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Unlocking the link between job crafting and individual work performance among Hospital nurses: the mediating effect of Strengths-based leadership

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Abstract

Nurses' individual work performance is central to delivering optimal patient care amid ongoing nursing shortages, making it important to identify factors that strengthen this performance. This study examines the mediating role of strengths-based leadership in the relationship between job crafting and individual work performance among nurses. A total of 209 staff nurses with more than one year of hospital experience were recruited from four hospitals in Kerala, India, between July and September 2026. Data were analysed using IBM SPSS 25.0 and Hayes' PROCESS macro. Job crafting showed a significant connection with strengths-based leadership (β=0.46, 95% CI=0.32-0.61), and strengths-based leadership encountered positive connection with individual work performance (β=0.14, 95% CI=0.03-0.24). Strengths-based leadership significantly mediated the relationship between job crafting and individual work performance (β=0.06,95% CI=0.01-0.13). The cross-sectional design limits causal inference, and the sample was drawn from a single Indian state, which may limit generalizability. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and test the model across other regions and healthcare systems. Hospital administrators in India and comparable healthcare contexts should invest in developing leaders' strengths-based capabilities, as this may help translate nurses' job crafting behaviours into measurable gains in individual performance and, ultimately, patient care. This study contributes to the job crafting and leadership literatures by identifying strengths-based leadership as a mechanism linking nurses' job crafting behaviours to their individual work performance, in an underrepresented healthcare setting.

Keywords: Nurses, Hospitals, Individual work performance, Mediation analysis, Job crafting, Strengths-based leadership

1. Introduction

Nurses play a vital part in providing quality care to the patients, and it is more important for hospitals to retain and manage the most skilled nurses in order to improve individual work performance . However, recruiting and retaining high-performing individuals is a difficult job for institutions . Job crafting is a prime method that could aid employers in overcoming these challenges . Job crafting might be defined as “a self-initiated change of employees' behaviours on physical qualities and relational of a particular job depending autonomously own knowledge and motivation” . Additionally, there is proof that individual work performance is affected by job crafting . As a result, it is essential to analyse factors affecting individual work performance to make further improvements in work performance.

Without ‘theory ’, there would be no focus on research, and as a result, this explains why in every research, one is anticipated to present one’s ‘theoretical’ framework . In the way of adding personal resources and job crafting, the extended Job Demand-Resource model was constructed to deeply explain motivational

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processes such as work engagement and performance . JD-R model indicates that job resources may set off the inspirational method of a person, after which affect person's attitude Previous study has depicted that "job crafting described as how much workers actively and proactively alter characteristics of their job able to seen in a inspirational process that allows job resources influence individual's attitudes and individual work performance" Studies on Finnish dentists and teachers proved that "where job demands are high, the association among job resources and work engagement is stronger". Since strengths-based leadership acts as a major driving force, subordinates' strength utilisation is considered an essential job resource . Strengths-based leadership is incredibly based on the belief that strengths facilitate personnel with the best chance of advancement ; . Strengths-based leadership is different from other kinds of leadership; it is a kind of positive leadership in which strengths-based leaders treat all subordinates equally and do not differentiate subordinate roles . Even though a few studies have used components of the JDR model to formulate hypotheses with regard to leadership and work engagement ; , this present analysis adds SBL as a crucial job resource within the JD-R model, including both processes.

SBL is a growing leadership construct that describes the behaviours which leaders use to motivate followers' strength use, identification, and development Improving healthcare quality in India is essential to achieve a higher level of performance by stimulating employees. As employees' strengths are considered the essential basis for encouraging staff to attain almost perfect work, the hospital industry is expected to execute more strengths-based leadership behaviours .

1. Theoretical framework and conceptual model

"The JD-R model is well-founded in addressing the particular difficulties that nurses encounter". Therefore, it is permissible for the JD-R model to describe why job crafting as an important job resource, may impact individual work performance, serving as a kind of workforce result as well as the intermediary mechanisms of strengths-based leadership

Despite the fact that several studies have been done based on job crafting among nurses to enhance the high level of nursing care, theory-based studies are required to act as an implementation aimed at learning in addition to describing individual work performance. As per the JD-R model, positive connectivity can be anticipated within job crafting, individual work performance, and strengths-based leadership. Accordingly, the main goal of this study is to determine the mediating influence of strengths-based leadership on the association between job crafting and individual work performance and to provide insights for developing ways to enhance individual work performance among nurses. The conceptual model in Figure 1 is framed based on JD-R theory.

2. Methodology

Research Design

The present study used empirical correlational research to check the intervening impact pertaining to strengths-based leadership upon job crafting as well as individual work performance based on the JD-R model and literature review.

Ethical consideration

The ethical review board provided ethical approval from Pondicherry University (IHEC/PU/2026/41/23-07-2026). After acquiring informed consent by describing the objective and the information provided in the research to the respondents. All the respondents were made aware that their involvement was voluntary and this might stop participating in the investigation at any stage without any sort loss of benefits.

Sample and procedure

Four hospitals in Kerala with more than 100 beds provided a convenient sample of the respondents. The requirements for inclusion were both full-time and part-time nurses who work in hospitals with greater than 100 beds. "And the respondents who have below one year of hospital experience were excluded as novices or

beginning nurses needed greater confidence to show competent practice had months or even years of training". To determine the minimum sample size, a priori power analysis was carried out with the help of G*Power to determine the optimal sample size needed, derived from the effect size of 0.15, an alpha level of 0.05, and a power of 0.95, so the sample size required was 119, as retrieved from . The final sample of 209 was greater than what was needed. In light of the dropout percentage, this questionnaire was given among 225 respondents. The 225 reprints were gathered, and data from 209 response forms served for the ultimate review once eliminating 16 reprints because of omitted data that is missing from the respondents.

Measures

Among respondents, basic characteristics seemed to comprise four parts: age, sex, marital status, and level of education, and also the employment-connected factors comprised four parts: hospital career, position, present working unit, and average monthly income.

Job crafting was evaluated making use of the job crafting measurement scale created by . This measurement instrument incorporated 21 items addressing 4 sub-dimensions: "increasing structural job resources, decreasing hindering job demands, increasing social job resources, and increasing challenging job demands". All the items were reviewed by respondents on a five-point Likert instrument (1 = never, 5 = often). A greater score showed greater job crafting. The Cronbach's α was observed at 0.926 for this research.

Strengths-based leadership was evaluated using this strengths-based leadership measurement scale designed by . The following measurement scale was developed for Chinese employees and was translated into an English-based scale by a professional translator. This scale is a two-dimensional strengths-based leadership scale with a total of 8 items; five items represent subordinate-focused strength-based leadership and three items represent supervisor-focused strengths-based leadership. The entire set of scale was evaluated by respondents based on a five-point Likert instrument starting from (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). A greater result showed higher strengths-based leadership. The Cronbach's α was observed at 0.925 for this research.

Individual work performance was evaluated with the help of the individual work performance scale originally designed by and adopted from the brief scale of . This scale is a 3-dimensional scale consisting of 18 items covering task performance, contextual performance, counter productive work behaviour. All the items of this scale have been evaluated from respondents based on 5 point likert instrument, comprising to (0 = "seldom" to 4 = "always" for task and contextual performance and 0 = "never" to 4 = "often" for counterproductive work behavior). A greater score showed greater individual work performance. The Cronbach's α was observed at 0.82 in this research.

2.1. Statistical Data Analysis

The information acquired was examined by utilising the aid of the IBM SPSS 25.0 program and also the PROCESS Macro. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to check the normality, and all of the variables fulfilled the normality requirement. Initially, the common and workplace characteristics based on the respondents were evaluated with frequency, percentage, mean, as well as standard deviation. Next, the extent of positive job crafting, strengths-based leadership, and individual work performance were assessed by mean and standard deviation. The association involving job crafting, strengths-based leadership, and individual work performance was measured using Pearson's correlation coefficient. In the fourth part the intermediary role of strengths-based leadership among the relationship linking job crafting and individual work performance was examined through the SPSS PROCESS Macro model , and the statistical significance of the mediating effect was verified using the bootstrapping approach with a 95% confidence interval.

3. Results

3.1. Basic and workplace characteristics of respondents

Among all the respondents, the majority had been women (94.3%), and the marital status was married of (74.6%), when the amount from a university for educational level (50.2%). When it comes to job-related characteristics. A large percentage of participants (39.2%) had less than 5 years, the staff nurses were found to be (93.3%), the active working unit served as the medical ward and critical care unit (60.1%), and the average monthly income corresponds to 20,000 to 30,000 (41.1%) (Table 1)

Table 1. Basic and workplace characteristics of respondents (N= 209)

Specifications	Sections	N(%) or M ±SD
Sex	Female	197 (94.3)
	Male	12 (5.7)
Age (years)	Below 25	44 (21.1)
	26-35	85(40.7)
	36-45	59(28.2)
	46 and above	21(10)
Marital Status	Married	156(74.6)
	Unmarried	52(24.9)
	Widow	1(0.5)
Educational Level	MSc. Nurse	3(1.4)
	BSc.Nurse	93(44.5)
	GNM	105(50.2)
	Other	8(3.8)
Total hospital Career (years)	Less than 5 years	82(39.2)
	5 to 10 years	53(25.4)
	10 to 15 years	31(14.8)
	Above 15 years	43(20.6)
Position	Staff Nurse	195(93.3)
	In charge	7(3.3)
	Nursing Supervisor	7(3.3)
Present Working Unit	Medical Ward	74(35.4)
	CCU	51(24.4)
	Obstetrics& Gynaecology	24(11.5)
	Surgical & Speciality Ward	20(9.6)
	Others (Emergency, Dialysis, Pediatrics)	40(19.1)
Average monthly income(in rupees)	Below 20000	44(21.1)
	20000 to 30000	86(41.1)
	30000 to 40000	48(23.0)
	Above 40000	31(14.8)
Source(s): Authors' own work		

3.2. Degrees of job crafting, strengths-based leadership, and individual work performance

The job crafting was 3.93±0.56 (range 1 to 5), and the subdomains were "increasing structural job resources" 4.21±0.64, "decreasing hindering job demands" 3.74±0.71, "increasing social job resources" 3.96±0.68, "increasing challenging job demands" 3.85±0.73. Strengths-based leadership scored 4.07±0.65 (range 1 to 5), and the subdomains were subordinate's strengths-based leadership 4.08±0.68, supervisor's own strengths-based leadership 4.05±0.68. The individual work performance was 3.21 ±0.48 (range 0 to 4), and plus the sub domains they were task performance 3.46±0.68, contextual performance 3.21 ±0.68, counterproductive behaviours 2.95 ±0.92 (Table 2)

Table 2. Degrees of job crafting, strength-based leadership and individual work performance

Variables	Range	Categories	M±SD

JC	1 to 5	Increasing structural job resources	4.21±0.64
		Decreasing hindering job demands	3.74±0.71
		Increasing social job resources	3.96±0.68
		Increasing challenging job demands	3.85±0.73
		Total	3.93±0.56
SBL	1 to 5	Subordinate's strength-based leadership	4.08±0.68
		Supervisor's own strength-based leadership	4.05±0.68
		Total	4.07±0.65
IWP	0 to 4	Task performance	3.46±0.68
		Contextual performance	3.21 ±0.68
		Counterproductive behaviors	2.95 ±0.92
		Total	3.21 ±0.48

Note(s): Job crafting (JC); Strengths-based leadership (SBL); and Individual work performance (IWP)
Source(s): Authors' own work

3.3. The Correlations among job crafting, strengths-based leadership, and individual work performance

Individual work performance showed a positive linkage to job crafting (r=0.352, p<0.001) and strengths-based leadership (r=0.404, p<0.001) (Table 3)

Table 3. The Correlations among job crafting, strengths-based leadership, and individual work performance

Variable	Job crafting	Strength-based leadership
	r(p)	r(p)
SBL	0.404	
	(<0.001)	
IWP	0.352	0.3
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)

Note(s): r = correlation
Source(s): Authors' own work

4.3 Relevant mediator's influence of strengths-based leadership considering the relation between job crafting and individual work performance

Normality and multicollinearity were checked prior to analysis. In order to verify the normality of the error term, the P-Plot was verified. The tolerance value was 1, and VIF was below 5, showing multicollinearity was absent. As shown in Table 4 and Fig. 1, the hypothesized three direct linkages and one indirect linkage all proved significant. In particular, job crafting positively affects strengths-based leadership (β =0.46, 95% CI = 0.32 to 0.61, R square = 0.16). Strengths-based leadership positively influenced individual work performance (β=0.41, 95% CI = 0.03 to 0.24, R square = 0.15). Job crafting moreover exhibited a small supportive influence on individual work performance (β= 0.23, CI = 0.11 to 0.35). The indirect effect size of strengths-based leadership on the connection among job crafting and individual work performance for the intermediary

influence analysis was statistically significant (β= 0.06, 95% CI = 0.01 to 0.13). The equations were adapted from and .

Table 4: The mediator's effect of strength-based leadership on job crafting and individual work performance

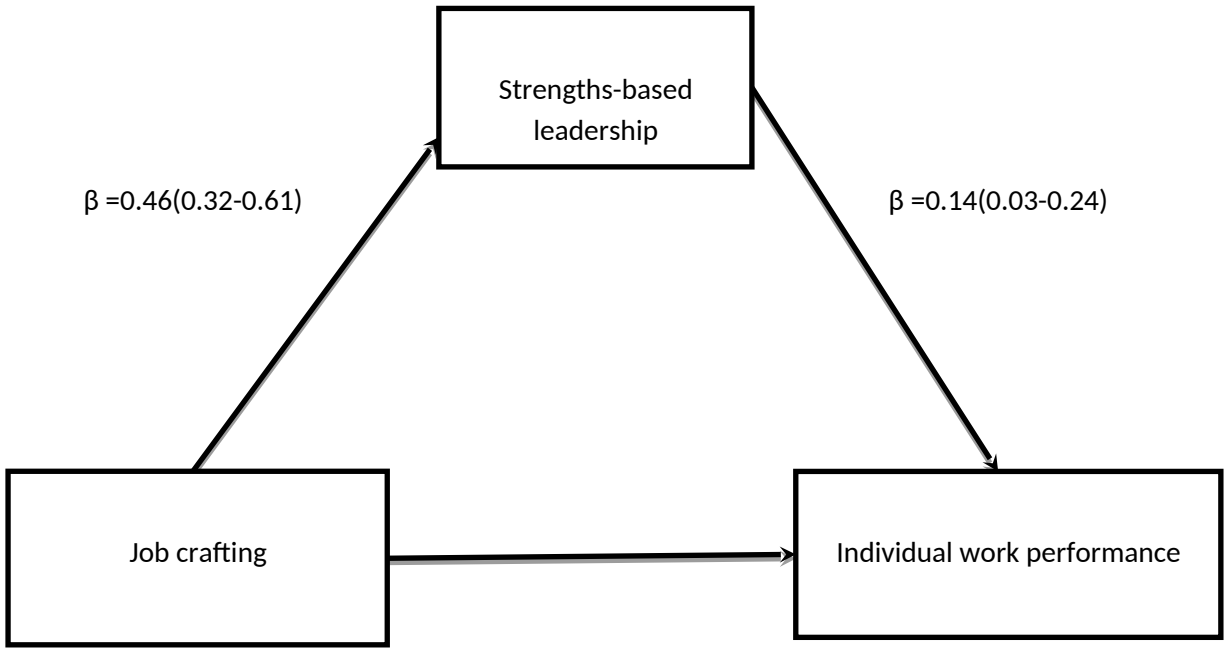
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	β	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	R square
JC(X)	SBL(M)	0.4683	0.0738	6.347	<0.001	0.3228	0.6138	0.1629
SBL(M)	IWP(Y)	0.1407	0.0522	2.6967	0.0076	0.0378	0.2436	0.1537
JC(X)	IWP(Y)	0.2382	0.0605	3.9344	<.001	0.1188	0.3576	
Indirect effect		0.0659	0.0312			0.0168	0.1383	
Direct effect		0.2382	0.0605			0.1188	0.3576	
Total effect		0.3041	0.0562			0.1932	0.4149	

Note(s): JC=Job crafting(X); SBL=Strength based leadership(M); IWP=Individual work performance(Y);

β = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE=standard error; LLCI=lower limit confidence interval;

ULCI =upper limit confidence interval

Source(s): Author's own work



β =0.23(0.11-0.35)

Indirect impact β =0.06 (0.01-0.13)

Total impact β = 0.30 (0.19-0.41)

Source(s): Author's own work

Figure 1. The mediator's effect of strengths-based leadership between job crafting and individual work performance

4. Discussion

Through this research, an essential contribution is made to nursing practice and research. To raise the level of patient care and performance of nurses, it is critical to understand how job crafting and strengths-based leadership impact on individual work performance . Measuring nurses' individual work performance and work engagement is essential due to worldwide shortage of nurses, which has worsened after COVID-19 .

The individual work performance of the respondents was 3.21 (range 1 – 5 points), which was conveyed as a level of moderation. Nursing workers from Kerala frequently mentioned dissatisfaction with their jobs because of undesirable work environments consisting of a shortage of staff, long working hours, and lower pay , which leads to a decrease in performance and work engagement . According to the systematic assessment of US and Canadian nurses' work engagement, mentioned that important role in encouraging a positive work environment, since nurses experience greater empowerment and engagement at work and thereby result in increased individual work performance . Nevertheless, nurses mentioning that they had an improved level of performance is additionally satisfying as well as inspirational about tomorrow because nurses represent the foundation with regard to the health system in Turkey and around the world . As a result, there is a need to identify the modifications in individual work performance, such as providing job resource development actions . Based on our findings, job crafting among hospital nurses significantly influences individual work performance directly and by using a mediating effect of strengths-based leadership. Job crafting among employees can bring a positive effect on workers in developing innovative abilities for solving problems, commitment, and satisfaction. The result of the study focused on the important impact of job crafting on employees' "task, contextual and counterproductive behaviours". Nurse managers should initiate frequent measurement of job performance levels, and additionally, psychological resilience in units along with critical occupational risk is needed to further take adequate action plans after considering the outcomes. By providing additional health care personnel, their workload can be lowered, and also working conditions and duration can be improved, finally bringing development in their individual work performance among nurses .

According to our study, the hypothesis is that strengths-based leadership mediates the relationship between job crafting and individual work performance among nurses, representing the effects of job crating about individual work performance may vary according to the level about strengths-based leadership despite similar job crafting. These findings verify that strengths-based leadership positively impacted individual work performance. This study advises that followers will feel more support from their leaders when they are given the chance to discover and develop their talents and are encouraged to exploit those strengths at work; as a result, there is an increase in engagement and ultimately lead to productive work performance . For example, giving workers the chance to improve their skills and abilities may boost their engagement at work since they can advance personally and take on more difficult jobs and improve job performance . The current study aims to understand detail perception about nurses on strengths-based leadership, job crafting, and its effect on individual work performance. Motivating employees to achieve excellent performance is crucial for any organisation in the context of China's high-quality development. As employees' strengths are the most vital basis for pushing employees to attain near–perfect performance, the hospital industry requires using more strengths-based leadership practices .

4.1. Practical implications

The result is significant for every health care provider and patient in raising job performance levels of health care practitioners. In particular, improving nurses' job performance, rather than increasing competition among medical organisations, also improves the efficient operation of the hospital system . Therefore, analysing individual work performance of nurses is essential to improve their work performance and intention to stay in the hospitals. This study mainly examined the mediating effect of strengths-based leadership in connection with job crafting and individual work performance between nurses. At last strengths- based leadership played a mediating role in the connection across job crafting along with individual work performance. According to , strengths-based leadership motivates nursing practitioners aimed at utilising their most efficient aspects at work, which improves their view pertaining to productive impacts. This

outcome demonstrates that is primarily important because it highlights the critical and primary role in enhancing nursing and patient outcomes.

4.2. Limitations and future research

Considering the relevance, this research has certain drawbacks. First, generalising about all clinical nurses is tough since the respondents were extracted from 4 hospitals in Kerala by utilising a convenience sampling method. Second, since it refers to a cross-sectional study, the components impacting individual work performance among the hospital nurses are unidentifiable. Finally, when developing a hypothetical model being investigate the role of mediating strengths-based leadership using the association within job crafting and individual work performance, we did not incorporate moderators of strengths-based leadership based on the JD-R model, such as organisational support and innovative culture that are crucial in supporting strengths-based leadership . At the end, future studies should analyse the current hypothesis in other professions in hospitals and other contexts.

5. Conclusion

According to the prolonged JD-R model, the study looked into the intermediary effect of strengths-based leadership within job crafting along with individual work performance among nurses in medium- and large-sized hospitals. These conclusions exhibited that strengths-based leadership and job crafting had an important connection along utilizing individual work performance among hospital nurses in Kerala. The above emergence of strengths-based leadership played a mediating role in the connection among job crafting as well as individual work performance.

Considering these results, our recommendations are as below: first, the study can be conducted in multiple locations apart from Kerala need to be undertaken to develop internal validity. Next, administrators of hospitals and nurses need to evaluate the influence of strengths-based leadership activity for nursing staff, which could improve job crafting and also individual work performance.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data supported in the study are not publicly available due to privacy, confidentiality, and ethical restrictions related to the participation of nurses. The participants did not provide consent for public sharing of their individual data.

AI Usage Disclosure

“The authors used Perplexity for language editing; all content was reviewed and verified by the authors.”

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, First Author; methodology, First Author; analysis, First Author; writing—original draft, First Author; writing—review and editing, all authors. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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