

Job crafting and Sustainable Development: Applications among Higher Education Teachers

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Abstract: The psychology of sustainable development supports the primary prevention approach and fosters well-being in organizations, initially from the employee to the organization, and to inter-organization developments. The goal of sustainable psychology is to promote both individual and organizational well-being through the development of resources. Job crafting is an essential personal resource that positively influences individuals, groups, and organizational outcomes. More explicitly, a teaching staff committed to sustainability in their professional activity is necessary to achieve sustainable development in education. Firstly, using the self-determination theory (SDT), study proposes job crafting as a personal resource underlying an employee's sustainable work behavior. Secondly, the study empirically explored the effect of employees' job crafting behaviors on job satisfaction in educational organizations. Data were collected from 200 teachers in Jammu district (J&K), India. The study follows a descriptive, correlational, cross-sectional, research design. Job satisfaction among teachers was strongly and favorably correlated with job crafting. This paper highlights that job crafting is a critical component of teacher well-being and need to be consistently supported in education management in the direction of improving job satisfaction, thereby facilitating the positive narrative at the personal, team, and organizational levels. Furthermore, the study provides strategies to achieve sustainable work behavior (through job crafting strategies), which benefits both the organizations and employees.

Keywords: job crafting, job satisfaction, self-determination theory, sustainability, sustainable development, well-being

Introduction

One of the critical areas for creating functional, sustainable work behavior is about workers and their management. An organization's economic, social, and environmental operations are intimately related to the idea of sustainability. Various sustainability factors can be connected and are crucial for organizations (e.g., the different aspects of the organization and the element of multiple stakeholders) (Mensah, 2019). A framework of sustainable development has been provided by the 2030 Agenda for governments, non-profit organizations, and citizens to look at their activities from the lens of sustainability (United Nations, 2015). Multiple entities have created numerous frameworks and rules to encourage and promote sustainability practices. Due to growing concerns over climate change, inequality, deteriorating employee mental health, and well-being, the careless production and consumption over the past few years, more attention has been drawn to organizational sustainability. As a result, several organizations have thought about including sustainability in their assessment reports (Truant et al., 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic has also substantially hindered nations' efforts to accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is posing difficulties for organizations trying to work toward sustainable development goals (Ranjbari et al., 2021a, b).

Good health, well-being, quality education, and strong institutions are just a few of the 17 sustainable development goals that have been put forth by the United Nations (United Nations, 2015). These objectives highlight the significance of expanding possibilities for advancement and fostering the growth of individuals, families, and communities in order to achieve sustainable growth and global expansion. Gladwin et al. (1995) define sustainable development as "a method for achieving human progress that is inclusive, connected, egalitarian, cautious, and secure". Psychology understands sustainable development as encompassing more than just the socio-economic and ecological context (Brundtland Report, 1987; Di Fabio, 2016; 2017a) but also enhancing employees' and organizational well-being. It promotes enrichment, growth, change, and flexibility (Di Fabio, 2016). One of the fundamental agents of change is the teacher.

The process of teachers' long-term professional development is greatly aided by education. Globally, many nations are implementing significant educational changes to transform the workplace. Due to recent educational reforms, educational institutions are now more attentive to many requirements of students than they were in the past. Teachers face greater workloads, emotional strains, and time constraints due to these developments (Singh & Rani, 2015). The teaching profession is the most rewarding and respected in India. Despite this, the number of teachers in colleges and universities declined for the second consecutive year, 2015–16, from 1.57 million to 1.37 million in 2017–18 (All India survey on higher education [AISHE], 2019). Not only is there a shortage, but also the hostile work environment has drained the vitality of teachers and led to a negative attitude toward their work (Collie et al., 2012; Høigaard et al., 2015). The incidence of stress, burnout, and deteriorating quality of life among teaching faculty is not only an Indian phenomenon. Still, it can be witnessed in developed countries like the USA, Turkey, and Japan, among others (Alves et al., 2019). This indicates a ground for researchers to intervene and explore the factors within the education system that will help teachers opt for teaching as a profession and continue with it.

Using self-determination theory (SDT), numerous studies have been conducted on the factors contributing to job stress and strain (Fernet & Austin, 2014; Olafsen, 2017). In an attempt to boost sustainable development, the current study argues for proactive behavior as the central goal of the leaders of government and non-government institutions. Employees frequently redesign their jobs in response to workplace obstacles, which aids in their transition. The purpose of the work and one's professional identity is influenced by job crafting. The sustainability of organizations is greatly influenced by job crafting (Di Fabio, 2017b; Kira et al., 2010; Shang, 2022) and is a crucial indicator of teachers' sustainable professional growth. As a result, job crafting affects the organization's and the employees' well-being. Crafting a job is regarded as proactive behavior. Being proactive is crucial since it leads to improved performance, faster professional advancement, and higher salaries for proactive workers (Grant et al., 2009). Employees reorganize their work in social, physical, or cognitive ways to promote resilience, job engagement, and thriving among them (Berg et al., 2010). Job crafting is the intentional process of tailoring a job to a person's strengths and motivations to meet organizational requirements and increase commitment and productivity (Wrzesniewski &

Dutton, 2001). Job crafting assures present as well as future benefits. According to previous studies, job crafting is a proactive action that encourages people to operate with the future in mind and fosters optimism in both themselves and others. (Bindl & Parker, 2011; Parker et al., 2010).

Numerous pieces of research have been conducted to determine the causes and effects of job crafting (Fryer et al., 2014; Petrou et al., 2015). Job crafting activities could enhance people's well-being through increased job performance and satisfaction (Dulara & Sen, 2017; Ghitulescu, 2006). Further, job crafting was also positively correlated with positive organizational outcomes like work engagement, job satisfaction, and well-being (Bakker et al., 2012; Kalyan et al., 2018). Several studies support the correlation among job crafting and other occupational outcomes, but further research is needed to understand the underlying mechanisms, especially in developing nations (Di Fabio & Svicher, 2021).

Furthermore, although teachers' contributions to society make their jobs extremely important, factors motivating teachers' sustainable development have not yet been fully explored. To guide teachers towards sustainable development, this study expected to determine the internal course of action followed by teachers (job crafting). Further, the study empirically tested the job crafting and job satisfaction relationship among teachers, leading to sustainable development.

Review of literature and hypothesis development

Organizations must deal with a changing workforce in an international, fiercely competitive economy. Managers view job motivation as a crucial component of the performance equation at organizational levels since people are an organization's most valuable resource (Lee & Raschke, 2016). Though work motivation research has improved recently, there are still many unanswered concerns regarding the most recent developments and present traits of employee motivation and how they connect to the sustainability of both employees and organizations. Job resources provide opportunities for employees to deal with the pressure at the workplace.

For a natural or social system to be sustainable, it must follow systems and procedures for resource development that allow it to benefit all its stakeholders. Sustainable growth is supported by the vigorous development of personal resources, including the parallel management of existing resources. The generation of new resources also supports the foundation of an employee's sustainable development as necessary by evolving work conditions or the employee's own professional goals (Kira et al., 2010). Further, individuals' ability to adapt to environmental demands and adopt preventative measures separates human and social systems' sustainability from that of the environment.

Figure 1 depicts the fundamental strategy for encouraging sustainable development of the employees. First, research indicates that developing rich personal resources are the foundation for sustainable development because they enable workers to adapt to and even thrive in the face of shifting workplace challenges and view their jobs as positive contributions to life and work. Sustainable behavior improves the quality of life by preserving the natural resources required to meet people's needs (Tapia-Fonllem et al., 2016). Therefore, employees and managers may engage and encourage job crafting, in which the needs and demands of the job are fitted together to accomplish personal resources. Employee well-being as a result of job crafting promotes long-term employee growth. Hence, the present study proposes that employees who involve in job crafting improve their positive psychological outcomes (well-being, job satisfaction, etc.) as personal resources and are accustomed to sustainable development.

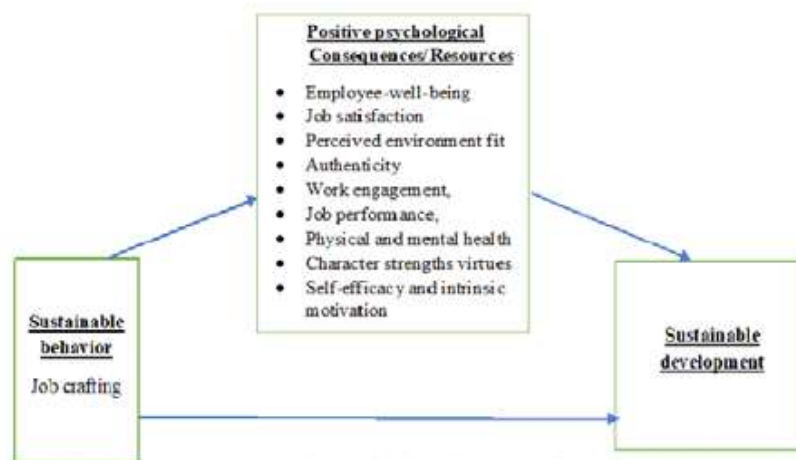


Figure 1: Conceptual model of job crafting (sustainable behavior) and sustainable development.

Job crafting and job satisfaction

The flexibility provided by the organization to manage these resources is a significant motivator. Crawford et al. (2010) considered job crafting from the perspective of job demands and resources. Further, job crafting was found to be positively correlated with work engagement. Following the research by Gordon et al. (2018), job crafting activities influence workers' well-being and job performance. Also, Ingusci et al. (2016) conducted a study and found that teachers' job satisfaction positively correlates with their job crafting. Thomassen (2016) found that job crafting activities benefit teachers' work engagement in a study among school teachers. The results of these studies indicate that job crafting affects the well-being of employees. By raising their degree of job satisfaction and engagement at work and decreasing burnout. Regardless of the significance of crafting and its seeming connection to satisfaction, many hypothetical aspects have yielded inconclusive findings. Research centered on overall job crafting revealed conflicting results. Leana et al. (2009) reported an unfavorable connection between job crafting and job satisfaction. While Cheng and O-Yang (2018) discovered a favorable association between job crafting and job satisfaction. Additional research on dimensions of job crafting offered several encouraging relations. As Villajos et al. (2019) showed only growing task and relational resources correlated to job satisfaction.

Job crafting consists of three components:

- Changing the way one works (task crafting)
- Changing the way one views one's work (cognitive crafting)
- Changing the course of interaction with others at work (relational crafting)

The task and relational crafting generate concrete results in the physical and social workplace environment, which could increase job resources like autonomy and social support (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), while cognitive crafting relates to the employee's perceptual changes about meaning and purpose of their job (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2016). These results highlight the need for additional research into the various job crafting dimensions that connect job crafting and satisfaction. Consequently, in the subsequent section, we propose that task (physical), relational (social), and cognitive (perceptual) crafting can improve teachers' job satisfaction.

Moreover, the present study argument is also supported by the SDT. The theory focuses on the processes through which a person selects various forms of motivation and the effects these forms of motivation have on the beginning and persistence of new behavior. The STD talks about three innate psychological needs, and satisfaction will foster the employee's well-being, performance, and engagement (Gagné & Vansteenkiste, 2013). Employees who use crafting to optimize workplace demands and resources are more likely to produce work that satisfies their needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Even an intervention-based study by van Wingerden et al. (2017) revealed that participants who learn to craft their work were more likely to satisfy their basic needs and were more engaged in their assigned tasks. Job crafting enhances one's intrinsic motivation for one's job, leading to higher needs satisfaction. According to SDT, nurturing a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness is essential to developing self-regulation and maintaining behaviors over time. As a result, environments that allow for autonomy and encourage confidence are likely to improve activity initiation and maintenance. An organization can develop a culture of sustainability by eliminating obstacles to job crafting for employees and by supporting self-determined motivation in employees.

Therefore, based on the review of literature, the following hypotheses are proposed: -

- H1. Job crafting positively influences job satisfaction.
- H1 (A) Task crafting positively influences job satisfaction.
- H1 (B) Relational crafting positively influences job satisfaction.
- H1 (C) Cognitive crafting positively influences job satisfaction.

Methodology

Participants and procedure

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The study's conceptual framework was developed through various articles, books, and internet sources. Secondary data was collected following a cross-sectional design, using a convenience sampling technique from 200 college teachers

working in the Jammu district, Jammu, and Kashmir (India). The sample size was determined based on a 5:1 ratio of cases to the parameters (Bentler & Chou, 1987). The most extended scale used in the study has 30 items. Hence, the acceptable sample for the present study initially determined is 150 teachers. Thus, the sample of 200 respondents is sufficient for this study. After receiving approval from the heads of the colleges, the teachers were approached. Before the survey was done, the objective and voluntary nature of the research was explained. The subjects' written, fully informed permission was acquired. They received assurances regarding the privacy of their answers. The surveys took participants approximately ten minutes to complete. Of the 200 teachers who participated in the study, 133 (66.5%) were females, while 67 (33.5%) were males. Mean age of the participants was 37 years ($SD= 7.52$), mean of working years was 8 years ($SD= 7.25$). The characteristics of the sample population are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Sample profile of the respondents

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
20-30	30	15
30-40	129	64.5
40-50	25	26
50-60	16	8
Marital Status		
Married	154	77
Unmarried	46	43
Education Qualification		
Masters	64	32
M. phil	40	20
Ph. D	96	48
Experience		
Less than 5 years	103	51.5
5-10 years	49	24.5
10-15 years	19	9.5
15-20 years	14	7
More than 20 years	15	7.5

Measures

The measures used in the present study are presented below:

Job crafting: The Job Crafting Questionnaire (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick 2013) comprises 15 items evaluated on 6-point Likert scale from 1 (hardly ever) to 6 (very). The scale consists of three sub-dimensions (5-items in each sub-scale) task crafting, cognitive crafting, and relational crafting. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the overall scale was $\alpha = .91$, task crafting = .87, cognitive crafting = .89, and for the relational crafting = .83.

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction questionnaire (Singh & Sharma, 2012) consists of 30-item rated on a 5-point scale. The respondent must select the option most accurately expresses their response from among five choices for each statement on the scale. A high overall score indicates a higher level of job satisfaction. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .97$.

Statistical analysis

Pearson's correlation and multiple linear regression analysis were used to ascertain the associations among the study variables.

Results

Data cleaning was done before data analysis. After that, linearity, homoscedasticity, and normality presumptions were tested. The normality of the variables was satisfactory. Skewness and kurtosis were both acceptable and remained within the range of ± 2 .

Next, the means, standard deviations, and Pearson's correlations were estimated to gain an initial overview of the relationships between the study variables. The correlation results $r(200) = .530$, $p .001$ two-tailed indicated a medium but highly significant and positive relationship between the scale of job crafting and job satisfaction (Table 2). Further, dimensions of task crafting ($r(200) = .403$, $p .001$),

relational crafting ($r(200) = .428, p .001$) and cognitive crafting ($r(200) = .483, p .001$) shares significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

Table 2. Preliminary and reliability analysis.

S. no	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	α
1	Job crafting	-	.808**	.826**	.831**	.530**	62.78	9.29	.90
2	Task crafting	-	-	.476**	.550**	.403**	20.27	3.99	.78
3	Relational crafting	-	-	-	.586**	.428**	20.82	4.09	.77
4	Cognitive crafting	-	-	-	-	.483**	21.87	3.51	.85
5	Job satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	81.11	15.82	.83

Notes: SD= Standard deviation, α = Cronbach's alpha.

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

* Correlation is significant at a 0.05 level.

Next, the results of regression analysis were analyzed. The model $F(77.526, 1), p = .000$ significantly predicts job satisfaction at both .01 and .05 level (2-tailed). Our regression model shows a significant influence of job crafting on the job satisfaction level of college teachers. R^2 value (.281) means that 28.1 percent variance in job satisfaction is because of the job crafting crating. This leads to acceptance of H1. job crafting positively significantly predicts job satisfaction.

Next, dimensions-wise analysis reveals that the model $(25.573, 3), p = .000$ is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). R^2 value (.287) reflects that 28.7 % of the variance in job satisfaction is because of the dimensions of job crafting (Table 3).

Table 3. Results for hypothesis testing using a Bootstrap Analysis With a 95% Confidence

S. No.	Predictors	β	t value	F value	R square	Sig.
1.	Job crafting	.903	8.80**	25.573	.287	.000
2.	Task crafting	.617	2.09*			
3.	Relational crafting	.717	2.41**			
4.	Cognitive crafting	1.29	3.56**			

The gradient of the regression line and strength of correlation between a predictor and outcome variable is indicated by the β value. The t value indicates the significance and direction of the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables.

For task crafting ($\beta = .617$; $t = 2.09$) and relational crafting ($\beta = .717$; $t = 2.41$) is significant at .01 level (Table 3). Thus, it leads to the acceptance of hypotheses H1(A) and H1(B). Further, cognitive crafting ($\beta = 1.29$; $t = 3.56$) was also significant at .01 level. This leads to the acceptance of H1(C) Cognitive crafting positively and significantly predicted job satisfaction.

The study assessed the impact of job crafting (overall and dimension-wise) on the job satisfaction level of the higher education teachers of the Jammu district. The results revealed a positive and significant direct effect of job crafting on job satisfaction.

Discussion and implications

Employee satisfaction and sustainability are intimately connected. This study encourages the growth of employees sustainable behavior resulting in personal resources to support sustainable development. Specific resources evolve and combine with other resources as a result of learning. Positive psychological consequences that follow sustainable behaviors are the hallmarks of healthy psychological functioning. These positive consequences include job satisfaction, employee well-being, perceived environment fit, authenticity at work, work engagement, job performance, physical and mental health, character strengths, feelings of self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation.

As expected, job crafting as sustainable behavior predicts the job satisfaction of higher education teachers. These results are supported by previous studies (Di Fabio, 2017b; Kira et al., 2010; Shang, 2022). Additionally, sustainable behavior enables staff members to translate existing resources—to combine them, rely on them in new ways, and discover fresh approaches to positively impact themselves, their workplaces, and the larger environment. Sustainable working is distinguished

by producing more than just happy, fleeting feelings of need fulfillment or motivation. It makes employees self-reliant in developing and sustaining their resources. So, job crafting is recommended as a dynamic means of achieving work goals that might enable employees to grow their resources balanced under changing conditions. Job crafting is reinforced in educational institutions by providing freedom on some issues, for instance, using alternate communication techniques wherever possible. Use of virtual channels to exchange information, such as teleconferencing, phone conversations, and email.

Instead of focusing on static and one-time job attributes, such an approach emphasizes people's dynamic and long-term work experiences (Kira, 2010). In addition, the present study also suggests that supervisors can participate in job crafting as it begins to substitute conventional job design processes and job requirements. The secret to gathering momentum, overcoming obstacles, fostering sustainable development, and improving employee well-being in organizations is a new managerial approach. This can be achieved through new leadership styles that demonstrate an understanding of how meaningful relationships are and how to create positive stories in organizational environments. Promoting sustainable behaviors should be mandated in educational institutions and the construction of public policy. Specific job crafting interventions in the form of training courses, workshops, and self-set crafting assignments will lead to the desired changes in employees and organizations. A current and upcoming challenge for the psychology of sustainability is the continuous research of sustainable behavior and the effect on beneficial social processes that contribute to improved physical and psychological well-being. Such a study needs to be reinforced with theoretical insights from various social sciences and other research fields.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study is not without its constraints. The study is confined to the colleges of Jammu district only (J&K state, India), with a convenience sampling technique used for data collection. This limits the generalizability of the results. Further, the

current study is cross-sectional. A longitudinal study should be conducted to bring out the long-term effects of the variables of the proposed research. The present study empirically tested a single psychological outcome of sustainable behavior. Future research must include more resources suggested in the study's conceptual model to address the teachers' sustainable development.

Conclusion

The study offered some initial concepts and thoughts for sustainable behavior that supports the growth of individual resources to promote sustainable development. The conceptual nature of the work is reinforced by empirical evidence, which draws on past research and our preliminary findings. The concepts presented in the paper need to be fully operationalized, and the idea of using job crafting as directing personal resources has to be tested in empirical research. Furthermore, we demand innovative methods for studying and implementing sustainable behavior that uses a longitudinal view to apprehend the active growth processes throughout an employee's career. This paper offered job crafting as a sustainable behavior to promote employees' job satisfaction. The need to promote well-being in institutions that struggle with the demanding and unpredictable shifting conditions of the 21st century could be considered the beginning of sustainable development.

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