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## The Role of Job Crafting in Transforming Perceived Overqualification into Meaningful Work: Evidence from Saudi Arabia

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### Abstract

*This study examines the relationship between perceived overqualification (POQ) and work meaningfulness, with job crafting as a mediating factor, within the Saudi Arabian workforce. Grounded in Person-Job Fit Theory, the research explores how overqualified employees actively reshape their job roles to enhance their sense of purpose and fulfillment at work. While previous studies have focused on the negative consequences of POQ, this study highlights the role of job crafting as a proactive strategy to mitigate these effects. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional design, data were collected from 480 employees across various industries in Saudi Arabia's public and private sectors. The results indicate that POQ has a significant positive effect on job crafting, suggesting that overqualified employees engage in job redesign to better align with their skills and career aspirations. Furthermore, job crafting has a strong positive effect on work meaningfulness, reinforcing its importance in enhancing job satisfaction and engagement. However, POQ does not directly influence work meaningfulness, indicating that its impact depends on employees' ability to engage in job crafting. The study confirms total mediation, demonstrating that job crafting fully explains the relationship between POQ and work meaningfulness. These findings contribute to Person-Job Fit Theory and provide practical implications for organizations to foster job crafting initiatives. Encouraging skill utilization, career adaptability, and leadership support can help overqualified employees maintain engagement and motivation, aligning with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 workforce development goals.*

**Keywords:** Perceived Overqualification, Job Crafting, Work Meaningfulness, Person-Job Fit Theory, Workforce Engagement, Saudi Arabia, Skill Utilization, Career Adaptability.

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## Introduction

Work meaningfulness is essential for employee well-being and organizational success, as individuals seek roles that align with their values and provide purpose. However, perceived overqualification (POQ)—the belief that one’s skills exceed job requirements—can impact this experience. POQ is a growing concern in modern labor markets, where highly skilled professionals may find themselves in roles that do not fully utilize their competencies (He and Li, 2024). While some view overqualification as a barrier, leading to disengagement, others proactively reshape their roles through job crafting to enhance meaningfulness (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2019). Job crafting, a proactive behavior where employees modify tasks, relationships, and perceptions of work, can help overqualified employees realign their job roles with their skills and career aspirations (Tims & Bakker, 2023). By engaging in job crafting, employees mitigate POQ’s negative effects and enhance their sense of work significance (Mondo et al., 2023). However, the extent to which job crafting mediates the POQ-meaningfulness relationship remains underexplored, particularly across different cultural and organizational settings.

This study is based on Person-Job Fit Theory, which suggests that employees experience greater satisfaction when their skills, values, and job roles align (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). When individuals perceive a mismatch between qualifications and job demands, they may experience lower work meaningfulness. However, job crafting can serve as a coping strategy, allowing employees to redefine their roles to foster engagement and purpose (Letona-Ibañez et al., 2021). Research suggests that overqualified employees who engage in proactive behaviors can reshape their work experiences to derive fulfillment (Han, 2023). Despite the prevalence of overqualification, most research focuses on its negative effects, such as reduced motivation and turnover (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2019). Fewer studies explore adaptive responses like job crafting, which may help overqualified employees sustain meaningful work experiences (Mondo et al., 2023). Additionally, research has largely been conducted in Western contexts, overlooking how cultural and organizational factors influence this dynamic in Saudi Arabia. Given the Kingdom’s Vision 2030 initiatives to enhance workforce productivity, understanding how employees proactively shape their work experiences is crucial. This study aims to answer three key research questions:

**RQ1:** What is the relationship between perceived overqualification and work meaningfulness in Saudi workplaces?

**RQ2:** How does job crafting mediate this relationship?

**RQ3:** What organizational and cultural factors influence overqualified employees’ engagement in job crafting?

The primary objectives are to examine the direct impact of POQ on work meaningfulness, investigate job crafting as a mediator, and explore contextual influences on job crafting behaviors in Saudi Arabia. The findings will provide practical insights for organizations and policymakers on enhancing job satisfaction and productivity through job crafting interventions.

Saudi Arabia’s labor market is evolving, with a growing number of highly educated professionals and structural transformations under Vision 2030. Skilled employees may find themselves in roles that do not fully utilize their expertise, particularly in the public and private sectors. Understanding the role of job crafting in enhancing work meaningfulness can help organizations develop strategies to support overqualified employees, reduce disengagement, and

improve retention. By examining the interplay between perceived overqualification, job crafting, and work meaningfulness, this research bridges gaps in existing literature and offers practical recommendations for Saudi organizations. Through the lens of Person-Job Fit Theory, it explores how job crafting can turn overqualification from a challenge into an opportunity for professional growth and engagement. Given Saudi Arabia's evolving workforce landscape, these insights can inform policies that promote employee well-being, retention, and workplace satisfaction.

## **Conceptual Model**

### **Perceived Overqualification**

Perceived overqualification (POQ) is an employee's belief that their skills exceed job requirements (Maynard et al., 2006). Unlike objective overqualification, POQ is a subjective perception influencing work attitudes and behaviors (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). It can lead to dissatisfaction and disengagement (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2015) but may also drive proactive behaviors like job crafting to better align roles with capabilities (He and Li, 2024).

### **Job Crafting**

Job crafting is a self-initiated process where employees proactively modify aspects of their work to better align with their strengths, values, and interests (Han, 2023). This includes adjusting tasks, interactions, and perceptions of work to enhance engagement, job satisfaction, and well-being (Letona-Ibañez et al., 2021). By reshaping their roles, employees can create a more meaningful and motivating work experience, leading to improved performance and commitment (Mondo et al., 2023). Organizations that support job crafting foster a more adaptive and engaged workforce (Tims & Bakker, 2023).

### **Work Meaningfulness**

Work meaningfulness is the perception that one's work is purposeful, significant, and aligned with personal values (Rosso et al., 2019). It enhances motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction while contributing to employee well-being and retention (Letona-Ibañez et al., 2021). Factors such as job design, organizational culture, and autonomy shape meaningful work experiences (Mondo et al., 2023).

## **Literature Review, Hypothesis Development, Gap and Research Model.**

### **Perceived Overqualification and Job Crafting**

Perceived overqualification has both positive and negative effects on job crafting, influenced by various contextual and individual factors. On the positive side, overqualified employees often leverage their surplus skills to expand their job roles, driven by role width self-efficacy (Li et al., 2024). In the airline industry, overqualified flight attendants restructure their roles to seek more meaningful tasks, especially when they experience a strong person-group fit (Changar et al., 2025). Job crafting also mediates the link between overqualification and innovation performance, helping employees align their tasks with their skills and enhance creativity (Jiang et al., 2024). Moreover, workplace autonomy enables overqualified employees to engage in job crafting, reducing withdrawal behaviors (Debus et al., 2019). However, perceived overqualification can also lead to frustration, job-person mismatch, and disengagement, limiting job crafting. Research on female corporate employees in Bangladesh found that overqualification fosters dissatisfaction, reducing proactive job modifications (Uddin et al.,

2023). In hospitality and tourism, overqualification often results in job boredom, though job crafting can help mitigate its negative effects (Khan et al., 2024). Meaningful work has been identified as a stronger moderator than job crafting alone in reducing job boredom (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2019).

External and psychological factors also shape this relationship. Workplace anxiety can mediate the negative effects of overqualification by depleting psychological resources, but cognitive reappraisal can buffer this impact (Zhang et al., 2022). Strong supervisor-subordinate relationships (guanxi) provide job security, encouraging job crafting among overqualified employees (Wu & Ma, 2023). Additionally, positive psychological capital—such as resilience and self-efficacy—helps employees overcome demotivation and engage in job crafting (Sesen & Ertan, 2020). The relationship between perceived overqualification and job crafting is nonlinear. Research suggests an inverted U-shaped pattern, where moderate overqualification enhances job crafting, but extreme levels reduce it (Woo, 2020). Career adaptability moderates this effect, as adaptable employees are more likely to craft their jobs effectively. Additionally, overqualified immigrants engage in leisure crafting to utilize their skills outside of work, emphasizing the broader implications of crafting behaviors (Sesen et al., 2024). Overall, while overqualification can drive job crafting, its effects depend on factors like job autonomy, workplace anxiety, and psychological resources. Organizations should foster autonomy, career adaptability, and supportive leadership to maximize the benefits of overqualified employees while mitigating disengagement. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

**H1:** Perceived overqualification has a positive impact on job crafting.

### **Job Crafting and Work Meaningfulness**

Job crafting plays a crucial role in enhancing work meaningfulness by allowing employees to proactively modify their tasks, relationships, and work environment to better align with their values and goals. Employees who actively engage in job crafting experience higher levels of motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, reinforcing their sense of purpose and fulfillment (Ni et al., 2023). By aligning their roles with personal values, employees gain a greater sense of control and meaning in their work, ultimately leading to increased engagement and retention (Xu et al., 2023; Malik & Malik, 2024). Several studies highlight the mechanisms through which job crafting fosters work meaningfulness. Employees with a strong sense of calling are more likely to engage in job crafting to enhance meaning, and this effect is further strengthened by supportive leadership (Chang et al., 2021). Moreover, different dimensions of job crafting contribute uniquely to meaningful work—cognitive crafting fosters purpose, task crafting enhances autonomy, and relational crafting strengthens workplace connections (Olayemi et al., 2024; Berg et al., 2013). Additionally, well-being has been found to mediate this relationship, suggesting that organizations should support job crafting initiatives to enhance both meaningful work experiences and employee resilience (Tripathy et al., 2023; Van Wingerden & Poell, 2019).

Beyond traditional job crafting, specific forms such as green-crafting behavior contribute to meaningful work by integrating environmental values into job roles, increasing engagement and organizational commitment (Elshaer et al., 2023). Furthermore, research indicates that job crafting can buffer negative workplace conditions, such as qualitative job insecurity, by helping employees regain a sense of significance and stability (Garoufallidou, 2023). However, while seeking resources and challenges through job crafting enhances work meaningfulness and performance, reducing job demands may have the opposite effect, highlighting the importance

of an active approach to crafting (Hulshof et al., 2020). Overall, job crafting serves as a key driver of work meaningfulness, influencing engagement, adaptability, and long-term job satisfaction. Organizations can foster a culture that supports job crafting by encouraging employees to seek new opportunities, build meaningful workplace relationships, and reshape their roles to enhance both individual and organizational well-being (Tims et al., 2016; Ageiz & El Mageed, 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

**H2:** Job crafting has a positive impact on work meaningfulness.

### **Perceived Overqualification and Work Meaningfulness**

Perceived overqualification (POQ) has a complex relationship with work meaningfulness, as its effects can be both negative and positive depending on social and organizational contexts. On the negative side, overqualified employees often face peer ostracism, leading to a diminished sense of belonging and lower perceptions of meaningful work. Workplace ostracism mediates the relationship between POQ and work meaningfulness, suggesting that social interactions significantly shape how overqualified employees perceive their roles (Zhang et al., 2023). Similarly, job boredom resulting from underutilization of skills can cause disengagement and reduced motivation, further undermining meaningful work experiences (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2019). Experimental research has also shown that employees who perceive themselves as overqualified report lower task meaningfulness due to feelings of relative deprivation, which leads to frustration and disengagement (Allan et al., 2023).

However, some studies highlight the potential benefits of perceived overqualification in fostering work meaningfulness. Overqualified employees, due to their surplus skills and efficiency, can complete tasks more quickly, allowing them additional time to engage in meaningful and enriching activities (He and Li, 2024). Furthermore, POQ can moderate the relationship between work meaningfulness and proactive workplace behaviors, meaning that when employees find their work meaningful, they are more likely to engage in initiatives that enhance their roles and organizational impact (Wu et al., 2024). The role of work passion has also been identified as a key factor in shaping how POQ affects meaningful work—employees with high levels of passion are better able to reframe their roles to enhance meaning, while those with lower passion experience greater dissatisfaction and turnover intentions (Luksyte & Carpini, 2024).

Additionally, the effects of POQ on work meaningfulness are strongly influenced by contextual factors such as organizational support and skill application opportunities. When organizations provide supportive environments, overqualified employees can find ways to leverage their excess skills, fostering a sense of purpose and significance in their work (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2015). These findings highlight the importance of workplace structures that allow overqualified employees to engage in meaningful tasks and utilize their expertise effectively. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

**H3:** Perceived overqualification has a positive impact on work meaningfulness.

### **The Mediating Role of Job Crafting**

Job crafting may serve as a key mechanism in the relationship between perceived overqualification (POQ) and work meaningfulness, as it allows employees to reshape their tasks, relationships, and perceptions to better align with their skills and aspirations. Overqualified employees often experience a mismatch between their qualifications and job demands, which

can reduce their sense of meaningful work (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2019). However, job crafting provides a proactive strategy that enables them to modify their work environment, potentially enhancing their sense of purpose and engagement (Tims et al., 2016). Research suggests that employees who engage in task, relational, or cognitive crafting are better able to mitigate the negative effects of POQ, leading to increased job satisfaction and meaningfulness (Berg et al., 2013). Furthermore, job crafting may help overqualified employees seek new challenges, expand their roles, and find intrinsic value in their work, thereby reinforcing their commitment and reducing disengagement (He and Li, 2024). If job crafting indeed facilitates the transformation of employees' work experiences, it could be a crucial factor linking POQ to meaningful work, highlighting the importance of fostering job crafting opportunities in organizations.

**H4:** Job crafting mediates the relationship between perceived overqualification and work meaningfulness.

### Research Gap

While research has explored the effects of perceived overqualification (POQ) on job attitudes and engagement, its impact on work meaningfulness remains underexamined. Studies indicate that POQ can lead to job boredom and disengagement (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2019; Allan et al., 2023), while others suggest it may foster efficiency and enrichment (He and Li, 2024). However, the conditions under which POQ enhances or diminishes meaningful work are unclear. A key gap is the mediating role of job crafting in this relationship. While job crafting improves job fit and engagement (Tims et al., 2016), its potential to buffer POQ's negative effects or enhance positive outcomes remains unexplored (Berg et al., 2013). Moreover, most studies focus on Western contexts, overlooking cultural differences in Eastern workplaces (Gholipour et al., 2024). This study addresses these gaps by investigating how job crafting mediates the POQ-meaningfulness link, offering insights into strategies organizations can adopt to support overqualified employees.

### Research Model

The research model illustrates the relationships between perceived overqualification (POQ), job crafting, and work meaningfulness, guided by Person-Job Fit Theory. This study proposes that POQ directly influences work meaningfulness while also examining the mediating role of job crafting in this relationship. The model accounts for how employees experiencing overqualification may either perceive reduced work meaningfulness or engage in job crafting to reshape their roles, enhancing their sense of purpose and job satisfaction.

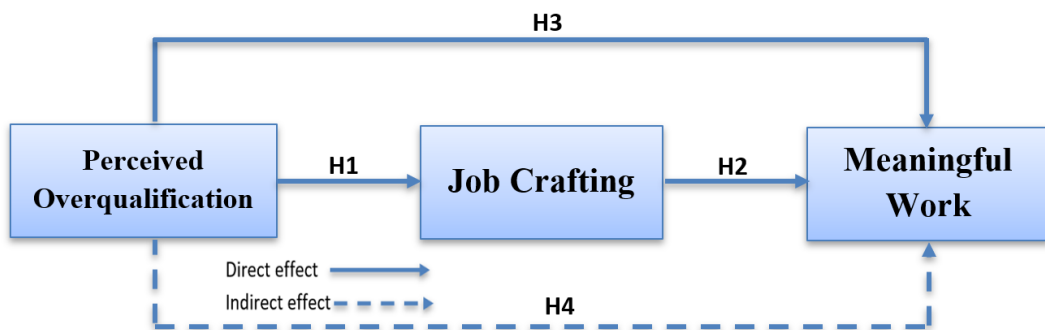


Fig. 1. Research Model.

This model will be tested within the Saudi Arabian labor market, providing insights into how employees navigate overqualification through job crafting and its implications for work meaningfulness.

## Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between perceived overqualification (POQ), job crafting, and work meaningfulness in the Saudi Arabian workforce. The study adopts a survey-based approach to collect data and test the hypothesized relationships using statistical analysis techniques.

## Research Design

A cross-sectional survey method is used to gather data from employees across various sectors in Saudi Arabia. This design allows for analyzing the direct and mediating effects of POQ on work meaningfulness, with job crafting as a mediator.

## Population and Sample

The target population consists of employees from Saudi Arabia's public and private sectors, focusing on highly skilled professionals who perceive themselves as overqualified for their current roles. To select suitable respondents, a purposive sampling strategy is employed, ensuring that participants self-identify as overqualified. Based on prior research, a minimum sample size of 480 participants is targeted to achieve statistical reliability and ensure robust data analysis.

## Data Analysis

The collected data will be analyzed using SmartPLS 4, a PLS-SEM tool suited for complex models and non-normal data. The analysis will include descriptive statistics to summarize key variables, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test construct validity and reliability, and structural model assessment to evaluate the direct effect of perceived overqualification (POQ) on work meaningfulness. The mediating role of job crafting will be examined using bootstrapping and Variance Accounted For (VAF), while model fit will be assessed through SRMR and GoF index. This approach ensures robust insights into how job crafting moderates the POQ-meaningfulness relationship, supporting workforce development in Saudi Arabia.

## Data Collection

This study employs a survey-based approach to collect data from employees working in Saudi Arabia's public and private sectors. The survey is distributed electronically through email, social media platforms, and professional networks, ensuring a broad reach across different industries.

The survey consists of four key areas: demographic information (age, gender, education level, job tenure, and sector), perceived overqualification (POQ) (measured using the Maynard et al., 2006 scale), job crafting (assessed using the Slemp & Vella-Brodrick., 2013 scale), and work meaningfulness (evaluated through the May et al., 2004 scale). Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

To enhance response accuracy, the survey ensures anonymity and includes a clear research purpose statement. Data is collected over a six-week period, with follow-up reminders sent to improve response rates. This approach ensures a diverse and representative sample, providing



reliable insights into how job crafting mediates the relationship between POQ and work meaningfulness in the Saudi workforce.

Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	260	54.2
	Female	220	45.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age	Between 20 and 30 years	140	29.2
	Between 30 and 40 years	180	37.5
	Between 40 and 50 years	100	20.8
	Above 50 years	60	12.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Educational Level	Bachelor's Degree	280	58.3
	Master's Degree	150	31.3
	Doctorate/Professional	50	10.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>
Years of experience	Less than 5 years	70	14.6
	From 5 to less than 10 years	110	22.9
	From 10 to less than 15 years	170	35.4
	15 years and more	130	27.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Job Sector	Public Sector	300	62.5
	Private Sector	180	37.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1. Sample Description

Table 1 provides a well-balanced demographic overview of the 480 participants, representing Saudi Arabia's workforce. The gender distribution is fairly even (54.2% male, 45.8% female), ensuring diversity. Most participants (66.7%) are 20–39 years old, indicating a young to mid-career workforce. The sample is highly educated, with 58.3% holding a bachelor's degree and 41.7% having postgraduate qualifications. A majority (62.5%) work in the public sector, reflecting employment trends in Saudi Arabia. Work experience is well distributed, with 35.4% having 10–15 years of experience and 27.1% over 15 years, ensuring insights from various career stages. Overall, the sample provides a diverse and representative workforce, enhancing the reliability and applicability of the study's findings.

## Results

### Evaluation of Measurement Model

The reflective measurement model includes one second-order factor for job crafting. so, the model will be evaluated in the first and second order by examining the terms of indicator consistency, internal consistency, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity in each order. Table 2 shows the results related to convergent validity, which indicates the extent to which a measure correlates positively with other measures of the same construct. This evaluation included an examination of indicator reliability, composite reliability, and the average variance extracted for the two variables: Perceived Overqualification and Work Meaningfulness,



along with the associated sub-variables for Job Crafting (Task Crafting, Cognitive Crafting, and Relational Crafting), at the first-order.

<b>Construct and Items</b>	<b>Standardized Loading (sig.)</b>	<b>Alpha</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b><i>Perceived Overqualification</i></b>		0.911	0.927	0.585
POQ1: My job requires less education than I have.	0.776**			
POQ2: The work experience that I have is not necessary to be successful in this job	0.767**			
POQ3: I have job skills that are not required for this job.	0.755**			
POQ4: Someone with less education than that of myself could perform well on my job.	0.760**			
POQ5: My previous training is not being fully utilized on this job.	0.761**			
POQ6: I have a lot of knowledge that I do not need in order to do my job.	0.755**			
POQ7: My education level is above the education level required by my job.	0.767**			
POQ8: Someone with less work experience than myself could do my job just as well.	0.767**			
POQ9: I have more abilities than I need in order to do my job.	0.772**			
<b><i>Job Crafting</i></b>				
<b><i>Task Crafting</i></b>		0.957	0.967	0.854
TC1: I introduce new approaches to improve my work.	0.923**			
TC2: I change the scope or types of tasks that can complete at work.	0.935**			
TC3: I introduce new work tasks that you think better suit your skills or interests.	0.918**			
TC4: I Choose to take on additional tasks at work.	0.927**			
TC5: I Give preference to work tasks that suit my skills or interests.	0.919**			
<b><i>Cognitive Crafting</i></b>		0.953	0.964	0.842
CC6: I think about how your job gives your life purpose.	0.913**			
CC7: I remind myself about the significance my work has for the success of the organization.	0.929**			
CC8: I remind myself of the importance of my work for the broader community.	0.921**			
CC9: I think about the ways in which my work positively impacts my life.	0.913**			

Construct and Items	Standardized Loading (sig.)	Alpha	CR	AVE
CC10: I reflect on the role my job has for my overall well-being.	0.914**			
<b>Relational Crafting</b>		0.966	0.974	0.882
RC11: I Make an effort to get to know people well at work.	0.932**			
RC12: I Organize or attend work related social functions.	0.940**			
RC13: I Organize special events in the workplace (e.g., celebrating a co-worker's birthday).	0.946**			
RC14: I always choose to mentor new employees (officially or unofficially).	0.934**			
RC15: I Make friends with people at work who have similar skills or interests	0.942**			
<b>Work Meaningfulness</b>		0.932	0.946	0.746
WM1: The work I do on this job is very important to me.	0.862**			
WM2: My job activities are personally meaningful to me.	0.861**			
WM3: The work I do on this job is worthwhile.	0.867**			
WM4: My job activities are significant to me.	0.865**			
WM5: The work I do on this job is meaningful to me.	0.856**			
WM6: I feel that the work I do on my job is valuable.	0.874**			
<b>Note:</b> **P < 0.01. <b>Alpha</b> refers to Cronbach's Alpha, <b>CR</b> refers to Composite reliability and <b>AVE</b> is average variance extracted				

Table 2: Measurement Items of the First -Order Constructs

The first step in evaluating the measurement model is testing internal consistency reliability. While Cronbach's alpha ( $>0.70$ ) is commonly used, composite reliability (CR: 0.70–0.90) is the preferred metric (Hair et al., 2019). Table 2 confirms strong reliability, with all constructs exceeding the required thresholds. Next, convergent validity is assessed using outer loadings ( $>0.708$ ) and average variance extracted ( $AVE \geq 0.50$ ) (Hair et al., 2014, 2021). All factor loadings surpass 0.708, and AVE values range from 0.585 to 0.882, confirming strong validity. Constructs such as Task Crafting ( $AVE = 0.722$ ) and Work Meaningfulness ( $AVE = 0.723$ ) demonstrate excellent convergent validity. Finally, discriminant validity ensures that each construct is distinct. The Fornell-Larcker criterion verifies this by comparing AVE values with latent variable correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 2 confirms that all constructs are unique and not overly correlated.

NO.	Construct	1	2	3	4	5
1	Perceived Overqualification	<b><i>0.756**</i></b>				
2	Task Crafting	0.563**	<b><i>0.924**</i></b>			
3	Cognitive Crafting	0.573**	0.759**	<b><i>0.918**</i></b>		
4	Relational Crafting	0.567**	0.729**	0.771**	<b><i>0.939**</i></b>	
5	Work Meaningfulness	-0.235**	0.432**	0.467**	0.437**	<b><i>0.864**</i></b>
	Mean	3.350	3.393	3.656	3.616	3.164
	Standard Deviation	0.820	0.776	0.794	0.806	0.865
<b>Notes:</b> **P < 001; Square root of AVE is typed in <i>italics bold</i> along the diagonal.						

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Constructs (Fornell-Lacker Method)

The square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than its correlations with other constructs in the model, according to Hair et al. (2014). Table 3 shows that the diagonal elements (which represent the square root of each construct's AVE) are greater than the off-diagonal correlations in their respective rows and columns; for instance, the square root of AVE for "Perceived Overqualification" is 0.756, which is higher than its correlations with other constructs like "Task Crafting" (0.563) and "Work Meaningfulness" (-0.235). The results in Table 3 show that the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion has been met, thereby establishing the discriminant validity of the model, which guarantees that each construct is statistically distinct from the others.

In addition to the above, Henseler et al. (2015) suggested the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) as a more efficient way to improve the assessment of discriminant validity. According to Hair et al. (2019), the HTMT evaluates the average of heterotrait-heteromethod correlations in proportion to the average of monotrait-heteromethod correlations, which ought to be less than 0.85.

NO.	Construct	1	2	3	4	5
1	Perceived Overqualification					
2	Task Crafting	0.599	.			
3	Cognitive Crafting	0.610	0.794			
4	Relational Crafting	0.596	0.757	0.804		
5	Work Meaningfulness	0.247	0.455	0.495	0.459	

Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Criterion Values

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion values that were utilized to assess the discriminant validity of the study's constructs are shown in Table 4. The fact that all HTMT values are less than the cautious cutoff of 0.85 suggests that the notions are unique and have discriminant validity. The first-order reflective measurement model is shown in Figure 2 below.

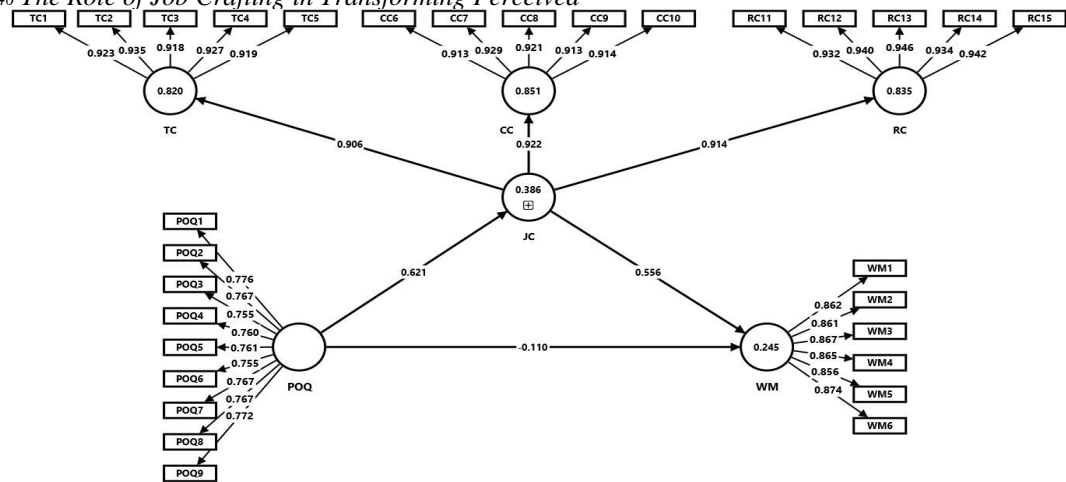


Figure 2. The Reflective Measurement Model (First-Order)

Although they were part of the first analysis model (repeated indicators approach), the second-order constructs had not yet been investigated and assessed. Therefore, the components of the second-order reflective measurement model represented by "Job Crafting" were evaluated using the two-stage method suggested by Becker et al. (2012). In other words, the latent variables were identified and utilized as manifest variables for the second-order constructs following the first-order evaluation (Figure 3). The validity and reliability results for these constructs are displayed in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

Construct and Items	Standardized Loading (sig.)	Alpha	CR	AVE
<b>Job Crafting</b>		0.901	0.938	0.835
Task Grafting	0.906**			
Cognitive Crafting	0.925**			
Relational Crafting	0.912**			
<b>Note:</b> **P < 0.01. Alpha refers to Cornbach's Alpha, CR refers to Composite reliability and AVE is average variance extracted				

Table 5: Measurement Items of the Second-Order Constructs

Table 5 shows That internal consistency reliability and convergent validity have been attained in the second-order constructs, as evidenced by the indicators factor loading, which ranged between 0.906 and 0.925, Cronbach's alpha, which was 0.901, composite reliability (CR), which was 0.938 for Job Crafting, and AVE values, which exceeded the threshold value of 0.50.

NO.	Construct	1	2	3
1	Perceived Overqualification	0.756**		
2	Job Crafting	0.620**	0.914**	
3	Work Meaningfulness	- 0.235**	0.488**	0.864**

Table 6. Correlations Between Constructs in Second-Order (Fornell-Lacker Method)

Table 6 confirms discriminant validity, as the square root of AVE values (0.756–0.914) exceeds the inter-construct correlations, ensuring that each construct is distinct. The results validate that perceived overqualification, job crafting, and work meaningfulness measure separate theoretical concepts, supporting the model's reliability. This strong discriminant validity enhances the study's credibility and ensures that the constructs are not overlapping.

NO.	Construct	1	2	3
1	Perceived Overqualification			
2	Job Crafting	0.681		
3	Work Meaningfulness	0.247	0.530	

Table 7: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Criterion Values for Second-Order

Table 7 confirms discriminant validity for the second-order constructs, with all HTMT values below the recommended threshold of 0.85. The highest HTMT values, observed between Perceived Overqualification and Job Crafting (0.681), remain within acceptable limits. These results validate that the constructs uniquely measure Perceived Overqualification, Job Crafting, and work Meaningfulness without significant overlap. Figure 3 below illustrates the second-order reflective measurement model.

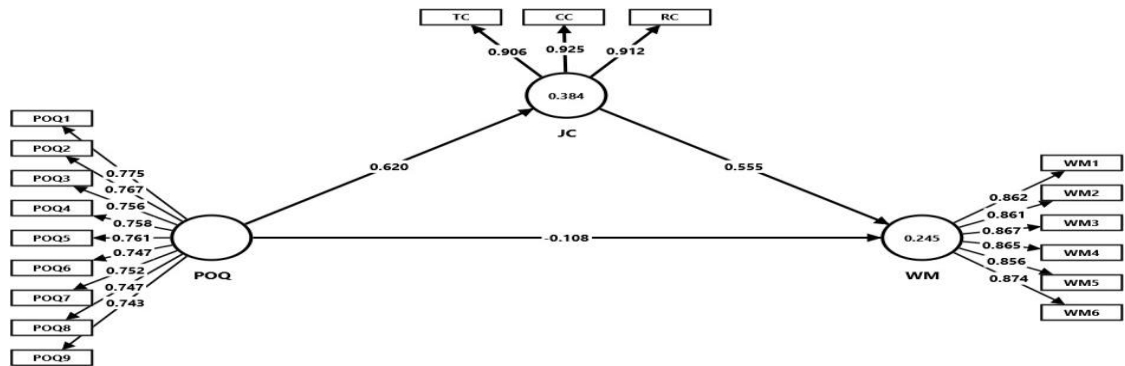


Figure 3. The Reflective Measurement Model (Second-Order)

### Evaluating the Structural Model

The evaluation of the structural model (see Figure 4) was conducted using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), and variance inflation factor (VIF).

Construct	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Collinearity Assessment	Confidence Intervals 95% Bootstrap (BCa)		F <sup>2</sup> Effect Size	Level of R <sup>2</sup>
		2.5%	97%		
Perceived Overqualification	1.000	0.538	0.684	0.623	
	1.623	-0.255	0.002	-0.002	
Job Crafting	1.541	0.433	0.664	0.251	0.384
Work Meaningfulness					0.245

First, we assessed the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the endogenous latent variables. The results indicated  $R^2 = 0.384$  for Job Crafting and  $R^2 = 0.245$  for work Meaningfulness (refer to Table 8). This means that 38.4% of the variation in Job Crafting and 24.5% of the variation in Work Meaningfulness can be explained by the independent variables in our conceptual models. Second, we examined the effect size ( $f^2$ ), which quantifies the contribution of each variable in explaining the endogenous variables. The effect sizes for the constructs recorded values of 0.623, -0.002, and 0.251, respectively, and were classified as strong, weak, and medium, based on Cohen's criteria (2013). Finally, all VIF values were below the conservative threshold of 3, indicating that our structural model did not exhibit any significant issues of collinearity among the predictor constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

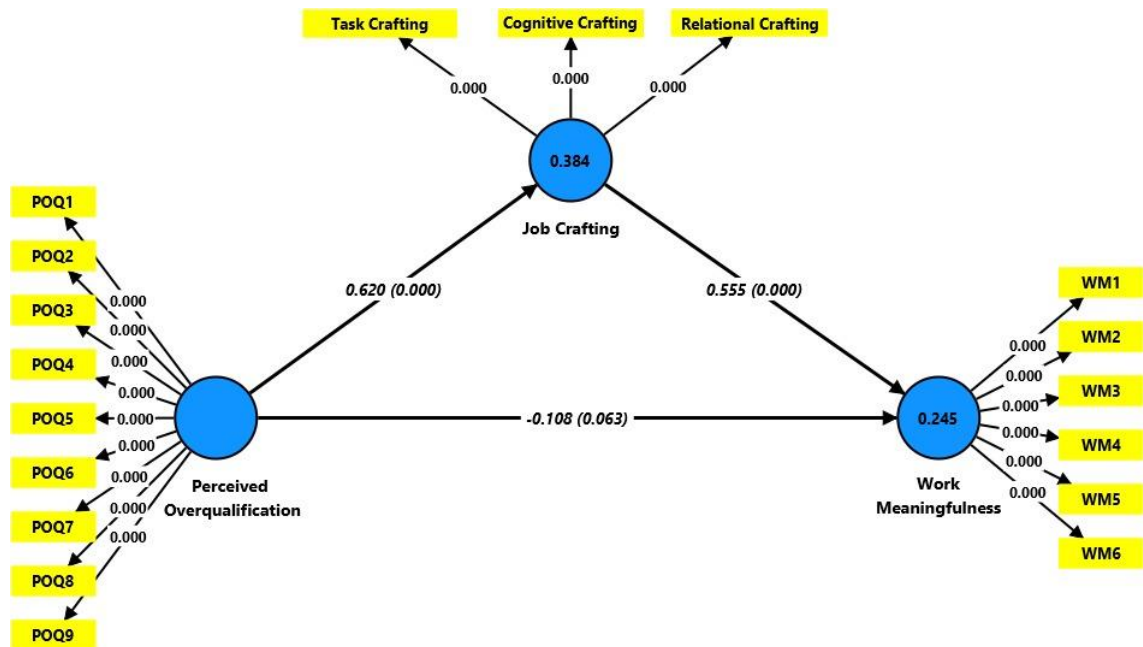


Figure 4: The Structural Model

### Hypotheses Tests

The “direct effect” hypotheses were initially tested by analyzing the standardized path coefficients (beta) and their significance levels. To assess the significance of the path coefficients, bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples were employed. As presented in Table 9, the results confirmed that perceived overqualification has a direct, positive, and significant impact on job crafting (H1:  $\beta = 0.620$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , confidence interval (CI) = 0.538 to 0.684), thereby validating H1. Additionally, job crafting was found to have a positive and significant effect on work meaningfulness (H2:  $\beta = 0.555$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , confidence interval (CI) = 0.433 to 0.664), supporting H2. While there was no significant direct effect of perceived overqualification on the work meaningfulness (H3:  $\beta = -0.108$ ,  $p = 0.063$ , confidence interval (CI) = -0.255 to 0.002), thus not supporting H3.

Hypothesis		$\beta$	Critical ratio	P-Value	Results
H1	Perceived Overqualification Job Crafting	0.620	16.906	<0.01	Supported
H2	Job Work Meaningfulness → Crafting	0.555	9.479	<0.01	Supported
H3	Perceived Overqualification Work Meaningfulness	-0.108	1.858	=0.063	Unsupported
H4	Perceived Overqualification ->> Job Crafting ->> Work Meaningfulness	0.344	9.148	<0.01	full mediation

Table 8. Structural Model Estimates

The mediating role of job crafting, as hypothesized in H4, was tested using the bias-corrected (BCa) bootstrap method with 95% confidence intervals (CIs; Cheung and Lau, 2008). The bootstrapping analysis showed that the standardized coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for the indirect effect of perceived overqualification on work meaningfulness through job crafting was significant ( $\beta = 0.344$ , CI = 0.271 to 0.418;  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates full mediation given the insignificance of the direct effect of perceived overqualification on work meaningfulness described in the H3. Therefore, these findings fully support H4. A summary of these results can be found in Table 8.

## Discussion

This study examines the direct and indirect effects of perceived overqualification (POQ) on job crafting and its role in enhancing work meaningfulness. The results support H1, indicating that POQ has a significant positive effect on job crafting. This suggests that overqualified employees proactively reshape their job roles to better utilize their skills and maintain engagement. These findings align with Li et al. (2024) and Jiang et al. (2024), who reported that POQ encourages job crafting as a strategy for improving job fit and career satisfaction. However, Uddin et al. (2023) argue that frustration from POQ may, in some cases, lead to disengagement rather than proactive behaviors. The Saudi Arabian workforce, influenced by Vision 2030's emphasis on workforce development, may exhibit higher job crafting tendencies compared to other cultural settings. Moreover, the results confirm H2, showing that job crafting significantly enhances work meaningfulness. Employees who actively modify their tasks, interactions, and work perceptions are more likely to experience fulfillment and purpose in their roles. These findings are consistent with Ni et al. (2023) and Olayemi et al. (2024), who emphasize job crafting as a key driver of work motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction. However, some researchers, such as Hulshof et al. (2020), suggest that excessive job crafting, particularly when it involves reducing job demands, may not always lead to meaningfulness. In the Saudi Arabian context, organizations should encourage structured job crafting opportunities to optimize employee engagement and career development.

Contrary to expectations, the findings do not support H3, as POQ has an insignificant negative effect on work meaningfulness. This indicates that POQ alone does not strongly influence how employees perceive work meaning. These results do not align with Wang et al. (2023), who found that overqualified employees often use their extra time for enrichment activities, leading to increased work meaningfulness. Instead, the findings are consistent with Sánchez-Cardona et al. (2019) and Allan et al. (2023), who suggest that POQ can lead to job boredom, frustration, and reduced motivation. The Saudi workforce, which operates within structured hierarchical



organizations, may experience fewer opportunities for enrichment, thereby limiting the positive potential of POQ. This study also examines the indirect effect of POQ on work meaningfulness through job crafting. The results support H4, indicating that job crafting fully mediates the relationship between POQ and work meaningfulness. This suggests that overqualified employees do not inherently perceive their work as meaningful but can create meaningfulness through proactive job crafting behaviors. These findings align with Tims et al. (2016) and Mondo et al. (2023), who highlight job crafting as a critical factor in improving job satisfaction and engagement among overqualified employees. However, Zhang et al. (2022) suggest that workplace factors such as anxiety, low autonomy, or unsupportive leadership may reduce employees' ability to engage in job crafting. For Saudi organizations, fostering career adaptability, autonomy, and leadership support can enhance job crafting's positive effects.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined the direct and indirect effects of perceived overqualification (POQ) on work meaningfulness, with job crafting as a mediating factor, within the Saudi Arabian workforce. The findings confirm that POQ positively influences job crafting, indicating that overqualified employees proactively reshape their roles to align with their skills and aspirations. Additionally, job crafting significantly enhances work meaningfulness, reinforcing its role as a critical mechanism for fostering engagement and job satisfaction. However, POQ does not have a direct effect on work meaningfulness, suggesting that employees must actively engage in job crafting to create meaningful work experiences. The study also confirms total mediation, indicating that job crafting fully explains the POQ-meaningfulness relationship. These findings highlight the importance of overqualified individuals in encouraging job crafting, particularly in Saudi Arabia, where Vision 2030's workforce development initiatives emphasize skill utilization and career growth. The study contributes to Person-Job Fit Theory by demonstrating how job crafting serves as a bridge between POQ and meaningful work. Future research should explore industry-specific differences, cultural influences, and the moderating role of psychological factors to provide a deeper understanding of how overqualification affects employees across different work environments. By demonstrating that job crafting is a crucial pathway through which overqualified employees can find meaning in their work, this study provides both theoretical and practical contributions. Encouraging job crafting behaviors can transform overqualification from a source of frustration into an opportunity for growth, benefiting employees and organizations alike. Future research should continue exploring cultural and industry-specific factors that shape job crafting and work meaningfulness across different work settings.

## **Theoretical Implications**

This study extends Person-Job Fit Theory by showing that job crafting acts as a key mechanism for overqualified employees to align their skills with their roles, thereby enhancing work meaningfulness. Unlike prior research that focused on the negative effects of POQ, this study highlights how proactive behaviors can mitigate its downsides, offering a more balanced perspective on overqualification. Additionally, the findings contribute to job crafting literature by demonstrating its mediating role in transforming skill-job mismatches into meaningful work experiences. Moreover, this study provides cultural insights by exploring POQ and job crafting in Saudi Arabia, an understudied context. While most research has been Western-centric, this study emphasizes how job crafting behaviors are shaped by organizational and cultural factors.

These insights can inform cross-cultural studies on job crafting and overqualification, broadening the application of Person-Job Fit Theory across diverse labor markets.

### **Practical Implications**

For organizations and HR professionals, these findings emphasize the need to foster job crafting initiatives as a strategy to engage overqualified employees. Organizations should provide structured opportunities for skill utilization, including task redesign, career development programs, and leadership support, to enable employees to reshape their roles proactively. In the Saudi Arabian context, where economic diversification and workforce transformations are underway, companies should align their talent management strategies with Vision 2030's goals by creating flexible, adaptive work environments that encourage employees to leverage their full potential. Additionally, managers should recognize overqualified employees as valuable assets and offer them challenging assignments, autonomy, and mentorship opportunities to enhance their work meaningfulness. Encouraging job crafting workshops and leadership training can further support an environment where employees feel empowered to modify their work roles proactively.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study has several limitations that provide opportunities for future research. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between perceived overqualification, job crafting, and work meaningfulness. Future studies could use longitudinal designs to better capture how these relationships evolve over time. Second, the study relies on self-reported data, which may introduce common method bias; incorporating multi-source data (e.g., supervisor or peer evaluations) could enhance validity. Third, the research focuses on the Saudi Arabian workforce, which may limit generalizability to other cultural or economic contexts. Comparative studies across different industries or countries could offer broader insights. Finally, while this study examines job crafting as a mediator, future research could explore moderating factors such as psychological capital, organizational support, or leadership styles to better understand how employees navigate overqualification in diverse workplaces.

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