

The Impact of Proactive Personality and Job Crafting on Flourishing: Examining the Mediating Role of Thriving at Work

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Abstract

Employee flourishing is gaining importance in research. The existing study has investigated proactive personality, job crafting, thriving at work, and flourishing as individual constructs; however, the combined contribution of these factors to flourishing remains largely unexplored. This paper will develop a framework to explain how thriving at work serves as a mediator, enabling employees to function more effectively within the organisation. Building upon the Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) model and Social Exchange Theory (SET), the research commences with an understanding of how the antecedent proactive personality and job crafting impact the mediator thriving at work, which later impacts the dependent construct flourishing. This research will help understand how placing thriving at work as a mediator affects employees with a proactive personality and job crafting, impact flourishing i.e., moving beyond traditional performance outcomes. This paper is based on insights from positive organizational behaviour and motivational factors. It will integrate existing research and propose a conceptual framework and theoretical propositions in the area of employee well-being. This paper will also provide directions for future research and help the organizations understand factors that need to be prioritized to support a proactive personality, effective job design, and enable employees to thrive and flourish.

Keywords: job crafting, proactive personality, thriving at work, flourishing

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1. Introduction

In today's modern organizations, employee well-being is a key and central concern due to job complexity and autonomy. Today, organizational success is not just measured by performance but also by employees' health and well-being (Medina-Garrido et al., 2017). Thus, flourishing is important, which is defined as a combination of emotional health, mental health and maintaining positive relationships with others (Keyes, 2005). Furthermore, flourishing and employee well-being are closely connected and overlapping constructs. Flourishing is a state where employees experience the highest level of employee well-being, encompassing holistic well-being (Fortuna et al., 2025). To flourish in the organisation, employees are no longer passive recipients; instead, they take the initiative to shape their jobs and grow within the organisation. One way to do this is through job crafting (Tims & Parker, 2020). For employees to craft their jobs, they need to take initiative and seek opportunities, which requires a proactive personality (Parker et al., 2010); therefore, a proactive personality and job crafting are important precursors to the study. In past research, authors have concluded that such behaviour leads to motivation and employee engagement (Petrou et al., 2018; Tims et al., 2012). Thriving at work is defined as the combination of learning and vitality.

Additionally, thriving at the workplace leads to enhanced performance and satisfaction (Kleine et al., 2019), as well as innovation (Zhao et al., 2025). Studies in the past have been done linking proactive personality and thriving at work (Jiang, 2017), job crafting and thriving at work (Mansour & Tremblay, 2021) and thriving at work and flourishing (Ho & Chan, 2022), but the knowledge and understanding of these variables and association between proactive personality, job crafting, and thriving at work is underexplored (Zhao et al., 2025). However, the knowledge or understanding of how thriving at work acts as a mediator between proactive personality, job crafting, and flourishing remains scattered. Addressing these gaps, the present study examines the relationship between personal characteristics and proactive work behaviour, adding to organisational work behaviour.

2. Theoretical foundations

To explain the link among the variables on which this study is based, it draws on Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. SET suggests that employees act positively only when they seek opportunities or growth. This means that employees will take the initiative to alter their role only when they have good working conditions and a positive work environment (Shore et al., 2009). Thus, proactive personality and job crafting are identified as such behaviours that helps employees take initiative to alter their job according to task, relational, and cognitive crafting. The JD-R model further explains how this proactive personality and crafting help employees increase resources and decrease hindering challenges, as per their ability, so that they can enhance their motivation and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)

3. Literature review and a brief justification of the proposed research project

3.1 Proactive personality and Thriving at work

Proactive personality (PP) is defined as the "relatively stable tendency to effect environmental changes" (Bateman & Crant, 1993). According to them, it helps employees recognise individual differences and the extent to which individuals take steps to influence their environments. According to Parker et al. (2010), a proactive personality involves foreseeing and minimising difficulties, as well as seizing opportunities to create and capitalise on them. Past reviews have concluded that a proactive personality has a positive impact on work and career outcomes, including career adaptability (Jiang, 2017), job performance (Saleem et al., 2024), and job satisfaction when mediated through social support (Yang et al., 2023). Furthermore, according to Kleine et al. (2019), thriving at work occurs when employees experience both a sense of vitality and a sense of learning. Moreover, research was conducted to explore the link between proactive personality and thriving, and the results showed that a positive relationship exists between the two (Alikaj et al., 2020). There is sufficient research on proactive personality and other variables; however a notable lack of research on the relationship between proactive personality and thriving at work. Hence, Liu et al. (2021) recommend studying additional personality traits, such as proactive personality, and their influence on thriving at work. Additionally, Merkuž et al. (2024) suggested that further research be conducted on the relationship between proactive personality and thriving at work. Therefore, we propose that:

Proposition 1: Proactive personality is positively associated with Thriving at work.

3.2 Job crafting and Thriving at work

Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) identified that employees craft their jobs by altering cognitive, task, and relational boundaries. Individuals can change their work boundaries by first shaping their tasks, either by adding more job responsibilities or narrowing their job scope. Additionally, Ghitulescu (2006) also defined assignment crafting as the mechanisms by which people conceptualize and execute tasks, create relationships with others to accomplish work, and assign value and priority to their occupations. Furthermore, Grant & Parker (2009) defined job crafting as building enriching experiences for the workforce while providing the skills, motivation, and opportunities for proactive behaviour, such as job crafting. Research indicates that job crafting has a positive relationship with job satisfaction and employee engagement (Naasani & Alotaibi, 2021), as well as with innovative work behaviour, which helps individuals generate and implement new ideas (Yohannes, 2024). Spreitzer et al. (2005) defined thriving at work as a state where an employee encounters both vitality (i.e., when an employee feels energized) and learning (i.e., when the employee acquires new knowledge). Research was conducted to investigate the relationship between job crafting and thriving at work, and the results indicated a strong and positive correlation between the two (Li et al., 2025). Thus, some studies have stated that all dimensions of job crafting in relation to thriving at work require further studies (Mansour & Tremblay, 2021). Additionally, Kleine et al. (2019) suggested that future studies on agentic work behaviour, which helps employees thrive, should be conducted. In contrast, the other dimensions have yet to be studied with respect to thriving at work, and therefore, we propose that:

Proposition 2: Job crafting has a positive effect on Thriving at work.

3.3 Thriving at work and Flourishing

Thriving at work is a multidimensional construct that encompasses not only the absence of distress but also the presence of positive psychological states and optimal functioning; hence, it goes beyond traditional well-being measures to capture an individual's capacity to grow, develop, and flourish (Ryff, 1989). Thriving at work is also

applicable in the workplace context. Organizations that promote thriving at work among employees tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction and performance (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Thriving at work is associated with better physical and mental health outcomes, and interventions focused on enhancing thriving at work can lead to improved overall well-being (Keyes, 2005). Flourishing is defined as a comprehensive state of well-being, encompassing both hedonic well-being, i.e., happiness and satisfaction, and eudaimonic well-being, i.e., personal growth and meaningful relationships (Schotanus-Dijkstra et al., 2016). According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), flourishing often involves a state of flow, where individuals are fully engaged in activities that challenge and utilise their skills to the fullest extent. Such experiences contribute to a sense of well-being and accomplishment. Further, flourishing enables employees to feel good and function effectively, while also allowing them to experience personal growth and well-being (A'yunnisa et al., 2024). Kleine et al. (2019) suggest that many studies merge vitality and learning to understand their impact on outcomes. However, they propose that further research is needed using polynomial regression to understand how each component interacts with the outcome. Recent reviews have demonstrated that flourishing is influenced by various factors, including perceived organizational support (Ho & Chan, 2022), job autonomy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), and personality traits (Rule et al., 2024). However, the variables of proactive personality, job crafting, and thriving at work have not been studied together, and the concept of thriving at work and its impact on flourishing have received limited attention. Thus, we propose that:

Proposition 3: Thriving at work is positively related to Flourishing.

3.3.1 Thriving at work mediates the relationship between Proactive personality and Flourishing

Jiang (2017) analyzed the relationship between proactive personality, thriving, and career adaptability, concluding that employees high in proactive personality take initiative and create a positive work environment, which in turn helps them thrive at work and later enables them to handle career challenges and changes effectively. Furthermore, Alikaj et al. (2021) examined the impact of proactive personality on creative behaviour when mediated by thriving, concluding that proactive personality leads to creative behaviour, which is facilitated by thriving, i.e., continuous learning and feeling energised. Zhai et al. (2020) concluded that support from colleagues and supervisors leads to greater learning and vitality, which in turn promotes thriving at work and improves overall well-being. Alwahhabi et al. (2023) found that thriving at work acts as a mediator between transformational leadership and employees' innovative work behaviour, concluding that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employees' innovative work behaviour. (Zhai et al., 2020b) identified the relationship between workplace support and life satisfaction, which is part of flourishing, and concluded that thriving at work fully mediated the relationship between workplace support and life satisfaction – a key indicator of flourishing. Hence, further research is required to understand how thriving at work mediates the relationship with respect to well-being and flourishing (A'yunnisa et al., 2024). Thus, based on the above literature, it is concluded that there is minimal research on how thriving at work mediates the relationship between proactive personality and flourishing. Thus, building on the existing literature, it is proposed that:

Proposition 3a: Thriving at work will mediate the relationship between Proactive personality and Flourishing.

3.3.2 Thriving at work mediates the relationship between Job crafting and Flourishing

Mansour & Tremblay (2021) examined the relationship between supportive leadership, job crafting, and thriving at work, demonstrating that when employees are supported by their leaders and individual factors, such as job crafting, make them feel more energetic and encourage continuous learning, ultimately leading to a thriving at work environment. Li et al. (2025) found that when employees utilize their natural strengths at work, they are more willing to craft their jobs, which in turn leads to increased vitality and learning, ultimately helping them thrive. Zoogah et al. (2025) empirically discussed how employees thrive in high-demanding and harsh conditions, which enables them to flourish later. Thus, from the above literature, we can conclude that individual papers on job crafting lead to thriving, and thriving at work leads to flourishing. Demerouti et al., (2015) have investigated the relationship between job crafting and flourishing, mediated by work engagement and suggest that further research is required with different mediators. Thus, thriving at work as a mediator will be considered, as there is limited insight into thriving at work as a mediator between job crafting and flourishing. Hence, the following is proposed:

Proposition 3b: Thriving at work mediates the relationship between Job crafting and Flourishing.

3.4 Proactive personality and Flourishing

Employees with a proactive personality do not merely respond when the situation demands; instead, they take initiative, identify the opportunity, and influence their work environment (Crant, 2000). Furthermore, they strive to enhance their environment by adopting innovative approaches to work (Kilic et al., 2024). Thus, employees who are actively involved in shaping their roles bring about positive change and also seek opportunities to learn and grow. Such behaviour reflects employees flourishing where they not only perform but also feel positive overall well-being at work (Redelinguys et al., 2019). Prior studies have shown that a proactive personality has a positive impact on career adaptability and growth (Wang et al., 2021), job crafting and work engagement (Vermooten et al., 2019), and turnover intention (Wang et al., 2024). Few authors have also examined the relationship between proactive personality and mental well-being (Jawahar et al., 2024), as well as positive emotions (Fu et al., 2024). They have concluded that proactive personality has a positive impact on both mental well-being and positive emotions, which are also core elements of flourishing. That means flourishing encompasses both feeling good and functioning well (Burns et al., 2022). Thus, the overall review concludes that there is a positive relationship between proactive personality; however, a gap still exists regarding how individual traits, like proactive personality, directly impact flourishing (Burns et al., 2022). Therefore, it is proposed that:

Preposition 4: Proactive personality is positively related to flourishing.

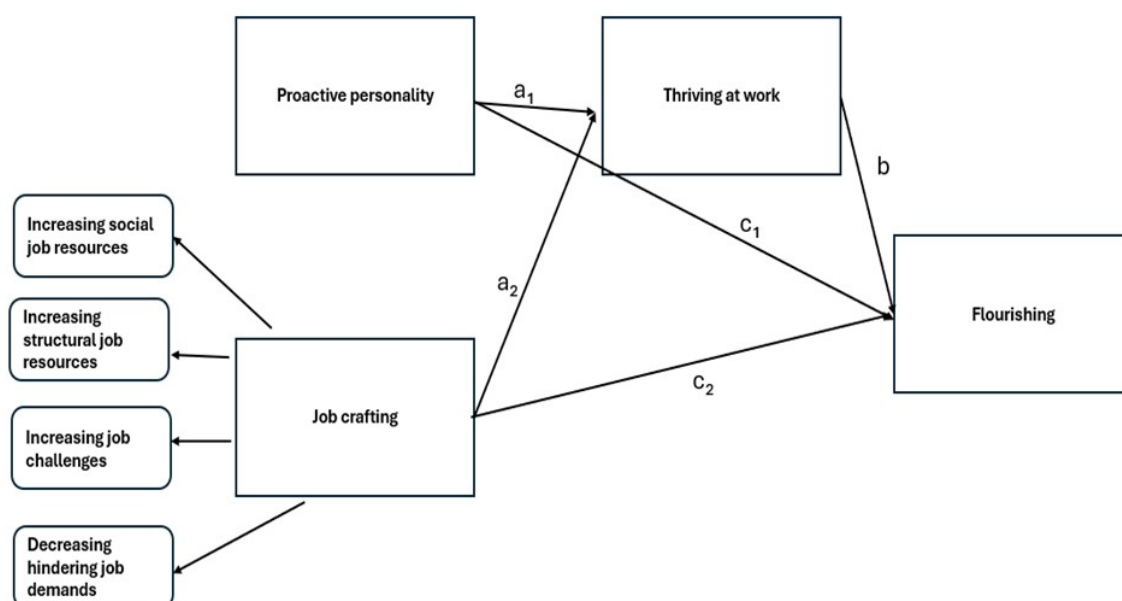
3.5 Job crafting and Flourishing

Job crafting is defined as employees modifying their role, like increasing or decreasing job demands and resources. Employees adjust their tasks by adding job resources and reducing hindering demand, thereby aligning them with their abilities. Earlier reviews had concluded that job crafting adds meaning and purpose to work (van den Heuvel et al., 2015), and enhances work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Additionally, it is also defined as a continuous and self-initiated process that alters social interactions and promotes personal growth and development (Petrou et al., 2018). Further, it impacts employee well-being and job performance, which are essential elements of flourishing (Robledo et al., 2019). Recent studies have shown that job crafting impacts overall life satisfaction, which in turn enhances well-being and contributes to flourishing (Shi et al., 2022). Therefore, we propose that:

Preposition 5: Job crafting is positively related to Flourishing.

4.1 Conceptual framework:

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



5. Theoretical contributions

This paper makes several crucial, meaningful contributions to existing studies. Firstly, it contributes to the proactive personality literature by highlighting how it enhances employees' vitality and learning, i.e., thriving, which is under-examined in an organisational context. Secondly, it advances the job crafting theory by highlighting job crafting as a behavioural process and how it helps employees alter their jobs by adding job resources and demands, which later allows them to thrive at work. Thirdly, by placing thriving at work as mediated between antecedents (i.e., proactive personality, job crafting) and outcome (i.e., flourishing). It helps to understand how learning and vitality contribute to the broader term of flourishing. Ultimately, this model integrates the JD-R model and social exchange theory to enhance the understanding of how employee well-being evolves.

6. Practical implications

This paper offers many practical implications for managers, leaders, and HR professionals within organisations. This paper will help them understand the factors that contribute to learning and vitality, which will later enable them to introduce or enhance practices that support employees flourishing at work. The managers can recognise the employees who are proactive and provide them with the support and resources they need to adapt their job to their competence and abilities. HR professionals can identify the training required by the employee, which is a core component of thriving, i.e., learning, and then strengthen their learning and development within the organisation. Such employees, who are acquiring new skills and learning, will maintain vitality and experience a sense of flourishing within the organisation. According to the JD-R model, employees who are provided with resources such as autonomy, support, and feedback help the employee to flourish (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2016). Additionally, managers and leaders can incorporate social exchange theory in the workplace, motivating employees to invest more actively in their work. The organisation can integrate both theoretical concepts into the workplace and create a policy that supports employee well-being and long-term organisational survival.

7. Directions for future research

The scholars can validate the propositions highlighted in this paper in a real organisational setting to identify if the relationship exists among these variables. Researchers can explore the relationships among variables across different industries, such as hospitality, education, healthcare, manufacturing and not-for-profit organizations, to identify trends and outcomes. A longitudinal study can also help researchers understand the impact of proactive personality, job crafting, and flourishing. Additionally, an empirical study could be undertaken to ascertain the propositions. Also, other mediating variables can be considered to understand the impact of proactive personality and job crafting on flourishing.

8. Conclusion

Thus, this paper seeks to explain how proactive behaviour and job crafting are important antecedents for the outcome flourishing when mediated by psychological mechanisms thriving at work. It shows that employees who take personal initiative and modify their jobs add to the employee's overall well-being. Thus, research suggests that proactive personality develops over time, and when employees seek growth and opportunity, they modify their task, relational, and cognitive areas on the job. Such behaviour helps the employee learn, develop, and grow more, which ultimately leads to flourishing in the organisation. Overall, this study provides a successful direction for future research and proposes practical implications for organisations that wish to help employees grow not only in terms of performance but also to create a healthier and more fulfilling workplace.

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