

Effect Of Subjective Aging and Career Crafting on Career Satisfaction Among Public School Teachers in Pakistan

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Abstract

Career satisfaction is a significant measure of professional well-being of employees and future success in the career life of employees, especially in the education sector that teachers significantly contribute to the learning outcomes. This paper has compared the relationship between subjective aging and career crafting and career satisfaction of Pakistani public-school teachers and has also investigated the mediating variable of career crafting between career satisfaction and subjective aging. The quantitative cross-sectional research design was chosen and a structured questionnaire was used to collect data among teachers in the schools that are publicly owned across the country. The total respondents who were involved in the study were 200 using the simple random sampling method. The data obtained were processed with the help of the descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and mediation analysis. The findings have shown that the teachers have reported fairly high subjective aging, career crafting, and career satisfaction. Correlation analysis showed strong positive relations on subjective aging, career crafting and career satisfaction. The regression results indicated that career crafting was a significant predictor of career satisfaction and subjective aging also helped in the explanation of career satisfaction. Additionally, mediation analysis proved that career crafting partly mediates the correlation between subjective aging and career satisfaction. These results indicate that taking career initiatives and having positive views on growing old are significant towards improving the career satisfaction of teachers. The research paper also adds to the body of knowledge on career development and educational management literature by offering evidence, which

is on a psychological and behavioral basis, with regard to career satisfaction among teachers in Pakistan. The results also have some practical implications on educational policymakers and administrators to facilitate proactive career management and professional well-being of teachers.

Keywords: Subjective Aging, Career Crafting, Career Satisfaction, Public School Teachers, Career Development, Pakistan

Introduction

The concept of career satisfaction is believed to be among the most valuable signs of psychological well-being and professional success of employees. It is indicative of how well and content people are with their professional accomplishments, developments, and work events. Career satisfaction in education industry, especially among teachers in public schools, is important in ensuring that there is a motivation, commitment to the job and the ability to teach. An increase in career satisfaction among teachers will make them more prone to show increased engagement, productivity, and commitment towards the learning outcomes of students (Akkermans et al., 2021).

Over the past few years, researchers have given more attention to psychological and behavioral aspects that determine career related outcomes. An example of these factors is the subjective aging factor which is the perceptions and feelings of the individual towards the aging process. Subjective aging is a factor that determines how the employees perceive their powers, career and career prospects. It has been indicated that people who feel older than their chronological age might have low motivation, work engagement, and career related optimism (Kooij et al., 2020). On the other hand, the positive aging perceptions can improve the career motivation and satisfaction of the employees as they promote the proactive career behaviors.

Career crafting is another construct that is of important effect on career outcomes, and this constitutes the proactive efforts that individuals make in order to shape and mold their careers so that they fit their interests, goals, and their personal strengths. Career crafting enables employees to willingly redesign their work roles, pursue developmental prospects, and change their career paths to get more fulfillment in their careers (Tims et al., 2019). Career crafting behaviors help a person to develop a greater feeling of control over their career growth that eventually leads to increased career satisfaction.

Although the existing body of research on career development and aging is increasing, little research has focused on the effect of subjective aging on career satisfaction in terms of career crafting especially in the setting of public-school teachers in developing nations like Pakistan. Teachers tend to experience mounting workload pressures, fewer career growth opportunities and mental stress that can affect their age and career development. It is thus necessary to understand the correlation between subjective aging, career crafting and career satisfaction so as to support sustainable careers in teaching and enhance education.

Thus, the current research aims at investigating how subjective aging and career crafting influences career satisfaction among Pakistani teachers of the public schools.

Through these relationships, the study will make a contribution to the body of literature on career development and educational management, and it is the psychological and behavioral processes, which shape career satisfaction among teachers.

The modern working environment has brought a demographic transformation and a rise in life expectancy, where the focus on scholarly research has been towards how employees perceive aging and the effects that these perceptions would have on career outcomes. Subjective aging which is the perception and experience of people about the process of aging has attracted much attention in organizational and career studies. Research recommends that subjective aging leads to different motivational levels, work attitudes, and profession-related behaviors in employees, which end up affecting employees in terms of professional satisfaction and career development (Zacher & Rudolph, 2021; Fasbender et al., 2022). Employees who feel that they are younger than their chronological age can have less career optimism and interest which could have adverse impacts on their career satisfaction.

Simultaneously, the contemporary workforce setting demands more and more that career management and career construction be the responsibility of the individual. Career crafting as a concept emphasizes that individuals are active in trying to change their career directions, pursue new ones and align their job-related roles with their personal values and strengths. Studies have revealed that career crafting helps employees to have career elasticity, career involvement, and career success in a dynamic work environment (Akkermans & Tims, 2022; De Vos et al., 2023). By taking proactive career behaviors, an employee can transform his professional experiences in a manner that can encourage career satisfaction.

Although the study on aging and career management is increasing, there is a paucity of empirical research describing the relationship between subjective aging and career satisfaction using proactive career behavior, namely career crafting, especially in the education sector. Workload pressure, inadequate promotion opportunities, and lengthy career tenure are some of the unique career pressures that teachers are likely to face and this is likely to affect their perception of aging and career development. It is thus important to understand how the perceptions teachers have towards aging influence their proactive career behavior and how this influences their career satisfaction to enable making careers in the field of education sustainable and rewarding.

Additionally, subjective aging and career development research in the past has focused mainly on Western contexts of organizations whereas little has been in the developing countries. In Pakistan, the public-school teaching is a big and important workforce that has a potential to develop the results of the education system but surprisingly there has been less research done on the psychological aspects of career satisfaction. Consequently, the exploration of the subjective aging, career crafting, and career satisfaction among Pakistani teachers working in the public schools will offer useful information on the psychological processes that determine the career-related experiences and long-term professional well-being of teachers. Thus, the present study seeks to address this research gap by examining how subjective aging and career crafting influence career satisfaction among public school teachers. By doing so, this study contributes to the literature on career development, aging at work, and

educational management while providing practical insights for policymakers and educational administrators seeking to enhance teachers' career satisfaction and professional sustainability.

The importance of psychological and behavioral influences in the determination of career outcomes of employees has become a topic of study in the recent past. Specifically, the idea of subjective aging is getting an increasing number of scholars, with the perceptions of aging that employees have towards themselves becoming a much more important determinant of their work attitude levels, motivation, and career-related decisions (Zacher & Rudolph, 2021; Fasbender et al., 2022). The previous studies indicate that subjective aging could influence the career engagement of the employees, their ability to work, as well as their career development opportunities at various lifespan stages. Nonetheless, there is a relative dearth of empirical evidence that describes the impacts of subjective aging and how it affects the career satisfaction of employees.

Meanwhile, researchers have shown the growing significance of proactive career behaviors, including career crafting, in modern career development. Career crafting empowers people to take work role initiatives, pursue career, and adjust their professional experiences with personal goals and competencies (Akkermans & Tims, 2022). The existing literature has already shown that career crafting positively relates to career success, employability, and job satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2023). The advances notwithstanding, little studies have explored career crafting as a tool where psychological perceptions like subjective aging can determine the outcome of careers. Moreover, the majority of previous studies that have investigated the aging at work and career development have mainly been in the western organizational settings. Very little importance has been put in developing nations especially in the education sector. Instructional staffs tend to have distinct career issues such as lengthy career services, large workload, and low chances of promotion that can affect their perception of aging and their career management practices. Nonetheless, scarce empirical studies that examine how subjective aging relates to career crafting and career satisfaction among the public-school teachers in some nations, particularly, the Pakistani nation are evident. Thus, the research intends to fill these gaps by investigating how the subjective aging and career crafting can influence career satisfaction in Pakistani teachers of the public schools. This study is informative to the literature because it incorporates the insights of the subjective aging and proactive career behavior to help understand the psychological and behavioral mechanisms that determine the level of career satisfaction among teachers.

The level of career satisfaction is a significant measure of professional well-being and future success of career by employees. Career satisfaction, especially in the teaching field, especially in the state-run schools, is a very important aspect that keeps the teachers motivated, committed and effective in teaching. When teachers have increased career satisfaction, they have a higher level of involvement in the roles of teachers and can assist students in achieving academic growth of higher quality. Nevertheless, numerous educators can encounter various career related issues that include lack of

promotion opportunities, job overload, stress in the workplace and that might post-negatively impact their career satisfaction in the long term (De Vos et al., 2023).

Over the last few years, scholars have begun to stress the importance of the psychological determinants in describing the career outcomes of employees. Subjective aging is one of such factors and it entails how individuals feel and perceives their aging process. Workers who feel that they are aging quicker or older than the chronological age could experience demotivation, a decrease in career goals and career developmental activities (Zacher & Rudolph, 2021). These perceptions have the ability to shape the attitude of the individuals towards their career prospects and professional development. Simultaneously, the modern career research has emphasized proactive career actions especially career crafting as one of the actions that determine career development and fulfillment. Career crafting allows people to take charge of the way they do their jobs, pursue development prospects, and align their professional behaviors with their own interests and objectives (Akkermans & Tims, 2022). Career crafting behaviors enable the employees to have more control over their career advancement that would possibly lead to their career contentment.

Although there is increased interest on the issue of aging and career advancement, it remains a relatively under-researched topic with little empirical evidence to explain the impact of subjective aging in career satisfaction in relation to proactive career behaviors, like career crafting, and especially in the education sector. Depending on the situation in the context of Pakistan, the public-school teachers are the key workforce, as they provide quality education, yet comparatively limited researches have been conducted on the psychological and behavioral mechanisms, which lead to their career satisfaction. Thus, the gap that was considered in the given research is the inability to collect empirical knowledge on the impact of subjective aging and career making on the construction of career satisfaction among Pakistani public-school teachers. Research in the relationships is valuable to explore the roles of how teacher perceptions of aging and their career proactivity in the way that it influences their professional satisfaction and career growth in the long-term.

The research problem of the present study is to test how subjective aging and career crafting influence career satisfaction among teachers in public schools in Pakistan. In particular, the research objectives to accomplish the following: to identify the level of subjective aging, career crafting and career satisfaction among public school teachers; to identify the relationship between subjective aging and career crafting and career satisfaction among public school teachers; to determine the effect of subjective aging and career crafting on career satisfaction among the public school teachers; to identify the mediating role of career crafting in the relationship between subjective aging and career satisfaction among the teachers in the public school.

2. Literature review

Subjective Aging

Subjective aging is the way people perceive, believe and feel about their aging. In contrast to chronological age, subjective aging represents the feeling of old age among the persons and the comparative assessment of the aging process to the work life and role of the persons. Subjective aging in the organizational context is relevant in

influencing the attitude, motivation and career related behavior of the employees. It has been proposed that employees that feel older than their chronological age might have lower work engagement, weaker careerist, and less desire to develop their profession (Avidor et al., 2022; Fernandez-Ballbé et al., 2023; Sabatini et al., 2024; (Zacher & Rudolph, 2021).

The research conducted in the recent past has highlighted the role of subjective aging in determining how persons perceive their working capacity and career prospects. Employees who have negative attitudes towards aging might feel their chances of career are restricted, and this is likely to lower their motivation to pursue career pro-actions. Conversely, a favorable attitude towards aging may boost the confidence of the employees and stimulate them to work and be active in their professional activities (Fasbinder et al., 2022). In teaching situations, the teachers attitude towards old age might affect their professional motivation, flexibility and readiness to seek career development opportunities.

Career Crafting

Career crafting is the deliberate actions that individuals implement to organize and adjust their careers in line with their interests, ambitions and their strengths. It is activities that include finding new learning prospects, restructuring work roles, developing professional relationships and creating new career opportunities. Career crafting enables one to have a better personal control over their career growth and align their occupation and personal values and career goals (Akkermans & Tims, 2022; Ge et al., 2023; Nalis et al., 2022; van Leeuwen et al., 2021).

Career crafting is a proactive career behavior whose significance in contemporary career settings that are full of uncertainty and constant change has been on the increase. The studies have revealed that occupied career crafters have increased chances of enjoying greater career flexibility, career achievement, and career fulfillment (De Vos & Akkermans, 2023). Career crafting behaviors can help employees reconstruct the work experiences in a way that allows them to enhance their professional development and psychological health.

Career Satisfaction

Career satisfaction is the subjective judgment of employees concerning the career progress, accomplishments and the experiences of the career. It represents the degree to which people are contented with their career growth, development prospects, and future career achievements. Career satisfaction is among the important pointing to career success and is linked to increased job commitment, motivation and work engagement. In this context, the author concurred with the intervention's effectiveness and discussed its importance in delivering a swiftly restructured information system (Rudolph & Zacher, 2021). In this regard, the author agreed with the effectiveness of the intervention and addressed its relevance in providing a rapidly reorganized information system (Rudolph & Zacher, 2021).

Career satisfaction is especially critical in the teaching profession as it determines the performance of the teachers, commitment to teaching profession, and the desire to stay

in their careers. Those teachers with increased career satisfaction have a better chance of showing greater commitment to teaching and play a positive role in the academic growth of students. But the workload pressure, lack of career advancement, and psychological pressures can adversely affect the career satisfaction of teachers.

Subjective Aging and Career Crafting

The perception of aging among employees may have a great impact on their proactive career behavior. Given that individuals feel older than they actually are, or think that their career development opportunities are constrained they might become less receptive to the career development events. On the other hand, those with less negative perceptions of aging might be more inclined to engage in career management by taking such actions as career crafting (Fasbinder et al., 2022). With such proactive actions, the employees are able to be career adaptable and stay in their professional growth despite the age-related perceptions.

Career Crafting and Career Satisfaction

Career crafting is the factor that has been shown to predict the positive career outcomes. When people are in control of their careers, they are the ones that are most likely to enjoy a sense of control over their lives and this will increase their sense of achievement and their fulfillment of their careers. Past studies have suggested a positive association between career satisfaction and career crafting behaviors, as they help employees to align their career work roles with their personal goals and interests (Akkermans & Tims, 2022). Employees can have a more considerable and fulfilling career experience through active career management.

Subjective Aging, Career Crafting, and Career Satisfaction

According to the recent career development studies, proactive career behaviors can be an overlooked but significant linkage between psychological perception and career outcomes. Subjective aging can also affect the desire of individuals to adopt career crafting behaviors and by doing so, their level of career satisfaction is impacted. Employees with favorable aging perceptions might have a higher tendency to design their own careers and strive to engage in professional growth prospects, and eventually, attain higher career satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2023). Empirical studies investigating this relationship, especially within the education sector, and within developing nations such as Pakistan are however limited.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The current research has a Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST) and Proactive Career Behavior Theory as its conceptual framework, which explains how the attitudes of employees to aging affect their career related behavior and career outcomes. The Socioemotional Selectivity Theory, which was developed by Laura L. Carstensen, is a theory that describes how the goals, motivations and behaviors of people can be

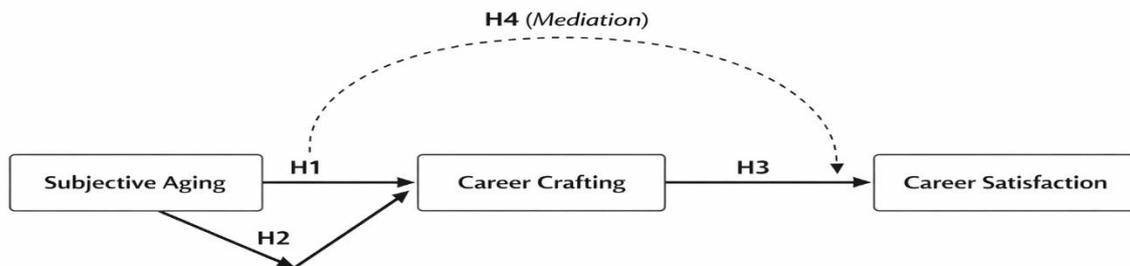
influenced by the perception of time and aging (Carstensen, 1992; Carstensen et al., 1999). This theory holds that people whose future time is perceived to be limited give more preference to emotionally significant goals and experiences over goals that are growth-oriented in the long term. Subjective aging as the understanding of the aging process that employees have about themselves can impact the motivation and work engagement of the individuals and career choices (Zacher & Rudolph, 2021). The employees, who feel that they are aging more rapidly or are older than they are chronologically, can lose the motivation to develop their careers and may think that the career opportunities are not open to them. On the other hand, those that have more positive expectations of aging might be more motivated and stay active in their professional activities.

Besides SST, Proactive Career Behavior Theory goes a notch higher to offer additional explanation on how people actively preside over their careers. According to this view, the organizational career structures do not present the employees as passive receivers but active agents that determine their career directions by making deliberate decisions and career management practices (Akkermans & Tims, 2022). Career crafting is also one of the crucial proactive career behaviors identified in literature and it can be described as the efforts of people to adapt their work roles, pursue new learning opportunities and to align their careers with their personal interests, capabilities and professional desires.

Career crafting provides people with the ability to control career progression and customize their work experiences to have more career satisfaction. It has been indicated that career crafting and other proactive career behaviors enable people to be more adaptable in their career, grow professionally, and achieve better career outcomes in the long term (De Vos et al., 2023). Career crafting provides the employees with an opportunity to redesign their approaches to work and career trajectories to ensure that they are more congruent with their personal values and objectives and therefore results in higher career satisfaction.

The current study is premised on the assumptions that how employees perceive aging determines their proactive actions in their career. On the one hand, teachers who view aging as an opportunity can be encouraged to continue with career crafting, including acquisition of new skills, getting professional development opportunities and changing their work roles. Such proactive career behaviors would help them feel that they have control over their career growth and eventually become more satisfied with their career. Thus, the theoretical research base of the study implies that subjective aging has direct and indirect impacts on career satisfaction via career crafting. Career crafting is a significant behavioral process which establishes a relationship between employees perception of aging and career consequences. The significance of understanding this relationship is especially relevant to the situation of teachers in the public-school setting in which a long history of career experience and professional pressure might affect how teachers view the process of aging and how they respond to it in their career pathway.

Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

The current research design was quantitative research to analyze the correlation between subjective aging and career crafting and career satisfaction among Pakistani teachers working in the public schools. Quantitative method is applicable when the study objective is to test hypotheses and analyse relationships among variables through the application of statistical methodology. The given approach enables researchers to gather numerical data and objectively analyze it to discover the patterns and relationships between variables (Siddique, 2025; Siddique et al., 2024; Siddique et al., 2023; Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The researcher employed cross sectional survey design whereby data were captured against respondents at one time only using a structured questionnaire.

The study population comprised of the teachers of the government schools in Pakistan. Teachers are very important to the education system and the satisfaction of their career is a great determinant of the teaching effectiveness, professional commitment and student achievement. The target population was a group of teachers working in the public schools because they are vulnerable to a variety of individual professional issues, e.g., high workloads, lack of promotion, and long careers which could subsequently affect aging and career development perception.

Simple random sampling was a probability sampling method employed to sample respondents in carrying out the study. Probability sampling also provides all the population members with an equal opportunity of being selected, which lowers the sampling bias and enhances the generalizability of the results (Campbell et al., 2020; Elfil & Negida, 2017; Robinson, 2014; Saunders et al., 2023).

The sample size was calculated according to the guidelines of quantitative research, as well as structural equation modeling. According to previous research, a sufficient sample size is required to ensure a valid and reliable outcome in the case of exploring the connection between two or more variables (Hair et al., 2022; Elfil & Negida, 2017;

Palinkas et al., 2015; Robinson, 2014). Thus, enough teachers were picked to provide the credible statistical analysis.

The study collected data through self-administered questionnaire that was given to teachers in the public schools. Questionnaires are commonly applied in social science research since they enable the researcher to obtain standardized information on a mass scale of respondents through an effective approach. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, respondents were given information of the purpose of the study, and were assured that, their responses would not be disclosed to any third party and that they would only be used as an academic research.

The questionnaires were given out physically and they were collected back. This approach was used to model higher response rate and enable the respondents to seek clarification on any questions concerning the survey questions.

The research tool was a structured questionnaire that was split into two parts. The initial section captured demographics including the gender, age, teaching experience and educational level. The second part was the questions that assessed the primary variables of the research: subjective aging, career crafting and career satisfaction.

Every question in the questionnaire was measured on a five-point Likert scale with the range of values 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The Likert scale is a convenient questionnaire typically applied to social science studies to assess the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions since it enables the respondent to say to which extent they agree or disagree with a statement (Joshi et al., 2021; Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003).

The questionnaire items were adapted from previously validated scales used in earlier research to ensure reliability and validity. Using established measurement scales helps improve the accuracy and consistency of research findings.

Validity and reliability were measured to guarantee the quality of the research instrument. The content validity was achieved by modifying measurement items of other prior-validated instruments that have been employed in earlier studies. The concept of reliability means how the measuring tool is consistent, and Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to evaluate this measure.

Hair et al. (2022) argue that a Cronbachs alpha of 0.70 and above is a reasonable level of reliability. Reliability analysis was done to ensure that the measurement items were always used to reflect the constructs of subjective aging, career crafting, and career satisfaction.

Analysis of the collected data was done with the help of statistical software. The demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were summarized using descriptive statistics.

In order to test the hypotheses proposed, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test what the relationships between the study variables are. SEM is regarded as an effective statistical method of analyzing a complex relationship between latent variables and testing mediation effects in conceptual models (Hair et al., 2022). The steps in analysis included measurement model assessment and structural model evaluation.

Measurement model was evaluated to test reliability and validity of the constructs whereas, structural model was tested to test the hypothesized relationships among subjective aging, career crafting as well as career satisfaction.

4. Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: *Level of Career Crafting, Subjective Aging and Career Satisfaction*

Variables	N	Mean	Median	SD
Career Crafting	200	4.31	4.38	0.380
Subjective Aging	200	4.49	4.58	0.351
Career Satisfaction	200	4.36	4.40	0.524

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the study variables. The results indicate that respondents reported high levels of subjective aging ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 0.351$), career satisfaction ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.524$), and career crafting ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.380$). Overall, the mean scores above 4 suggest that the participants generally demonstrated high perceptions of the studied constructs.

Inferential Statistics

Table 2: *Relationship between Career Crafting, Subjective Aging and Career Satisfaction*

Variables	1	2	3
Career Crafting	—		
Subjective Aging	0.626***	—	
Career Satisfaction	0.561***	0.441***	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 2 presents the correlation among the study variables. The results show that career crafting is positively and significantly correlated with subjective aging ($r = .626$, $p < .001$) and career satisfaction ($r = .561$, $p < .001$). In addition, subjective aging is also positively and significantly related to career satisfaction ($r = .441$, $p < .001$). These findings indicate a significant positive relationship among all the study variables.

Table 3: *Effect of Career Crafting and Subjective Aging on Career Satisfaction*

Model	R	R ²	Overall Model Test			
			F	df1	df2	p
1	0.573	0.328	48.2	2	197	<.001

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=200

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	0.576	0.414	1.39	0.166
Career Crafting	0.647	0.103	6.27	<.001
Subjective Aging	0.221	0.112	1.97	0.050

Table 3 presents the regression results examining the effect of career crafting and subjective aging on career satisfaction. The overall model was statistically significant ($R = .573$, $R^2 = .328$, $F(2,197) = 48.2$, $p < .001$), indicating that the predictors explained 32.8% of the variance in career satisfaction.

The results show that career crafting significantly predicts career satisfaction ($\beta = 0.647$, $SE = 0.103$, $t = 6.27$, $p < .001$). Subjective aging also has a marginally significant effect on career satisfaction ($\beta = 0.221$, $SE = 0.112$, $t = 1.97$, $p = .050$). These findings suggest that both variables contribute to explaining career satisfaction among respondents.

Table 4: Mediating Effect of Career Crafting on the Relationship between Subjective Aging and Career Satisfaction

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		Z	p	% Mediation
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	a × b	0.439	0.0795	0.2828	0.594	5.52	<.001	66.5
Direct	C	0.221	0.1110	0.0037	0.438	1.99	0.047	33.5
Total	c + a × b	0.659	0.0949	0.4736	0.845	6.95	<.001	100.0

Table 4 shows that career crafting significantly mediates the relationship between subjective aging and career satisfaction. The indirect effect was significant ($\beta = 0.439$, $SE = 0.0795$, $Z = 5.52$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.283, 0.594]) and accounted for 66.5% of the total effect. The direct effect was also significant ($\beta = 0.221$, $SE = 0.111$, $p = .047$),

representing 33.5% of the total effect. These results indicate partial mediation of career crafting.

Table 5 Independent Sample *t*-test Regarding Gender

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Career Crafting	Male	120	4.28	0.417	-1.2828 ^a	198	0.201
	Female	80	4.35	0.314			
Subjective Aging	Male	120	4.49	0.366	-0.0342	198	0.973
	Female	80	4.49	0.328			
Career Satisfaction	Male	120	4.38	0.509	0.8477	198	0.398
	Female	120	4.28	0.417			

Table 5 presents the independent sample *t*-test examining gender differences in the study variables. The results show that there were no significant gender differences in career crafting ($t(198) = -1.28, p = .201$), subjective aging ($t(198) = -0.03, p = .973$), and career satisfaction ($t(198) = 0.85, p = .398$). These findings indicate that male and female teachers reported similar levels of career crafting, subjective aging, and career satisfaction.

Table 6 Independent Sample *t*-test Regarding Locality

Variables	Locality	N	M	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Career Crafting	Rural	120	4.29	0.378	-1.082	198	0.280
	Urban	80	4.35	0.383			
Subjective Aging	Rural	120	4.50	0.333	0.411	198	0.682
	Urban	80	4.47	0.377			
Career Satisfaction	Rural	120	4.30	0.519	-1.919	198	0.056
	Urban	80	4.44	0.524			

Table 6 presents the independent sample *t*-test examining differences based on locality. The results indicate that there were no significant differences between rural and urban teachers in career crafting ($t(198) = -1.08, p = .280$) and subjective aging ($t(198) = 0.41, p = .682$). Similarly, the difference in career satisfaction was not statistically significant ($t(198) = -1.92, p = .056$), although urban teachers reported slightly higher mean scores. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers from rural and urban areas showed similar levels of career crafting, subjective aging, and career satisfaction.

5. Discussion

This paper has explored the impact of subjective aging and career crafting on career satisfaction in Pakistan among teachers working in the public schools and the mediating role of career crafting in this process. The results showed that subjective aging, career crafting, and career satisfaction were highly rated by the teachers, which means that the respondents, as a rule, have positive attitudes towards their professional experiences. Results of the correlation indicated that career crafting, subjective aging and career satisfaction had a positive and significant association with one another whereby teachers with more positive perceptions of aging are more apt to take proactive career actions and enjoy better levels of career satisfaction. This is in line with the past studies

that showed that aging perception could impact the motivation and interest of workers in career development practices (Zacher and Rudolph, 2021; Fasbender et al., 2022). The regression test also revealed that career crafting has a strong predictive value of career satisfaction, and that career proactive behaviours are important in creating a positive career. Through career crafting, teachers have higher chances of enjoying a more fulfilling and satisfying career because they work on shaping and managing their careers. The result confirms the previous research that highlights the importance of career crafting in career success and career satisfaction (Akkermans & Tims, 2022; De Vos et al., 2023). Besides, subjective aging exhibited a low significant difference in it to career satisfaction meaning that the way teachers perceive their aging process can also yield an impact on their general satisfaction with their career.

Moreover, the mediation analysis indicated that career crafting is a partial mediator in the connection between subjective aging and career satisfaction. Such a finding suggests that the perception of teachers regarding aging has both direct and indirect impacts on their career satisfaction level due to their proactive career behaviors. A positive attitude towards aging also causes the teacher to indulge themselves in career crafting activities like pursuing professional development opportunities and modify their work roles that eventually lead to an improvement in their career satisfaction.

Altogether, these results suggest that career management through proactive means and positive attitudes towards aging can help achieve career satisfaction in teachers. The research adds to the body of works in the area of career development by revealing that the combination of psychological perceptions and proactive behaviors has an impact on teachers as to whether they are satisfied with their career within the framework of the Pakistani state-run education system.

Conclusion

The current research investigated how subjective aging and career crafting affect career satisfaction among Pakistan-based teachers in the public schools. The results indicated that the subjective aging and career crafting levels and career satisfaction were overall high among the teachers.

The findings have revealed that career crafting is a significant factor toward career satisfaction, and subjective aging plays a significant role in explaining teacher career satisfaction. More so, mediation analysis also revealed that career crafting also mediates the correlation between subjective aging and career satisfaction.

In general, the paper has shown that positive attitudes towards aging and the active approach to careers are key factors in improving the career satisfaction of teachers. The idea of encouraging teachers to actively guide and control their careers could assist in bettering their professional health and assist in achieving a more sustainable and efficient education system.

Limitations and Future directions

Although this study has been helpful, it has certain limitations. To begin with, the research design was cross sectional and this does not allow one to establish causal relationships between subjective aging, career crafting, and career satisfaction. Second,

self-reported questionnaires were used to collect the data and this can be prone to common method bias. Third, the researchers were concerned with teachers working in public schools in Pakistan only, which can restrict the application of the results to other areas or industries. Since future studies are likely to employ longitudinal designs, a wide range of samples representing various educational or organizational contexts, as well as the analysis of other mediating or moderating factors, including career adaptability or organizational support, should be considered to understand more deeply the issue of factors affecting career satisfaction.

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