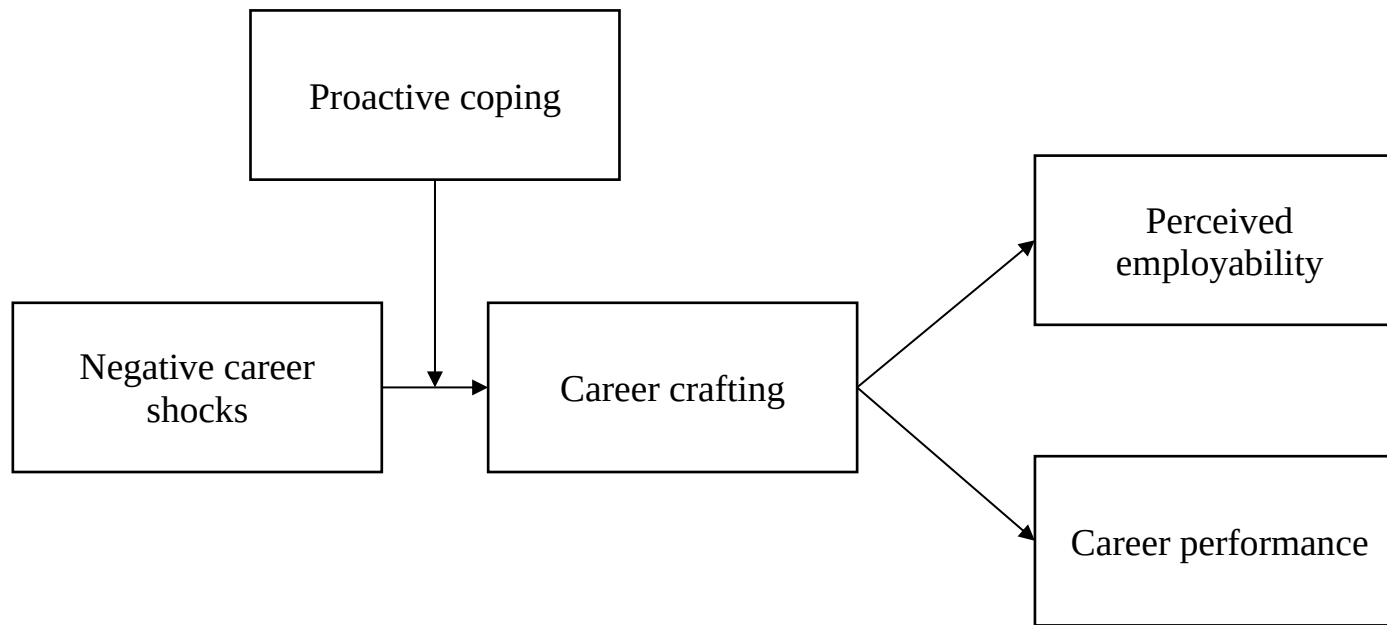


FIGURE 1 The theoretical model

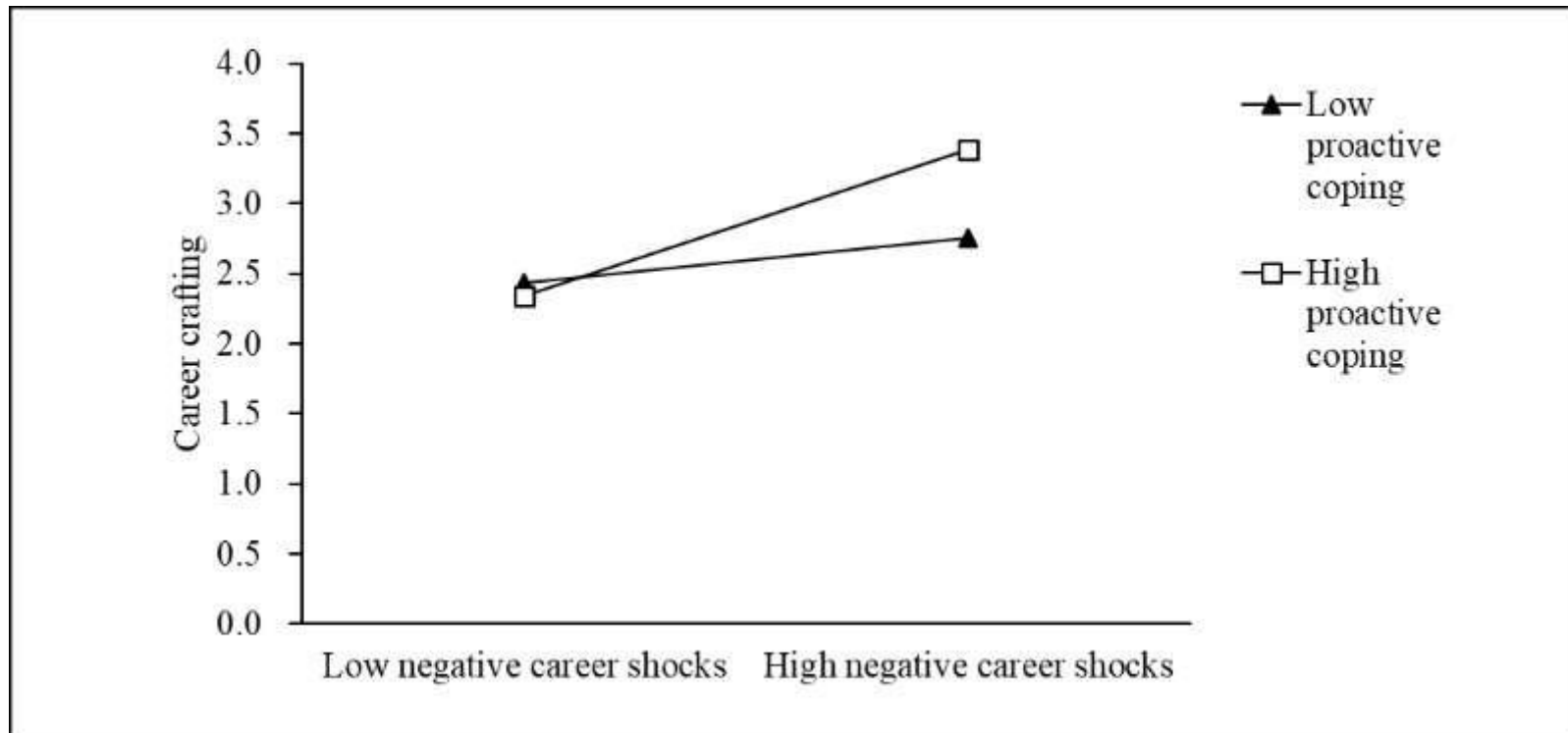


FIGURE 2. Interaction between negative career shocks and proactive crafting on career crafting