

MODERATING EFFECTS OF SITUATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL VARIABLES
ON PERCEIVED OVERQUALIFICATION AND JOB CRAFTING RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract

The present study addresses an aspect of perceived overqualification, or the belief of being employed in a position for which one possesses excess education, work experience or knowledge, skills and abilities relative to job requirements, that has yet to be fully examined in organizational research. While more is known about attitudinal responses and exit intentions, less empirical testing has evaluated outcomes stemming from decisions to stay, or the inability to leave overqualification situations. Thus, the current research examined a proposed negative relationship between perceived overqualification and engagement in job crafting, which can be viewed as adaptive actions initiated by employees in order to promote personal meaningfulness in their work. Four crafting types have been identified in past literature (increasing structural job resources, increasing social job resources, increasing challenging job demands and decreasing hindering job demands), but little is known about what actually prompts crafting. Although a negative direct relationship was expected between perceptions of overqualification and some types of job crafting, the present study also hypothesized a buffering effect of perceptions of situational growth opportunity and interpersonal characteristics. Results indicated that perceived overqualification negatively predicted engagement in expanding types of job crafting. Situational growth expectations moderated the relation between perceived overqualification and expanding types of job crafting. Core self-evaluations did not moderate perceived overqualification–job crafting relationships, and growth need strength exhibited a positive moderating effect on the previously nonexistent relationship between perceived overqualification and restricting types of job crafting. Implications and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Moderating Effects of Situational and Interpersonal Variables on Perceived
Overqualification and Job Crafting Relationships

Despite a growing interest in overqualification among organizational scholars, this dimension of the broader underemployment construct has yet to receive sufficient research attention. Most recent investigations have focused on the attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction) and turnover intentions (e.g., Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006) of overqualified employees (Bashshur, Hernández, & Peiró, 2011). Notably less research has been conducted on employee behavioral responses to perceptions of overqualification (e.g., Fine & Nevo, 2008). For example, if an employee feels overqualified but is unable or unwilling to leave her position, how might she manage her situation? The current research will attempt to address this question by examining a prospective relationship between perceived overqualification and engagement in job crafting behaviors. Job crafting consists of employee-initiated workplace behaviors and perceptions, which alter the nature of assigned tasks or the manner in which the employee perceives tasks, such as “hospital cleaners actively caring for patients and families, integrating themselves into the workflow of their floor units” (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, pp. 185). This example highlights the altering of interactional job tasks in a way that fundamentally changes the meaning of the job.

Given that crafting is considered to be an individual’s adaptive response to unsatisfactory situational factors (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), it is possible that under certain circumstances, employees perceiving overqualification may engage in job crafting. However, the tendency for overqualification to be directly and negatively related to a variety of attitudes and outcomes suggests that a negative relationship may instead

exist. In the current research, I will attempt to determine the nature of the relationship between perceived overqualification and job crafting, and also investigate several moderators (i.e., core self-evaluations, expectations of future growth and growth need strength) in an effort to highlight their possible interactive effects.

Perceived Overqualification

Overqualification combines two of the five primary underemployment dimensions outlined by Feldman (1996), namely the possession of surplus education and the possession of surplus knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) relative to the requirements for one's job (Maynard et al., 2006). Research in this area can typically be broken down into two categories based on how the construct is measured. Some researchers have measured employee overqualification objectively (e.g., comparing job education requirements against an employee's highest level of education attained), often focusing solely on the more easily quantifiable aspect of over-education (Bashshur et al., 2011; Kahn & Morrow, 1991; McGoldrick & Robst, 1996). The second approach taps employee perceptions of being overqualified, which is the primary focus of this study, and these perceptions may or may not be in line with objective measures of overqualification. Indeed, Maltarich, Reilly and Nyberg (2011) suggest the two methods of measuring overqualification are actually tapping two separate constructs, and that individual differences may influence appraisal of employment situations.

As both subjective and objective overqualification have been linked with a number of negative workplace outcomes (e.g., poor job attitudes and psychological health), Erdogan and Bauer (2009) called for investigation into what potential moderators may impact these observed negative relationships. The authors themselves found that

self-reported empowerment diminished the effects of perceived overqualification on several negative outcomes, including turnover intentions and actual turnover.

Furthermore, Erdogan, Bauer, Peiro, and Truxillo (2011) suggest that overqualification can actually prove beneficial for work-family/work-life conflict and job satisfaction, depending on the employee's motives for remaining in an overqualification situation. To date, the very small pool of research that has actually examined such relationships has focused on personal variables (e.g., marital status), rather than variables that an organization might be able to influence (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009). As a result, the present study will investigate both organizationally controllable and dispositional variables, by testing the moderating value of growth need strength, core self-evaluations and future growth expectations on the relationship between perceived overqualification and engagement in job crafting. First, however, I consider the nature of the job crafting construct and its potential direct relationship with perceived overqualification.

Job Crafting

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) define *job crafting* as a set of adaptive actions undertaken by workers to alter their jobs, including physical or cognitive manipulation of tasks or modification of relational interactions. More recently, based on Demerouti et al.'s (2001) job demands-resources model, Tims, Bakker and Derks (2011) defined job crafting as "changes that employees may make to balance their job demands and job resources with their personal abilities and needs" (p. 2). Under this model, the authors highlighted four main dimensions similar to those proposed by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), including crafting that (a) increases structural job resources, (b) increases social

job resources, and (c) increases challenging job demands, as well as crafting that (d) decreases hindering job demands as a standalone facet (see Table 1 for examples of each).

The former three job crafting types have been found to be significantly and positively correlated with each other (Tims et al., 2011) and may be collectively viewed as *expanding work behaviors*. By engaging in these types of behaviors (e.g., volunteering to participate in a new project; asking others for workplace performance feedback; engaging in workplace activities that foster professional development), the employee proactively seeks to enhance job fulfillment or engagement by accumulating extra resources and workplace challenges. On the other hand, crafting that decreases hindering job demands may be viewed as *restricting work behaviors*, by which the employee seeks to reduce job complexity or exposure to certain job characteristics (e.g., avoiding difficult clients; rearranging assigned tasks to minimize duration and/or intensity of work).

Past research has outlined similarities between job crafting and a number of organizational behaviors that are individually and organizationally beneficial, including role innovation, personal initiative, organizational citizenship behavior and task revision (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2011). Furthermore, Berg, Dutton and Wrzesniewski (in press) strongly emphasize the positive implications of job crafting engagement as a way to instill meaningfulness into work, and suggest that in crafting, a worker utilizes her assets to improve person-job fit. From this perspective then, crafting appears to be a predominantly positive construct, providing opportunity for enhancing both an employee's work experience, as well as organizational effectiveness. As a result, it is difficult to determine the place of restricting work behaviors within the job crafting construct. While engaging in restricting work behaviors is certainly a means of employee-

enacted job alteration, whether it instills meaningfulness in one's work and ignites passion in an employee is less clear. Taking this into consideration, the primary goal of the present research is to determine the nature of relationships between perceptions of overqualification and expanding work behaviors. As secondary goal, I aim to address restricting work behavior relationships from a more exploratory perspective.

Previous examinations into the nature of job crafting have hypothesized such behaviors to be motivated by desiring more control over one's job, creating a positive self-image and connecting with others (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Situational factors such as perceived autonomy have also been hypothesized to moderate the relationship between motivation for crafting and the actual initiation of crafting behaviors (Berg et al, 2010). Furthermore, empirical investigations have suggested that although management is typically unaware of job crafting initiation (Lyons, 2008), those who work closely with an employee engaging in crafting may take notice. In partial support of this notion, Tims et al. (2011) found that while restricting work behaviors remain undetected by coworkers, all three types of expanding behaviors tend to be recognized by one's workplace peers.

Based on the limited job crafting research conducted to date (a recent PsycINFO search using the term "job crafting" yielded a modest 23 published results), it is evident that the nature of the job crafting construct has yet to be fully explored. Lyons (2008) called for additional investigation into the specific factors that might provoke or inhibit employee crafting. In the present study, I attempt to address this by examining a potential link between perceived overqualification and job crafting (Maynard, 2011), utilizing

human capital theory and personality theory to derive hypotheses about main effects and potential moderators.

Human Capital Theory

The tenets of human capital theory were derived from the research of Schultz (1961), which focused on returns (in the form of earning potential) gained from one's educational investment. Becker (1964) went on to specify that acquired capital increases employee performance and productivity, in turn leading to a potential for higher level earnings. More recent research has focused on a broadened definition of capital, including not only formal education, but also skills and knowledge gained through training, work experience and social connections (Mincer, 1994). Furthermore, investments in capital acquisition "promote the development of desirable personal attributes (namely, cognitive ability and conscientiousness), which in turn lead to higher productivity and earned income" (Ng & Feldman, 2010, pp. 228).

In a review of human capital theory as it relates to overqualification, Livingstone (1997) suggests that perceptions of overqualification may result if there are gaps between the level of capital acquired and what is necessary for carrying out work assignments. Individuals will make efforts to maximize the capital they possess (Van Ham, Mulder, & Hooimeijer, 2001), but are also unlikely to do so in the face of unsatisfactory returns. Thus, employees may attempt to manage the overqualification situation by allocating capital outside of their current organization rather than engaging in expanding work behaviors. This may manifest in the form of seeking an alternative employment opportunity, one that will better utilize acquired capital and present an increased likelihood of providing advantageous returns on capital investments. However, in the

event that the employee is unable or unwilling to find more advantageous employment, capital allocation may also be directed toward personal fulfillments outside of the one's work life.

Indeed, past research has found support for a significant and positive predictive relationship between perceptions of overqualification and turnover intentions (e.g., Gupta & Beehr, 1979; Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Maynard et al., 2006), and research has also supported a link between perceived overqualification and job search-related behavior (Wald, 2005). While it is important to note that research is sparse in relation to the effects of perceived overqualification on actual employee turnover (Maynard, Joseph & Maynard, 2006; Erdogan & Bauer, 2011), a limited pool of research suggests underemployment facets do indeed lead to turnover behavior. For example, in an analysis of job stressors and subsequent withdrawal behaviors, Gupta and Beehr (1979) found that the stressor of skill underutilization (a facet of overqualification) led to increased likelihood of employee turnover. Similarly, employees who experienced work status incongruence (a mismatch that occurs when an employee desires a specific status such as full-time employment, which is not being fulfilled in their present work environment), a construct related to underemployment, were found to be more likely to engage in turnover than their counterparts who experienced greater congruence (Holtom et al., 2002).

Thus, while the job crafting literature suggests crafting is a means of instilling work meaningfulness, and as such, expanding work behaviors would be expected to increase in the presence of perceived overqualification, human capital theory suggests the relationship will be negative. As a result, I hypothesize that in general, perceived

overqualification prevents the employee from engaging in expanding work behaviors as this would constitute an investment in an undesirable working situation that cannot provide advantageous returns. Engaging in such behaviors may also limit available resources that can be better allocated toward securing a more gainful employment situation.

Hypothesis 1: Perceived overqualification will be negatively related to expanding work behaviors.

Moderating Effects of Individual Differences and Situational Variables

Whether or not an employee reacts to having excess capital by engaging in job crafting may depend upon their intention to either remain in or vacate the overqualification situation, and may also be impacted by situational and interpersonal characteristics. Presently, I argue the case for a buffering effect, under which perceived overqualification will become non-predictive of job crafting (in the form of expanding work behaviors) when the employee (a) has a particularly high expectation of imminent growth or improvement in her job (i.e., future growth expectations), (b) has a particularly strong desire to experience work which offers professional growth and challenge (i.e., growth need strength) or (c) has a particularly positive self-concept (i.e., core self-evaluations). I now explore each of these potential moderators in turn.

Future Growth Expectations

I propose that the initiation of crafting behaviors among overqualified workers will depend on their expectations about possible future growth within their job. More specifically, from the theoretical perspective of human capital, expectations of future growth may undo the negative effects of perceived overqualification on expanding work

behaviors. If an employee feels there is a good chance for situational improvement within her current organization, she may draw upon acquired capital in order to maximize the likelihood of future growth. Since their current job may not offer sufficient avenues for capital utilization, they may also engage in expanding work behaviors as much as non-overqualified employees in order to put the majority of their knowledge, skills and abilities to good use.

In a longitudinal examination of perceived overqualification and job satisfaction, Johnson and Johnson (2000; 2002) found that perceived overqualification, measured as low growth opportunity, predicted work and supervisor satisfaction among postal employees. As job satisfaction has been linked to both in-role (Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton, 2001) and extra-role (Organ & Ryan, 1995) performance, there are reasons to expect that positive future expectations about one's job may sustain proactive efforts on that job. Similarly, Feldman and Turnley (2004) found that employees expecting future benefits from their jobs tend to maintain high performance and perceive lower levels of relative deprivation. Finally, Maynard, Rokitowski and Bodolato (in preparation) found future growth expectations to predict employee engagement in organizational citizenship behaviors directed toward one's own job as well as one's organization and coworkers. Based on these findings, I hypothesize that if the employee believes their overqualification situation is likely to improve in their current organization, they will be less apt to avoid engaging in job crafting behaviors that they view as beneficial.

Hypothesis 2: Future growth expectations will moderate the negative relationship between perceived overqualification and expanding work behaviors, such that the

relationship will be neutralized for workers who report high future growth expectations.

Personality Theory and Interpersonal Moderators

In his review of future directions for theory-based underemployment research, Feldman (2011) outlines the prospective value of personality theory, which emphasizes the maintenance of relatively stable personality traits leading to similar reactions under similar circumstances over time. From this perspective, it is plausible that certain traits (such as high levels of neuroticism) would be likely to exacerbate perceptions of overqualification and fail to produce positive responses to overqualification situations. However, the present study wishes to address traits that, when possessed, are viewed as being more positive. Examples include high core self-evaluations and growth need strength. While these traits may not diminish perceptions of overqualification, they may promote positive and proactive responses to perceived overqualification, such as engagement in expanding work behaviors.

Core self-evaluations. Core self-evaluations (CSE) is a hybrid construct of self-concept drawn from four factors: generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem, neuroticism and locus of control (Judge et al., 1997). Erez and Judge (2001) found significant and positive relationships between CSE and eight performance and motivation variables (i.e., rated performance, sales volume, activity level, goal setting, goal commitment, task performance, task persistence and task motivation) among insurance salesmen. Results further indicated that scores on a measure of CSE better predicted performance and motivation than did individual measures of self-efficacy, self-esteem, neuroticism and

locus of control. Judge and Hurst (2007) also found that individuals with high CSE are more adaptive, optimistic and able to respond proactively to unfavorable conditions.

While no research has examined the potential link between job crafting and CSE, there are several indications that CSE may play a role in crafting behavior. Lyons (2008) indicated the presence of a significant correlation between crafting and self-image, with individuals higher in self-image reporting a higher level of crafting engagement. Furthermore, Parker, Bindl and Strauss' (2010) review of proactive motivation in the workplace stressed the importance of self-efficacy for proactive goal generation and enactment. The authors suggest that without efficacy, one may refrain from proactivity, for fear of potential outcomes including negative resistance and failure.

Thus, as job crafting is considered to be a “proactive process that is associated with adaptive action” (Berg et al., 2010; pp. 178), I hypothesize that CSE will moderate the relationship between overqualification and job crafting. Past research suggests that workers with high CSE tend to seek productive alternatives to aversive situations, and expanding work behavior is a potential outlet for doing so.

Hypothesis 3: Core self-evaluations will moderate the negative relationship between perceived overqualification and expanding work behaviors, such that this relationship will be neutralized for employees with high core self-evaluations.

Growth need strength. Part of the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) of work motivation developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), growth need strength represents an individual's relatively stable need for work that fosters development or growth and provides opportunity for challenge and accomplishment. Under this model, growth need strength (GNS) serves as a moderating variable between five key motivational

characteristics of one's job (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback) and subsequent outcomes such as job satisfaction, job performance, internal work motivation and turnover (Grant, Fried & Juillerat, 2011).

Initially, growth need strength was put forth as a moderator only for "enriched" work situations, namely those positions with high motivation potential scores (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Oldham and Hackman, 1976). However, research has since found support for the stability of growth need strength under less desirable working conditions. For example, a small-scale study conducted with college students by Das (1991) found growth need strength to significantly impact the relation between job attitudes and productivity on a menial task of drilling holes. A later study conducted by Shalley, Gilson and Blum (2009) investigated whether a supportive work context and task complexity moderated the relationship between growth need strength and self-reported creative performance. They concluded that workers high in growth need strength "can overcome having a job that is more routine and less autonomous and find ways to essentially build creativity into the job." (pp. 500), a description which is strikingly similar to job crafting.

In relation to the present research, it is possible then that growth need strength will moderate the relationship between perceived overqualification and expanding work behaviors. Under overqualification conditions, individuals high in this personality trait may be more likely to avoid disengagement in expanding behaviors, in an effort to satisfy their intrinsic need for productive work experiences and achievement. Conversely, individuals with low growth need strength may be less likely to engage in expanding behaviors when perceiving overqualification, as they have lower levels of intrinsic motivation.

Hypothesis 4: GNS will moderate the negative relationship between perceived overqualification and expanding work behaviors, such that the relationship will be neutralized at higher levels of GNS.

Exploring Restricting Work Behaviors

As previously mentioned, no hypotheses have been generated in relation to restricting work behaviors. The unclear nature of this construct in general, as well as its incongruence with job crafting principles warrants inclusion from a strictly exploratory perspective. As a result, the present study's aim in regard to restricting work behaviors is to provide insight into how it might function in overqualification situations for the purposes of future research.

Method

Participants

In their review, Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) point out that many previous investigations of job crafting have focused on a single type of employment (e.g. hairdressers, Cohen & Sutton, 1998; engineers, Fletcher, 1998), limiting the generalizability of findings. To advance the available literature and increase generalizability, in the present study I recruited employed participants across varying professions and organizations.

Participants were recruited through two avenues. The first was through the use of survey invitations sent via a social networking website. Individuals initially invited to participate were encouraged to invite their social circles to complete the survey. In addition, non-teaching staff from a mid-sized northeastern state university also received a participation invitation via email. Benefits of utilizing these recruitment techniques

include access to a large number of potential subjects in a wide range of professions and industries. Unemployed and self-employed individuals were not eligible to participate in this study, as the questions did not pertain to their current employment situation.

Additionally, data were only utilized from participants who indicated their age as 21 years or above, to increase the likelihood of their possessing a higher level of work experience and KSAs.

Recruitment strategies yielded useable data from 242 subjects. Seventy five percent of participants were female, and the average age was 43 years ($SD = 13.36$). The mean education level was sixteen years, or the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree ($SD = 2.37$ years). In terms of employment characteristics, the majority of responders indicated full-time and permanent job status (82%), with an average organizational tenure of 9.48 years ($SD = 9.57$) and an average job tenure of 6.07 years ($SD = 6.97$ years).

Measures

Subjects who chose to click on the survey link were automatically redirected to the online survey (see the Appendix), hosted on the SurveyMonkey.com website. The online survey took about 15-20 minutes to complete and included measures of perceived overqualification, job crafting, growth need strength, future growth expectations, and core self-evaluations. Demographic information and job characteristics were also collected.

Perceived overqualification. Perceived overqualification was measured using Maynard et al.'s (2006) 9-item Scale of Perceived Overqualification (SPOQ). The SPOQ utilizes a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and includes items developed to tap into perceptions of possessing additional education (e.g., "My job

requires less education than I have”), skills (e.g., “I have job skills that are not required for this job”), or work experience (e.g., “My previous training is not being fully utilized on this job”) beyond what one’s job requires ($\alpha = .92$).

Engagement in job crafting. To date, job crafting researchers have measured this construct using mainly qualitative methodologies, such as interviews (e.g., Lyons, 2008; Berg et al., 2010). The present study instead assessed job crafting behavior with Tims et al.’s (2011) recently developed job crafting scale. The measure is based on a 5-point Likert scale (1= *never*; 5 = *often*), and asks participants to rate the degree to which they engage in behaviors geared toward increasing structural job resources (e.g., “I try to learn new things at work;” 5 items), increasing social job resources (e.g., “I ask whether my supervisor is satisfied with my work;” 6 items), increasing challenging job demands (e.g., “When there is not much to do at work, I see it as an opportunity to start new projects;” 6 items) and decreasing hindering job demands (e.g., “I make sure that my work is mentally less intense;” 5 items). Reliability for each of the four dimensions in the initial sample was acceptable ($\alpha = .82$, $\alpha = .79$, $\alpha = .77$ and $\alpha = .75$, respectively).

Original scale development and validation was conducted in Dutch with participants from the Netherlands. It is unclear whether back-translation validation techniques were employed in translating the scale into English (as it appears in the published article). As a result, prior to data collection for the main study, a small-scale pilot study was conducted to examine the psychometric properties of the English version. Graduate students from a mid-sized northeastern university, as well as non-teaching staff members from a northeastern community college were invited to participate (total $N = 82$). Participants were recruited via e-mail and were asked to complete a short survey

consisting only of the job crafting scale, the scale of perceived overqualification and questions regarding demographic information (age, sex, organization tenure, job tenure, and employment status).

Given the small number of participants, it was not possible to analyze the data with a confirmatory factor analysis. Instead, reliability was first calculated for the original four subscales (i.e., increasing structural job resources, increasing social job resources, increasing challenging job demands and decreasing hindering job demands). Internal consistency for these subscales was acceptable, but not strong ($\alpha = .67$, $\alpha = .68$, $\alpha = .76$, and $\alpha = .76$, respectively). Next, generation of a scree plot confirmed the acceptability of extracting a two factor model. A principal components analysis (PCA) was then conducted using oblique rotation (i.e., direct oblimin) to allow for correlated factors. Results of the PCA indicated that the majority of included items loaded on two separate factors, with factor loadings greater than 0.45 (see Table 2).

The first factor, comprised of 14 items, represents behaviors that are initiated for the purposes of increasing workplace resources and/or utilizing acquired skills and abilities to the fullest (e.g., engaging in social interactions with supervisors and peers that promote positive workplace relationships; making efforts to maximize opportunities to learn and put to use new and interesting information at work). This factor is comprised entirely of items from the increasing structural job resources, increasing social job resources, and increasing challenging job demands subscales. The second factor consists of the 6 remaining items, and concerns avoidant behaviors undertaken to minimize contact with challenging or stressful workplace elements (e.g., striving to reduce contact with difficult coworkers or clients; structuring one's day in a way that eases emotional

and manual task burdens). This factor completely matches the content of Tims et al.'s (2011) decreasing hindering job demands subscale.

One item from the increasing structural job resources scale failed to load on either factor, but its removal did not significantly impact reliability, and thus it was retained as part of the first factor. The internal consistency of the resulting measure of expanding work behaviors (including all 15 items of increasing structural job resources, increasing social job resources and increasing challenging job demands) was .84, noticeably stronger than for each of the three subscales separately. Thus, for the purposes of the primary study, it was decided that the English version of the Tims et al. (2011) job crafting scale could be used in the primary study, and the three “increasing” subscales were merged into one measure of expanding job crafting behaviors.

Future growth expectations. In order to measure perceptions that one's underemployment situation might improve, the present study employed Maynard, Rokitowski and Bodolato's (in preparation) Future Growth Expectations Scale (FGES). The six-item measure is based on a percentage scale from 0% (*do not expect the situation will change*) to 100% (*certain the situation will change*). Respondents indicate the likelihood that each potential area of growth will occur on their current job within the next two years and includes items that relate to areas of job growth (e.g., “my job will provide me with new challenges”; $\alpha = .91$).

Core self-evaluations. The Core Self-evaluations Scale (CSES) developed by Judge et al. (2003) was used to measure CSE, as it is regarded as the best measure available for research purposes (Gardner & Pierce, 2010; Judge & Hurst, 2007). The CSES asks employees to rate their level of agreement (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly*

agree) with twelve statements regarding perceptions of self-confidence, self-efficacy, locus of control and neuroticism (e.g., “I am confident I get the success I deserve in life”; $\alpha = 0.84$).

Growth need strength. Growth need strength was measured using items from Hackman and Oldham’s (1976) Job Diagnostic Survey. Respondents chose their level of preference (a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly prefer job A* to *strongly prefer job B*) on 12 pairs of hypothetical job situations ($\alpha = 0.71$). For each pair, one job choice contains growth characteristics (e.g., “A job which provides constant opportunities to learn new and interesting things”), while the other contains characteristics satisfying a variety of other needs (e.g., “A job with very satisfying teamwork”).

Demographic information and job characteristics. Finally, I asked participants to provide information pertaining to their age, gender and geographic location. They were also asked to provide a number of job characteristics, including job tenure, organizational tenure, and employment status (full-time, part-time, temporary, self-employed, unemployed). Age, gender, education level, job tenure and organizational tenure were explored as potential control variables for primary regression analyses as described below.

Results

Correlations

Table 3 presents a correlation matrix including all outcome, predictor, and demographic variables. Perceived overqualification was significantly and negatively related to future growth expectations ($r = -.18$) and expanding work behaviors ($r = -.29$), but positively related to restricting work behaviors ($r = .15$). The hypothesized

moderators were each at least partially related to job crafting. Future growth expectations, core self-evaluations, and growth need strength were all positively related to expanding work behaviors, while only core self-evaluations was linked (negatively) to restricting work behaviors. Expanding and restricting work behaviors were not significantly correlated with each other.

In terms of demographic variables, only participant education level was significantly and positively related to expanding work behaviors ($r = .16$), such that individuals with higher levels of education tended to engage in a greater amount of expanding work behaviors. Education level and age were both significantly and negatively related to restricting work behaviors ($r = -.15$ and $r = -.24$, respectively), with younger and less educated workers engaging in more restricting work behaviors. These findings were used to inform decisions regarding the inclusion of control variables for main and exploratory analyses. As recommended by Spector and Brannick (2011), only those control variables identified in the initial correlation matrix as being significantly related to the outcome variable (i.e., job crafting) were entered in regressions. By only including controls likely to confound primary relationships (e.g., age and education level for restrictive work behaviors; education level only for expanding work behaviors), predictive power of the regression analyses is maximized.

Hierarchical Regression Analyses

In order to test hypotheses and run exploratory analyses, SPSS software was utilized to run eight hierarchical regressions. In testing for direct main effects, two regression analyses were conducted, one for each of the two job crafting types

(expanding and restricting) as the outcome variables. Control variables were entered in step 1 and perceived overqualification was entered in step 2.

For hierarchical moderated regressions used to test the interaction relationships, job crafting (either expanding or restricting work behaviors) was set as the outcome variable, with control variables entered in step 1. Perceived overqualification and the particular moderator variable (desire for skill utilization, core self-evaluations, or future growth expectations) were entered in step 2. For each regression, step 3 included the overqualification-moderator interaction term. Based on recommendations by Cohen, Cohen, Aiken & West (2003), centered versions of all predictors were used.

Hypothesis 1: Direct relationships between overqualification and expanding work behaviors. Hypothesis 1 predicted a negative relationship between perceived overqualification and expanding work behaviors, and indeed, such a relation was observed (see Table 4). Education level significantly and positively predicted expanding work behaviors in step 1 ($R^2 = .029$, $\beta = .171$, $p < .01$). When perceived overqualification was entered in step 2, its significant negative relation with expanding work behaviors predicted significant variance above and beyond the control variable ($\Delta R^2 = .056$, $\beta = -.254$, $p < .001$), and the previously observed education level-expanding work behavior relationship became non-significant. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2: The moderating role of future growth expectations. Hypothesis 2 stated that among employees with high future growth expectations for their job, perceived overqualification would be unrelated to expanding work behaviors. In step 2 of the regression analysis, both perceived overqualification and future growth expectations

had significant and direct predictive relationships with expanding work behaviors (see Table 5). Perceived overqualification was negatively related ($\beta = -.172, p < .01$), while future growth expectations displayed a strong positive relationship with expanding work behaviors ($\beta = .519, p < .001$). As expected, the interaction effect entered in step 3 was also significant above and beyond the observed direct effects ($\Delta R^2 = .013, \beta = .117, p < .05$).

To explore this interaction, the dataset was split into thirds based on high, moderate, and low future growth and a series of post hoc simple linear regressions was conducted (see Table 6). Under conditions of low and medium strength future growth expectations, perceived overqualification significantly and negatively predicted expanding work behaviors. However, under conditions of high future growth expectations, the negative relationship between perceived overqualification and expanding work behaviors became non-significant. As shown in Figure 1, high expectations for future job growth succeeded in neutralizing the overall negative relationship between perceived overqualification on expanding work behaviors. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3: The moderating role of core self-evaluations. Hypothesis 3 posited that core self-evaluations would moderate the overqualification-expanding work behavior relationship, such that among employees with high core self-evaluations, those who perceived themselves as overqualified would engage in more expanding work behavior than those who did not feel overqualified. Regression results outlined in Table 7 indicate that core self-evaluations had a significant, direct and positive relationship with expanding work behaviors ($\beta = .259, p < .001$), while perceived overqualification

maintained a significant, direct and negative relation ($\beta = -.212, p < .01$). However, Hypothesis 3 was not supported, as an interaction effect between perceived overqualification and core self-evaluations was not present.

Hypothesis 4: The moderating role of growth need strength. Finally, I explored the moderating role of growth need strength in the overqualification-crafting relationship. Specifically, Hypothesis 4 anticipated a positive interaction effect of growth need strength and perceived overqualification on expanding work behaviors, similar to those predicted for future growth expectations and core self-evaluations. As shown in Table 8, growth need strength had a significant positive relationship with expanding work behavior ($\beta = .177, p < .01$) while perceived overqualification had a significant negative relationship ($\beta = -.240, p < .001$). However, no interaction effect was present (see Table 11); therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Exploratory Analyses

As previously mentioned, the unclear nature of restricting work behaviors warranted exploratory investigation. Results indicated no direct relationship between perceptions of overqualification after controlling for demographic variables (see Table 9). Additionally, future growth expectations and core self-evaluations did not moderate the perceived overqualification-restricting work behaviors relation (see Tables 10 and 11, respectively). However, while neither growth need strength nor perceived overqualification were directly related to restricting work behaviors beyond control variables, a significant and positive interaction effect was present in step 3 (see Table 12; $\Delta R^2 = .029, \beta = .186, p < .05$).

A series of post hoc simple linear regressions were computed in order to explore the observed interaction (see Table 13), with participant growth need strength scores split into three groupings based on a frequency distribution. At low and medium levels of growth need strength, perceived overqualification did not significantly predict engagement in restricting work behaviors. However, among employees high in growth need strength, perceived overqualification was positively related to restricting work behaviors ($R^2 = .098$, $\beta = .313$, $p < .05$). As seen in Figure 2, there is little relationship between perceived overqualification and restrictive work behaviors among those with low growth need strength, but a positive relationship between perceived overqualification and restrictive work behaviors for those high in growth need strength.

Discussion

Direct Effects

The present study is the first known investigation of the relationship between perceived overqualification and job crafting. The results showed perceived overqualification to have a direct negative relationship with expanding work behaviors and a small positive relationship with restricting work behaviors (though this latter relationship disappeared after controlling for age and education level). The observed direct relationship between perceived overqualification and expanding work behaviors is in line with other research findings that overqualification tends to lead to negative workplace attitudes and outcomes. However, the lack of direct relation between perceived overqualification and restricting work behaviors highlights that individuals who believe they are overqualified for their job may still avoid behaviors that could negatively impact the impression that others in the workplace have of them. Simply put, the present results

indicate that employees perceiving overqualification are less likely to explore ways to enrich their jobs, but they also do not seem to consistently look for ways to disengage from or simplify their work lives.

Moderating Effects

Before reviewing the tests of moderation hypotheses, it is important to note that direct and positive predictive relationships were observed for future growth expectations, core self-evaluations and growth need strength on expanding work behaviors in Step 2 of regression analyses. None of these variables, however, were related directly to restricting work behaviors after controlling for age and education level. These findings contribute to the small job crafting literature, and indicate the potential for both situational and interpersonal variables to impact job crafting engagement. They also provide evidence that restricting work behaviors may be fundamentally different from expanding work behaviors.

In terms of moderating effects, future growth expectations eliminated the overall negative relationship between perceived overqualification and expanding work behaviors. Given the recent call for research focusing on positive overqualification outcomes (Erdogan & Bauer, 2011), this finding is of particular importance. The ability of high future growth expectations to effectively eliminate a significant predictive relationship indicates that situational factors can be implemented to alleviate negative outcomes of overqualification. In fact, doing so may have a positive effect for both the organization and the individual employee. For example, recent research has shown that even under perceived overqualification conditions, individuals who believe there is high likelihood for improvement in their work situation are more likely to engage in certain types of

organizational citizenship behaviors (Maynard et al., in preparation). Future researchers may wish to investigate whether individuals who feel overqualified but also sense a strong chance for future growth have significantly higher positive reports on individual outcomes (such as subjective well-being, work satisfaction, or greater intention to remain with the organization), as compared to their overqualified counterparts who have low future growth expectations.

Exploratory analyses revealed that elevated levels of growth need strength under conditions of perceived overqualification produced a significant positive relationship with restricting work behaviors. Post hoc testing further highlighted that perceived overqualification predicted restricting work behaviors at the highest reported levels of growth need strength. It is possible then that the nature of this relationship is based on an aversion to situations and interactions that are viewed by the individual as being counterproductive to and inhibitive of growth. By avoiding such difficult persons and experiences, the individual may be able to focus more energy on avenues that will satisfy their internal needs. Follow-up research using both quantitative and qualitative methods with pre-determined hypotheses may confirm whether this is the case, and also aid in the investigation of where exactly excess resources tend to be allocated (e.g., non-work activities, job search).

In relation to the present study hypotheses, it appeared that only future growth expectations and growth need strength were of significant moderating value, as core self evaluations failed to moderate relationships between perceived overqualification and job crafting behaviors. Perhaps the underlying nature of this finding indicates that, while high core self-evaluations enhance a worker's *ability* to engage in job crafting (evidenced by

the direct predictive relation between CSE and expanding work behaviors), they do not necessarily translate into *motivation* for job crafting engagement when faced with overqualification.

Research Limitations and Future Directions

In terms of limitations of the present study, it is important to note that due to the nature of online research, the survey response rate was relatively low. Recruitment techniques utilized prevent the calculation of an exact response rate, but it is estimated that roughly ten percent of all individuals invited to participate chose to complete the online survey. Additionally, reliability for the measure of growth need strength in this particular sample was relatively low ($\alpha = .68$), consistent with past evaluations of growth need strength measures (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Future research may wish to employ an alternative measurement technique for this variable. The findings may not be generalizable to all work situations and locations. For example, the majority of participants sampled indicated residence within New York State (99%), and while results may have the potential to be generalized to other areas within the U.S. culture, assumptions may be drawn for international samples. Finally, while Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) indicate that crafting can occur in any job, little is known about whether some jobs are simply more “job craftable” than others. In partial support of this notion, past research has highlighted that, while crafting does occur across autonomy levels, barriers to crafting (e.g.; task structure that is too rigid, or task structure that is too undefined) need to be overcome in order for crafting to be initiated (Berg et al, 2010).

Researchers have recently called for greater attentiveness to the measurement of overqualification, specifically addressing the need for distinction between objective and

subjective overqualification (Erdogan et al., 2011; Maltarich et al., 2011). While the authors emphasize the importance of overqualification perceptions, they also highlight that such perceptions may be inaccurate. As a result, future research may wish to explore whether observed relationships in the current study extend to more objective measures of overqualification. This can be achieved through several avenues (e.g., comparing employee résumés with present job requirements), but past research has traditionally done so by comparing actual job requirements to the employee's education level. Under similar reasoning, it may also be of value to collect supervisor and peer ratings of an employee's overqualification, to determine whether varying perspectives on the employee's qualifications produce similar results.

Given the evidence that employees perceiving overqualification engage in less expanding job crafting (except perhaps under high future growth expectation conditions), it would be helpful to examine where the excess resources they possess are being allocated. It is possible and perhaps even probable that such resources are being put to use in job search efforts, but it may be of interest to examine whether they are being utilized in non-work related areas as well. For example, perhaps overqualified individuals are using resources to gain fulfillment in their personal lives; engaging in a challenging hobby or improving familial functioning. Following this perspective, it may even be insightful to examine whether overqualified individuals perceive higher levels of work-life balance.

Longitudinal techniques may also be of interest, in order to more fully explain the interaction effect of perceived overqualification and future growth expectations on expanding work behaviors. A possible research direction would be to determine the

effect, if any, of unfulfilled future growth expectations over time. Perhaps a curvilinear relationship would be observed, with high future growth expectations initially reducing the negative impact of perceived overqualification on expanding work behavior but over passage of time, the positive effects of future growth expectations may be found to diminish, or even backfire, if growth is not actualized.

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Table 1.*Job Crafting Types and Examples (Tims et al., 2011)*

Dimension	Examples
Increasing Structural Job Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making efforts maximize learning and skill acquisition in the workplace. • Engaging in behaviors that promote professional development.
Increasing Social Job Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking performance feedback from supervisors and coworkers. • Engaging supervisor in a mentor/coach relationship.
Increasing Challenging Job Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking on extra-role tasks without receiving/requesting extra compensation. • Proactively volunteering to work on new projects and committees.
Decreasing Hindering Job Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing tasks in such a way as to minimize contact with difficult/problematic individuals. • Avoidance of difficult decision-making and minimizing emotional intensity of work.

Table 2.*Primary Components Analysis Results for Tims et al. (2011) Job Crafting Scale*

	1	2
Increasing Structural Job Resources		
• I try to develop myself professionally.	.692	
• I try to develop my capabilities.	.766	
• I try to learn new things at work.	.758	
• I make sure that I use my capacities to the fullest.	.555	
• I decide on my own how to do things.	.255	
Increasing Social Job Resources		
• I look to my supervisor for inspiration.	.483	
• I ask others for feedback on my job performance.	.514	
• I ask my supervisor to coach me.	.454	
• I ask whether my supervisor is satisfied with my work.	.464	
• I ask colleagues for advice.	.501	
Increasing Challenging Job Demands		
• When an interesting project comes along, I offer myself proactively as a project co-worker.	.666	
• If there are new developments, I am one of the first to learn about them and try them out.	.558	
• When there is not much to do at work, I see it as a chance to start new projects.	.645	
• I regularly take on extra tasks, even though I do not receive extra salary for them.	.678	
• I try to make work more challenging by examining the underlying relationships between tasks.	.590	
Decreasing Hindering Job Demands		
• I try to ensure that my work is emotionally less intense.	.662	
• I make sure that my work is mentally less intense.	.651	
• I manage my work so that I try to minimize contact with people whose problems affect me personally.	.644	
• I organize my work so as to minimize contact with people whose expectations are unrealistic.	.641	
• I try to ensure that I do not have to make any difficult decisions at work.	.602	
• I organize my work in such a way as to make sure I do not have to concentrate for too long a period at once.	.525	

Note: $N = 82$. Cross-loadings were all below .45 and are not shown.

Table 3.*Correlation Matrix for all Variables of Interest*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1. Age	----										
2. Gender	.06	----									
3. Education	.11	-.04	----								
4. Org. Tenure	.59**	-.04	.04	----							
5. Job Tenure	.43**	-.04	-.05	.71**	----						
6. Perceived Overqualification	-.30**	-.11	-.33**	-.26**	-.16*	----					
7. Future Growth Expectations	-.14*	-.08	.12	-.11	-.14*	-.18**	----				
8. Core Self-Evaluations	.20**	-.08	.07	.19**	.19**	-.12	.28**	----			
9. Growth Need Strength	.12	.02	.22**	.04	.04	-.05	.00	.08	----		
10. Restricting Work Behaviors	-.24**	-.07	-.15*	-.11	-.11	.15*	-.09	-.15*	-.13	----	
11. Expanding Work Behaviors	.06	.05	.16*	.03	-.03	-.29**	.56**	.31**	.21**	-.11	----

*Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$*

Table 4.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Expanding Work Behaviors from Education Level and Perceived Overqualification

Expanding Work Behaviors	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Step 1.	.029	.029**	
Education Level			.171**
Step 2.	.085	.056***	
Education Level			.080
Perceived OQ			-.254***

*Note: N = 230; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

Table 5.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Expanding Work Behaviors from Education Level, Perceived Overqualification, Future Growth Expectations and Perceived Overqualification X Future Growth Expectations Interaction

Expanding Work Behaviors	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Step 1.	.029	.029**	
Education Level			.171**
Step 2.	.345	.316***	
Education Level			.051
Perceived OQ			-.172**
Future Growth Expectations			.519***
Step 3.	.358	.013*	
Education Level			.050
Perceived OQ			-.177**
Future Growth Expectations			.488***
Perceived OQ x Future Growth Expectations			.117*

*Note: N = 229; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$*

Table 6.

Simple Linear Regressions Predicting Expanding Work Behaviors from Perceived Overqualification, Under Conditions of High, Medium and Low Future Growth Expectations

	R^2	B	N
High Future Growth Expectations	.002	-.040	89
Medium Future Growth Expectations	.088**	-.297**	80
Low Future Growth Expectations	.187***	-.432***	71

*Note: ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$*

Table 7.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Expanding Work Behaviors from Education Level, Perceived Overqualification, Core Self-evaluations and Perceived Overqualification X Core Self-evaluations (CSE) Interaction

Expanding Work Behaviors	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Step 1.	.034	.034**	
Education Level			.184**
Step 2.	.150	.116***	
Education Level			.087
Perceived OQ			-.212**
CSE			.259***
Step 3.	.151	.001	
Education Level			.086
Perceived OQ			-.211**
CSE			.259***
Perceived OQ X CSE			-.028

*Note: N = 218; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$*

Table 8.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Expanding Work Behaviors from Education Level, Perceived Overqualification, Growth Need Strength and Perceived Overqualification X Growth Need Strength (GNS) Interaction

Expanding Work Behaviors	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Step 1.	.028	.028*	
Education Level			.167*
Step 2.	.107	.079***	
Education Level			.043
Perceived OQ			-
GNS			.240***
Step 3.	.112	.005	
Education Level			.046
Perceived OQ			-.224**
GNS			.192**
Perceived OQ x GNS			-.076

*Note: N = 222; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$*

Table 9.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Restricting Work Behaviors from Age, Education Level and Perceived Overqualification

Restricting Work Behaviors	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Step 1.	.061	.061**	
Age			-.202**
Education Level			-.119
Step 2.	.062	.001	
Age			-.196**
Education Level			-.111
Perceived OQ			.025

*Note: N = 208; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$*

Table 10.

Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Restricting Work Behaviors from Age, Education Level, Perceived Overqualification, Future Growth Expectations and Perceived Overqualification X Future Growth Expectation Interaction

Restricting Work Behaviors	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Step 1.	.060	.060**	
Age			-.200
Education Level			-.119
Step 2.	.062	.002	
Age			-.205
Education Level			-.110
Perceived OQ			.012
Future Growth Expectations			-.042
Step 3.	.064	.002	
Age			-.202
Education Level			-.108
Perceived OQ			.015
Future Growth Expectations			-.057
Perceived OQ x Future Growth Expectations			.052

*Note: N = 207; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$*

Table 11.

Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Restricting Work Behaviors from Age, Education Level, Perceived Overqualification, Core Self-evaluations and Perceived Overqualification X Core Self-evaluations Interaction

Restricting Work Behaviors	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Step 1.	.059	.059**	
Age			-.199**
Education Level			-.115
Step 2.	.065	.006	
Age			-.176*
Education Level			-.098
Perceived Overqualification			.036
Core Self-evaluations			-.070
Step 3.	.077	.012	
Age			-.172*
Education Level			-.090
Perceived Overqualification			.042
Core Self-evaluations			-.084
Perceived Overqualification X Core Self-evaluations			.110

*Note: N = 199; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$*

Table 12.

Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Restricting Work Behaviors from Age, Education Level, Perceived Overqualification, Growth Need Strength and Perceived Overqualification X Growth Need Strength (GNS) Interaction

Restricting Work Behaviors	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Step 1.	.067	.067***	
Age			-.217
Education Level			-.117**
Step 2.	.069	.002	
Age			-.208**
Education Level			-.099
Perceived OQ			.036
GNS			-.028
Step 3.	.098	.029*	
Age			-.166*
Education Level			-.108
Perceived OQ			.019
GNS			-.080
Perceived OQ X GNS			.186*

*Note: N = 203; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$*

Table 13.

Simple Linear Regressions Predicting Restricting Work Behaviors from Perceived Overqualification, Under Conditions of High, Medium and Low Growth Need Strength

	R^2	β	N
High Growth Need Strength	.098*	.313*	63
Medium Growth Need Strength	.026	.161	90
Low Growth Need Strength	.003	-.058	73

*Note: * $p < .05$*

Figure 1.

Interaction Effects of Perceived Overqualification and Future Growth Expectations on Expanding Work Behaviors

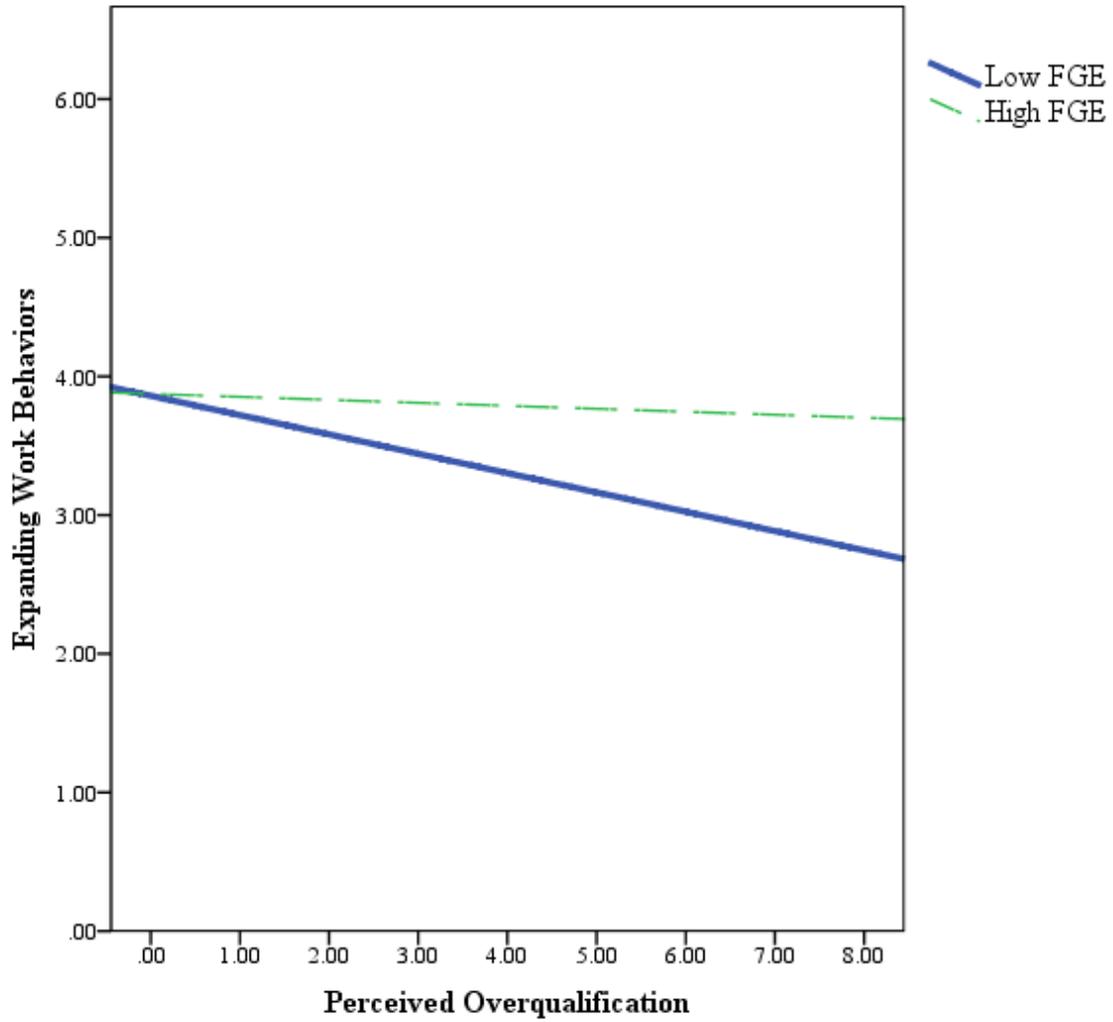


Figure 2.

Interaction Effects of Perceived Overqualification and Growth Need Strength on Restricting Work Behaviors

