

A model of job calling in teachers

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Abstract

Aim: This cross-sectional study proposed a model of job calling and collected data using spirituality calling, job calling, job crafting, job well-being and job flow questionnaires. The model was evaluated in AMOS-21 and SPSS-21 using structural equation modeling. The path coefficients of job calling toward spirituality calling, job crafting and job flow and those of job crafting toward job well-being and job flow were positive and significant. Using the bootstrap procedure showed the indirect effects of job calling on job well-being and job flow through job crafting. Job calling should be considered in recruiting teachers given the positive effects of job calling on job crafting, job well-being and job flow of teachers and positive effects of aligned job calling with organizational objectives on organizational efficiency. Acquainting teachers with the structure and applications of job calling is also crucial.

Keywords: *Spirituality calling, job calling, job crafting, job well-being, job flow*

Introduction

This study designed and tested a model of the predictors and consequences of job calling. Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011) defined job calling as “consuming and meaningful passion that people experience toward a domain” (p. 1003). Job calling refers to consuming, as it is central to the identity of one who perceives their work as calling, and is characterized by strong engagement in work (Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas 2011). Individuals with calling help others or their society and thus perceive their work as meaningful (Dik and Duffy 2009). Individuals with calling consider their job their purpose in life rather than a means for financial objectives or occupational promotion (Elangovan et al. 2010; Wrzesniewski et al. 1997).

Relationships between perceiving one’s work as calling and positive outcomes have been addressed in literature. Employed adults considering their job as calling reported higher levels of satisfaction with job, organizational commitment and career-related self-efficacy and less turnover and withdrawal (Duffy et al., 2011; Hirschi and Herrmann, 2013; Peterson et al., 2009; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997; Shin et al., 2021).

Calling is related to higher levels of satisfaction with life (Peterson et al., 2009; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997; Hirschi et al., 2018).

Neubert and Halbesleben defined spiritual calling as summons from God to approach work with a sense of purpose and pursuit of excellence in work practices. This definition is based on Judeo-Christian perspectives; nevertheless, it can be applied to other monotheistic religious or spiritual traditions.

Job crafting refers to occupational changes made by employees on their own initiative and related to the tasks performed at work, to the social characteristics of the job and to the perception of employees of their job (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Boehnlein, & Baum, 2022).

According to Warr (1994), job well-being refers to one’s affective status, aspirations, degree of autonomy and sense of self-competency. Ryff (1989) defined well-being as self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relationships with others, individual growth and purpose in life.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) introduced ‘flow’ as the ‘holistic sensation felt when acting with total involvement (p. 4)’. Flow refers to the experience of working at full capacity, with intense engagement and effortless action, where personal skills match required challenges (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Bakker (2005) and Demerouti (2006) identified the core elements of flow as absorption referring to absolute concentration and involvement in the activity, enjoyment referring to enjoying the activity and intrinsic motivation referring to the need for performing certain activities due to their fascination.

Methodology

The present quantitative, applied, descriptive and correlational study performed structural equation modeling and used multistage sampling to select 283 teachers from Kerman, Iran.

Measurements

Neubert and Halbesleben (2015) developed the 5-item spirituality calling questionnaire and reported its reliability coefficient as 0.95. Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011) designed the 12-item job calling questionnaire and confirmed its internal consistency by calculating a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.90. The present study confirmed the reliability of the 18-item job crafting questionnaire (Laurence, 2010) by calculating a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.9.

This study also confirmed the reliability of the 54-item job well-being questionnaire (Hinkin, 1988) and the 13-item job flow questionnaire (Bakker, 2008) by calculating a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.88 and 0.90, respectively.

Results

Figure 1 shows the model, the standard path coefficients and their significance.

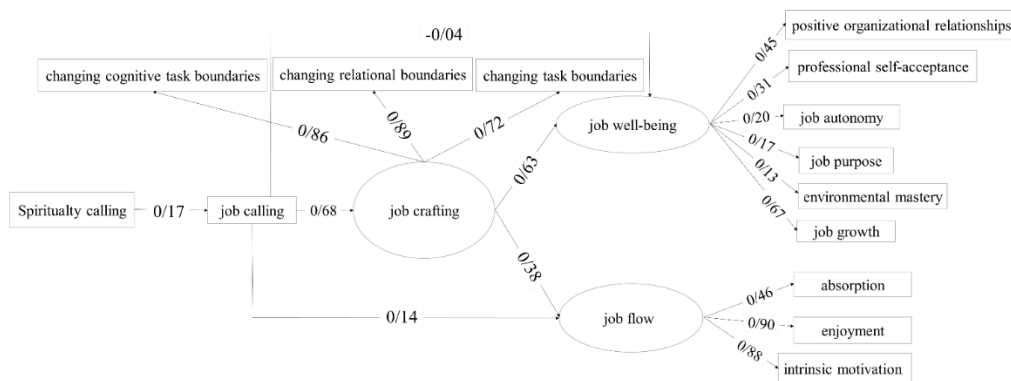


Figure 1. The model (standardized path coefficients)

According to Figure 1, spirituality calling significantly affected job calling ($\beta=0.17$, $P=0.001$). Significant direct relationships were observed from job calling to job crafting ($\beta=0.68$, $P=0.001$), job well-being ($\beta=0.63$, $P=0.001$) and job flow ($\beta=0.38$, $P=0.001$).

As a nonparametric method based on multiple resampling, bootstrapping was performed to determine the indirect effects of job calling on job well-being and job flow through job crafting (Table 1). The indirect effect was calculated for individual samples and a sampling distribution was empirically generated. A confidence interval was also determined given that the mean bootstrapping distribution did not equal the indirect effect. The indirect effect was non-zero in case zero was not included in the interval.

Table 1. Indirect effects of the variables

Intermediate path	Bootstrap	Lower bound	Upper bound	P
Job calling→ job crafting→ Job well-being	0.08	0.01	0.10	0.01
Job calling→ job crafting→ job flow	0.10	0.05	0.15	0.001

Given a 95% bootstrap confidence interval, the path between the lower and upper bounds of job crafting did not meet zero, which suggested the significance of the indirect paths. According to the indirect effects of the mediation analysis in Table 2, job crafting played a significant mediating role in the relationship of job calling with job well-being and job flow.

Discussion and conclusion

This study proposed a model to link spirituality calling and job calling to job well-being and job flow. Job crafting appeared as a mediator in the relationships of job calling with job well-being and job flow. Perceiving work as calling was found to increase job crafting, job well-being and job flow.

In line with previous studies (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Duffy, Allan, Autin & Bott, 2013; Chang, 2021; Shin et al, 2021; Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019), the present research confirmed the significant relationships of job calling with job well-being and job flow and between spirituality calling and job calling. Job crafting was found to mediate the relationships of job calling with job well-being and job flow.

Teachers' perception of teaching as calling yielded numerous positive outcomes for themselves and their students. Investigating the factors that contribute to teachers' job calling and adopting strategies such as spirituality calling to develop calling orientation in teachers are therefore crucial. Finding purpose and meaning at work, setting and successfully achieving professional goals, being committed to work and recognizing major contributions in the life of others are crucial for achieving a sense of calling. Encouraging teachers to set themselves an active professional goal and identify their work as meaningful and important is also essential.

Employees can use job crafting to improve the fit between themselves and the demand of their job. Job crafting helps employees reshape their job and more closely align it with their motivations for work and individual skills and preferences. This process affects the nature of the job, including its demand and the personal sense of efficacy for meeting the demand. Job crafting enables individuals of striking a balance between the demand of their job and their personal resources they manage and helps buffer against stress and increase engagement. The findings suggested job calling helps teachers craft their job by increasing structural job resources through creating opportunities for professional development, which increased their job well-being and job flow. Individuals who perceive their job as calling are more aware of their goal and motivated to gain responsibility for their own career development, thus crafting their job to fit their capacity. This finding is consistent with the reports suggesting job crafting (Tims et al. 2012; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014; Baker & Kim, 2020; Tims & Bakker, 2020; Oprea et al, 2019) predicts job well-being and job flow. Teachers with a sense of calling feel strong positive emotions towards the subject they teach and their students and teaching in general. They identify their job as rewarding and fulfilling and radiate energy and enthusiasm while teaching.

The present study limitations included its cross-sectional design that caused failure to make causal conclusions. Relying solely on self-report was also a limitation associated with a common-method variance effect. Giving socially-desirable responses was also possible.

According to the present results, teachers should be encouraged to cultivate job crafting as an important path toward job well-being and job flow.

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