Job Crafting and Task Performance Among Teachers: Mediating Role of Burnout

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Excessive job demands and heavy workload adversely affect task performance of instructors. However, designing and reshaping of work could lessen burnout which ultimately enhances their task related performance. Data from teachers ($N = 300$) were collected on Job Crafting Questionnaire, Burnout Assessment Tool, and The Individual Work Performance Questionnaire using the convenience sampling approach in a cross-sectional study. The results indicated a significant and positive association of job crafting with task performance. Similarly, a significant negative association was observed between job crafting and burnout. Further analysis indicated that burnout mediated the relationship between job crafting and task performance. The findings of the study will help academicians in Pakistan to craft their job in such a way that gives them a sense of accomplishment or meaning. Teachers can be encouraged through various teaching and training modules to redesign their work-related tasks and deliver their best. Additionally, management of educational institutes can create and organize opportunities for teachers to shape their tasks and duties. Equipping teachers with sufficient self-help skills to reduce their burnout could change the dynamics of teaching in Pakistan.

Keywords. Job crafting, job performance, burnout, teachers, educational institutions

Technological advancements in the last two decades have changed workplace settings globally. This 21ˢᵗ century's competitive workplace requires exceptional performance from academicians

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(Khan & Yusoff, 2016). Therefore, not only academicians are facing competitive jobs but institutes are striving to inculcate innovative ideas to improve their employee's productivity and thereby improving their world ranking's (Alarcon & Edwards, 2011). The COVID-19 pandemic, with its economic crunch, brought its toll on the educational sector (Blustein et al., 2020). Instructors, in the post-pandemic world are readjusting to on-campus teaching after spending almost two and a half year in constant changing work context (online learning/work from home/on campus teaching) (Li & Yu, 2022; Obrad & Circa, 2021; Rehman & Khan 2021). The unprecedented pandemic left its mark on developing economies like Pakistan, radically enhancing the uncertainties that students and teachers in Pakistan already face (Rasheed et al., 2021). To cope with the aftereffects of the pandemic as well as the competitive market, teachers need to be of sound mind and body. However, the current context has drastically increased burnout and negatively affected their performance (Kniffin et al., 2021). The World Health Organization 2018, has also characterized burnout as a condition that occurs due to occupational stress that has not been effectively controlled yet (WHO, 2018). The consequences of burnout on performance are more severe and can even lead to disinterest among teachers (Eskic et al., 2019; Fan et al., 2021). Disinterest is defined as not being involved in a situation or event, showing no interest in it, and not getting any benefits or rewards from it (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). It emerges from the fact that teachers who believe that their work demands more than they get paid for it have higher levels of burnout than teachers who believe that their work and rewards are balanced and can perform better and have low work pressure (Goddard et al., 2006; cited in EI Helou et al., 2016).

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, and Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) model emphasizes that individual responses can lead to positive outcomes and decrease the negative outcomes (Hobfoll, 2002; Hobfull, 2002 & Demerouti et al., 2001). Therefore, keeping in view COR and JD-R model, the present research aims to assess how job crafting plays its role in minimizing negative outcome like burnout (despite of all the stressors) and enhance positive outcome such as teacher's task performance.

Formidable educational infrastructure provides sustenance to economic and social welfare of countries. Hence, to ensure this, skilled, capable, and satisfied teachers who can deliver high quality education to the students are essential. In Pakistan, an upsurge in educational institutes has been observed with increased demand of qualified and skilled teachers (Faisal et al., 2019). Almost half of the

teachers leave their profession within five years as they are required to do both teaching and research (Sims & Jerrim, 2020). Excessive workload results in teacher's absentees which directly impacts students' academic performance and disinterest (Aloe et al., 2014). Currently, among 203 universities enlisted with Higher Education Commission, 81 are private and 122 are public sectors as compared to a total of 153 Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) in 2013 (HEC, 2019; Ping, 2021). Jang Development Reporting Cell compared data of 189 nations from World Economic Forum, UNESCO, 2016, and Economic Survey of Pakistan. Pakistan was ranked at 9th (from the bottom) for student to teacher ratio. These statistics implied minimal teacher student interaction due to increased workload and job demand (EduVision, 2019). As per Education Statistics (2007-2017), the number of faculty members declined in public sector universities in Pakistan, and with an increasing number of universities this decline further reflects the gravity of the situation (Hanafi & Abuzar, 2021). This decline can be attributed to the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as well as the job demands of the teachers. Not only these teachers, across all HEIs, are managing teaching, but they are handling most of the managerial tasks along with their research projects. One of the main goals of educational institutions is to produce high-quality research and teaching, which leads to burnout among faculty members at universities. The primary cause of this is a shortage of facilities and a research environment (Khan et al., 2014). Faculty members are still facing challenges as a result of their demanding jobs, hefty workloads, and publication projects due to which work-life balance is becoming harder (Adil & Kamal, 2020; McCarthy et al., 2016). For instance, teachers are encouraged to engage in innovative research and look for opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues in order to enhance the quality and quantity of their research publications (Xie et al., 2024). Thus, job crafting is one of the important factors in contemporary higher education (Xie et al., 2024). Teachers must redesign their work to increase work performance in response to the intense workload and high pressure imposed by university ranking systems (Tian & Lu, 2017).

These stressors along with growing number of students, to meet the financial demands of HEIs, contribute to burnout and poor performance of teachers (Faisal et al., 2019; Gergersen et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2019; Subon & Sigie, 2016). Moreover, in spite their susceptibility to burnout and other problems, they are often left underrepresented occupational group in organizational science studies (Adil & Kamal, 2020).

Job related burnout, considered as one of the biggest issues affecting teachers (Albertsen et al., 2010; Chang, 2009; Maslach & Jackson, 1981), negatively impact both organization and employee, in the form of, turnover and poor performance (Bhatti et al., 2011; Chang, 2009; Leiter & Maslach 1988; Swider & Zimmerman 2010). It has been reported to affect between 30-40% of the teaching population and induce detrimental effects (García-Carmona et al., 2019). Countries such as Ukraine, have been working on identifying factors to prevent negative feelings experienced by teachers (Ivanchenko et al., 2022). However, in a post pandemic world, lower-middle-income countries like Pakistan are going through transitional phase (Rajarajeswari, 2010) and with job demands expanded to a greater extent than before, with limited resource allocation, the workload has increased significantly (Abbas & Roger, 2013).

In this context, Bakker et al. (2012) highlighted job crafting as the prominent factor that can reduce burnout, as employees alter the nature of their work by reshaping and redesigning their work tasks that better suits their needs. Job crafting is the process of identifying employment based on physical, social, and cognitive level of job characteristics that promotes performance (Tims et al., 2013; Laurence et al., 2010). It is characterized as an action that employees perform to design and mold the work identity and workloads by changing the work and executing it to overcome job demands (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Based on JD-R model, Tims et al. (2012) presented and formulated an alternative conceptualization of job crafting and defined it as an adjustment and modifications that employees make to maintain a balance between the demands of their employment and the resources of their occupations within the bounds of their abilities and requirements. Job crafting has a vital role in educational settings and acts as a predictor of work effectiveness (Bashir et al., 2021; Tims et al., 2013). Therefore, individuals who redesign and redefine their work tasks act as a resource to successfully raise the likelihood of positive job outcomes and protect against unfavorable events (Singh & Singh, 2018; Zhang et al., 2021). The JD-R model further asserts job crafting's significant part in fostering positive results and assistance in proactively coping with stressors as well as burnout (Bakker & Demorouti, 2007; Taris, 2006). Consequently, job crafting improves job performance by preventing employee burnout (Demerouti et al., 2015; Petrou et al., 2015). Similarly, Singh and Rajput (2021) reviewed job crafting and highlighted improved job performance, job satisfaction, and person-job-fit as benefits of job design. They further asserted that employees who instill creativity in their work are more likely to experience less burnout as well as

enhance and sustain their job performance levels. However, as per the researcher's knowledge, only Khan et al. (2018) have highlighted positive impact of job crafting on the performance of Pakistani teachers. In light of this, it can be said that job crafting is effective among Pakistani teachers.

According to JD-R literature, to accomplish maximum productivity, organizations should provide workers with enough job tasks and resources, such as feedback, social support, and a range of skill sets. Job demands such as long working hours, workload, peer conflict, poor administrative support, ambiguity of roles (Collie et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2011, 2015; cited in Silva et al., 2023) lead to burnout (Jomuad et al., 2021; Silva et al., 2023) that affect the teacher's performance (Jomuad et al., 2021) while job resources such as positive and supportive relations with colleagues, and administration have a profound effect on the teacher's performance. Based on JD-R model, this research proposed that when teachers redefine their job tasks by increasing their job resources, it will reduce their level of burnout and enhance their job performance. Likewise, COR theory states (Hobfoll & Shirom 2000), job resources are central when job demands are high. Thus, in light of the COR and JD-R models, the current study intends to evaluate the role that job crafting plays in reducing adverse outcomes, such as burnout (despite all the stressors), and enhancing favorable outcomes, such as task performance for teachers.

Method

Based on the literature review and research questions, the following hypotheses were postulated.

Objectives

1. To examine the association between job crafting, burnout, and task performance among teachers.
2. To assess the mitigating role of burnout between job crafting and job performance of teachers.

Hypotheses

Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Job crafting will be positively correlated with job performance and negatively correlated with burnout of teachers.

2. Burnout will have a negative association with the job performance of teachers.

3. Task performance will be mediated by job crafting through burnout.

Measures

Job Crafting Questionnaire (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013)

This 21-item instrument is used to evaluate the crafting behaviors in tasks, cognitive, and relational crafting on a 6-point Likert scale with 5 items in each subscale. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of the scale ranged from .83 to .91 (Slemp et al., 2013).

Burnout Assessment Tool (Schaufeli et al., 2020)

Burnout among teachers was assessed through 23 items instrument on a 5-point Likert scale and assessed core symptoms (exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive impairment, and emotional impairment) and secondary symptoms of burnout (psychological stress and psychosomatic symptoms). Cronbach's alpha for the primary dimension ranged from .90 - .92 (Schaufeli et al., 2020). There are no reverse-coded items in this scale and high scores indicated a higher level of burnout and low scores were an indication of lower level of burnout at respective core symptoms.

The Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (Koopmans et al., 2014).

The job performance of teachers was assessed through task performance, contextual performance and counter productive work behavior on 18 items scale. The scale assessed task and counter productive work behavior on 5 items each and contextual performance on 8 items performance on a 5-point Likert rating scale. The Cronbach alpha reliability ranged from .79 to .89 (Koopmans et al., 2014).

Sample

The sample entails teachers at school, college, and universities (*N* = 300) from different educational institutes of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Both male (*n* = 150) and female (*n* = 150) teachers participated in the present research and most of them were married, living in a nuclear family system and were from urban areas. Most of the participants stated that they were happy with their jobs. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed while only three hundred and

ten questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 77.5%. A correlational cross-sectional research design was employed in the present study.

Procedure

Participants were recruited for the study using convenient and purposive sampling methods at their respective school, colleges, and universities. Ethical approval for the present research was taken from the Institutional Review Board. Participants were approached after receiving approval from the authors to use scales. Participants were briefed regarding the study, its purpose, and implications before initiating the research process. All responses were kept anonymous to avoid and maintain confidentiality. Similarly, participants were conveyed that they can withdraw from the study at any moment if they don't want to participate without any compulsion.

Results

The Cronbach alpha reliabilities of all scales and subscales of the present study ranges from a satisfactory range of $\alpha = .80$ to .90. Based upon these values, it can be concluded that all scales were reliable to use (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Furthermore, Table 1 indicated normal distribution of data with skewness and kurtosis in normal range.

Table 1: *Correlation Between all the Study Variables (N = 300)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Task Crafting	-								
Cognitive Crafting	.72**	-							
Relational Crafting	.60**	.68**	-						
Job Crafting	.88**	.91**	.86**	-					
Burnout Core Symptoms	-.31**	-.34**	-.25**	-.34**	-				
Burnout Secondary Sym	-.36**	-.35**	-.26**	-.37**	.72**	-			
Task Performance	.39**	.40**	.34**	.43**	-.37**	-.41**	-		
Contextual Performance	.40**	.41**	.32**	.42**	-.31**	-.35**	.68**	-	
Counter-Productive W B	-.21**	-.23**	-.22**	-.25**	.46**	.43**	-.31**	-.08	-
α	.87	.87	.81	.93	.92	.91	.83	.87	83
M	4.3	4.53	4.28	4.36	2.45	2.36	2.96	2.89	1.14
SD	1.10	1.08	1.04	.95	.69	.88	.75	.75	.97
Skewness	-.77	-1.08	-.70	-.98	.42	.71	-.86	-.70	.86
Kurtosis	-.05	.76	-.13	.60	-.68	-.44	.22	-.05	.04

Note. Sym = Symptoms; WB = Work Behavior.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

These findings of the Pearson correlation analysis illustrated that job crafting, and its subscales have a significant positive association with two subscales of the work performance and negative association with counter-productive work behavior as well as with burnout and all of its subscales. Similarly, burnout indicated negative association with two subscales of work performance while positive association with counter-productive work behavior.

Based on the finding of the correlation analysis, mediation analysis was carried out by keeping the three basic steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) that are significant positive association between outcome and predictor variable, significant association between predictor and mediation, and significant association between mediator and outcome variable.

Table 2: *Mediating Role of Burnout between Job Crafting and ask Performance of Teachers (N = 300)*

Model	B	SE	p	CI (Lower)	CI (Upper)
Model without Mediator					
Constant	1.49	.19	.00	1.12	1.85
Job Crafting—Task Performance (c)	.34**	.04	.00	.26	.42
R^2 (Y, X)	.18				
Models with Mediator					
Model 1: Burnout Core Symptoms as Dependent Variable					
Constant	3.53	.18	.00	3.18	3.88
Job Crafting—Burnout Core Symptoms (a)	-.25**	.04	.00	-.33	-.17
R^2	.12				
Model 2: Task Performance as Dependent Variable					
Constant	2.46	.27	.00	1.92	3.00
Burnout Core Symptoms — Task Performance (b)	-.28**	.04	.00	-.40	-.16
Job Crafting —Task Performance (c')	.27**	.06	.00	.19	.35
R^2 (Y, M, X)	.24				

Note. $^*p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$.

Table 2 illustrates that job crafting positively predicts task performance of teachers accounting for 18% of the variance. However, the variance has increased to 24% after adding mediator in model 2.

Figure 1: Mediating Effect of Burnout Core Symptoms in Predicting through Job Crafting
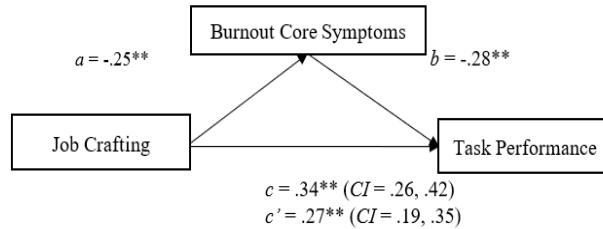
The results illustrated a positive association between job crafting and task performance while a negative association of both was apparent with burnout. The findings indicated that burnout mediated between job crafting and job performance of teachers. Overall, the results supported the hypotheses of the study.

Discussion

The present research aimed to assess the role of job crafting in mitigating the negative outcomes on teachers. The findings of the study supported hypotheses and indicated that job crafting plays a significant role in reducing burnout of teachers and enhances their task related performance. Further, correlation analysis demonstrated a positive association between job crafting and task performance among teachers (Geldenhuys et al., 2021; Leana et al., 2009; Moreira et al., 2022; Nagarajan et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2021). It can be inferred that job crafting helps teachers to be enthusiastic in their work-related tasks as they craft them by altering the nature of their work or taking advice from their co-workers (Esmaeili et al., 2019; Shang, 2022; Siddiq et al., 2022). Furthermore, proactive behavior of teachers can result in the creation of resources for the workplace, making it more fascinating and satisfying. Crafting the work tasks helps the employees in increasing their job resources that helps employees in boosting their motivation and enable them to successfully adapt to work situations. This improves the performance of employees (Demerouti et al., 2017; cited in Yadav & Dhar, 2024).

Similar to other collectivistic culture (Japan and China), where consideration for others is highly prized, employees in Pakistan consider how their decision may influence their coworkers as well (Chu et al., 1999). This positive gesture strengthens their social relations at work and ultimately improves their task accomplishments (Ibarra, 1993). Additionally, effective communication skills help and

direct them in influencing their coworkers, enabling them to receive support and assistance quickly and readily, which consequently motivates them to assist their coworkers in increasing their job passion (Nguyen et al., 2021). Teachers proactively optimize their job demands and resources in the workplace that helps them to improve their work tasks.

Additionally, job crafting was negatively associated with burnout (Hearn, 2022). The findings were in line with the previous literature (Chen at al., 2014; Singh & Singh, 2018; Singh & Rajput, 2021) which indicates that job crafting minimizes the effect of burnout by allowing workers to control their stress level that have a profound effect on performance of an individual. In Asian cultures, individuals often seek social support from family and friends (Jibeen, 2016). Hence, it can be concluded that teachers seek new friendships and maintain interactions with their colleagues to facilitate their job in a tranquil setting and sustain group harmony.

The findings confirmed mediation effect of burnout core symptoms between job crafting and task performance. As teachers design their tasks and environment, they feel less exhausted and eventually can perform better (Gordon et al., 2018, Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2016). According to Mukundan and Ahour (2011), teacher's burnout can contribute to negative behavior of students towards their teachers and learning process. To avoid such circumstances, job crafting acts as a job resource and minimizes burnout (Lee & Wolf, 2019). Workload of teachers in Pakistan can be an exhausting factor and can have detrimental effects on their performance and mental health. However, findings indicated that implying job crafting in the job could provide an additional resource that could control exhaustive feelings and eventually improves efficiency and performance of teachers. Hence, it is recommended that educational institutions should encourage teachers to practice job crafting.

Conclusion and Implications

To sum up, it's important to comprehend the importance of job crafting and how it affects teacher's ability to accomplish their work tasks. The findings of the present study will help educational institutions in spreading awareness about job crafting and improving educational resources while funding various intervention-based programs (training and workshops) that could aid teachers in dealing with stressors effectively.

Future Directions

The study utilized JD-R and COR theory to examine the association between job crafting and job performance. Future research can use and test other models and theory to examine job crafting. Additionally, comprehensive data from all educational institutes (school/college/universities) can provide a better understanding of the proposed association.

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