

Job Crafting and Employee Well-being: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Sector IT Organizations

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Abstract

Harnessing the potential of a sustainable and employed workforce brings massive benefits for the workforce and the organization by unlocking opportunities for a harmonious growth, prosperity and success. Pandemic and various macro and micro level factors bring disturbances and opportunities, building excessive pressure on employees and reducing well-being. Job crafting empowers employees to mediate such uncertainties by giving them the control to modulate their work landscape in the best possible manner with negligible or no organizational resources. Thus, by achieving a better fit with their job with the help of job crafting, they create a sustainable work environment significantly reducing attrition and enhancing well-being. Understanding the organizational differences between working in public and private sector organizations, aids in making informed decisions on how to best cater to employee and organizational expectations, leading to better quality of work and well-being. However, there is scarcity of comparative studies between public and private sector organizations of the said variables, especially in the Indian setting. Our study aims to study the level of job crafting and well-being among public and private sector IT employees and determine the significance of difference between them. For the present study, 301 employees working in public and private sector IT organizations were selected. 't' test was performed to find the significant difference between public and private sector employees with regards to job crafting and well-being. The results clearly depicted that public sector employees engaged in relational crafting more than private sector employees and experienced higher well-being. In contrast, the private sector employees used cognitive crafting more than their public sector counter parts. The results ascertained that both public and private sector organizations engaged in unique job crafting behaviours. The study reinforces the importance of understanding the sector- specific drivers of job crafting and well-being, as valuable strategies for enhancing sustainability and productivity.

Key words: Job crafting; Well-Being; Public Sector IT Employees; Private Sector IT Employees

Work is a monumental part of any individual life span (Naber, 2017). India is one of the world leaders in human resources with 68% population in active working age (The Indian Express, 2023). Harnessing the potential of a sustainable and employed workforce brings massive benefits for the workforce and the organization by unlocking opportunities for a harmonious growth, prosperity and success.

Pandemic and various other macro (globalization, urbanization, technology revolution, air pollution, and others) and micro level (long working hours, travel, target-driven work style, differential time zones, travel lifestyle change, and others) factors fuel the dynamic nature of the organization, especially the IT sector (the backbone of any organization) which brings both disturbances along with opportunities, both within and outside the organization (Trivedi et.al., 2024). This builds up excessive pressure on the IT employees due to the overwhelming nature of demands or a

perception of lack of resources, resulting in reduced psychological or physiological well-being (Sukumar et.al, 2021).

Mediating such uncertainties by achieving a better fit with their job, translates into employees experiencing a sense of flourishing, meaning and identity at work which ultimately translates into well-being (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014; Popaitoon et al., 2025). This forms the heart of job crafting wherein employees, through task, cognitive or relational crafting, intentionally change specific aspects of work without changing the job as a whole (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). This facilitates the ability to feel flourished and good, encompassing emotional and psychosocial experiences and how we function in terms of meaning, purpose and connection i.e. well-being (Diener et al., 2009). Modulating task, relational and cognitive components empowers an employee to make positive changes to his/her work and mold the meaning of the job and work identity to achieve

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human flourishing (Deci and Ryan 2000; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Vansteenkiste and Ryan 2013; Popaitoon et al., 2025). Proactive behaviour by employees facilitates balance between job demands and resources culminating in harmony between person and organization (Griep et al., 2022). Various researches have proved job crafting's relationship with job satisfaction, job performance, well-being, emotions, burnout and attrition (Rogala and Cieslak, 2019; Wang et al., 2020; Oprea et al. 2022; Pijpker et al., 2022; Kardas, 2023; Martínez-Díaz et al., 2023). Therefore, job crafting empowers employees with the control to modulate their work landscape in the best possible manner with negligible or no organizational resources, thus making a sustainable work environment significantly reducing attrition and enhancing well-being (Slomp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014; Munnisunker and Dhanpat, 2025). However, literature depicts that though there are separate studies on public and private sector organizations, barring a few there is scarcity of comparative studies of the two in context of the said variables, especially in the Indian setting. Multiple dimensions of public and private sector differences are recognized including regulation, funding, ownership, etc (Buelens and Van den Broeck, 2007; Hvidman and Andersen 2016). All these nuances affect the working, motivation and outcomes of employees working in both these sectors. Understanding the differences between working in public and private sector organizations aids in making informed decisions on how to best cater to both employee and

sector IT employees. Therefore, this study will aid managers in effectively implementing job crafting as a cost effective strategy in a way which best suits their organization. It will prove to be beneficial in reducing brain drain and attrition which are major growing concerns in today's organizations and will also be a useful step towards achieving employee well-being as well as a sustainable, flourished and productive organization.

Objectives

The present study aims to determine the significance of difference between employees working in public and private sector IT organizations in terms of job crafting and well being.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There will be significant difference between public and private sector employees in terms of job crafting.

Hypothesis 2: Public sector employees will report higher well being than the private sector employees.

Sample

For the present study, employees working in public and private sector IT organizations were selected. Employees from middle level management having managerial responsibility and minimum 10 years of service were considered for the study based on their consent to participate. Employees were matched in terms of the nature of job and level of experience. The minimum number of employees to be selected was determined using the Slovin's sample size formula (Ryan, 2013). The demographic profile of participants is given below.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

	Public	Private	Overall
Age (mean)	42.19 years	37.11 years	39.20 years
Experience (mean)	17.82 years	12.77 years	14.85 years
Sample size	124	177	301

organizational expectations, thus leading to better quality of work and well-being (Anderson et al., 2023). By focusing on employees, the key resource for any organization, this study seeks to contribute to smoother functioning and higher productivity within organizations.

Building on these insights, our study aims to fill this gap in literature by studying the level of job crafting and well-being among public and private

Tools used

In-order to collect data regarding job crafting and well-being among both public sector and private sector IT employees, The Job Crafting Questionnaire (JCQ) (Slomp, and Vella-Brodrick, 2013) and The Flourishing Scale (FS) (Diener, et al., 2009) were used.

Procedure

Various measures were administered to the employees under standard instructions. A cover sheet was used which elicited participant details such as name, age, gender, work experience and organization. The participation of the employees was voluntary. The data was collected from the sample individually through the questionnaires and consent of all the participants was taken individually through consent forms as well as orally. Moreover, the participants were assured that the information given by them as well as the results would be treated as confidential and would only be used for research purposes. Following standard procedures, the scores for each participant were then computed.

Statistical analysis

't' test was performed to find the significant

interactions at work than private sector employees ($M=16.72$) as could be seen by their mean scores. In other words, public sector employees have a higher capacity to build and adapt to relationships at work than their counterparts. However, the two organizations did not differ significantly on the overall construct of job crafting.

With regards to well-being a significant difference emerged between public sector and private sector employees ($df=299$, $t=11.80^{**}$; $p<0.05$). The higher mean score of public sector employees ($M=46.59$) as compared to private sector employees ($M=31.66$) indicated that public sector employees had better cognitive and affective evaluation of their life than their private sector employees counterparts and experienced a

Table 2: Comparative Study of public and private sector employees with regard to job crafting and well-being.

Variables		Public sector employees	Private sector employees	t value
Task crafting	Mean	20.27	20.68	0.76
	SD	4.86	4.43	
Cognitive crafting	Mean	19.06	23.31	8.20**
	SD	4.84	4.09	
Relational crafting	Mean	22.55	16.72	10.20**
	SD	4.77	4.95	
Job crafting (overall)	Mean	61.88	60.71	1.06
	SD	9.87	9.13	
Well-being	Mean	46.59	31.66	11.80**
	SD	5.42	13.33	

$p<0.01^*$; $p<0.05^{**}$

difference between public and private sector employees with regards to job crafting and well-being.

Results

The results clearly depicted that there was a significant difference found ($df=299$, $t= 8.20^{**}$; $p<0.05$) between public and private sector IT employees with regards to cognitive crafting. The private sector employees ($M=23.31$) used cognitive crafting more than their public sector counter parts ($M=19.06$). Thus private sector employees engaged more in altering their perception of their job, with the view to making it more personally meaningful. In contrast, in terms of relational crafting ($df=299$, $t=10.20^{**}$; $p<0.05$) public sector employees ($M=22.55$) exercised more discretion about the interpersonal

greater sense of flourishing.

In view of the present findings, both, hypothesis 1, which stated that there will be significant difference between public and private sector employees in terms of job crafting, and hypothesis 2 ,which stated that public sector employees will report significantly higher well being than the private sector employees, stand corroborated.

Discussion

The results ascertained that both public and private sector organizations engaged in unique job crafting behaviours. Distinctive cultural factors in public and private IT sector such as social ties, monetary gains, motives, work environment, focus, etc influence the type of innovative behaviour used by employees (Taylor,

et.al., 2013; Nabi and Ismail, 2016). Researchers have confirmed that the level of motivation to engage in proactive activities of public sector employees was comparable to the employees of private sector. It differed in them depending on the kind of employee's motive (Bysted and Hansen, 2013; Dan, 2015).

In general public sector workers have the tendency to be motivated more by intrinsic rewards of work with higher organisational commitment and less by monetary gain, than private sector employees due to the positive choice placed by the public employees to keep work-life balances along with a prosocial attitude rather than a risky option which result in employees engaged in proactive relational crafting. (Houston, 2000; Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001; Houston, 2004; Lyons, et.al., 2006; Buelens et.al., 2007; Belschak and Den Hartog, 2010; Buurman et al., 2012; Taylor, et.al., 2013; Furnham et.al., 2014; Chen et.al., 2014; Esteve et.al., 2016). Public sector organizations are political, rule-based, highly regulated, having high standards related to transparency and accountability, and a complex command chain (Tims and Bakker, 2010; Harju et al., 2016; OECD, 2017; Mazzetti et al., 2018). Seeking social job resources through relational crafting such as social activity, support, feedback, mentoring, and attaining interaction at work provides the employees with an efficient and viable solution to manage their complex work environment (Boyne 2002; Klein et al. 2010; Tims et al., 2012; Audenaert et.al., 2020; Lazazzara, Tims & de Gennaro, 2020; Buonocore et.al., 2021; Li et al., 2025)

Private organizations, on the other hand, function in a dynamic environment, where there exists a competitive advantage supplemented by a performance-reward connection and a high level of flexibility (Bessant, 2003; Fauchart and Keilbach, 2009; Ren and Guo, 2011). Private employees need to stick out from the group to get noticed by the management in order to move up their career path. A sense of autonomy and competence increases employee engagement in innovative work behaviour which is provided by cognitive crafting. (Amabile et al., 1996; Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Alpan et al. 2010; Tims et al., 2012; Inkinen et al., 2014; Kooij et al., 2015; Bakker et al., 2016). The need to create or maintain a positive image at work propels employees towards cognitive crafting ultimately

providing a better fit for private employees (Niessen, Weseler, & Kostova, 2016).

Cognitive crafting, thus functions as a mastermind dimension that influences the redesign of tasks in private sector with prescribed tasks and routines (in which management responsibility is low), wherein the perception of tasks is seen as an integral part of the whole and enhancing structural resources enables employees to thrive and flourish (Baka et al., 2025). Private sector employees use cognitive crafting to enhance job resources, cope with challenges, and drive personal growth. They actively select workplaces, work locations, and working hours which are useful for career management and, moderate the level of job insecurity (Wessels et al., 2019; Mazzetti et al., 2018).

Overall, job crafting is a valuable strategy for employees of both sectors to adapt to their work contexts and pursue professional development (Baka et al., 2025; Munnisunker, and Dhanpat, 2025).

The results also highlight that public sector employees have higher levels of well-being than private sector employees. These findings were corroborated by De Moortel et al.(2014) who in their study on employees in six countries found that public sector employees have higher levels of well-being than non-public sector employees.

In order to function efficiently, employees need to be assured that their basic needs are fulfilled. Structural work conditions such as work hours, pay, job security, etc significantly impact an employee's well-being (Lahat and Ofek, 2020). This may be a plausible explanation for why public sector enterprises have higher well-being among employees. (Coffey et al. 2009; Golden, Henly, & Lambert 2013; Boxall & Macky, 2014). Another causal factor might be their unique public sector motivation i.e. social interactions that support well-being, and work-life balance. (Den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2013; Lahat and Ofek, 2020; Borst et al., 2017; Teneng et.al., 2024)

Private organizations, on the other hand, have rigid work schedules, longer working hours, higher performance demands and higher workloads, leading to increased work-family conflict or imbalance for employees, culminating into decreased well-being (Ngalim & Tanyi, 2019, Nkwenti & Amin, 2021; Teneng et.al., 2024).

Therefore, the key factors contributing to this difference in well-being include greater job security, more stable working conditions, better leave entitlement and stronger focus on work-life balance in public sector organizations. Additionally, the sense of purpose and motivation along with their healthier social relationships, further enhance their well-being. These factors in combination create an environment in which public sector employees are more likely to experience higher levels of well-being as compared to their private sector counterparts.

Conclusion

Based on the above, the study reinforces the importance of understanding the sector-specific drivers of job crafting, emphasizing that both relational and cognitive crafting are valuable strategies for enhancing employees well-being. By aligning job crafting initiatives with distinct motivations and work contexts of public and private sector employees, organizations can better support their work force in achieving personal and professional growth. By doing so, it will help the organizations utilize these findings in ways that best suit their organization by enabling middle level managers to understand how proactive psychological changes known as job crafting can redesign a job and enhance well being with or without limited use of organizational resources.

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