

# The Impact of Perceived Organizational Support on Knowledge Workers' Career Calling: The Roles of Job Crafting and Prosocial Motivation

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**Abstract:** Drawing on self-determination theory and social exchange theory, this study focuses on knowledge workers to investigate the mechanism through which perceived organizational support influences career calling. A moderated mediation model was constructed, with job crafting as the mediator and prosocial motivation as the moderator. Data were collected via questionnaires from 331 knowledge workers. The results indicate that: (1) Perceived organizational support has a significant positive influence on the career calling of knowledge workers. (2) Job crafting plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and career calling. (3) Prosocial motivation positively moderates the relationship between perceived organizational support and job crafting. (4) Prosocial motivation positively moderates the mediating effect of job crafting on the link between perceived organizational support and career calling. This research provides a new perspective on the mechanisms of how perceived organizational support impacts career calling and offers practical insights for enterprises to optimize the management of knowledge workers.

**Keywords:** Perceived Organizational Support; Career Calling; Job Crafting; Prosocial Motivation; Knowledge Workers.

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## 1. Introduction

In the digital era, corporate and organizational management has undergone a profound transformation. Digital technologies have rendered organizations more open, flat, and agile, while simultaneously empowering individuals with enhanced cognitive and decision-making capabilities, as well as greater autonomy in choosing their working time and workspace [1]. As digital transformation continues to permeate various sectors, flexible work arrangements—such as remote work—have become increasingly prevalent. While these models grant employees higher levels of autonomy, they also necessitate a greater reliance on individual self-management and self-regulation to ensure the attainment of organizational objectives. Within this context, an employee's intrinsic understanding of and identification with their work are crucial; such alignment fosters internal drive, strengthens self-discipline, and sustains both professional passion and operational efficiency.

Career Calling (CC) is defined as an individual's perception of a deep and meaningful link between their self-identity and a specific work role, providing a profound source of purpose for fulfilling that role[2]. A substantial body of research has demonstrated a positive correlation between career calling and proactive work attitudes and behaviors. As a highly internalized motive, career calling effectively promotes self-driven performance and self-management, thereby enhancing work efficiency. However, in practical organizational settings, not all employees experience a sense of calling through their work. Consequently, scholars have begun to investigate the developmental mechanisms of calling. Regarding its antecedents, prior studies have identified person-job fit as a critical predictor[3], and numerous researchers have explored individual-level factors. Nevertheless, there remains a paucity of research examining how extrinsic organizational-level factors influence the formation of calling.

Bunderson et al. suggested that the formation of a calling is not only contingent upon factors such as meaning-making and the perceived significance of one's profession but is also closely intertwined with extrinsic environmental factors, such as teams.[4] As calling is inherently a subjective psychological perception, employees experience more than just the alignment between their work and their life's meaning; the various supports provided by the organization also significantly shape their perception of work meaningfulness.

Regarding extrinsic organizational support, while a limited body of research has addressed its impact on calling, studies exploring the underlying influence mechanisms remain insufficient. Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to employees' general beliefs regarding the extent to which the organization values their contributions. Compared to objective support, POS is a more potent predictor of an individual's subjective attitudes and behaviors. Consequently, grounded in Social exchange theory (SET) and Self-determination theory (SDT), this study identifies POS as an antecedent and introduces job crafting (JC) as a mediating variable and prosocial motivation (PM) as a moderating variable. Specifically, this research examines whether POS influences calling through the mediation of job crafting and analyzes whether PM serves as a boundary condition that moderates the impact of POS on career calling.

Driven by the continuous advancement and deepening of educational attainment, knowledge workers now constitute an increasing proportion of the corporate workforce and typically generate substantial value for their organizations. Existing researches indicate that knowledge workers not only exhibit a heightened inclination to pursue a calling[5] but also possess the latent capacity to actualize it[6]. Consequently, the present study identifies knowledge workers as the primary focal population, aiming to analyze the mechanisms through which POS—an organizational-level variable—influences the manifestation of career calling.

## 2. Hypothesis Development

### 2.1. POS and Career Calling

According to SDT, when an individual's basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are satisfied, extrinsic motivation is more effectively internalized into intrinsic motivation [7]. A calling is not merely a form of work passion; rather, it represents a highly internalized motivational state. For knowledge workers, their advanced educational backgrounds often lead them to prioritize the realization of life goals and self-actualization over mere material incentives. The formation of a calling is not instantaneous; it is a gradual process of observation, cognition, learning, and solidification shaped by external influences, requiring a specific "organizational carrier" for its experience and realization[8]. POS—defined as employees' global beliefs regarding the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being[9]—serves as a pivotal extrinsic contextual variable. By satisfying the three basic psychological needs and providing respect and recognition, POS stimulates the experience of work meaningfulness, thereby facilitating the cultivation of a calling.

Firstly, the work outputs of knowledge workers are characterized by high levels of intangibility and complexity. When an organization demonstrates recognition of their contributions, it conveys powerful signals of being "valued" and "accepted," thereby effectively fulfilling the employees' need for relatedness. As this sense of belonging evolves into a strong affective bond that aligns the individual with the collective, employees become increasingly inclined to internalize organizational goals as their personal missions. This cognitive alignment, in turn, fosters and elevates their sense of career calling throughout the intricate process of knowledge-based work.

Secondly, high POS is typically accompanied by resource allocation and positive feedback, which are instrumental in satisfying employees' need for competence. Knowledge workers operate in industries characterized by rapid knowledge iteration and thus possess an intense desire for personal growth and professional development. During the process of career construction, the organization's provision of career counseling, skills training, and opportunities to participate in cutting-edge projects not only assists employees in identifying professional interests and navigating their career trajectories but also directly mitigates the anxiety stemming from knowledge obsolescence. Such comprehensive support bolsters employees' work capabilities and fosters a sense of validation regarding their professional value, thereby fulfilling their competence needs. The satisfaction of these needs enables knowledge workers to derive a sense of achievement from resolving complex challenges and driving technological innovation, leading them to view their work as a primary path for self-actualization and ultimately elevating their level of career calling.

Thirdly, knowledge workers typically exhibit a high degree of independence and self-directedness. When they perceive that the organization provides support rather than coercive control, the sense of being trusted fosters a profound perception of autonomy. High-support organizational environments prioritize the collection of employee feedback and offer flexible work arrangements or participation in decision-making, which effectively enhances employee-

organization interaction and job satisfaction, thereby fulfilling the need for autonomy. Within such an environment, knowledge workers undergo a deep integration of extrinsic organizational goals with their own professional values. When work objectives become congruent with personal values, the professional role transcends mere employment and manifests as a calling.

In summary, as a positive job resource, POS facilitates the internalization of work motivation and reinforces a sense of responsibility and mission by satisfying the three basic psychological needs—relatedness, competence, and autonomy—of knowledge workers. Given their high sensitivity to the meaning of work, knowledge workers are more inclined to experience a profound sense of purpose and transcendent significance, manifested as a professional calling. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1.** POS has a positive impact on the career calling of knowledge workers.

### 2.2. Job Crafting as a Mediator

Job crafting is defined as a proactive, bottom-up behavior in which employees alter the content and methods of their work according to their own needs, aiming to satisfy individual or group requirements and derive a sense of work meaningfulness[10]. Qualitative research from a role perspective has indicated that environmental factors within the workplace can stimulate job crafting behaviors[11]. According to SET, when employees perceive positive support from their organization, they tend to adhere to the norm of reciprocity. Consequently, they strive to repay the organization by engaging in extra-role behaviors or increasing their levels of engagement. For knowledge workers, whose roles are characterized by high complexity, strong autonomy needs, and achievement orientation, POS acts not only as a supplement to external resources but also as a critical incentive that triggers proactive job crafting.

Career calling reflects the extent to which an individual perceives their occupation as their life's purpose and a source of meaning. From the perspective of SDT, career calling can be conceptualized as integrated regulation—the most advanced stage of motivational internalization. In this state, individuals do not work merely for financial compensation or career advancement; instead, they view work as an intrinsic part of their life's significance. For knowledge workers, work transcends being a mere livelihood and serves as a platform for self-actualization. As a dynamic process of constructing work meaning from the bottom up[11] job crafting is a fundamental mechanism for enhancing work meaningfulness[12]. Through the personalized adjustment of job tasks and boundaries, job crafting aligns work with an individual's interests, capabilities, and values, thereby fostering a profound sense of calling[13].

Based on the aforementioned analysis, it can be inferred that when knowledge workers perceive high levels of organizational support, they are likely to engage in proactive behaviors—specifically job crafting—as a means of reciprocating the support received from the organization, driven by the norm of reciprocity. By proactively reshaping their work tasks, relational boundaries, and the cognitive meaning of their jobs, employees can better align their work with their individual abilities and interests. This alignment enhances their perception of work meaningfulness, thereby fostering a stronger sense of career calling. From the

perspective of SDT, POS represents an individual's subjective perception of organizational backing, serving as a supportive psychological experience derived from the external environment. In contrast, career calling constitutes a highly internalized work motivation. According to Riley's research[14], the process of motivational internalization is contingent upon the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Since job crafting facilitates the fulfillment of these three needs, it can be posited that job crafting serves as a vital bridge—a potential mediating pathway—through which POS influences employees' career calling. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 2.** Job crafting mediates the relationship between POS and career calling among knowledge workers.

### 2.3. PM as a Moderator

PM refers to an other-oriented internal drive aimed at benefiting others, manifested as a psychological tendency to care for others' needs and a willingness to expend effort on their behalf[15]. Prior research has demonstrated that PM exerts a significant influence on individual behavioral decision-making processes[16][17]. Grant et al. further noted that individuals with high PM place greater emphasis on the interests of others and adhere more strictly to social norms, whereas those with low PM tend to operate through a lens of rational calculation[18]. According to SET, POS encourages employees to reciprocate the organization's benevolence; however, the efficacy of this social exchange depends on how individuals perceive and respond to such reciprocal obligations. As a stable altruistic disposition, PM can strengthen knowledge workers' responsiveness to the norm of reciprocity. Consequently, upon perceiving organizational support, these individuals are more likely to manifest proactive job crafting behaviors. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 3.** PM positively moderates the relationship between POS and job crafting.

Building upon the theoretical arguments for the mediating effect (Hypothesis 2) and the moderating effect (Hypothesis 3), this study further proposes that PM moderates the mediating influence of job crafting, thereby establishing a moderated mediation model. Specifically, for knowledge workers with high PM, their inherent altruistic orientation amplifies their willingness to reciprocate upon perceiving organizational support. This leads them to engage more vigorously in proactive job crafting across task, relational, and cognitive dimensions. Such elevated job crafting behavior facilitates the internalization of work motivation by satisfying their basic psychological needs, which in turn

fosters a more profound sense of calling. Conversely, for employees with low PM, even in the presence of high organizational support, a lack of altruistic drive may restrict them to maintaining a merely transactional exchange relationship with the organization. Consequently, their lower engagement in job crafting results in a diminished impact on calling. In summary, PM not only moderates the direct link between POS and job crafting but also exerts an indirect moderating effect on career calling through the mechanism of job crafting. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 4.** PM positively moderates the mediating effect of job crafting on the relationship between POS and career calling among knowledge workers.

The integrated research framework based on the aforementioned hypotheses is illustrated in Fig 1.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Sample and Data Collection

This study targeted knowledge workers as the primary subjects. The formal survey was concentrated in first- and second-tier cities within the Yangtze River Delta region in China. Online questionnaires were distributed via social network connections to knowledge workers holding at least a bachelor's degree, encompassing technical professionals, managerial staff, marketing personnel, and individuals in other specialized roles. Data collection commenced in early October 2025 and concluded in December 2025. A total of 396 questionnaires were recovered. After excluding 65 invalid responses due to incomplete or patterned answering, 331 valid questionnaires were retained, yielding an effective response rate of 83.6%.

Descriptive statistical analysis revealed the following sample characteristics: **Gender:** The sample consisted of 157 males (47.4%) and 174 females (52.6%). **Age:** 69 participants (20.8%) were aged 25 or below, 97 (29.3%) were aged 26–30, 77 (23.3%) were aged 31–35, 50 (15.1%) were aged 36–40, and 38 (11.5%) were aged 41 or above. **Education:** 236 respondents (71.3%) held a bachelor's degree, 80 (24.2%) held a master's degree, and 15 (4.5%) held a doctoral degree. **Work tenure:** 23 (6.9%) had 1 year or less of experience, 66 (19.9%) had 1–3 years, 38 (11.5%) had 3–5 years, and 204 (61.6%) had 5 years or more. **Occupational type:** Technical R&D personnel accounted for 100 individuals (30.2%), managers for 37 (11.2%), marketing personnel for 119 (36.0%), and other professionals for 75 (22.7%).

### 3.2. Measures

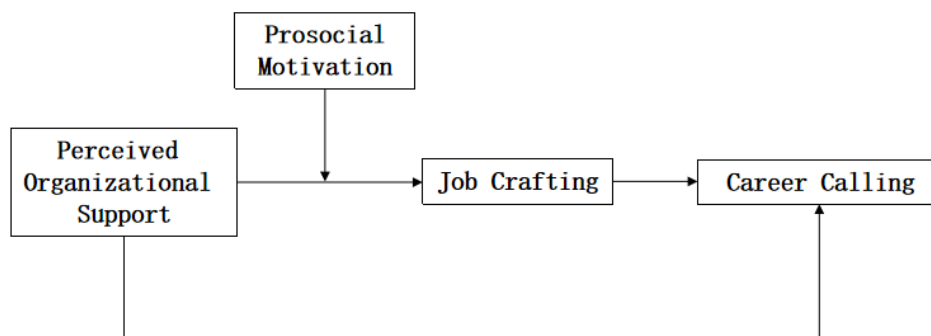


Fig 1. Theoretical framework

The measurement scales adopted in this study were originally developed in English. To ensure the scales' applicability within the Chinese cultural context, this study utilized the Chinese versions that have been validated and employed by scholars in authoritative Chinese academic journals. All items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale, with responses ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "7" (strongly agree).

**POS.** POS was measured using the scale developed by Eisenberger et al.[9]. While the original scale consists of 36 items, this study adopted a shortened 8-item version with high factor loadings to ensure parsimony. Sample items include: "The organization strongly considers my goals and values." and "The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor." In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.925.

**Career Calling.** Career Calling was assessed using the 12-item scale developed by Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas[19]. Sample items include: "I feel a sense of destiny regarding my career" and "My existence would be much less meaningful without my career." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.944.

**Job Crafting.** Job Crafting was measured using the 15-item, three-dimensional scale developed by Slemp and Vella-Brodick [20]. The scale captures task, relational, and cognitive crafting. Sample items include: "I introduce new work tasks that better suit my skills or interests.", "I make friends with people at work who have similar skills or interests with me.", and "I think about how my job gives my life purpose.". The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.896.

**PM.** PM was measured using the 5-item scale developed by Grant and Sumanth[21]. Sample items include: "I like to work on tasks that have the potential to benefit others." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.863.

**Control Variables.** To minimize the influence of extraneous factors on the research results and ensure the robustness of the findings, this study controlled for five demographic and work-related variables based on extant literature. **Gender:** Previous studies suggest that gender may significantly influence an individual's perception of calling; therefore, it was included as a control variable. **Age:** Individual career values often evolve with age. Older employees typically possess more stable professional status and greater job autonomy, which may subsequently impact their job crafting behaviors. **Education:** Former researches identified a positive correlation between educational attainment and the intensity of calling, education level was controlled in this study. **Work tenure:** Tenure reflects an employee's familiarity with their work and the organizational environment. Employees with longer tenure are often more adept and flexible in utilizing organizational resources, which could influence the focal variables. **Occupational type:** Different positions may lead to variations in how employees perceive corporate values. Furthermore, the scope and degree of job crafting are often constrained or enabled by the specific nature of a job role. In summary, these five variables were selected as controls to account for potential confounding effects and to improve the internal validity of the research.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Common Method Bias Test

Although this study employed well-established scales and

followed rigorous data collection procedures, the reliance on self-reported questionnaires may lead to potential common method variance. To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings, Harman's single-factor test was conducted using SPSS 23.0. The results of the unrotated exploratory factor analysis revealed the presence of multiple factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, which collectively accounted for 69.79% of the total variance. Notably, the first principal component explained only 36.87% of the variance, which is well below the critical threshold of 40%. These results indicate that no single factor accounts for the majority of the variance, suggesting that common method bias does not pose a significant threat to the validity of the data in this study.

### 4.2. Reliability and Validity Test

Prior to conducting formal hypothesis testing, this study assessed the reliability of the measurement instruments using Cronbach's alpha coefficients via SPSS 23.0 to ensure the scientific rigor and dependability of the subsequent analysis. The results indicated that the Cronbach's alpha for each variable exceeded the threshold of 0.8, demonstrating high internal consistency and reliability across all scales. Subsequently, confirmatory factor analysis was performed using Amos 24.0 to further evaluate the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measurement model.

A four-factor baseline model included POS, job crafting, career calling and PM as the latent factors, and other alternative models were developed to check the best-fit model. Based on the results of the model comparison (Table 1), the values of the CFA of the 4-factor model suggest a good fit ( $\chi^2/df = 2.867$ , RMSEA = 0.075, IFI = 0.847, TLI = 0.834, CFI = 0.846). Factor loadings were 0.672 and above, exceeding the threshold (0.5). Further, all the constructs showed AVE values above 0.5 (AVE signifies average variance extracted). Thus, it helped to achieve convergent validity.

**Table 1.** Model comparison

Model	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	IFI	TLI	CFI
4-factor Model	2.867	0.075	0.847	0.834	0.846
3-factor Model	3.345	0.084	0.807	0.791	0.806
2-factor Model	4.507	0.103	0.710	0.688	0.708
1-factor Model	5.312	0.114	0.643	0.616	0.641

Composite reliability values were above 0.7, satisfying the suggested standards, thus indicating acceptable internal reliability. Subsequently, AVE values were compared with inter-construct correlations to measure discriminant validity. Discriminant validity was also achieved as the square root of AVE exceeded inter-construct correlations.

### 4.3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

In this study, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the interrelationships among POS, job crafting, career calling, and PM. The descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and the correlation matrix for all focal variables are reported in Table 2. The results of the correlation analysis indicate that all primary variables are significantly and positively correlated with one another. These findings provide preliminary support for the subsequent hypothesis testing.

## 4.4. Hypothesis Testing

### 4.4.1. Test of Main Effect

In this study, hierarchical regression analysis was performed using SPSS 23.0 to test the proposed hypotheses. The regression models incorporated control variables (gender, age, education, work tenure, and occupational type), the independent variable (POS), the mediating variable (JC), the dependent variable (CC), and the moderating variable (PM). To examine the impact of POS on career calling, we first entered the five control variables into the regression model with career calling as the dependent variable (see Model 1, Table 3). Subsequently, POS was added to the regression in Model 2. As indicated by the results of Model 2, POS exerts a significant positive influence on career calling ( $\beta = 0.586$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

### 4.4.2. Test of Mediation

To test the mediating effect of job crafting, this study employed the Bootstrap method to estimate the sampling

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics and correlations

Variables	Mean	SD	CR	1	2	3	4
POS	4.784	1.043	0.925	1			
JC	4.864	0.813	0.896	0.667**	1		
CC	4.645	0.969	0.944	0.574**	0.625**	1	
PM	4.822	0.747	0.863	0.349**	0.438**	0.238**	1

Note. N = 331 CR = Cronbach's Alpha \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table 3.** Regression results of POS on career calling

Variables	Career Calling			
	Model 1		Model 2	
	$\beta$	T	$\beta$	T
Gender	-0.059	-1.077	-0.118	-2.620
Age	0.018	0.209	0.047	0.680
Education	0.065	1.140	0.083	1.787
Work Tenure	0.053	0.616	-0.018	-0.261
Occupational Type	0.053	0.962	0.059	1.304
POS			0.586***	13.007
R <sup>2</sup>	0.017		0.354	
$\Delta R^2$	0.002		0.342	
F	1.149		29.649***	

Note. N = 331 \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

distribution and the 95% confidence intervals (CI) of the indirect effect. Specifically, we used Model 4 of the PROCESS macro with 5,000 bootstrap resamples. The results are presented in Table 4. According to the bootstrap results, the indirect effect of POS on career calling through job crafting was 0.291. Since the 95% confidence interval did not include zero, the mediating role of job crafting was statistically significant. These findings indicate that job crafting plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between POS and career calling; thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

### 4.4.3. Test of Moderation

Based on the aforementioned results, this study employed hierarchical regression analysis to examine the moderating effect of PM. To mitigate potential multicollinearity issues, the independent variable (POS) and the moderating variable (PM) were mean-centered prior to the analysis. Subsequently, the variables were entered into the regression model for job crafting in three stages: the control variables (Model 3), the independent and moderating variables (Model 4), and finally

the interaction term (Model 5). The results are summarized in Table 5. As indicated in Model 5, the interaction between POS and PM was statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.344$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

The moderating effect of PM on the relationship between POS and job crafting is illustrated in Fig 2. Simple slope analysis reveals that the positive impact of POS on job crafting is significantly stronger for employees with high PM compared to those with low PM.

**Table 4.** Bootstrap results of mediation test

POS→JC→CC	Effect		SE	95%CI
	Total Effect	0.586	0.047	(0.496, 0.680)
	Direct Effect	0.295	0.063	(0.172, 0.424)
Indirect Effect	0.291	0.045	(0.208, 0.382)	

Note. N = 331

Bootstrapping = 5000 CI = Confidence Intervals

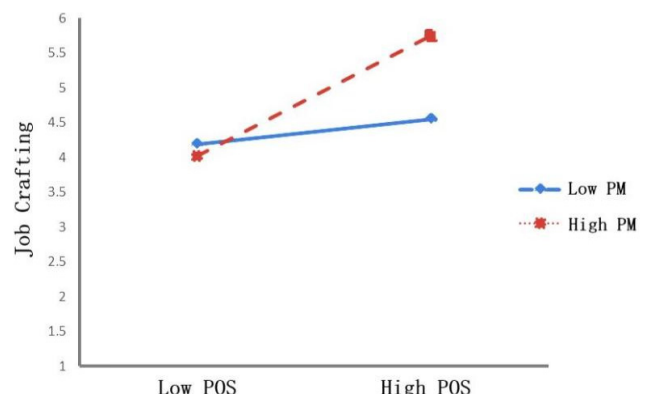
**Table 5.** Regression results of moderation test

Variables	Job Crafting		
	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Gender	0.113	-0.003	0.034
Age	-0.038	-0.017	0.006
Education	0.090	0.099	0.120
Work tenure	0.054	-0.003	-0.052
Position type	-0.002	-0.014	-0.012
POS		0.458***	0.523***
PM		0.252***	0.255***
POS×PM			0.344***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.013	0.499	0.601
$\Delta R^2$	-0.003	0.488	0.591
F	0.825	45.891***	60.617***

Note. N = 331 \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

### 4.4.4. Test of Moderated Mediation

To test the moderated mediation effect, this study utilized the PROCESS macro in SPSS 23.0 (Model 7) with 5,000 bootstrap resamples and a 95% confidence interval. After controlling for gender, age, education, work tenure, and occupational type, the results indicated that the first stage of the mediation process was significant and moderated. The detailed results of the moderated mediation test are presented in Table 6. As shown in the table, within the path where job crafting serves as the mediator, the indirect effect produced under conditions of low PM was lower than that under high PM. Under the moderation of PM, the Bootstrap confidence intervals (CI) for the indirect effects did not include zero at either level. This indicates that the moderated mediation effect was significant; thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.



**Fig 2.** The moderation plot of PM

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Conclusion

Grounded in SDT and SET, this study investigated the mechanism through which POS influences the career calling of knowledge workers. By constructing a moderated mediation model with job crafting as the mediator and PM as the moderator, and based on the empirical analysis of survey data, the following conclusions are drawn:

**Table 6.** Bootstrap results of moderated mediation test.

	PM	Effect	SE	95%CI
POS→JC→CC	Low(M-1SD)	0.138	0.029	(0.085, 0.198)
	Medium(M)	0.271	0.041	(0.195, 0.354)
	High(M+1SD)	0.404	0.060	(0.291, 0.526)

Note. N=331

Bootstrapping=5000 CI=Confidence Intervals

The results demonstrate that POS exerts a significant positive influence on the career calling of knowledge workers. This study posits that career calling is determined not only by the alignment between professional tasks and individual skills/interests but also by the external organizational environment. By satisfying employees' basic psychological needs, organizations can bolster their positive psychological capital and facilitate the integration and internalization of extrinsic motivation. This process enhances employees' perception of work meaning and value, thereby strengthening their sense of career calling and fostering proactive attitudes and performance outcomes.

Job crafting serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between POS and career calling. As a positive psychological perception, POS represents an employee's awareness of the backing provided by the organization. According to SET, once knowledge workers perceive such support, they adhere to the norm of reciprocity and reciprocate through constructive actions, namely job crafting. Organizational support also provides the necessary resources and conditions for such crafting. In turn, job crafting enhances employees' perceived autonomy and fosters high-quality workplace relationships. These elements fulfill basic psychological needs, heighten the sense of meaningfulness, and ultimately elevate calling.

PM positively moderates the relationship between POS and job crafting, as well as the overall indirect effect of POS on career calling through job crafting. As an other-oriented personality trait, PM reinforces the reciprocity mechanism within social exchanges. Employees with high PM are more inclined to engage in proactive job crafting to benefit the organization upon receiving support. Furthermore, these individuals prioritize the maintenance of social relationships and actively invest in relational crafting to cultivate a harmonious organizational atmosphere. This proactive engagement helps satisfy their need for relatedness, leading them to view their work as a profound calling.

### 5.2. Implications

Against the backdrop of the digital economic transformation and the increasingly prominent management characteristics of knowledge workers, this study offers the following four practical insights into how to catalyze individual intrinsic drive and a sense of mission:

First, establish meaning-oriented retention strategies and

leverage career calling as a value anchor. Organizations should transcend the limitations of traditional material incentives and shift their focus toward the construction of work meaning for their employees. As a highly internalized form of motivation, career calling is a core variable for enhancing talent stickiness among knowledge workers. Managers should facilitate the deep integration of personal values with organizational goals through visionary leadership and cultural cultivation. By transforming work from a mere "means of subsistence" into a meaningful part of one's life, organizations can address high turnover rates at their root.

Second, construct multi-dimensional organizational support systems to address basic psychological needs. The study confirms that POS is the logical starting point for driving career calling and proactive behavior. Enterprises should look beyond simple financial rewards to build a multi-dimensional support system that encompasses instrumental support, socio-emotional support, and value recognition.

Third, deepen "bottom-up" flexible management to empower multi-dimensional job crafting. To bridge the mediating pathway from "perceived support" to "career calling," managers must create an inclusive environment that encourages proactive job crafting. Instead of rigid top-down task assignments, organizations should adopt flexible management styles that allow knowledge workers to reshape their tasks, relational boundaries, and cognitive perceptions. This empowerment enables employees to tailor their roles to their unique strengths and interests, thereby fostering a sustainable sense of calling.

Fourth, optimize talent selection criteria by identifying PM in individual traits. Given that PM significantly moderates the transformation of organizational support into job crafting behavior, enterprises should incorporate prosocial orientation assessments into their recruitment and selection processes. Priority should be given to candidates who exhibit high social responsibility and a collaborative mindset. Such individuals are not only more responsive to organizational support but also contribute to a mutually beneficial cultural ecosystem, significantly enhancing overall team synergy and collaborative efficiency.

### 5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Despite its theoretical and practical contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that warrant further consideration in future research.

First, this study primarily relied on a single-wave, cross-sectional survey design. Although statistical tests indicated that common method bias did not pose a severe threat, the reliance on self-reported data from a single point in time limits our ability to fully capture the dynamic causal relationships between variables. In future researches, subsequent studies could employ longitudinal tracking designs or multi-wave data collection to better establish causality. Additionally, researchers may consider collecting dyadic data (e.g., leader-subordinate matching) to enhance data objectivity. To capture the micro-fluctuations of employee behavior, experience sampling methods such as daily or weekly diary studies could be utilized to observe the dynamic evolution of job crafting.

Second, there are constraints regarding the generalizability of the findings. The valid sample of 331 participants was predominantly concentrated in first- and second-tier cities within the Yangtze River Delta region in China. While the sample size met the statistical requirements for the current

model, the industry distribution and geographic breadth remain limited, which may restrict the universal application of the results. Future research should aim to expand the sample size and increase the diversity of industries and regions. This would allow for a more robust test of the model's validity across different organizational contexts and cultural backgrounds.

Third, while this study validated the mediating role of job crafting, the transmission mechanism between POS and career calling remains an open area for further exploration. Some scholars suggest that additional psychological or relational mediators may exist between job crafting and calling. Future studies could incorporate a broader range of potential mediating or moderating variables to further refine the theoretical framework. For instance, exploring the roles of psychological safety, meaningful work, or different types of leadership styles could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational support translates into a profound sense of calling.

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