Crafting Harmony: A Moderated Mediation Modelling Approach to Work-Life Balance and Job Crafting in Academia

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Abstract

The present research investigates the significant concern of work-life balance (WLB) within the academic sphere. Specifically, it examines the influence of hindering job demands (HJDs) and investigates the potential mediating and moderating effects of home crafting, job crafting, and leisure. Crafting. To investigate this, data from 1139 full-time academic institutions in Southeastern Nigeria were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which provided a unique geographical and cultural perspective. According to the findings, a substantial inverse relationship is observed between HJDs and WLB. WLB is positively impacted by an increase in structural job resources and a decrease in impeding job demands; conversely, an increase in demanding job demands is detrimental. While leisure crafting is positively correlated with WLB, it does not act as a moderator in the relationship between HJDs and WLB. In contrast, home crafting moderates this relationship considerably and positively correlates with it. This paper provides novel perspectives on how academic institutions in Nigeria and potentially analogous settings can improve the equilibrium between work and personal life while devising strategies to address the intricate dynamics of job demands.

Keywords: hindering job demands, job crafting, leisure crafting, home crafting, work-life balance

Introduction

Academic professionals in higher education who are entrusted with critical activities such as intellectual inquiry, research, and community participation frequently face unique challenges to their development and goals. These obstacles, which include administrative tedium and substandard working conditions (Ghasemy & Elwood, 2023), are exacerbated by the 'open-ended' nature of their employment and the number of role demands encountered. This distinct set of pressures makes it substantially more difficult for them to establish work-life balance than other professions (Ugwu et al., 2023). Therefore, the adoption of work-life integration strategies becomes not just important but imperative for academics (Sturges, 2012).

Work-life balance (WLB) is vital for integrating professional and personal realms, allowing people to pursue their values, goals, and ambitions (Haar et al., 2019). Despite extensive research in Western European contexts, there is a clear need for more comprehensive studies in other cultures (Goodwin et al., 2020). According to Shockley et al. (2017), contextual factors are examined in approximately 10% of WLB studies, which predominantly focus on Western European populations. The absence of cultural context, such as the contrast between collectivism in Africa and individualism in Western Europe (Ugwu et al., 2023), impedes our comprehension of WLB in various contexts. As a result, increasing WLB research to encompass collectivist societies such as Nigeria is of great importance (Haar et al., 2019).

While the challenges of achieving WLB for academics are evident, the literature suggests viable solutions that give hope. Job crafting, or the proactive modification of work components to correspond with individual requirements and preferences, is becoming recognized as a major method for increasing job satisfaction and general well-being (Demerouti & Bakker, 2014). According to Tims et al. (2012), this concept has several

dimensions, including increasing social job resources (ISoJRs) for more social support, decreasing hindering job demands (DHJDs) to manage work pressures, increasing challenging job demands (ICJDs) for personal growth, and increasing structural job resources (ISJRs) such as autonomy and skills. These measures, when adopted, can lead to a more balanced and enjoyable academic life.

In addition to job crafting, leisure crafting and home crafting are job design components that make use of non-work resources, significantly boosting overall well-being. Leisure crafting entails purposeful participation in recreational activities aiming at achieving personal goals, making social connections, and encouraging personal growth, which assists individuals in overcoming life problems and maintaining balance across several life domains (Petrou & Bakker, 2016). Home crafting, as defined by Demerouti et al. (2020), entails making changes to one's personal or domestic environment to fit with professional tasks and personal preferences, hence improving work-life balance. The literature extensively documents the spillover impacts of home and work life. Positive experiences and resources received from leisure activities can boost job performance and satisfaction by lowering stress and increasing overall life satisfaction (Sonnentag & Fritz 2007). Similarly, a supportive home environment can minimize work-related stress while increasing workplace engagement (Voydanoff, 2005). Conversely, stress and negative experiences in one domain can have an impact on performance and well-being in another (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Individuals can create a more balanced and meaningful existence by incorporating these off-the-job resources through leisure and homemaking while also addressing the unique difficulties and opportunities in their work and personal lives.

Although job crafting research has received increased attention (Ge et al., 2023), there are still gaps in understanding its consequences. According to Roczniewska et al. (2022), job crafting interventions have produced inconclusive results for a variety of behaviors (Devotto

& Wechsler, 2019), implying that specific characteristics of work crafting may serve distinct goals. Furthermore, some evidence reveals a non-linear relationship between job crafting and well-being (Yepes-Baldó et al., 2016). Although Boehnlein and Baum's (2022) meta-analysis found that job crafting improves well-being, the efficacy of these strategies may be influenced by cultural differences and in-group collectivism (Boehnlein & Baum, 2022; Tims et al., 2012), potentially leading to unintended consequences. As a result, a more thorough examination is required to identify how each dimension effects WLB and well-being, particularly in academic settings, and whether they act as mediators or routes in the relationship between hindering job demands (HJDs) and WLB.

Overall, these studies emphasize the need to take into account both WLB and job crafting, as well as the potential benefits of including homemaking to boost academic well-being and optimal functioning. Home crafting is defined as "the changes that employees make to balance their home demands and resources with their abilities and needs, to experience meaning, and to create a fit with their environment" (Demerouti et al., 2020, p. 1013). We argue that home crafting will help achieve WLB in academics because events in the home domain are critical in compensating for any negative experiences employees may have had in the workplace (Shirmohammadi et al., 2022) and, as such, can improve WLB attainment (Bharathi & Mala, 2016).

The purpose of this study is to look at how leisure crafting, various parts of job crafting, and home crafting practices affect the relationship between one's WLB and HJDs. This study examines the relationship between job demands and resources using the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the job demands-resources (JD-R) framework (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demands are features of a position that require significant mental and physical exertion, ultimately depleting employees' energy reserves (Mazzola & Disselhorst, 2019). As a result, achieving WLB becomes a hard

challenge. Job resources, on the other hand, promote motivation by assisting in the achievement of work objectives, reducing job demands and expenses, and facilitating individual development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Crafting activities, whether undertaken for leisure, work, or at home, serve as personal resources that help manage HJDs and improve WLB by saving or refilling depleted resources. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), the JD-R theory suggests that personal resources can provide people more control over their circumstances, potentially mitigating the negative effects of HJDs on WLB.

This link is reinforced by the COR theory, which highlights people's desires to collect and protect their assets. Individuals confronted with resource depletion as a result of employment pressures may resort to creative activities as a strategy for resource conservation. These treatments are intended to replenish exhausted resources, hence assisting in achieving WLB regardless of the severity of HJDs. As a result, leisure, work, and homemaking are critical in enhancing WLB since they act as methods for preserving and restoring resources. Figure 1 displays the conceptual model that elucidates the aforementioned interactions and processes, as well as the expected moderating and mediating functions that crafting techniques will provide between HJDs and WLB.

(Insert Figure 1 about here)

Literature Review

Hindering Job Demands (HJDs) and Work-Life Balance (WLB)

The concept of work-life balance (WLB) is often questioned in academia due to high workloads, tight publishing standards, and the ongoing chase of funding. These distinct dynamics, as underlined by Rodell and Judge (2009), indicate the broad impact of HJDs on academic professionals. Preliminary research by Li et al. (2021) and Mazzola and Disselhorst (2019) have shed light on this critical topic. However, little attention has been paid to the influence of academia's diversified employment needs for WLB.

Academic environments have specific pressures that can dramatically increase psychological burdens and disturb WLB. This tension is particularly pronounced in the tenure track and the 'publish or perish' culture, which raises anxiety and reduces job satisfaction (Demerouti et al., 2012). Longitudinal studies, such as those by Mazerolle and Eason (2016), highlight how hindering job demands (HJDs) progressively disrupt WLB, emphasizing the volatility and cumulative impact of these demands over time. Building on this, Lendák-Kabók (2020) explores researchers' experiences from qualitative perspectives, revealing how factors such as socioeconomic status, gender, and ethnicity further complicate WLB management. These personal characteristics can exacerbate the challenges posed by HJDs, creating a more nuanced understanding of the pressures faced by academics. Comparative investigations by Haar et al. (2014) extend this analysis by providing insights into the unique challenges that academics face compared to other industries, illustrating that the academic profession entails specific stressors that significantly affect WLB. Together, these studies illustrate the multifaceted nature of WLB in academia, highlighting the interplay between job demands and personal characteristics and underscoring the importance of tailored interventions to address these complex issues.

To address the challenges of establishing WLB in academia, it is important to evaluate the many functions and roles inherent in research and teaching. Designing interventions that address the unique challenges and pressures associated with these kinds of jobs can help to alleviate the adverse effects of HJDs on WLB. Workload modifications, job creation, and mentoring programs are all successful problem-solving solutions (Gravador & Teng-Calleja, 2018; Scharp et al., 2021; Strong et al., 2013). Scharp et al. (2021) found that creative work design can buffer the detrimental effects of HJDs on employee engagement, emphasizing the necessity of novel ways to improve academic WLB. Empirical research backs up these strategies, highlighting their good impact on WLB. Building on this, Bartlett

et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of comprehensive methods for striking a balance between academic and personal lives. They underline that institutions must assist employees in acquiring critical behavior management through activities aimed at socialization, productivity, and time management. Strong et al. (2013) further explored the benefits of institutional policies and procedures for promoting WLB, emphasizing the importance of mentoring in this setting. Gravador and Teng-Calleja (2018) define work-life balance (WLB) as the development of habits that promote well-being, emphasizing the importance of conserving personal time and working successfully. Collectively, these studies emphasize the significance of targeted interventions and comprehensive techniques to address the unique problems of academia, resulting in improved WLB and overall well-being.

Hypothesis 1: Hindering job demands will negatively correlate with the perception of work-life balance.

Job Crafting: Increasing Social Job Resources (IsoJRs) as a Moderator

With the many strains in academics, job crafting via increasing social job resources (IsoJRs) is essential for WLB. Recent studies highlight the importance of IsoJRs in academic motivation, learning, and overall well-being, which are critical for dealing with the sector's particular challenges (Bakker et al., 2016; Boehnlein & Baum, 2022). Mentorship and supporting networks, for example, are essential in negotiating academic hurdles, developing team cohesion, and managing academic life (Breevaart & Tims, 2019). The literature often combines job satisfaction and burnout theories, emphasizing IsoJRs as an alternative to academic employment demands. In university contexts, empirical research, including studies on the impact of work-life balance on mental health, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, supports this (Badri, 2019; Giauque et al., 2019). As a result, we propose:

Hypothesis 2a: Increasing social job resources will positively correlate with perceptions of work-life balance.

Hypothesis 2b: *Increasing social job resources will moderate the relationship between hindering job demands and work-life balance to minimize the negative impact on work-life balance.*

Job Crafting: Diminishing Hindering Job Demands (DHJDs) as a Moderator

In academia, where research, publication, and teaching demands are high, Diminishing Hindering Job Demands (DHJDs) is essential. DHJDs refer to the processes or strategies aimed at reducing or mitigating job demands that are perceived as obstacles to personal growth, goal attainment, or overall work engagement, typically seen as stressors that hinder an employee's ability to perform effectively and can negatively impact their job satisfaction and WLB (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Our current study, informed by Bakker and de Vries (2021), investigates how targeted job crafting reduces stress, improving WLB. Considering the variability in academic roles and integrating role theory and stress-coping models, it encourages strategies that facilitate DHJDs in academia. We Proposed:

Hypothesis 3a: The perception of diminishing hindering job demands will positively correlate to the perception of work-life balance.

Hypothesis 3b: The perception of diminishing hindering job demands will moderate the relationship between hindering job demands and work-life balance to minimize the hindering job demands' negative effect on work-life balance.

Job Crafting: ICJDs as a Mediator

WLB grows increasingly complex in academics, necessitating the development of novel techniques for reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction. Extensive empirical and theoretical data suggests that individual Crafting of Job Demands (ICJDs) can act as a mediator between HJDs and WLB. This mediation is explained by several key factors from the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, role theory, and stress-coping theories (Bakker et al., 2016; Tims et al., 2012). The JD-R model suggests that work demands and resources have

a major impact on employee well-being and performance. HJDs that obstruct an employee's progress and sense of accomplishment put a strain on WLB. However, proactive job crafting, particularly through ICJDs, can reduce the obstructive nature of these expectations while still promoting personal growth and professional happiness. By customizing job requirements to individual needs, this intermediary mechanism can convert stress into opportunities for growth and fulfillment, thereby improving WLB.

Empirical evidence supports the efficacy of job crafting for improving WLB and job satisfaction. Van Wingerden et al. (2017) and Kardas (2023) highlight the benefits of task and cognitive crafting, in which employees tailor their job duties and perspectives to align their interests and skills better. Employees can lessen the consequences of burdensome job requirements by using ICJDs, making the workplace more enjoyable and harmonious. Role theory and stress-coping models further elucidate why ICJDs may mediate the relationship between job demands and WLB. individuals occupy multiple roles and strive to meet the expectations associated with each role (Marks et al., 2001). Stress-coping models explain how people deal with environmental stressors (Michel et al., 2014). Individuals can better manage their academic duties by using proactive coping techniques such as ICJDs, which reduce role conflict and stress while also fostering better WLB (Aruldoss et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 4a: Individual-crafted job demands will negatively correlate with perceptions of work-life balance.

Hypothesis 4b: Individual-crafted job demands will mediate the relationship between hindering job demands and work-life balance.

Job Crafting: Individually Structured Job Resources (ISJRs) as a Mediator

Individually Structured Job Resources (ISJRs) are critical in managing HJDs by offering increased autonomy and skill variety. Research suggests a nuanced relationship between these resources and work-life balance. A study among Indian nursing professionals

during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that job resources like job autonomy positively influenced work-life balance, impacting job satisfaction (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021). This finding challenges the traditional view of a negative correlation between structured job resources and work-life balance.

Further insights into the academic work environment show that WLB is a complex issue, influenced by various factors such as gender, ethnicity, and class. These factors indicate that the impact of structured job resources on work-life balance might be context-specific and influenced by individual and cultural differences (Lendák-Kabók, 2020).

Hypothesis 5a: Increasing structured job resources will positively correlate with work-life balance perceptions, as these resources, like job autonomy, appear to enhance rather than impair work-life balance.

Hypothesis 5b: Increasing structured job resources will positively mediate the relationship between hindering job demands and work-life balance perceptions, suggesting that these resources can act as a buffer in the demanding academic environment.

Leisure and Home Crafting as Moderators

Integrating leisure and home crafting within the JD-R model elucidates their pivotal roles as personal resources in academia, offering nuanced strategies to enhance WLB amidst HJDs. Leisure crafting, which entails the proactive alignment of leisure activities with personal values, emerges as a crucial moderator in this dynamic. It improves work-family spillover, acts as a buffer against work-related stress, and fosters personal fulfillment and meaning-making, particularly in environments where opportunities for job crafting are scarce (Petrou & Bakker, 2016; Petrou et al., 2018). Research supports this notion, demonstrating that leisure crafting not only exhibits a positive correlation with WLB but also acts as a

mediator between career orientation and life enhancement, thereby emphasizing its capacity to alleviate the negative consequences of HJDs (Han & Hwang, 2021; Lee et al., 2015).

Similarly, home crafting, which involves purposefully designing one's living space to enhance overall wellness, is recognized as a crucial component in achieving a balance between HJDs and WLB. This approach prioritizes establishing a home environment conducive to disengagement from work-related stressors and relaxation, thus promoting the well-being of both the individual and the professional. Recent studies have established a significant correlation between engaging in home crafting activities, such as safeguarding private time and fortifying family bonds, and experiencing enhanced subjective well-being and WLB (Demerouti et al., 2020; Gravador & Teng-Calleja, 2018). These findings indicate that a supportive domestic setting is essential for individual rejuvenation and the enhancement of familial connections, providing an antidote to the demands of scholarly pursuits.

By integrating these observations into the JD-R model, leisure activities and home crafting are regarded as personal assets that individuals utilize to offset the psychological burdens of work obligations, thus augmenting their general state of being and contentment with their jobs. This theoretical framing emphasizes the importance of personal resources in assisting academics to navigate the difficulties of life on campus. Additionally, it underscores the potential of leisure activities and home crafting as viable approaches to enhance academic well-being and job satisfaction.

perceptions of work-life balance, serving as a proactive means to fulfill personal needs and aspirations outside professional responsibilities.

Hypothesis 6b: Leisure crafting will mediate the relationship between hindering job demands and work-life balance, providing a buffer against the negative impact of

these demands and enhancing individuals' ability to maintain a satisfactory balance between their professional and personal lives.

Hypothesis 7a: Home crafting will positively correlate with work-life balance perceptions, as creating a supportive and relaxing home environment is crucial in enabling individuals to disengage from work-related stressors and recharge.

Hypothesis 7b: Home crafting will moderate the relationship between hindering job demands and work-life balance, reducing the adverse effects of such demands on individuals' ability to achieve a harmonious balance between their work and personal lives.

Method

Participants and Procedures

In a longitudinal survey study, we aimed to understand the mediation effects of job and leisure crafting on work-life balance (WLB) among academics. This design was chosen to capture dynamic relationships over time and minimize common-method bias. We recruited 1,139 academics from various departments within federal universities in southeastern Nigeria. Participants were selected to ensure a diverse representation of academic disciplines.

The study was conducted in three stages over nine weeks. Surveys were administered during work hours without incentives to maintain objectivity. The demographic breakdown included 744 male and 395 female employees, aged between 27 and 56 years (mean age 42.90, SD = 7.71).

Initially, 1,354 surveys were distributed, and 1,152 were returned, resulting in an 85.1% response rate. However, 13 surveys were discarded due to improper completion. Additional issues such as oversight in responding and missing demographic information further reduced the number of valid responses to 1,139. This robust sample size and

methodological approach allowed us to rigorously investigate the mediation effects and contribute valuable insights into the work-life balance of academic professionals.

Measures

We evaluated the hindering job demands through seven questions derived from previously established scales (Rodell & Judge, 2009). Study participants rated their agreement with various statements about their jobs that could potentially affect their stress levels. For this study, the scale's reliability was confirmed with a high Cronbach's alpha of 0.90, indicating more significant hindrances to job demands with higher scores. Job crafting was assessed using the 21-item Job Crafting Scale developed by Tims et al. (2012), divided into four dimensions: increasing social job resources (ISoJRs), increasing challenging job resources (ICJRs), and decreasing hindering job demands (DHJDs). Apart from DHJDs, each dimension was assessed through five items, while DHJDs were evaluated using six items. The reliability of these sub-scales, as reflected by Cronbach's alpha coefficients, were ISJRs at 0.76, DHJDs at 0.74, ISoJRs at 0.80, and ICJRs at 0.74, with an overall scale Cronbach's alpha of 0.88. Aggregate scores for each sub-scale represented typical behaviors for their respective dimensions, with higher scores indicating a greater tendency toward job-crafting behaviors. Leisure crafting was measured with a 9-item scale (Petrou & Bakker, 2016), achieving an internal consistency of 0.88 in the present study, where higher scores indicate higher leisure crafting behavior. Home crafting was assessed using a 10-item scale by Demerouti et al. (2020), which included dimensions of autonomy (4 items), competence (3 items), and relatedness (3 items). Sub-scale scores were summed to give the total score of home crafting, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70, indicating higher home crafting behavior with higher scores. Work-life balance was measured using the Work-life Balance Scale (Brough et al., 2014), with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.78 for the present study, where higher scores indicate higher WLB.

Analysis Strategy

We chose Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for its ability to analyze complex relationships between latent and observed variables, offering a comprehensive understanding of the data framework and theoretical concepts. SEM is ideal for our study due to its capacity to handle multiple dependent variables and consider constructs as both dependent and independent variables (Kline, 2023). Its capability to evaluate measurement error enhances the reliability and precision of our findings (Brown, 2006). SEM's effectiveness in similar psychological and organizational studies supports our methodological choice (Byrne, 2016). Following Podsakoff et al. (2003), we aim to contribute to the literature by using SEM to explore job crafting and work-life balance.

SEM validated the instruments and allowed a thorough examination of the measures used. We started with factor analysis using AMOS version 24 and examined intercorrelations between variables using SPSS version 23. We then used AMOS version 24 to assess specific indirect effects of mediating variables. The process macro was employed for post hoc analysis of significant moderated mediation relationships (model 5). Demographic variables, initially control variables, were eliminated during hypothesis testing due to a lack of statistically significant differences.

Structural model

This segment summarizes the outcomes of evaluating the suggested structural theory. The emphasis was on assessing the fit of the overall structural model and the theorized relationships among the constructs. The structural model's results indicated a CMIN/DF ratio of 1.490 with 2 degrees of freedom, a chi-square value of 1.490, an RMSEA of .03, a TLI of .99, and a CFI of .99. These metrics suggest that the proposed theoretical structure is a good match for the observed covariance matrix.

Results

We first evaluated the descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables. Among the demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, number of children, tenure in the university, and length of lecturing), gender (males) was significantly more related to WLB than the females (r = -.09, p < .001). Age was negatively related to WLB (r = -.15, p<.001). Number of children was negatively related to WLB (r = -.06, P< .05). ISJRs was not related to WLB (r = .05, p>.05). HJDs was negatively related to WLB (r = -.11, p< .001). DHJDs were positively associated with WLB (r = .12, p<.001). ISoJRs were not related to WLB (r = .03, p>.05). ICJDs were positively related to job demands (r = .12, p< .001). Leisure crafting was positively related to WLB (r = .22, p< .001). Home crafting was significantly related to WLB (r = .12, p< .001). Please see Table 1.

(Insert Table 1 about here)

Next, we evaluated the effects of our model. Most path coefficients were statistically significant (p < .05), confirming support for all the theorized connections between the constructs. With an R^2 of .12 for WLB, the structural model accounts for 12% of the variance in Work-Life Balance. Results from a parallel mediation analysis indicated that HJDs are indirectly related to WLB through their relationship with the ISJRs and ICJDs. First, as can be seen in Figure 2, HJDs were not significantly related to ISJRs (a1 = .011, p = .428) but reported a significant positive relationship with ICJDs (b1 = 0.196, p < .001). A 95% bias-corrected confidence interval based on 5,000 bootstrap samples indicated that the indirect effect of ISJRs (a1b1 = 0.000), holding ICJDs constant, was insignificant (CI = -0.002 to 0.004).

Secondly, HJDs were significantly related to ICJDs (a2 = .196, p = .001) and reported a significant positive relationship with WLB (b_2 = 0.100, p < .001). A 95% bias-corrected confidence interval based on 5,000 bootstrap samples indicated that the indirect effect through ICJDs (a_2b_2= 0.035), holding ISJRs constant, was significant (CI = 0.017 to 0.055).

HJDs' total indirect effect through the ISJRs and ICJDs was above zero (CI = 0.018 to 0.055). Please see Table 2 for significant and non-significant paths in this analysis and Figure 2 for a visualization.

(Insert Table 2 and Figure 2 about here)

As illustrated in Table 3, the findings revealed a significant negative association between HJDs and WLB, validating Hypothesis 1. ISoJRs exhibited a significant positive connection with WLB, confirming Hypothesis 2a, although it did not act as a significant moderator between HJDs and WLB, thus not supporting Hypothesis 2b.
DHJDs positively predicted WLB with significance, backing Hypothesis 3a, but it did not significantly moderate the relationship between HJDs and WLB, leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 3b.

ICJDs demonstrated a significant negative predictor of WLB, supporting Hypothesis 4a. However, it was not a significant mediator between HJDs and WLB (refer to Table 4), so Hypothesis 4b was not upheld. Contrary to Hypothesis 5a, ISJRs were found to be a significant positive predictor of WLB rather than a negative one. Moreover, ISJRs were a significant positive mediator between HJDs and WLB, partially validating Hypothesis 5b (see Table 4). Leisure crafting had a positive correlation with WLB, corroborating Hypothesis 6a, but it did not act as a significant moderator between HJDs and WLB, leading to the dismissal of Hypothesis 6b. Lastly, home crafting did not significantly predict WLB, disproving Hypothesis 7a. Instead, it functioned as a significant moderator in the relationship between HJDs and WLB, thus supporting Hypothesis 7b.

Table 4 demonstrates that the moderated mediation analysis identified the total indirect effect and SIE 4 as statistically significant within DHJDs (B = .001; p = .016). The confidence intervals obtained through bootstrapping did not contain zero, providing additional evidence of the direct and indirect impacts of HJDs on WLB. This also suggests

that the model is a full mediation, as per Hair et al. (2020). However, SIE 3, SIE 5, and SIE 6 did not achieve statistical significance. The comparative results of the specific indirect effects at three different levels of DHJDs are summarized in Figure 3.

(Insert Table 3 and Figure 3 about here)

Post hoc Analysis

The decision to conduct a post hoc analysis was borne out of the fact that the moderated mediation analysis showed a significant result in the specific indirect path of HJDs x HC→ICJDs→WLB. A post hoc analysis highlights the conditional indirect effect of the interaction of HJDs and home crafting through ICJDs to WLB. Table 4 explained that at the low and mean levels of home crafting, HJDs were significantly related to WLB. Drawing on the earlier moderated mediation result, this shows that through the indirect effect of ICJDs, low and mean HJDs lead to significant positive WLB.

(Insert Table 4 about here)

Discussion

Using Structural Equation Modeling, this study investigated how crafting behaviors influence the link between HJD) and WLB. It confirmed that HJDs had a detrimental impact on WLB, consistent with the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and other research (Haar et al., 2019). Increasing structural job resources (ISJRs) were positively connected to WLB, contrary to DeLongchamp (2021), but similar to Hakanen and Roodt (2010) and Tims et al. (2012). ISJRs, on the other hand, did not significantly mediate the HJD-WLB association.

Increasing social job resources (ISoJRs) predicted WLB as well, validating findings by Breevaart and Tims (2019) and Tims et al. (2012), but did not alter the HJDs-WLB relationship. Increasing cognitive job demands (ICJDs) were found to be adversely connected to WLB, validating the study's premise and matching with Boehnlein and Baum (2022).

According to Crawford et al. (2010) and Lowe (2006), ICJDs were a strong mediator between HJDs and WLB.

According to the JD-R model and studies by Crawford et al. (2010) and Nahrgang et al. (2011), DHJDs are positively connected to WLB. DHJDs, on the other hand, did not significantly modify the HJDs-WLB association. Leisure crafting had a strong positive connection with WLB, supporting the findings of Kleiber et al. (2002) and Latack and Havlovic (1992), but it did not attenuate the HJDs-WLB link.

Contrary to expectations, home crafting was highly connected to WLB but negatively attenuated the HJDs-WLB association. A post hoc test demonstrated a moderated mediation effect, particularly in the indirect path of HJDs * home crafts→ ICJDs→ WLB, demonstrating that ICJDs can positively relate to WLB under specific settings. This surprising discovery emphasizes the complexities of the relationships between job pressures, crafting practices, and WLB.

Theoretical Implications

This study extends existing WLB research by including a new context that has been scarcely studied (Amazue & Onyishi, 2016). In doing so, we provide cross-cultural evidence for a blend of JD-R and COR theories and how they interact through resources to impact the relationship between HJDs and WLB. A vital contribution to the WLB literature lies in our findings that ICJDs mediated the negative relationship between HJDs and WLB and that home crafting negatively moderated the relationship between HJDs and WLB. This implies that employees are more likely to achieve WLB when they experience enriching family experiences, regardless of whether HJDs are high or low. Intriguingly, we have enriched the literature by finding that home crafting moderated the relationship between HJDs and WLB through ICJDs. Furthermore, the current study has indicated that ICJDs mediated the negative relationship

between HJDs and WLB in the dimension of job crafting. This is a shift from the *status quo* and a novel addition to the literature.

In general terms, the contributions of the present study enhance our understanding of how HJDs and resources interact and may influence employees' achievement of WLB by considering the moderating and mediating approaches in the relationships beyond the direct effect of HJDs and resources on WLB. This study responds to several calls (e.g., Haar et al., 2019) to explore the complex mechanisms through which job demands and resources influence individuals' outcomes.

Practical implications

Having established relationships between most of the studied antecedents and WLB and a significant moderating home crafting and mediating relationship between HJDs and WLB via ICJDs, their practical implications are noteworthy. These findings offer meaningful information to both employees and managers. For the employees, it provides information on how much they should exercise autonomy or customize their jobs not to compromise their WLB. On the part of the employers, the time allocated to employees for leisure (e.g., relaxation, playing games) should be stipulated since our findings suggest that employees can attain better WLB when their jobs allow them to engage in leisure activities. Home crafting was also helpful in achieving WLB regardless of whether the level of HJDs is high or low. The present study's findings indicated that WLB was reduced under high HJDs except in the presence of home crafting. As a result, it is essential to promote a more enriching home experience by training employees through intervention programs designed to foster more home crafting skills.

Limitations and Future Research

This Work-Life Balance (WLB) study offers valuable insights but has methodological limitations. Despite using a longitudinal survey design to avoid bias, self-reported data may cause Common Method Variance (CMV). Woszczynski and Whitman (2004) highlight that

self-reports can be influenced by the method rather than the effect being researched, advocating diverse respondent types and longitudinal designs to reduce CMV effects. While the longitudinal strategy reduces response biases, it only provides correlational relationships, as the gaps between surveys may not be sufficient to infer causality. Future researchers should replicate these results with longer gaps between studies to address these limitations (Richardson et al., 2009).

The study's focus on Southeast Nigerian academics limits its generalizability. Future research should consider the broader implications of our findings within the overall literature. Additionally, longitudinal studies may suffer from sample attrition and non-response bias, which the high response rate does not fully address. Zhu and Li (2019) note that CMV, a type of systematic variance due to similarities in the measurement procedure, can mislead correlations and impact conclusions. Therefore, future researchers should consider experimental designs instead of longitudinal sampling.

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Table 1: Descriptive statistics, correlations and measurement model of study variables.

	Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Gender			1	-.13**	.03	-.02	-.16**	-.12**	.00	-.05	.06*	.06*	-.12**	-.18**	-.12**	-.09**
2	Age	42.90	7.71		1	-.06*	.45**	.47**	.51**	.20**	-.14**	.00	-.02	.10**	.06	-.02	-.15**
3	Marital Status					1	-.23**	-.22**	-.22**	.06*	-.03	.08**	.05	-.03	-.11**	-.02	-.02
4	Number of Children	2.56	2.24				1	.32**	.25**	.05	-.11**	-.03	-.06*	.06	.06*	.03	-.06*
5	How Long In Your University	7.43	5.44					1	.77**	.04	-.12**	.07*	-.03	.13**	.10**	.07*	.03
6	Length of Lecturing	7.52	5.02						1	.08**	-.11**	.02	.01	.12**	.13**	.06*	.01
7	ISJRs	20.87	2.84							1	-.06	.34**	.34**	.22**	.23**	.36**	.05
8	HJDs	23.32	5.02								1	.08**	.11**	.28**	.03	.24**	-.11**
9	DHJDs	21.69	4.24									1	.39**	.08**	.14**	.32**	.12**
10	ISoJRs	18.88	3.46										1	.40**	.20**	.28**	.03
11	ICJDs	18.16	3.22											1	.35**	.19**	.12**
12	Leisure crafting	33.88	6.98												1	.35**	.22**
13	Home crafting	32.21	6.60													1	.12**
14	WLB	13.37	2.73														1
	α									.768	.900	.743	.800	.742	.880	.701	.777
	CR									.834	.900	.823	.870	.829	.903	.737	.870
	AVE									.633	.890	.544	.626	.549	.511	.586	.691

*Note: *p <.05, **p <.001; Gender (Coded '0' for Male, '1' for female); Marital Status (Coded '0' for single, '1' for married); DHJDs = Decreasing Hindering Job Demands; ICJDs = Increasing Challenging Job Demand; LC= Leisure Crafting; HJDs = Hindering Job Demands; WLB = Work-Life Balance; ISoJRs = Increasing Social Job Resources; ISJRs = Increasing Structural Job Resources; HC= Home Crafting*

Table 2: Moderated mediation model of WLB among DHJDs, ISoJRs, HC and LC.

Outcome		Criterion	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
WLB	<---	HJDs	-.074	.016	-2.495	.013
WLB	<---	ISJRs	.116	.027	4.154	001
WLB	<---	ICJDs	-.076	.025	-2.629	.009
WLB	<---	Home crafting	.035	.011	1.245	.213
WLB	<---	DHJDs	.119	.019	3.947	001
WLB	<---	ISoJRs	.061	.024	2.021	.043
WLB	<---	Leisure crafting	.196	.011	6.991	001
WLB	<---	HJDs x LC	.009	.002	.337	.736
WLB	<---	HJDs x HC	-.111	.002	-4.012	001
WLB	<---	HJDs x DHJD	.015	.003	.528	.597
WLB	<---	HJDs x ISoJR	-.018	.005	-.627	.531

Note: Gender (Coded '0' for Male, '1' for female); Marital Status (Coded '0' for single, '1' for married); DHJDs = Decreasing Hindering Job Demands; ICJDs = Increasing Challenging Job Demand; LC= Leisure Crafting; HJDs= Hindering Job Demands; WLB = Work-Life Balance; ISoJRs = Increasing Social Job Resources; ISJRs= Increasing Structural Job Resources; HC= Home Crafting

Table 3: Direct, indirect, and total effects of the hypothesized model

Path	Point estimate (std.)	SE	Bootstrapping with 95% confidence interval		Two-tailed significance
			Bias-corrected		
			Lower	Upper	
Specific Indirect Effect					
SIE1	.003	.008	-.004	.030	.335
SIE2	-.071	.032	-.144	-.015	.011
SIE3	-002	.003	-.009	.002	.289
SIE4	-.002	.002	-.009	.000	.090
SIE5	.004	.002	.001	.010	.009
SIE6	-.001	.001	-.004	.001	.383
SIE7	-.001	.002	-.007	.001	.439
SIE8	.002	.002	-.002	.007	.403
SIE9	-.002	.002	-.006	.002	.421
SIE10	.000	.001	-.003	.001	.520
Total indirect effect					
Hindering →WLB	-.027	.012	-.054	-.004	.019
Direct effect					
Hindering →WLB	.021	.036	-.046	.095	.489
Total effect					
Hindering →WLB	-.005	.034	-.069	.065	.955

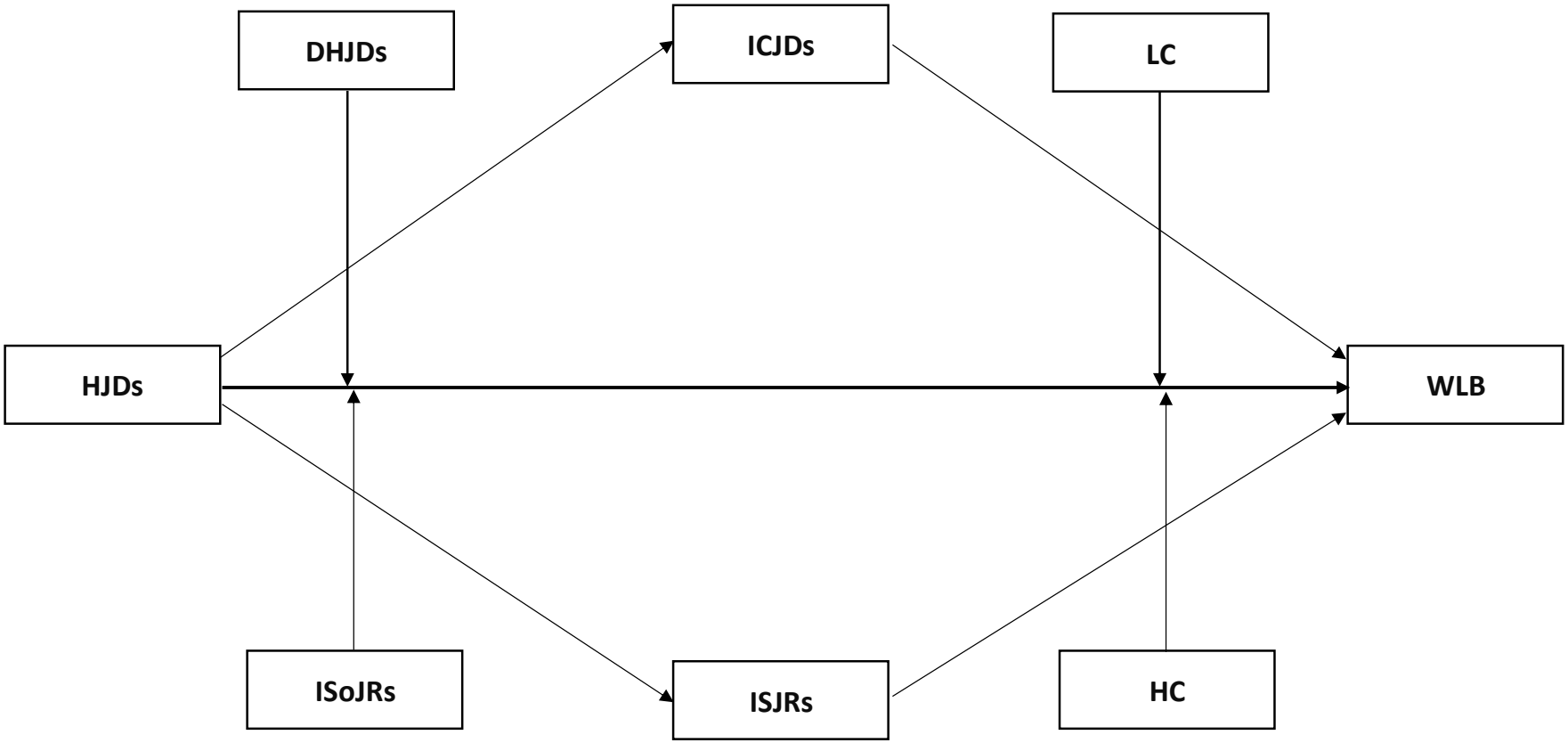
NOTE: DHJDs = Decreasing Hindering Job Demands; ICJDs = Increasing Challenging Job Demand; LC= Leisure Crafting; HJDs = Hindering Job Demands; WLB = Work-Life Balance; ISoJRs = Increasing Social Job Resources; ISJRs = Increasing Structural Job Resources; HC= Home Crafting; SIE= Specific Indirect Effect; SIE1= HJDs→ISJR→WLB; SIE2= HJDs →ICJDs→WLB;SIE3= HJDs→ ISoJRs →ICJDs→WLB; SIE4= HJDs→DHJDs→ICJDs→WLB; SIE5= HJDs→HC→ICJDs→WLB; SIE6= HJDs→LC→ICJDs→WLB; SIE7= HJDs →ISoJRs → ISJRs→ WLB; SIE8= HJDs→ DHJDs → ISJRs →WLB; SIE9= HJDs→HC→ISJRs→WLB; SIE10= HJD→LC→ISJRs→WLB

Table 4: Conditional effects of the focal hindering job demands at values of the home crafting

HC	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Low	.100	.026	3.856	.000	.049	.151
Mean	.054	.017	3.142	.002	.020	.088
HIgh	.008	.019	.408	.684	-.030	.045

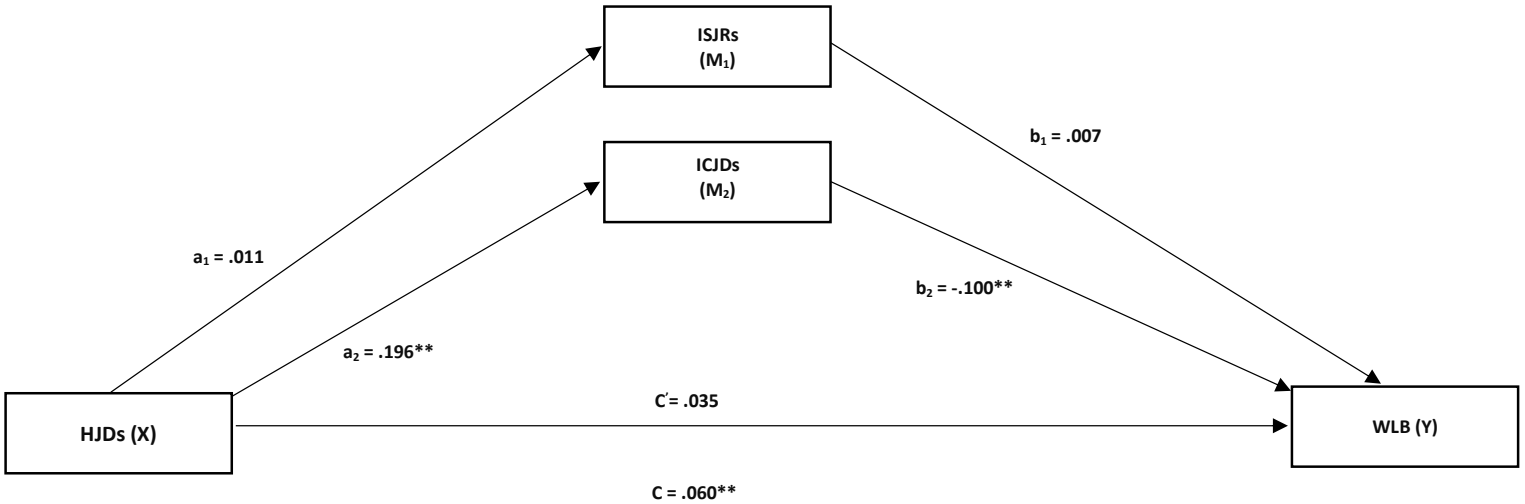
Note: HC= Home crafting

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



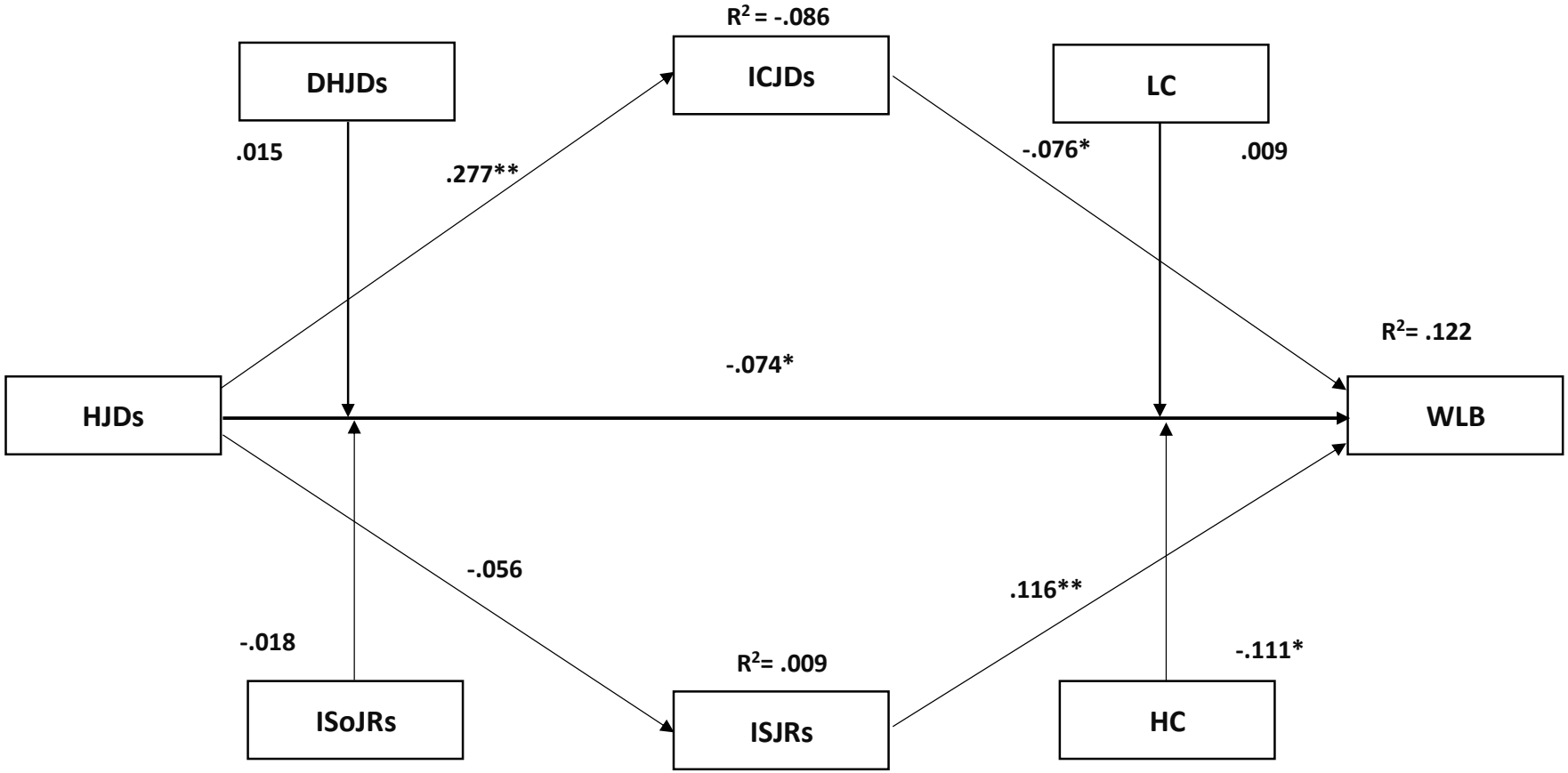
DHJDs = Decreasing Hindering Job Demands; ICJDs = Increasing Challenging Job Demand; LC= Leisure Crafting; HJDs = Hindering Job Demands; WLB = Work-Life Balance; ISoJRs = Increasing Social Job Resources; ISJRs = Increasing Structural Job Resources; HC= Home Crafting

Figure 2: Mediation analysis of ISJRs, ICJDs, HJDs and WLB



*Note: *p <.05, **p <.001; ICJDs = Increasing Challenging Job Demand; HJDs = Hindering Job Demands; WLB = Work-Life Balance; ISJRs = Increasing Structural Job Resources*

Figure 3: moderated mediation Model of WLB among DHJDs, ISoJRs, LC, and HC



*Note: *p <.05, **p <.001; Moderation result in bracket; DHJDs= Decreasing Hindering Job Demands; ICJDs = Increasing Challenging Job Demand; LC= Leisure Crafting; HJDs = Hindering Job Demands; WLB = Work-Life Balance; ISoJRs = Increasing Social Job Resources; ISJRs = Increasing Structural Job Resources; HC= Home Crafting*

Figure 4. Simple Slope Analysis