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Driving Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior in the Public Sector: The Roles of Empowering Leadership and Job Autonomy through Job Crafting

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Abstract: This study aims to examine how empowering leadership and job autonomy influence change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB) through the mediating role of job crafting. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework, this research proposes that leadership and autonomy function as critical job resources that stimulate proactive behavioral change among employees. A quantitative approach was employed using survey data collected from 1,022 employees in a public financial organization undergoing structural and digital reform. Data were analyzed using covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM). The results show that empowering leadership and job autonomy have significant positive effects on job crafting. In turn, job crafting significantly enhances CO-OCB, highlighting its central role as a behavioral mechanism through which employees contribute to organizational change. Mediation analysis confirms that job crafting significantly mediates the relationship between both antecedents and CO-OCB. These findings contribute to the literature by emphasizing the role of proactive work redesign in translating contextual resources into change-oriented behavior, particularly in the public sector. Practically, organizations are encouraged to strengthen empowering leadership and provide meaningful autonomy to support employee-driven transformation.

Keywords: Empowering Leadership, Job Autonomy, Job Crafting, Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Public sector organizations worldwide are undergoing profound and continuous transformation, driven by rapid digitalization, rising citizen expectations, and increasing policy complexity (Economic, 2024) ; (OECD, 2023). This transformation extends beyond technological adoption, encompassing systemic organizational change, including structural redesign, process reconfiguration, and behavioral transformation of public employees (Dunleavy & Margetts, 2025). Emerging evidence highlights that the success of such transformation critically depends on employees' proactive and adaptive behaviors at the

operational level (Chen et al., 2023). In Indonesia, these challenges are reflected in the fluctuating Government Effectiveness Index (2017–2024), indicating that governance effectiveness remains unstable and sensitive to both external pressures and internal bureaucratic capacity constraints. Furthermore, the fluctuation of Indonesia's Government Effectiveness Index between 2017 and 2024 also indicates that public sector transformation cannot rely solely on structural and procedural reforms. Although institutional restructuring and digitalization initiatives have been continuously implemented, the inconsistent pattern of government effectiveness suggests that organizational performance is also highly dependent on employees' behavioral adaptation and proactive involvement. In this regard, the ability of employees to initiate improvements, adapt work practices, and contribute voluntarily to organizational change through change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB) becomes increasingly important to ensure that transformation efforts are translated into sustainable operational effectiveness



Source: The GlobalEconomy.com (2024), processed by the author (2026).

Figure 1. Government Effectiveness Index in Indonesia, 2017–2024

Recent literature suggests that structural and procedural reforms alone are insufficient to ensure sustainable transformation without corresponding behavioral change among public employees (Organization, 2023) ; (Campbell, 2025). Policy implementation is shaped by micro-level dynamics, including role interpretation, discretion, and individual sensemaking, which often lead to variations in practice (Gershgoren et al., 2025) ; (Lavee & Cohen, 2025). Consequently, effective transformation depends on employees' ability to internalize and enact change in their daily work practices (Dechamps et al., 2025) ; (Larsen et al., 2025).

In this context, change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB) becomes critical, as it reflects discretionary efforts to improve work procedures and address implementation challenges (Campbell, 2025). Unlike conventional OCB, which emphasizes social harmony, CO-OCB explicitly targets organizational improvement and adaptation (Chen et al., 2023). However, empirical evidence indicates that proactive participation in organizational improvement remains uneven and often limited (Khaw et al., 2023). Although prior studies have emphasized change readiness and attitudes, they provide limited insight into how such predispositions translate into actual behavioral change (Campbell, 2025) ; (Ni et al., 2025) ; (Sharma et al., 2024). This gap is particularly salient in public sector contexts characterized by structural rigidity and institutional constraints.

To better understand how change-oriented behaviors are activated at the individual level, it is essential to examine the key organizational and job-related factors that shape employees' proactive responses to change. In this regard, recent studies highlight the role of empowering leadership and job autonomy in fostering proactive behaviors. Empowering leadership enhances participation, ownership, and initiative (Chen et al., 2023), while job autonomy strengthens intrinsic motivation and adaptive capacity (Zampetakis & Arvanitis, 2024) ; (Campbell, 2025). However, the autonomy paradox suggests that increased flexibility does not

always translate into greater perceived control or proactive behavior (Joseph & Sengul, 2025) ; (Fritsch et al., 2025).

Within this framework, job crafting serves as a key behavioral mechanism through which employees actively reshape their work to align with changing demands (Holman et al., 2024) ; (Zhang et al., 2025). Despite these advances, empirical studies integrating empowering leadership, job autonomy, and job crafting to explain CO-OCB, particularly in public sector transformation contexts, remain limited. Therefore, this study proposes a multistage model to examine how leadership and job design influence CO-OCB through the mediating roles of job crafting, responding to recent calls by Campbell (2025) for more complex and integrative models that move beyond single antecedents such as job autonomy in explaining CO-OCB.

Despite the growing interest in proactive behavior and organizational change in the public sector, empirical studies that specifically examine the mediating role of job crafting in explaining the relationship between empowering leadership, job autonomy, and CO-OCB remain limited. Most prior studies have focused primarily on direct effects or have been conducted in private-sector settings, leaving insufficient understanding of how proactive work redesign mechanisms operate within bureaucratic and highly regulated public organizations. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by developing and testing an integrative model that positions job crafting as a key behavioral mechanism linking contextual resources and change-oriented behavior in the public sector. In addition, this research extends the application of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework in the context of public sector transformation, while also providing practical insights into how organizations can foster employee-driven change through leadership and job design strategies.

The remainder of this paper is organized into five sections. Section 1 introduces the research background, research gap, and objectives. Section 2 provides a review of the relevant literature and develops the research hypotheses. Section 3 describes the research methodology, followed by Section 4, which presents the empirical results. Finally, Section 5 discusses the findings and concludes with the study's implications.

METHOD

Sample, Variables and Measurements

This study employs a quantitative approach using survey data collected through an online questionnaire distributed between January and March 2026. The population comprises 77,137 civil servants working in a public financial organization in Indonesia undergoing structural and digital transformation. A non-probability purposive sampling technique, combined with randomization, was applied to ensure that respondents met the criteria of having at least three years of work experience and holding positions ranging from operational staff to mid-level managerial roles. The sample covered various organizational units, including central and regional offices, to capture a heterogeneous workforce. The minimum sample size was determined using SEM requirements (Hair et al., 2019), Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, and G*Power analysis, resulting in a recommended minimum of 383 respondents.

A total of 1,129 responses were initially collected. Prior to analysis, data screening and cleaning procedures were conducted to ensure data quality and validity. A total of 107 responses were excluded for several reasons: respondents not meeting eligibility criteria and lack of consent ($n = 7$), failure to pass attention check questions ($n = 2$), duplicate responses ($n = 8$), straight-lining response patterns ($n = 37$), and statistical outliers identified using SPSS ($n = 53$). After applying these procedures, the final dataset consisted of 1,022 valid responses, ensuring sufficient statistical power and robust representation for subsequent analysis.

Unless otherwise stated, all variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Measurement items were adapted from established and widely validated scales. The questionnaire was administered in Bahasa

Indonesia. Prior to the main survey, a reading test and pre-test were conducted to ensure clarity, contextual relevance, and reliability of the instrument, followed by minor revisions.

Empowering leadership. Empowering leadership was measured using a 12-item scale developed by Ahearne et al., (2005), capturing dimensions such as enhancing the meaningfulness of work, fostering participation in decision-making, expressing confidence in high performance, and providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints. A sample item is, “My leader helps me understand the importance of my work to the overall effectiveness of the organization.”

Job autonomy. Job autonomy was measured using a 9-item scale adapted from the Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ) developed by Morgeson & Humphrey (2006), which captures the degree of autonomy employees have in scheduling their work, making decisions, and determining work methods. A sample item is, “The job allows me to make my own decisions about how to schedule my work.”

Job crafting. Job crafting was measured using a 21-item scale developed by (Tims et al., 2012), which captures proactive efforts to modify job demands and resources, including increasing job resources, increasing challenging demands, and decreasing hindering demands. A sample item is, “I try to learn new things at work.”

CO-OCB. CO-OCB was measured using a 9-item scale developed by Vigoda-Gadot & Beerli (2011), which captures employees’ voluntary efforts to initiate and support constructive changes in organizational processes and practices, particularly in the public sector context. A sample item is, “I try to adopt improved procedures for doing the job.”

In the analysis, several control variables were included to account for potential confounding effects, namely age, tenure, gender (male = 0, female = 1), education level, job position, and work location.

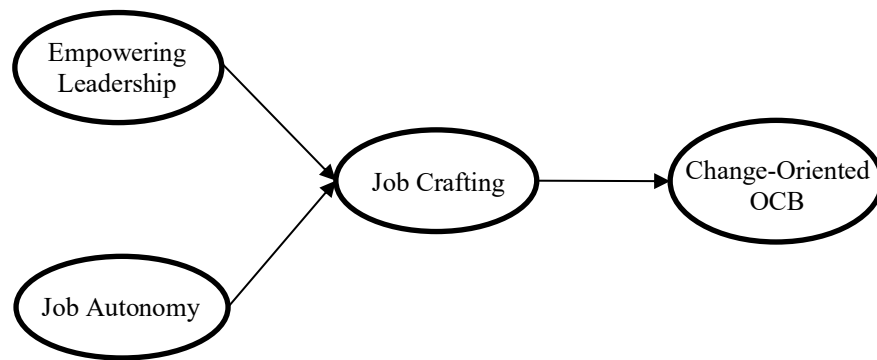
Data Analysis Method

This study employs CB-SEM to analyze the data and test the proposed hypotheses. CB-SEM is considered appropriate as it enables the simultaneous estimation of multiple relationships among latent constructs while accounting for measurement error. The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model, including factor loadings, construct reliability, and overall model fit. Second, the structural model was evaluated to examine the hypothesized relationships and the mediating effect of job crafting.

The significance of the hypothesized relationships was evaluated using t-values at a 95% confidence level, with a threshold of 1.645 for one-tailed testing. The mediating effect of job crafting was assessed by examining the significance of indirect effects. Overall model fit was evaluated using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, including RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR, following the recommendations of (Hair et al., 2019).

Conceptual Framework

This study proposes a conceptual framework that explains the relationships among empowering leadership, job autonomy, job crafting, and CO-OCB. Empowering leadership and job autonomy are posited to positively influence job crafting, as both provide employees with the support and discretion needed to proactively modify their work. Job crafting, in turn, is expected to enhance CO-OCB by enabling employees to identify opportunities for improvement, initiate changes, and support the implementation of organizational transformation.



Source: Processed by the author (2026)

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Statistical Results and Data Interpretation

The demographic profile of the respondents is summarized in Table 1. This study obtained 1,022 valid responses from civil servants employed in public financial institutions in Indonesia, reflecting a broad and heterogeneous sample. The composition of respondents indicates that participants possess adequate experience and familiarity with organizational processes and transformation initiatives, ensuring the relevance of the collected data to the research objectives.

Table 1. Demographic Statistic of Respondents

	Respondent		Public Financial Organization (OKN)	
	Qty	%	Qty	%
Gender				
Man	690	68%	52.293	68%
Woman	332	32%	24.844	32%
Age				
≤ 25 years	40	4%		
26 - 30 tahun	214	21%	25.949	33%
31 - 35 tahun	158	15%		
36 - 40 tahun	217	21%	23.827	31%
41 - 45 tahun	164	16%		
46 - 50 tahun	90	9%	17.862	23%
≥ 51 tahun	139	14%	10.299	13%
Level of education				
High school/equivalent	8	1%	2.048	3%
D1/D2/D3	210	20%	26.630	35%
S1/D4	478	47%	33.144	43%
S2	315	31%	14.972	19%
S3	11	1%	343	3%
Position				
Administrator Official (Echelon III)	29	3%	1.681	2%
Supervisory Official (Echelon IV)	208	20%	8.978	12%
Functional Official	212	21%	18.000	23%
Operational Staff	573	56%	48.478	63%
Tenure				
3 - < 8 tahun	208			
8 - < 13 tahun	203			
13 - < 18 tahun	217			
18 - < 23 tahun	163			
≥ 23 tahun	231			

Source: Processed by the author (2026)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using LISREL 8.8 to assess the measurement model of empowering leadership, job autonomy, job crafting, and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB). The analysis was performed at both the first-order and second-order levels. At the first-order level, CFA was used to examine the relationships between observed indicators and their respective latent constructs or dimensions. This procedure was applied both to unidimensional constructs and to the first-order dimensions of multidimensional constructs in order to assess indicator validity and construct reliability. At the second-order level, CFA was employed specifically for multidimensional variables by modeling the first-order dimensions as reflective indicators of their higher-order constructs. Indicator validity was evaluated using standardized factor loadings obtained from the standardized solution output in LISREL. Referring to (Hair et al., 2019), a standardized loading factor of 0.30 or above is considered acceptable for studies with a large sample size ($N > 350$), although higher loading values indicate stronger convergent validity. Reliability analysis was also conducted to ensure that the indicators consistently represented their intended latent variables. The evaluation of the measurement model was completed before proceeding to the structural model analysis.

The results show that all indicators meet the minimum loading threshold, supporting convergent validity. Empowering leadership demonstrates strong loadings across its dimensions, particularly in enhancing the meaningfulness of work. Job autonomy is also well represented by its dimensions, with work methods autonomy contributing most strongly at the higher-order level. For job crafting, all dimensions are valid, although slightly lower loadings appear in decreasing hindering job demands; nevertheless, increasing challenging job demands emerges as the most dominant dimension. CO-OCB is confirmed as a unidimensional construct with consistently adequate loadings across all indicators.

After establishing the validity of each construct, the next step involved assessing construct reliability using Construct Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). These indices were calculated based on the standardized factor loadings and measurement errors of the indicators in both the first-order and second-order models, in line with the hierarchical structure of the constructs. Following Hair et al. (2019), constructs were considered reliable when CR exceeded 0.70 and AVE was greater than 0.50. In addition, the criterion proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) in Huang et al. (2013) was taken into account, whereby a construct may still be regarded as adequately reliable when AVE is below 0.50, provided that CR remains above 0.60. Overall, the results indicated satisfactory reliability for all constructs. Although the AVE value for the dimension decreasing hindering job demands is slightly below the recommended threshold ($AVE = 0.447$), the construct is still considered acceptable because the Construct Reliability (CR) value exceeds the recommended cut-off of 0.70. According to Hair et al. (2019), multidimensional constructs often produce lower AVE values due to the broader conceptual coverage of the indicators, while CR is considered a more stable and preferred indicator of internal consistency.

Table 2. Construct Reliability (CR) Value and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for Latent Variable

Variabel	Dimension	CR	AVE
First Order			
Empowering Leadership	Enhancing the Meaningfulness of Work	0.954	0.873
	Fostering Participation in Decision Making	0.913	0.777
	Expressing Confidence in High Performance	0.931	0.819
	Providing Autonomy from Bureaucratic Constraints	0.801	0.574
Job Autonomy	Work Scheduling Autonomy	0.840	0.637
	Decision-making Autonomy	0.867	0.685
	Work Methods Autonomy	0.916	0.784
Job Crafting	Increasing Structural Job Resources	0.901	0.649

	Decreasing Hindering Job Demands	0.817	0.447
	Increasing Social Job Resources	0.842	0.517
	Increasing Challenging Job Demands	0.870	0.574
CO-OCB	-	0.937	0.626
Second-Order			
Empowering Leadership	-	0.849	0.586
Job Autonomy	-	0.865	0.682
Job Crafting	-	0.764	0.452

Source: Processed by the author (2026)

Structural Equation Modeling

Goodness of Fit (GoF) is used to evaluate the extent to which the proposed model adequately represents the relationships among observed indicators in the empirical data. In other words, it assesses the alignment between the theoretical model and the actual data structure (Hair et al., 2019). A model is considered to have an acceptable fit when it satisfies at least four to five recommended GoF criteria (Hair et al., 2019). The structural model demonstrates an overall acceptable to good fit, as indicated by several fit indices meeting recommended thresholds, including RMSEA = 0.078, SRMR = 0.074, CFI = 0.960, NNFI = 0.958, and NFI = 0.953. Although certain indices such as GFI and AGFI fall below the ideal cut-off, the majority of goodness-of-fit measures satisfy the criteria suggested by (Hair et al., 2019), indicating that the proposed model adequately represents the observed data. Because model fit is determined by other indices (CFI, RMSEA, SRMR) that have been met.

Table 3. Structural Model Goodness-of-Fit Indices

Goodness of Fit	Fit Indices	Reference Value	Structural Model Results	
AbsoluteFit Indices	Normed Chi Square	$\leq 3:1$	7817:1201	Poor fit
	GFI	$GFI \geq 0.9$	0.075	Poor fit
	SRMR	$SRMR \leq 0.08$	0.074	Good fit
	RMSEA	$RMSEA \leq 0.08$	0.078	Good fit
Incremental Fit Indices	NNFI	$NNFI \geq 0.9$	0.958	Good fit
	NFI	$NFI \geq 0.9$	0.953	Good fit
	RFI	$RFI \geq 0.9$	0.950	Good fit
	IFI	$IFI \geq 0.9$	0.960	Good fit
	CFI	$CFI \geq 0.9$	0.960	Good fit
Parsimonious Fit Indices	AGFI	$AGFI \geq 0.9$	0.722	Poor fit
	PNFI	$PNFI \geq 0.5$	0.898	Good fit

Source: Processed by the author (2026)

Based on the results of data analysis using LISREL, the structural equations and coefficients of determination (R^2) are presented as follows:

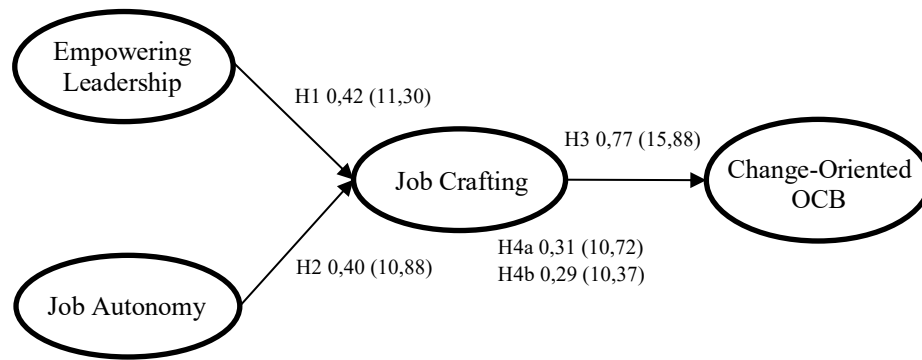
$$JC = 0.42*EL + 0.40*JA, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.46, R^2 = 0.54 \quad (1)$$

$$COOCB = 0.77*JC, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.40, R^2 = 0.60 \quad (2)$$

Based on the structural model equations, the following interpretations can be drawn:

- Referring to Equation (1), the variance in job crafting (JC) is explained by empowering leadership (EL) and job autonomy (JA) by 54%. The remaining 46% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.
- Referring to Equation (2), the variance in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB) is explained by job crafting (JC) by 60%, while the remaining 40% is accounted for by other variables outside the model.

The results of the data analysis based on the structural model path diagram (Figure 3) indicate that all relationships among the variables tested in this study have t-values ≥ 1.65 .



Source: Processed by the author (2026)

Figure 3. Path Diagram (Path Coefficient and T-value)

The results of the structural model, as illustrated in Figure 3, indicate that all hypothesized relationships are statistically significant, with t -values ≥ 1.645 . These findings demonstrate that empowering leadership (EL) and job autonomy (JA) have positive and significant effects on job crafting (JC), while job crafting also exerts a positive and significant influence on change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB). Furthermore, the mediating role of job crafting is supported, as the indirect effects of EL and JA on CO-OCB through JC are found to be positive and significant, as indicated by t -values ≥ 1.645 .

Table 4. Results of Direct Effects Significance Test

Path	Path Coefficient Value	t-values	Result Significance		Hypothesis Testing Results
EL → JC	0,42	11,30	Significant	Positive	Supported
JA → JC	0,40	10,88	Significant	Positive	Supported
JC → COOCB	0,77	15,88	Significant	Positive	Supported

Source: Processed by the author (2026)

The results of the mediation analysis are summarized in Table 5. According to Hair et al. (2019), mediation is established when there are significant relationships among the relevant variables. The detailed findings of the mediation paths examined in this study are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of Indirect Effects Significance Test

Path	Path Coefficient Value	t-values	Result Significance		Hypothesis Testing Results
EL → JC → COOCB	0,31	10,72	Significant	Positive	Supported
JA → JC → COOCB	0,29	10,37	Significant	Positive	Supported

Source: Processed by the author (2026)

H1: Empowering leadership has a positive effect on job crafting

The results indicate that empowering leadership has a positive and significant effect on job crafting ($\beta = 0.42$; $t = 11.30$), supporting H1. This finding suggests that when leaders provide autonomy, trust, and opportunities for participation, employees are more likely to proactively reshape their work. The strongest contribution of empowering leadership lies in enhancing the meaningfulness of work and expressing confidence in employees' capabilities, which strengthens employees' self-efficacy and willingness to take initiative. From a behavioral perspective, employees tend to engage in job crafting, particularly by managing hindering job demands, indicating an adaptive strategy to maintain effectiveness in dynamic work environments. This result aligns with the JD-R perspective, where empowering leadership

functions as a critical job resource that stimulates proactive behavior such as job crafting (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) ; (Chen et al., 2023). Job crafting reflects employees' proactive efforts to modify job demands, resources, and work approaches to better align with their abilities and evolving organizational demands, thereby enhancing motivation and adaptability within the JD–R framework. In this regard, empowering leadership functions as an important contextual resource that encourages employees to take initiative, participate in decision-making, and actively redefine their work roles. Leaders who provide autonomy, trust, and confidence create a supportive environment that strengthens employees' sense of responsibility and perceived impact, which in turn stimulates job crafting behavior, particularly in dynamic organizational settings characterized by structural change and increasing work demands (Chen et al., 2023) ; (Zhou et al., 2024). Prior empirical studies consistently demonstrate that empowering leadership positively influences employees' tendency to engage in job crafting by encouraging them to reinterpret organizational change as an opportunity to improve and reshape their work roles proactively (Audenaert et al., 2019). Furthermore, daily and time-lagged studies confirm that empowering leadership promotes sustained job crafting behavior through increased vigor, intrinsic motivation, and work-related curiosity (Tang et al., 2020) ; (Jaleel & Sarmad, 2024). Therefore, empowering leadership is expected to positively influence job crafting."

H2: Job autonomy has a positive effect on job crafting

Job autonomy is found to have a positive and significant effect on job crafting ($\beta = 0.40$; $t = 10.88$), thus supporting H2. This result indicates that greater freedom in determining work methods, schedules, and decisions encourages employees to proactively modify their tasks and work approaches. The most dominant aspect of autonomy lies in work methods autonomy, highlighting that flexibility in how work is performed plays a crucial role in stimulating job crafting behavior. From the SDT perspective, autonomy fulfills a basic psychological need that enhances intrinsic motivation, leading employees to actively adjust their work to improve effectiveness and personal fit (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Empirical insights also show that flexible work arrangements provide practical space for employees to experiment with new ways of working, reinforcing the emergence of job crafting behaviors. Within the JD–R framework, job autonomy is considered a key job resource that provides employees with discretion, flexibility, and opportunities to determine how their work is performed. Such autonomy enables employees to actively adjust their tasks, work methods, and interactions in response to changing work demands through job crafting behaviors (Demerouti, 2026). Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that job autonomy positively influences job crafting by enhancing employees' sense of work meaningfulness and strengthening the alignment between job characteristics and individual values (Nie et al., 2023). Prior studies further indicate that employees who experience greater decision-making and work-method autonomy are more likely to seek additional resources, embrace challenging demands, and proactively redesign their work roles (Chang et al., 2021) ; (Doblinger, 2023). This positive relationship has also been confirmed across various organizational contexts, including service and digital work environments, where autonomy encourages experimentation, adaptability, and proactive work adjustment (Jang & Kim, 2023) ; (Zhang et al., 2025). Moreover, daily-level studies reveal that increases in perceived job autonomy are associated with higher engagement in job crafting behaviors over time (Rudolph et al., 2025). Therefore, job autonomy is expected to positively influence job crafting

H3: Job crafting has a positive effect on CO-OCB

The analysis reveals that job crafting has a strong positive and significant effect on change-oriented OCB ($\beta = 0.77$; $t = 15.88$), confirming H3. This finding implies that employees

who actively reshape their jobs are more likely to engage in change-oriented behaviors, such as proposing improvements and introducing new work methods. Job crafting is primarily reflected in increasing challenging job demands and decreasing hindering job demands, indicating a balance between seeking growth and managing constraints. This combination enhances employees' adaptability and proactive orientation toward change. The findings support prior studies suggesting that job crafting acts as a self-regulation mechanism that fosters innovation and change-oriented behavior, particularly in dynamic organizational contexts (Demerouti et al., 2024) ; (Malik, 2024). From a proactive work behavior perspective, job crafting represents employees' self-initiated efforts to modify task boundaries, social interactions, and work meaning to better align work demands with personal capabilities and organizational expectations. Through these proactive adjustments, employees become more adaptive, engaged, and willing to contribute beyond formal job requirements. In dynamic organizational environments, particularly within the public sector, job crafting plays an important role in fostering change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB). Employees who actively reshape their work are more likely to initiate improvements, support process innovation, and participate in organizational transformation efforts (Chen et al., 2023). Previous studies further indicate that job crafting enhances employees' willingness to propose new ideas, challenge existing procedures, and contribute constructively to organizational change initiatives (Malik, 2024). In addition, job crafting strengthens change readiness and voluntary change behavior by increasing employee resilience and adaptive capacity in responding to evolving work demands (Khan et al., 2025). As a form of proactive self-regulation, job crafting also encourages extra-role behaviors that support organizational effectiveness and continuous improvement (Demerouti et al., 2015). Therefore, employees who engage in higher levels of job crafting are expected to demonstrate stronger CO-OCB.

H4a: Job crafting mediates the effect of empowering leadership on CO-OCB

The mediation analysis shows that job crafting significantly mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and CO-OCB (indirect effect = 0.31; $t = 10.72$), supporting H4a. This indicates that empowering leadership does not directly drive change-oriented behavior but operates through employees' proactive job crafting. When leaders provide trust, autonomy, and support, employees are encouraged to adjust and develop their work, which subsequently leads to greater involvement in organizational change initiatives. This finding reinforces the SDT and JD-R integration, where leadership fosters intrinsic motivation and resource activation that translate into proactive behaviors. Job crafting is conceptualized as a key behavioral mechanism through which empowering leadership is translated into change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB). Empowering leadership encourages employees to participate in decision-making, exercise discretion, and take responsibility for their work, thereby fostering intrinsic motivation and proactive work behavior (Chen et al., 2023) ; (Zhou et al., 2024). By providing trust, support, and developmental opportunities, empowering leaders create a work environment that enables employees to actively reshape their tasks, relationships, and work meaning through job crafting (Piao & Hahn, 2025). Within the JD-R perspective, empowering leadership functions as an important job resource that stimulates employees to optimize available resources and manage work demands proactively (Rudolph et al., 2020). In turn, employees who engage in job crafting are more likely to demonstrate CO-OCB, such as proposing improvements, supporting innovation, and contributing to organizational transformation (Chen et al., 2023) ; (Malik, 2024).

H4ab: Job crafting mediates the effect of job autonomy on CO-OCB

Similarly, job crafting significantly mediates the relationship between job autonomy and CO-OCB (indirect effect = 0.29; $t = 10.37$), supporting H4b. This result suggests that autonomy alone is insufficient to directly generate change-oriented behavior unless it is translated into

proactive adjustments through job crafting. Employees who have control over their work are more likely to redesign their tasks, which enhances their capacity to contribute beyond formal roles. From a JD-R perspective, job autonomy serves as a key resource that enables employees to engage in job crafting, which then drives CO-OCB. This finding is consistent with prior research emphasizing that autonomy facilitates proactive behavior only when individuals actively utilize it to reshape their work (Rudolph et al., 2020 ; Nie et al., 2023). Within the SDT and JD-R frameworks, job crafting is also viewed as a critical mechanism linking job autonomy to change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB). Job autonomy provides employees with discretion, flexibility, and control over how work is performed, which strengthens intrinsic motivation and encourages proactive adaptation to changing work demands (Nie et al., 2023; Doblinger, 2023). Employees who experience higher levels of autonomy are more likely to actively modify their tasks, seek additional resources, and redefine their work roles through job crafting. From the JD-R perspective, job autonomy serves as a strategic job resource that facilitates bottom-up work redesign in dynamic organizational environments (Rudolph et al., 2020). Through job crafting, employees become more engaged, adaptive, and willing to contribute beyond formal job requirements, thereby increasing their involvement in constructive change initiatives and organizational improvement efforts (Malik, 2024) ; (Chen et al., 2023).

Discussion

This study highlights the critical role of job crafting as a key behavioral mechanism linking empowering leadership and job autonomy to change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB). The findings indicate that empowering leadership exerts a positive indirect influence on CO-OCB through job crafting, suggesting that leadership practices characterized by participation, trust, and meaningfulness encourage employees to proactively reshape their work and contribute to organizational change. This result supports the view that empowering leadership functions as a social resource that fosters intrinsic motivation and proactive behavior, enabling employees to initiate improvements without relying solely on formal structural changes (Chen et al., 2023).

However, the findings also reveal that not all aspects of empowering leadership are equally perceived. In particular, the relatively weaker perception of autonomy from bureaucratic constraints suggests that empowerment in public organizations remains partially limited by formal procedures. This indicates that while leaders may promote participation and confidence, the absence of sufficient discretion may hinder employees from fully engaging in job crafting behaviors. As a result, the effectiveness of empowering leadership in driving CO-OCB depends not only on relational support but also on the extent to which organizational systems allow flexibility and discretion.

Furthermore, job crafting emerges as the most influential predictor of CO-OCB, emphasizing its central role in fostering change-oriented behavior. Employees who actively seek challenges, expand their resources, and adjust their work are more likely to introduce improvements and challenge existing processes. This finding is consistent with prior studies demonstrating that job crafting enhances proactive and change-oriented behaviors in organizations (Chen et al., 2023) ; (Malik, 2024). Notably, the dominance of increasing challenging job demands suggests that employees are more inclined to engage in growth-oriented adjustments rather than avoidance strategies.

Nevertheless, the findings also point to an imbalance in job crafting practices. While employees tend to increase challenges and resources, they face difficulties in reducing hindering job demands, particularly those related to administrative complexity, role ambiguity, and workload pressures. This condition indicates that structural constraints within the organization may limit the effectiveness of job crafting, as employees are not fully able to manage or eliminate work-related obstacles. Consequently, job crafting should be understood

not only as an individual proactive behavior but also as one that is shaped by organizational context.

The mediating role of job crafting in the relationship between job autonomy and CO-OCB further reinforces the importance of proactive adaptation. The findings suggest that job autonomy does not directly translate into change-oriented behavior; instead, employees must first utilize autonomy to actively redesign their work through job crafting. This implies that autonomy functions as an enabling resource, whose effectiveness depends on employees' capability and willingness to engage in proactive work behaviors.

In addition, the results indicate that the perceived level of job autonomy remains suboptimal, particularly in terms of independent work execution. Despite the implementation of flexible work arrangements, employees still report limited opportunities to fully exercise autonomy in practice. This suggests that formal flexibility policies alone are insufficient and must be supported by clear role expectations and reduced bureaucratic constraints. In line with Campbell (2025), autonomy in public organizations should be viewed as bounded discretion that requires a balance between flexibility and structural guidance.

Moreover, the findings reveal the dual nature of job autonomy. While autonomy can encourage experimentation, flexibility, and proactive behavior, it may also create pressure when not accompanied by clear direction and support. In dynamic and collaborative environments, employees may experience increased demands to self-manage their work across multiple responsibilities, which can limit the positive effects of autonomy. Therefore, organizations need to ensure that autonomy is implemented alongside clarity and support mechanisms to maximize its impact on job crafting and CO-OCB.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the emergence of change-oriented behavior in public organizations is largely driven by employees' proactive capacity to reshape their work. Empowering leadership and job autonomy serve as important contextual enablers, but their effectiveness ultimately depends on the extent to which employees engage in job crafting. This underscores the importance of fostering a work environment that not only provides resources but also actively encourages and supports proactive work redesign as a pathway to organizational change.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study aims to examine how empowering leadership and job autonomy influence change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (CO-OCB) through the mediating role of job crafting in the context of public sector transformation. The findings indicate that empowering leadership and job autonomy positively influence job crafting, which in turn enhances employees' change-oriented behavior. These results provide empirical support for the proposed theoretical framework, confirming that job crafting functions as a key behavioral mechanism linking contextual resources to proactive change-oriented outcomes. The study highlights that employees are not merely passive recipients of organizational change but active agents who reshape their work and contribute to improvement through job crafting. By demonstrating the mediating role of job crafting, this research extends prior studies that have primarily focused on direct relationships, offering a more nuanced understanding of how leadership and job design translate into change-oriented behavior. From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce the integration of SDT and the JD-R framework in explaining proactive behavior in organizational settings. From a practical standpoint, the results suggest that organizations should foster empowering leadership and provide meaningful autonomy to encourage employees to actively participate in and support organizational transformation.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the use of cross-sectional data restricts causal inference, particularly in capturing the temporal dynamics of the mediating role of job crafting. Second, the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce common method bias. Third, the sample is limited to a single public financial organization in Indonesia, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Fourth, although established scales were used, the measurement of constructs such as job crafting and CO-OCB may not fully capture their contextual complexity. Finally, the study focuses on a limited set of variables and a single mediating mechanism, which may overlook other relevant factors. Therefore, future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs, multi-source data, and broader model frameworks to enhance robustness and generalizability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several practical and academic recommendations are proposed. Practically, organizations particularly in the public sector are encouraged to strengthen empowering leadership practices and provide meaningful job autonomy to foster employees' proactive engagement in job crafting, thereby enhancing their contribution to organizational change initiatives. Creating a supportive work environment that promotes participation, discretion, and psychological ownership may facilitate more effective and sustainable transformation. Academically, future research is recommended to expand the scope of the sample across different organizational and cultural contexts to improve generalizability, employ longitudinal or multi-source data to strengthen causal inference, and explore additional variables such as organizational climate, psychological empowerment, or work engagement, prosedural justice as alternative or complementary mechanisms. Moreover, the use of different analytical approaches, such as longitudinal SEM or experimental designs, is encouraged to further validate and extend the current findings.

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