

Dare to thrive! How and when do development idiosyncratic deals promote individual thriving at work?

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Abstract

Despite the importance of a thriving workforce in sustaining organizational success, prior research pays little attention to how individualized human resource (HR) practices can help individual employees to thrive at work. Drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of conservation of resources theory, we investigate whether, how, and when development idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) can contribute to individual thriving. We contend that possessing development i-deals will motivate individuals to engage in approach job crafting, which in turn promotes their experience of thriving at work. We further contend that high-quality leader–member exchange will enhance the function of development i-deals in triggering approach job crafting and subsequent thriving experiences. Results from a two-wave survey involving 278 managers in a pharmaceutical firm in China and a three-wave survey among 178 managers working in various organizations in the UK support our hypotheses. Our findings provide new insights for practitioners seeking to design customized HR practices to support a thriving workforce.

KEYWORDS

idiosyncratic deals (i-deals), individualized human resource management (HRM), job crafting, leader–member exchange (LMX), thriving at work

1 | INTRODUCTION

Thriving denotes an individual's joint experience of a sense of learning (i.e., acquiring/applying new knowledge and skills) and a sense of vitality (i.e., having energy and zest) (Spreitzer et al., 2005). When individuals are thriving, they sense forward progress and momentum (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009), indicating a state of personal growth and positive well-being (Paterson et al., 2014). Accumulated studies have evidenced that thriving employees contribute positively to their organizations through better performance, greater creativity, higher job satisfaction, and lower turnover intention (for reviews, see Goh et al., 2022;

Kleine et al., 2019; and Shahid et al., 2021). Given the critical role human resource management (HRM) plays in shaping a sustainable, prosperous workforce (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017), studies propose that HRM can and should boost individual thriving (Goh et al., 2022). Indeed, high-performance work systems (HPWS) or well-being-oriented HR practices, which are aimed at enhancing organizational performance (e.g., Allothmany et al., 2022; Cao et al., 2022; Jo et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2019) or employee welfare (Bartram et al., 2023), are shown to be positively related to individual thriving.

Nevertheless, current research on the relationship between HRM and thriving has two limitations. First, thus far studies focus on HR

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practices universally applied within an organization, which, however, may not always boost thriving for all employees because individuals vary in their needs and responses to the same HR practices (Han et al., 2020; Van Beurden et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). For example, Wang et al. (2022) find that some employees perceive HPWS to be stressful and therefore experience less thriving. Second, in most cases (see Goh et al., 2022), studies on HRM and individual thriving have not examined the underlying behavioral mechanisms and the conditions under which HR practices can enable individual actions to achieve a thriving state. As indicated in the socially embedded model of thriving (SEMT), individuals' agentic work behaviors play a key role in transmitting the effects of resourceful work contexts to influence thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2005); therefore, there is a need to identify specific agentic work behavior that can translate HR practices into a thriving state for individual employees.

To address these limitations, we investigate whether individualized HR practices, or more specifically development idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) can promote individual thriving. Development i-deals refer to individually negotiated employment arrangements related to developmental opportunities (Anand et al., 2010; Rousseau, 2005). We focus on development i-deals because such individualized HR practices constitute a resourceful work context that vitalizes individuals' personal growth through supporting personalized skill enhancement and future goal achievement (Ng & Feldman, 2015; Rosen et al., 2013; Srikanth et al., 2022), which can be effective in fostering individual thriving. More importantly, compared with universally applied practices such as HPWS, individualized HR practices are more flexible and can be tailored to individuals' needs (Rousseau et al., 2006). For example, organizations can offer some employees overseas assignments while providing others with professional training, according to their preferences. Investigating development i-deals' potentially enabling role of thriving thus gives organizations more alternatives to motivate employees based on their distinct developmental needs. We draw on the SEMT (Spreitzer et al., 2005) and conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018) to identify the behavioral mechanism underpinning development i-deals, and the conditions in which that behavioral mechanism can be more effective in translating development i-deals to individual thriving. In brief, we seek to understand whether, how, and when development i-deals can promote individual thriving.

Specifically, development i-deals, because they convey improvement-based goals for personal development, trigger individuals' approach motivation (Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Thrash, 2001) to pursue those goals. According to COR theory, individuals will actively request resources and opportunities to help them achieve their goals and effectively cope with challenges (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Following this logic, we argue that development i-deals will promote individuals' approach job crafting, that is, striving for improvement-focused goals through increasing task and skill boundaries (Zhang & Parker, 2019), such as by seeking out structural resources, social resources, and challenging job opportunities (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Dust & Tims, 2020), which can capture agentic work behaviors in exploration (Wu & Parker, 2017) that “help people to stretch and grow in new

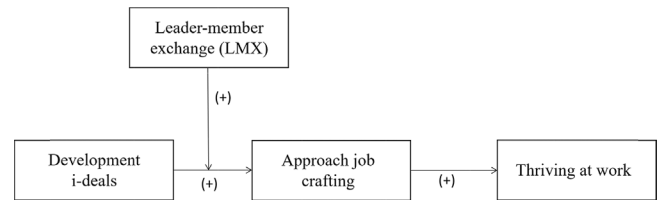


FIGURE 1 Conceptual model.

directions” (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 540). In turn, approach job crafting will increase individuals' learning at work and energize them to approach developmental goals armed with their expanded set of tasks, resources and aspirations. In brief, we suggest that development i-deals will enable individuals to thrive by encouraging their engagement in approach job crafting.

Meanwhile, COR theory also emphasizes “how environments and contexts create fertile or infertile ground for creation, maintenance, and limitation of resources” (Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 107) and contends that “strong worker–supervisor relationships” (Hobfoll, 2011, p. 118) constitute a primary source for individuals to access and utilize resources in organizations. In other words, individuals are more likely to employ their current resources to expand their resources and opportunities when those current resources can be utilized more effectively (Hobfoll, 2002). Given that development i-deals “derive their value from the relationship between the giver and receiver” (Bal et al., 2012, p. 311) and direct supervisors are generally the key and actual implementers of individualized HR practices such as development i-deals (Rousseau et al., 2009), we propose that a high-quality leader–member exchange (LMX) relationship supports and enables individuals to better utilize granted development i-deals, strengthening how development i-deals motivate approach job crafting and thus nurturing the experience of thriving. Figure 1 presents our conceptual model.

Our research contributes to the thriving and HRM literature in notable ways. First, by identifying development i-deals as an influential factor for individual thriving, our research demonstrates the importance of individualized HR practices in developing a thriving workforce, deviating from the conventional approach of using generalized HR practices to foster individual thriving. Meanwhile, our study suggests that development i-deals motivate employees to expand their resources by crafting their work boundaries, departing from the dominant social exchange perspective (e.g., Katou et al., 2021; Liao et al., 2016; Probst et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022) to offer a different theoretical perspective with respect to individuals' reactions to individualized work arrangements.

Second, our research identifies approach job crafting as a specific agentic work behavior to explain why development i-deals can enhance employees' sense of thriving, thereby contributing to opening the “black box” underlying the HRM–thriving relationship. Given that only “a small body of work supports the SEMT's proposed effects of agentic work behaviors” (Goh et al., 2022, p. 200), our focus on approach job crafting, an agentic work behavior that captures individuals' efforts to expand their resources and opportunities, provides a

fine-grained examination on the role of agentic work behaviors in promoting thriving.

Third, by identifying LMX quality as a boundary condition that helps maximize the potential of development i-deals in enabling individual thriving, this research addresses recent calls to understand the role of supervisors in HRM to enhance employee well-being. Despite the important role that supervisors play in implementing HR practices (e.g., Salas-Vallina et al., 2021), with few exceptions (Huettermann & Bruch, 2019; Jo et al., 2020; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021), there is a dearth of research that investigates how HRM and leadership can jointly influence individual thriving. Beyond this call, our moderated mediation model also reveals a specific condition (i.e., high LMX) in which a behavioral mechanism (e.g., approach job crafting) becomes adequately salient to explain why development i-deals can boost individual thriving. Altogether, by integrating COR theory into the SEMT, this research provides a refined SEMT framework for future research on thriving and enriches the theoretical understanding of the interplay between HR practices and leadership.

Importantly, as a positive psychological state, thriving at work captures the essence of sustainable management of human resources in organizations (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Developing a thriving workforce characterized by high vitality and a desire to learn contributes to employees' well-being and productivity, helping them achieve sustainable development goals with respect to well-being and fulfilling work (Sachs et al., 2019). Thus, on a practical level, our research has the potential to help achieve these goals by guiding HR practitioners and organizational leaders to foster a thriving workforce through individualized HR practices (e.g., development i-deals) and leadership (e.g., building high-LMX relationships).

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 | Theoretical foundations: SEMT And COR theory

In the seminal work of Spreitzer et al. (2012), Spreitzer et al. (2005), and Spreitzer and Porath (2014), thriving at work is proposed to capture an individual's simultaneous experiences of learning and vitality. In their SEMT, Spreitzer et al. (2005) propose that favorable work contexts and resources enable individuals' experience of thriving by propelling them to engage in agentic work behaviors, or active and purposeful actions, such as task focus, exploration, and heedful relating. Agentic work behaviors are important because they help individuals produce resources during work to sustain a thriving state. While the SEMT provides a framework to understand how work contexts can help individuals to thrive via agentic work behaviors, it does not provide a fine-grained elaboration on the links of specific work context and specific agentic work behavior from a resource perspective (Goh et al., 2022). In addition, it does not address when, or the boundary conditions under which, a specific work context can be more effective in fostering individual

agentic work behaviors to promote thriving (Kim et al., 2023; Niessen et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2020).

To this end, Spreitzer et al. themselves (Spreitzer et al., 2005; Spreitzer & Porath, 2014) have explicated the importance of enriching the SEMT to explain the complexities of the behavioral process that precedes thriving. In a review, Goh et al. (2022) specifically indicate the need to integrate resource-based theories, such as COR theory, into the SEMT to address its limitations and expand the nomological network of thriving. Supplementing the SEMT from the resource perspective is important because by its nature, thriving is a state shaped by resources, or by contexts and behaviors that enable individuals to acquire resources (Gerbasí et al., 2015; Spreitzer et al., 2005). The motivational, resource-expansion principle of COR theory makes it well-suited to explain how resources, resource-generating efforts, and/or resource-enriching contexts facilitate the development of thriving.

Specifically, COR theory is a motivational theory that describes human behaviors in terms of evolutionary needs (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Its central tenet is that to survive and thrive, individuals genetically strive to acquire, conserve, and foster critical resources (Hobfoll, 1989). The theory contends that individuals tend to protect their limited resources when they experience stress (i.e., the primacy of loss principle), and are motivated to acquire more resources to handle future challenges and achieve future goals when situated in a resource-rich context (i.e., the resource investment principle). In other words, beyond coping with stress, resources help to “build a reservoir of sustaining resources for times of future need” (Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 104). Thus, possessing a wide array of resources benefits individuals' well-being and growth (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Moreover, COR theory emphasizes the importance of contextual factors that affect how individuals create and utilize resources, suggesting that favorable social relationships, such as the support of direct supervisors, can help individuals to acquire and utilize resources (Chen et al., 2015; Hobfoll et al., 1990).

Given this, integrating COR theory into SEMT should help advance the current theory about thriving in at least two ways. First, the resource investment principle of COR theory provides a resource-based lens to explain why a specific work context (e.g., development i-deals) can motivate specific agentic work behavior that generates more resources (e.g., approach job crafting) needed for individual thriving. This resource perspective can refine the SEMT as it shows not all agentic work behaviors lead to thriving; only those agentic work behaviors that help create resources can enable thriving. Second, this integration extends the SEMT framework by introducing boundary conditions, zooming in on the condition (e.g., LMX) under which a specific work context is more or less effective in driving individual endeavors to expand resources and thus thriving. This integration is important because “overlooking such contextual enablers (or potential disablers) may engender unexplained variance and misguided practical interventions” (Goh et al., 2022, p. 203).

Although some emerging studies have employed COR theory to understand the occurrence of thriving, these studies fail to integrate COR theory with the SEMT as we seek to do here. For example,

Dimitrova (2020) proposes that frequent international business trips can promote thriving by allowing individuals to acquire new resources but may also hinder thriving by consuming those individuals' current resources. Zhang et al. (2023) find that ostracism constitutes an undesirable work context that depletes individuals' resources, thus inhibiting their thriving. Bartram et al. (2023) argue that well-being-oriented HRM can enable individual thriving by triggering agentic behaviors. However, none of these studies reveal the specific agentic work behavior that helps generate resources, which is a key behavioral process preceding thriving under the SEMT (Goh et al., 2022). Moreover, these studies do not incorporate the role of supervisors in the process of generating or conserving resources. Nevertheless, HRM literature has noted supervisors' critical role in influencing individuals' perceptions and utilization of HR practices (Huettermann & Bruch, 2019; Jo et al., 2020; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021).

In sum, by proposing approach job crafting as a key agentic work behavior that generates resources for individual thriving in the context of individualized HR practices (e.g., development i-deals) and incorporating LMX as the moderator, we believe that the integration of COR theory can not only refine the current SEMT framework from a resource perspective, but also shed new light on the interplay between HR practices and leadership.

3 | DEVELOPMENT i-Deals AND APPROACH JOB CRAFTING

As noted earlier, a central tenant of COR theory lies in its motivational nature, which explains individual behaviors that are driven by humans' evolutionary need to acquire critical resources to survive and thrive (Hobfoll et al., 2018). According to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), a resourceful context should trigger individuals' approach motivation (Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Thrash, 2001) for actively investing resources to create more resources for improvement-based goal achievement. By offering special training opportunities to satisfy individuals' developmental needs (Rousseau, 2005), development i-deals not only bring challenges to motivate their personal growth (Srikanth et al., 2022) but also carry positive meaning for their self-worth (Liao et al., 2016). As such, we argue that development i-deals constitute a desirable work context that can encourage individuals' approach job crafting.

Job crafting is an important agentic behavior that individuals adopt to redesign their jobs (Demerouti & Bakker, 2014; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). To reshape their jobs, individuals can either extend their work territories and relationships (i.e., approach job crafting) or lessen their workloads and interactions (i.e., avoidance job crafting) (Bindl et al., 2019; Bruning & Campion, 2018; Lopper et al., 2023). We focus on approach job crafting because it can be seen as a form of agentic, exploratory behavior (Bruning & Campion, 2018) as described in the SEMT, and represents a type of resource-generating behavior (Loi et al., 2020) in COR theory. For example, Wu and Parker (2017) contend that proactive work behaviors such as job crafting largely capture exploration, as such behaviors involve exploring new possibilities and bringing change to the workplace. Specifically, approach job crafting

can take three forms: seeking challenges (e.g., initiating new tasks or projects), increasing structural resources (e.g., initiating new ways of working), and increasing social resources (e.g., asking for feedback) (Harju et al., 2021). Through these initiatives, individuals gather more job resources and opportunities to facilitate their career success (Cenciotti et al., 2017; Holman et al., 2023; Shin et al., 2018). In contrast, avoidance job crafting is focused on conserving resources; it does not generate resources or attract opportunities (Harju et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2013). Thus, approach job crafting should be more effective in facilitating individual learning and energizing individuals to pursue their developmental goals, namely individual thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Below we explain why development i-deals can promote individuals' engagement in approach job crafting.

First, development i-deals constitute a work context in which the organization cares about individuals' career development and supports their personal growth (Rousseau, 2005; Srikanth et al., 2022). In such a context, individuals should not just focus on finishing their current jobs; they are more approach-oriented (Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Thrash, 2001) with respect to goal achievement and think more about how to expand their job boundaries to meet future work goals and realize their future selves, resulting in an approach job crafting process (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Harju et al., 2021). Development i-deals make individuals more aware of how they can be prepared to contribute to organizations' future success (Ng & Feldman, 2015). As such, when they obtain development i-deals, employees are more motivated to seek resources and opportunities at work by engaging in approach job crafting to prepare themselves for future challenges (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Dust & Tims, 2020).

Second, obtaining development i-deals indicates to individuals that they are in a favorable work context in which the organization recognizes their potential and unique contributions (Hornung et al., 2008; Rousseau et al., 2006, 2009). Prior research shows that having development i-deals promotes individuals' perceived value of themselves and their jobs (e.g., Hornung et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2013). To maintain and reinforce a positive sense of self, individuals want to be approach-oriented and invest resources in expanding job boundaries, thereby increasing their value to the organization (Hornung et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2013; Ng et al., 2021; Ng & Lucianetti, 2016; Wang et al., 2018). For example, obtaining personalized professional training should make individuals more confident in carrying out their work in new ways (i.e., increasing structural resources) and take on challenging tasks (i.e., seeking challenging demands). Being involved in customized developmental programs further encourages individuals to build social connections with others (i.e., increasing social resources), helping them to more easily obtain feedback on their contributions and developmental progress.

Supporting these views to some extent, HR practices that offer empowerment and customized training have been found to positively relate to approach job crafting (Meijerink et al., 2020). Thus, we develop our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. Development i-deals are positively related to approach job crafting.

4 | APPROACH JOB CRAFTING AND THRIVING AT WORK

COR theory also notes that the valuable resources human beings accumulate in preparing for future goal achievement are beneficial to their psychological well-being (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 2002). Approach job crafting, reflective of an agentic behavior featured in the SEMT (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Wu & Parker, 2017), has been found to create and expand task and social resources (Holman et al., 2023); therefore, we expect it can foster a thriving state through resources acquisition.

First, by increasing social resources, such as seeking coaching from supervisors and/or advice from coworkers (Harju et al., 2021), individuals are likely to learn and acquire new information about how they can better perform their work roles to benefit their own and the organization's overall functioning (Paterson et al., 2014). Extending social networks and interactions with others at work can also feed one's energy (Kim et al., 2023; Tims et al., 2013). Second, by increasing their structural resources, such as by building skills and fully utilizing capabilities (Tims et al., 2012), individuals gain a sense of learning due to their enhanced knowledge and skills (Mansour & Tremblay, 2021). Some structural resources, such as the autonomy to decide how to do things (Tims et al., 2012), further allow individuals to develop positive affective experiences that activate and rejuvenate a sense of vitality (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019; Muraven et al., 2008; Tisu et al., 2023). Third, in the approach job crafting process, individuals possess a future-oriented mindset and tend to make their jobs more challenging (Bindl et al., 2019; Bruning & Campion, 2018). Taking on new job challenges propels individuals to keep absorbing and applying new knowledge and skills, resulting in an experience of learning (Prem et al., 2017). Meanwhile, increasingly challenging demands can provide individuals with an experience of mastery (Tims et al., 2012), helping them to increase and replenish their energy (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Diener & Seligman, 2004; Kim & Beehr, 2020).

In brief, the exposure to novelty in the approach job crafting process restores individuals' energy, while the trial-and-error process enhances learning, indicating approach job crafting's potential to contribute to individual thriving. There is some indirect empirical evidence supports our conjecture regarding the relationship between approach job crafting and thriving. For example, research shows that exploration at work is positively related to individual thriving (Niessen et al., 2012; Paterson et al., 2014). Therefore, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 2. Approach job crafting is positively related to thriving at work.

As noted earlier, Spreitzer et al.'s (2005) SEMT suggests that exploratory behaviors such as approach job crafting play a key mediating role in the relationship between work contexts and individual thriving. Meanwhile, the arguments above that are grounded in COR theory suggest that development i-deals can drive approach job crafting (Hypothesis 1), and that engaging in this crafting can enhance thriving at work (Hypothesis 2). As such, we contend that

development i-deals serve as a favorable work context that encourages individuals to acquire more resources and opportunities by expanding their job boundaries, and as a result, enhance their sense of thriving. Taking the above arguments together, we posit:

Hypothesis 3. Approach job crafting mediates the positive relationship between development i-deals and thriving at work.

4.1 | The moderating role of leader-member exchange

As noted earlier, taking a COR perspective, Hobfoll (2011) identifies high-quality worker-supervisor relationships as important in facilitating the process by which individuals leverage available resources to gain additional resources. Within a resource-enriching ecology, employees must work closely with their direct supervisors to access resources and, more importantly, to use these resources optimally. Meanwhile, as Bal et al. (2012, p. 311) note, unlike hard i-deals such as flexibility i-deals, whose metrics are generally objective and measurable (e.g., number of hours worked), development i-deals are "more subjective in nature and therefore are likely to need a supportive environment to be effective." As direct supervisors serve as the proximal contexts where individuals are embedded (Law-Penrose et al., 2016) and development i-deals are implemented (Rousseau et al., 2009), we expect the quality of LMX relationships with supervisors to moderate the strength of development i-deals in motivating individuals' approach job crafting and thus the extent to which individuals thrive in the workplace.

First, from the instrumental point of view, LMX helps individuals to take advantage of development i-deals in approach job crafting. For example, high LMX allows them to obtain first-hand information from supervisors about the organization's long-term strategy and goals (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Tangirala et al., 2007). Being a member of a supervisor's "in-group" also gives individuals more visibility to enter important social networks and opportunities to be included in critical decision-making processes (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997; Venkataramani et al., 2010). These instrumental benefits of LMX can make individuals not only perceive the feasibility of, but also anticipate positive outcomes from using development i-deals to craft jobs for resource expansion. In other words, high LMX enables individuals to better utilize development i-deals (e.g., special training and career advancement opportunities) to request and make changes in their jobs that expand their work territories.

Second, from the psychosocial point of view, LMX indicates a secure base that motivates individuals to leverage development i-deals to enlarge job boundaries and resources. As job crafting involves risks due to its change-oriented nature, individuals are sensitive as to whether or not their proximal context provides support or opportunities to minimize these risks (Berg et al., 2010; Wu & Parker, 2017). Through mutually trusting and respectful relationships

with their supervisors, employees can obtain social-emotional support (e.g., encouragement, guidance) that helps reduce risks and uncertainties during the process of redesigning a job (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Individuals can also count on their supervisors to provide immediate feedback when seeking to broaden work scopes and relationships (Liden et al., 1997). Thus, high LMX makes individuals feel safer in expanding their job resources and opportunities when receiving development i-deals, indicating that LMX can intensify the positive link between development i-deals and approach job crafting.

In contrast, low LMX is characterized by low levels of trust and low-quality interactions (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Because individuals who have low LMX with their supervisors are less able to access the instrumental (e.g., first-hand information) and psychosocial (e.g., emotional support) benefits available to their counterparts with high LMX (Xu et al., 2015), they are less likely to act upon the opportunities embedded in development i-deals to actively expand their job boundaries. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4. LMX moderates the positive relationship between development i-deals and approach job crafting such that this relationship is stronger among individuals possessing high rather than low LMX.

Thus far, we have explained that approach job crafting is a behavioral mechanism that transmits the positive influence of development i-deals to thriving (Hypotheses 1-3) and theorized that LMX can enhance the positive effect of development i-deals on approach job crafting (Hypothesis 4). Combining these ideas suggests a moderated mediation model wherein the indirect effects of development i-deals on thriving via approach job crafting vary with the levels of LMX. To formally examine this moderated mediation model, we propose that given high LMX, individuals are more likely to take advantage of development i-deals to craft their jobs in an approach-oriented way and consequently experience a higher level of thriving than individuals with low LMX:

Hypothesis 5. LMX moderates the positive indirect relationship between development i-deals and thriving at work via approach job crafting, so that this indirect relationship is stronger among individuals with higher rather than lower LMX.

4.2 | Overview of the present research

We conducted two studies to progressively examine our hypotheses. In Study 1, we collected data from managers in a Chinese organization in two waves to examine whether development i-deals promote engagement in approach job crafting (Hypothesis 1) and subsequently promote their experience of thriving at work (Hypotheses 2 and 3). To confirm the findings from Study 1 and examine the full moderated mediation model, we administered a three-wave survey (Study 2) among managers from various organizations in the United Kingdom.

In Study 2, we examine how development i-deals, via approach job crafting, affect thriving after controlling for the initial level of thriving as well as the effects of flexibility and financial i-deals and avoidance job crafting. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board-equivalent committee of the first author's university.

5 | STUDY 1

5.1 | Sample and procedure

We collected data from managerial employees in a pharmaceutical firm in Guangzhou, China. Prior to conducting the formal survey, we held preliminary interviews with key personnel in the firm to understand the context, particularly the prevalence of i-deals. Although this firm uses centralized HRM policies (including its compensation and benefits scheme), its HR practices allow for flexibility in offering i-deals to attract and retain key talent. Managerial employees in this firm generally have more access to i-deals than general employees as they have more external resources or possess crucial skills that can enhance the firm's competitive advantage. This situation is similar to what previous studies report, namely that i-deals are more likely to be available to highly-valued employees such as managers who possess unique knowledge and skills that organizations need to achieve their goals (Ng & Feldman, 2010, 2015; Srikanth et al., 2022). Therefore, the managerial employees in this firm are well-suited for our research, which is focused on i-deals.

To alleviate the potential threat of common method bias (Ostroff et al., 2002), we administered the survey at two points in time, 1 month apart. On average, it took about 10 min for respondents to read and respond to the questions on each of the two questionnaires. Before beginning the study, we obtained the names of the managerial employees from our key contact person at the firm. We assigned each of these employees a unique username and password they used to access the online survey; our research team then used those unique usernames to match the two questionnaires completed by each respondent. On the cover page of each questionnaire, the informed consent form explained the voluntary nature of the survey and assured respondents anonymity and confidentiality. To encourage authentic responses, we did not offer compensation or monetary incentives to the respondents. Respondents were told that a report of our findings would be made available to them upon request.

In the first wave of the study (Time 1), the respondents reported their development i-deals and demographic information. As these managers could have negotiated flexibility (i.e., flexible work hours) and financial i-deals (i.e., customized performance-based bonuses), we included these as variables to control for their confounding effects. In total, 290 managers completed these questionnaires, a response rate of 80.3%. One month later, as the second wave of the survey, we invited managers who had answered the Time 1 questionnaire to report their approach and avoidance job crafting and their level of thriving at work. We successfully matched surveys for 238 respondents, a response rate of 82.1%.

Of the final sample, 50.0% were male. The majority (79.8%) were between 26 and 40 years old and had at least a bachelor's degree (82.8%). On average, they had worked at this firm for 8.3 years (standard deviation [SD] = 6.2 years) and had roughly 5.1 years of supervisory experience (SD = 4.9 years). They worked in various departments, including sales (35.3%), supply chain management (17.1%), purchasing (11.9%), quality control (7.3%), finance (6.6%), maintenance (6.3%), supply chain (3.5%), IT (3.5%), and others (8.5%).

5.2 | Measures

We used established scales with sufficient reliability to measure the study variables and conducted a back-translation process (Brislin, 1970) to develop the questionnaires for the Chinese company. Except for the demographic variables, the respondents responded to the questions using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). All used items are presented in Appendix 1.

5.2.1 | Development i-deals

We asked the managers to report their obtained development i-deals using Hornung et al.'s (2008) four-item scale ($\alpha = 0.80$). For example, one item is, "The extent to which in your current job you have successfully negotiated special opportunities for skill development."

5.2.2 | Approach job crafting

Following prior research (e.g., Harju et al., 2021), the managers were asked to report their level of engagement in approach job crafting using Tims et al.'s (2012) scale that includes five items on increasing structural job resources (e.g., "I make sure that I use my capacities to the fullest"), five items on increasing social job resources (e.g., "I ask others for feedback on my job performance"), and five items on increasing challenging job demands (e.g., "If there are new developments, I am one of the first to learn about them and try them out"). A total of 15 items for these three dimensions were used to measure approach job crafting ($\alpha = 0.91$).

5.2.3 | Thriving at work

The managers rated their sense of thriving at work over the past month based on Porath et al.'s (2012) 10-item scale ($\alpha = 0.85$). Examples include "I am developing a lot as a person" (learning), and "I feel alive and vital" (vitality).

5.2.4 | Control variables

In addition to development i-deals, these managerial employees also had access to flexibility and financial i-deals. Theoretically, flexibility

and financial i-deals should contribute to a desirable work context (e.g., Hornung et al., 2014; Rosen et al., 2013) in which thriving might occur. For these reasons, we control for these two types of i-deals to address possible confounding effects. Flexible i-deals were measured with Hornung et al.'s (2008) two-item scale ($\alpha = 0.58$) which includes "The extent to which in your current job you successfully negotiated an individually customized work schedule," and financial i-deals were measured with Rosen et al.'s (2013) five-item scale ($\alpha = 0.91$), including "After my initial appointment, I negotiated with my supervisor to develop a compensation plan that rewards my unique contributions." Although the reliability of this measure of flexibility i-deals is not ideal, it is modest and comparable to that of other scales that were also measured with two items (e.g., Anderson & Coughlan, 1987; Frone et al., 1997; Schleicher et al., 2004).

While our theoretical grounding drove us to focus on approach job crafting, avoidance job crafting (e.g., minimizing undesirable social interactions; Bindl et al., 2019) may also help employees to conserve resources (e.g., energy) and thus may affect thriving. To help confirm the unique explanatory power of approach job crafting apart from the potential effect of avoidance job crafting, we also account for the mediating role of avoidance job crafting. Tims et al.'s (2012) six items that assess efforts to reduce job demands ($\alpha = 0.86$; e.g., "I try to ensure that I do not have to make many difficult decisions at work") were used to measure avoidance job crafting.

Finally, as prior research shows that gender and age significantly affect thriving or its dimensions (e.g., Paterson et al., 2014), we also controlled for these variables in our analyses. For example, some studies find that women report lower levels of energy than men (e.g., Niessen et al., 2012), and some report that older people may struggle more with learning (e.g., Maurer, 2001).

To ensure the robustness of our findings, we run the analyses with and without these control variables and the results are consistent. Given the theoretical reasons to consider their effects, we report the results that include the control variables (Bernierth & Aguinis, 2016).

6 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 | Measurement model

Before examining our hypotheses, we conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using Mplus 7.4 to establish the discriminant validity among our core variables. Given the relatively small sample size, we follow the procedures in Brooke et al. (1988) and reduced the number of items for each construct into three-item parcels, which were used as indicators of latent variables in the CFA models, except for flexibility i-deals, which had only two items. A good model fit is achieved when the comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) are above 0.90, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is below 0.08, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is below 0.10 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1998).

The CFA results showed that the six-factor model (i.e., development i-deals, flexibility i-deals, financial i-deals, approach

TABLE 1 Construct means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities (Study 1).

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Development i-deals	3.79	0.74	0.80							
2. Approach job crafting	4.08	0.53	0.28**	0.91						
3. Thriving	3.99	0.57	0.18**	0.64**	0.85					
Controls										
4. Gender ^a	0.50	0.50	-0.18**	-0.09	-0.07					
5. Age ^b	3.43	1.19	-0.23**	-0.05	0.08					
6. Flexibility i-deals	3.42	0.99	0.48**	0.22**	0.08	-0.19**	-0.10	0.58		
7. Financial i-deals	3.16	0.94	0.49**	0.21**	0.12	-0.16**	-0.02	0.34**	0.91	
8. Avoidance job crafting	3.74	0.72	0.24**	0.63**	0.43**	-0.07	-0.03	0.29**	0.27**	0.86

Note: $N = 238$. Reliability coefficients are reported on the diagonal.

^aIn two categories (0 = male, 1 = female).

^bIn six categories (1 = 25 and below, 2 = 26–30, 3 = 31–35, 4 = 36–40, 5 = 41–45, 6 = 46 and above).

** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed test).

TABLE 2 Average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) of variables (Studies 1 and 2).

Construct	Study 1		Study 2	
	AVE	CR	AVE	CR
Development i-deals	0.60	0.82	0.68	0.83
Approach job crafting	0.77	0.91	0.76	0.91
Thriving	0.69	0.87	0.84	0.94
LMX	-	-	0.77	0.91
Controls				
Financial i-deals	0.77	0.91	0.76	0.90
Flexibility i-deals	0.61	0.75	0.72	0.83
Avoidance job crafting	0.73	0.89	0.74	0.90
Thriving (Time-1)	-	-	0.81	0.94

job crafting, avoidance job crafting, and thriving) had the best fit ($\chi^2(104) = 268.12$, $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.94; TLI = 0.92; SRMR = 0.06; RMSEA = 0.08). This model fit the data better than the five-factor model that combines the two types of job crafting ($\chi^2(109) = 495.66$, $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.85; TLI = 0.81; SRMR = 0.08; RMSEA = 0.12; $\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df) = 227.54(5)$, $p < 0.01$), the four-factor model combining the three types of i-deals ($\chi^2(113) = 481.66$, $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.86; TLI = 0.83; SRMR = 0.10; RMSEA = 0.12; $\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df) = 213.54(9)$, $p < 0.01$), and the one-factor model with all items loaded onto the same factor ($\chi^2(119) = 1465.25$, $p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.48; TLI = 0.41; SRMR = 0.17; RMSEA = 0.22; $\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df) = 1197.13(10)$, $p < 0.01$). Overall, these results indicate adequate discriminant validity, indicating that the respondents were able to distinguish the study's measures. Table 1 reports descriptive statistics and reliabilities for Study 1's variables. In addition, as shown in Table 2, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all variables exceeds 0.50 and the composite reliability (CR) of all variables exceeds 0.70, which further supports the construct reliability and validity of Study 1's variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

6.2 | Hypotheses testing

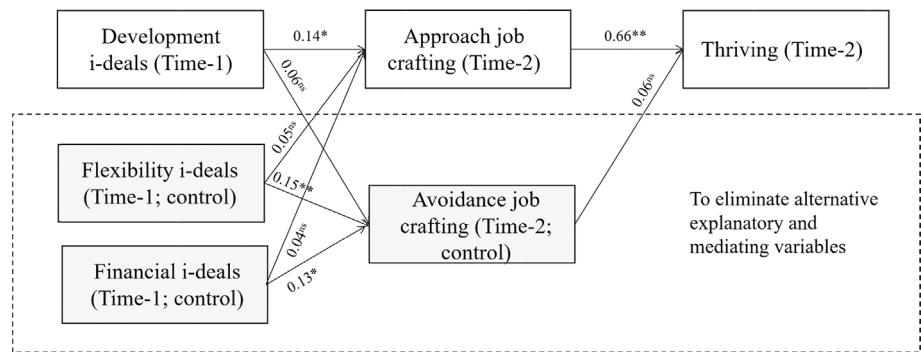
We use the Mplus 7.4 software to estimate the relationships posited in our hypotheses. Figure 2 reports the results of the overall mediation path analysis and shows that development i-deals are positively related to individuals' approach job crafting ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.05$) after controlling for the effects of flexibility i-deals ($\beta = 0.05$, *ns*) and financial i-deals ($\beta = 0.04$, *ns*), supporting Hypothesis 1. Moreover, approach job crafting ($\beta = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$) but not avoidance job crafting ($\beta = 0.06$, *ns*) is positively associated with thriving, supporting Hypothesis 2. We then bootstrap the confidence intervals (CIs) to assess whether the impact of development i-deals on thriving is transmitted by approach job crafting (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The 95% bias-corrected CI [0.014, 0.171] does not include zero, suggesting approach job crafting has a significant mediating effect (effect: 0.09). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is also supported.

7 | DISCUSSION

Using a sample of managers from a pharmaceutical firm in China, we find that individuals who obtain development i-deals from their organizations tend to engage in approach job crafting, which in turn leads them to experience thriving at work. However, ratings on both approach job crafting and thriving were reported at Time 2, which raises a concern about common method bias. The two-wave research design also casts doubt on the direction of the relationship between job crafting and thriving. In addition, we did not examine the moderating role of LMX in this study. Finally, although findings from a convenience sample from a single organization are less likely to be influenced by organizational culture, the generalizability of such findings may be limited.

To address these limitations and examine our overall moderated mediation model, we conducted a three-wave survey (Study 2) to measure the independent variables (i.e., i-deals), mediators (i.e., job

FIGURE 2 Path analysis results for Study 1. $N = 238$. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed test).



crafting), and the dependent variable (i.e., thriving) at three different points in time. We also measured and accounted for individual thriving at Time 1 to better untangle the effect of development i-deals on thriving via approach job crafting. Furthermore, complementing the results from Study 1 that were generated from a single Chinese firm, in Study 2 we survey individuals across various organizations and industries in a Western culture to enhance the generalizability of our findings.

8 | STUDY 2

8.1 | Sample and procedure

As in Study 1, in Study 2 (conducted in 2022), we recruited participants among managerial employees via Prolific, a UK-based professional data collection platform widely used in management research (Eyal et al., 2022). The Prolific platform includes participants who work in various organizations, industries, and occupational areas, maximizing the potential for generalizable research findings (Schilpzand et al., 2022). The beginning of each of the three questionnaire waves briefly described our research purpose, clarified the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study, and assured the participants that all collected information would be kept secure and accessible only to the research team. They were told the estimated time spent on the survey would be around 10 minutes. To encourage participation, we offered an incentive of around £2 for managers who submitted each survey and an additional £1 incentive for those who completed all three surveys. In each survey, we inserted attention-check items (e.g., “Please select “strongly disagree” for this item”), which helped us exclude disengaged responses from the dataset.

At Time 1, respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they had obtained development, flexibility, and financial i-deals from their organizations. They also reported the measure of thriving and demographic information as controls. A total of 282 managers responded to the first wave of this survey. One month later (Time 2), we measured respondents' job crafting and the quality of their relationships with their supervisors (i.e., LMX). In this second wave, 277 managers completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 98.2%. Another month later (Time 3), these managers were again asked to report their levels of thriving and 231 of them completed the survey,

a response rate of 83.4%. We used Prolific's unique ID to match responses from the three waves. After the matching process and removing disengaged responses, we obtained a valid sample of 178 managers (overall response rate = 63.1%).

Of our final sample, 48.9% were male. The majority of respondents (74.3%) had a bachelor's degree or higher qualification. On average, they were 38.8 years old ($SD = 10.5$) and had worked for their organizations for 7.6 years ($SD = 6.1$). They worked in a range of sectors including education (15.6%), retail (11.2%), public service (9.5%), finance (7.3%), consulting (6.1%), and information technology (6.1%).

8.2 | Measures

In Study 2, we measured the three types of i-deals (development, flexibility, and financial), job crafting (approach and avoidance), and thriving using the same scales as in Study 1. Respondents rated their LMX relationships with their supervisors using Graen and Scandura's (1987) seven-item scale. A sample item was “Regardless of how much formal authority he/she has, my immediate leader would “bail me out” at his/her expense.” Table 3 reports reliability measures and descriptive statistics for Study 2's variables. As in Study 1, we control for the effects of gender, age, flexibility and financial i-deals, and avoidance job crafting. In addition, to better identify the effect of development i-deals on thriving, we also control for managers' thriving level reported at Time 1. Our results remain consistent whether or not these variables are included. Given the theoretical reasoning involved in developing our hypotheses we report the results with these controls (Bernierth & Aguinis, 2016).

9 | RESULTS

9.1 | Measurement model

As in Study 1, we combine indicators for each construct into three-item parcels, except for flexibility i-deals. The CFA results show the eight-factor model ($\chi^2(202) = 347.11$, $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.95; TLI = 0.94; SRMR = 0.04; RMSEA = 0.06), in which each of the eight measured variables (development i-deals, flexibility i-deals, financial i-deals, LMX, approach job crafting, avoidance job crafting, and

thriving) are loaded on separate factors, provides the best fit. It performs better than the seven-factor model that combines approach and avoidance job crafting ($\chi^2(209) = 676.22, p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.85; TLI = 0.82; SRMR = 0.09; RMSEA = 0.11; $\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df) = 329.11(7), p < 0.01$), the six-factor model that combines the three type of i-deals ($\chi^2(215) = 616.56, p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.88; TLI = 0.85; SRMR = 0.08; RMSEA = 0.10; $\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df) = 269.45(13), p < 0.01$), and the one-factor model in which all items are loaded on the same factor ($\chi^2(230) = 2067.99, p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.43; TLI = 0.37; SRMR = 0.15; RMSEA = 0.21; $\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df) = 1720.88(28), p < 0.01$). These results show the discriminant validity among our study constructs. In addition, as shown in Table 2, the AVE and CR of all of the variables in Study 2 also meet the required criteria for sound construct reliability and validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

9.2 | Hypothesis testing

We also use the Mplus 7.4 software to conduct a path analysis of the proposed moderated mediation model. Figure 3 presents the estimates of this path model. As in Study 1, the results from Study 2 show that individuals' development i-deals are positively related to their approach job crafting ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.05$) after controlling for flexibility i-deals ($\beta = 0.01, ns$), financial i-deals ($\beta = 0.02, ns$), and initial thriving at Time 1 ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.01$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Meanwhile, approach job crafting ($\beta = 0.13, p < 0.05$) but not avoidance job crafting ($\beta = -0.09, ns$) is positively associated with thriving at Time 3 after controlling for thriving at Time 1 ($\beta = 0.61, p < 0.01$), supporting Hypothesis 2. The bias-corrected bootstrapping results confirm the significant positive indirect effect of development i-deals

TABLE 3 Construct means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities (Study 2).

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Development i-deals (T1)	3.13	0.98	0.84									
2. Approach job crafting (T2)	3.05	0.72	0.35**	0.89								
3. Thriving (T3)	3.71	0.75	0.43**	0.40**	0.91							
4. LMX (T2)	3.79	0.82	0.36**	0.29**	0.37**	0.91						
Controls												
5. Gender ^a	0.51	0.50	-0.08	0.06	-0.06	-0.09						
6. Age ^b	38.77	10.45	-0.12	-0.22	-0.04	0.09	-0.07					
7. Flexibility i-deals (T1)	3.38	1.15	0.38**	0.19*	0.18*	0.30**	-0.04	-0.04	0.79			
8. Financial i-deals (T1)	2.40	0.99	0.54**	0.26**	0.32**	0.43**	-0.12	-0.12	0.38**	0.88		
9. Avoidance crafting (T2)	2.82	0.81	-0.06	0.01	-0.21**	-0.02	0.04	-0.20**	0.02	-0.02	0.87	
10. Thriving (T1)	3.68	0.76	0.44**	0.37**	0.72**	0.41**	-0.10	-0.05	0.34**	0.37**	-0.18*	0.91

Note: N = 178. Reliability coefficients are reported on the diagonal.

^aIn two categories (0 = male, 1 = female).

^bIn years.

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed test).

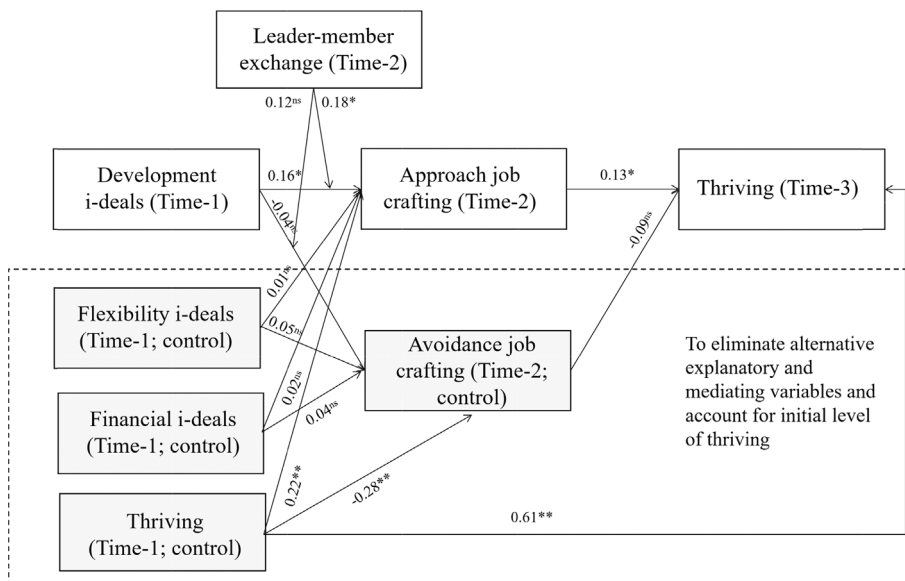
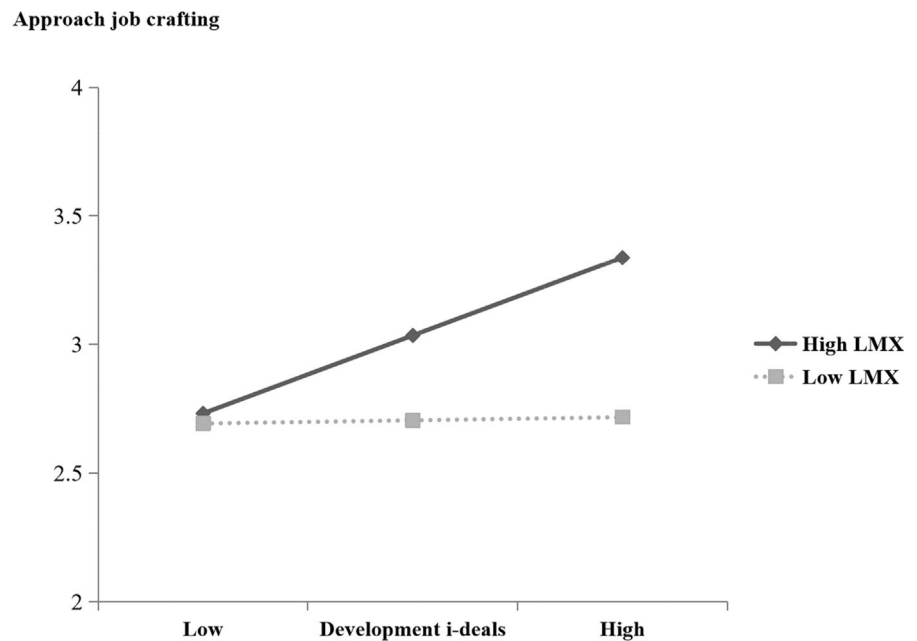


FIGURE 3 Path analysis results for Study 2. N = 178. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed test).

FIGURE 4 The moderating role of leader–member exchange (LMX) on the relationship between development i-deals and approach job crafting.



on thriving via approach job crafting (effect: 0.02; 95% CI [0.005, 0.057]), lending support to Hypothesis 3.

As shown in Figure 3, the interaction effect between development i-deals and LMX on approach job crafting is significant ($\gamma = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$). Following the procedure in Aiken and West (1991), we plot the interaction effects at -1 and $+1$ SD from the mean and perform simple slope tests. As shown in Figure 4, the relationship between development i-deals and approach job crafting is significant for managers with high LMX (simple slope = 0.31, $p < 0.05$) but not significant for individuals with low LMX (simple slope = 0.01, *ns*). These results support Hypothesis 4.

We then bootstrap the CIs to assess whether LMX moderates the indirect effect of development i-deals on thriving via approach job crafting (i.e., Hypothesis 5). The results of the 95% bias-corrected CI confirmed that the conditional indirect effect of development i-deals on managers' thriving via approach job crafting is positive and significant when the managers' LMX is high (effect: 0.040; 95% CI [0.009, 0.090]), but not significant when LMX is low (effect: 0.001; 95% CI [−0.154, 0.180]). These results support Hypothesis 5.

10 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

Building on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018), we theorize and then confirm via two studies that development i-deals can encourage individuals' approach job crafting and subsequently promote their experience of thriving at work. We further reveal that having a high-quality relationship with one's supervisor cements the positive effects of development i-deals on approach job crafting and thus thriving. Our findings have several important theoretical and practical implications.

10.1 | Theoretical implications

Our findings on the role of development i-deals in predicting thriving expands our limited understanding of the role of HRM in promoting individual thriving (Goh et al., 2022; Kleine et al., 2019; Shahid et al., 2021). With the increasing interest in understanding whether HR practices that enhance organizational performance can also promote individual well-being, our findings contribute to the ongoing theoretical debates on the effects of HR practices on individual well-being in general (Bartram et al., 2023; Peccei et al., 2013). More importantly, as previously noted, most existing studies on thriving investigate HR practices at a systemwide level and do not focus on personalized or customized HR practices (e.g., Allothmany et al., 2022; Bartram et al., 2023; Cao et al., 2022; Jo et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2019). Our findings extend and go beyond by identifying the role of individualized HR practices, specifically development i-deals, in fostering individual thriving. In doing so, we identify important theoretical insights that help to enrich the literature on i-deals and thriving.

First, our research presents a new angle to study i-deals. I-deals are usually viewed as a means for organizations to build social exchange relationships with employees, which drives scholars to predominantly rely on a social exchange perspective to understand how i-deals contribute to individual work attitudes and performance (e.g., Katou et al., 2021; Liao et al., 2016; Probst et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022). Although some studies have adopted different lenses, such as person–environment fit (Howard et al., 2022) and social cognitive theory (Wang et al., 2018), our research offers a perspective based on COR theory, suggesting that development i-deals can promote a self-regulation process in which individuals actively craft their jobs to pursue their personal goals and thrive. Interestingly, we find that flexibility i-deals and financial i-deals do not motivate individuals to engage in approach job crafting, revealing the uniqueness of

development i-deals in driving a self-regulation process for job expansion and thriving. These findings indicate the need to better understand the differences between these types of i-deals to assess their respective impacts on individuals, which should help organizations to better leverage i-deals to motivate their employees.

Second, by integrating COR theory into Spreitzer et al.'s (2005) SEMT we uncover an exploratory, resource-generating behavioral mechanism (i.e., approach job crafting) that organizations can evoke by using development i-deals so as to promote a thriving workforce. Existing empirical studies on thriving make little attempt to identify the agentic actions employees undertake to thrive in socially embedded contexts (Goh et al., 2022). The few exceptions (Niessen et al., 2012; Paterson et al., 2014) mostly attempt to empirically verify the agentic behaviors (i.e., task focus, exploration, and heedful relating) that Spreitzer et al. (2005) identify in the SEMT. Indeed, these agentic behaviors can manifest in many, more varied forms in the workplace (Xu et al., 2020). Broadening our knowledge of the behavioral mechanism that facilitates the experience of thriving, our research introduces and verifies a COR-based resource perspective by showing that agentic behaviors that expand job boundaries (i.e., approach job crafting), rather than reduce work boundaries (i.e., avoidance job crafting), can foster a sense of thriving.

Third, our findings regarding the moderating role of LMX empirically reveal, for the first time, the importance of taking direct supervisors into account in better leveraging individualized HR practices to foster individual thriving. While previous studies identify LMX as a factor that can encourage individuals' job crafting (Sethi et al., 2023) or directly contribute to individual thriving (Guan & Frenkel, 2021; Walumbwa et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2019), our research suggests that LMX is a facilitator that can encourage individuals to act upon development i-deals to expand their job boundaries. In this way, our research broadens the SEMT (Spreitzer et al., 2005), which neglects boundary conditions under which various work contexts (such as distal HRM contexts) have a stronger or weaker effect on thriving (Goh et al., 2022).

Moreover, by emphasizing the interaction between development i-deals and LMX in motivating approach job crafting behaviors to shape thriving employees, our study reveals how HRM and leadership can synergistically interplay to trigger a sense of thriving. As studies on both leadership and HRM seek to understand how to effectively manage employees, conventional scholarship has long treated leadership as a substitute for HRM in promoting individual well-being (Leroy et al., 2018). However, given that leadership plays an important role in shaping employees' understanding of HRM (e.g., Huettermann & Bruch, 2019), a few recent studies explore the HRM-leadership interaction. Some show a positive interaction between supportive HRM (e.g., health-related, or well-being-oriented HRM) and positive leadership (e.g., transformational, or engaging leadership) in fostering employees' well-being and happiness at work (e.g., Huettermann & Bruch, 2019; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). However, such an interaction does not always exist. For instance, although Jo et al. (2020) propose the roles of HPWS and service leadership in promoting individual thriving at work and ultimately performance are mutually enhancing,

they find that HPWS and leadership influence employees independently instead of together. This finding, which deviates from other studies (e.g., Huettermann & Bruch, 2019; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021), prompted them to call for more research to investigate line managers' roles in implementing HR practices to foster human resource sustainability, particularly with respect to employee thriving. Extending this stream of the literature, including the findings in Jo et al. (2020), which concentrates on the interaction between universal HR practices and leadership styles, our study shifts the focus to individualized HR practices and leadership to address employee well-being such as thriving. Thus, our results provide a fresh perspective that suggests a need for future research on the types of HRM and leadership (e.g., overarching, or individualized) that can synergistically foster individual thriving and related outcomes. In doing so, our study responds to the call in Jo et al. (2020) for further evidence regarding whether and what types of leadership and HRM—in this study, LMX and development i-deals, respectively—can be combined to benefit individual thriving. Going beyond this call, our study offers more nuanced insights into how HRM-leadership cooperation or synergies operate from a resource expansion perspective.

10.2 | Practical implications

Our findings also carry important implications for HR practitioners. First, our results show the importance of development i-deals (beyond flexibility and financial i-deals) in fostering individuals' experiences of thriving. Our research reveals the benefits of designing and implementing tailored, individualized development programs, such as leadership training and job rotation, to fit an individual's personal growth needs in order to build a thriving workforce. Moreover, our research findings indicate that individualized HR practices such as development i-deals (special and individualized i-deals or programs) may achieve the organization's overall workforce and leadership development goals by motivating individuals to proactively expand job boundaries and create resources to enhance positive elements of their work (i.e., engaging in approach job crafting). Thus, we believe that in addition to offering special development opportunities, HR practitioners and senior leaders should clearly communicate that their organizations embrace and appreciate individuals' efforts in approach job crafting. HR practitioners should also provide support and guidance regarding how to effectively acquire and sustain new resources to positively reshape a job (Harju et al., 2021).

In addition, to leverage the beneficial effects of development i-deals in promoting individual thriving, supervisors are encouraged to build high-quality relationships with the individuals who report to them and guide their direct reports to fully pursue the opportunities attached to development i-deals. To facilitate their efforts, HR practitioners can incorporate the core elements of LMX (e.g., how to provide direction and socio-emotional support) into leadership training. At the same time, HR practitioners will need to pay more attention to those who do not have high-quality LMX relationships with their supervisors, as those employees may perceive less support from

their direct supervisors than what they may need to make the most of development i-deals. To help these employees to thrive, HR practitioners should encourage them to proactively craft their jobs in an approach-oriented manner, in addition to actively reminding their supervisors to offer necessary support.

10.3 | Limitations and future research directions

The present research has some limitations that should be noted for future research. First, in both of the surveys used to produce our results, all of the measures were self-reported by the respondents. Therefore, although the one-month time-lagged design should help to alleviate the potential for common method bias (Ostroff et al., 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2012), we cannot completely rule it out due to the self-reported nature of our data. Future researchers are encouraged to collect measures from multiple sources where appropriate and feasible (e.g., job crafting rated by coworkers and i-deals rated by supervisors or HR).

Second, despite the time-lagged design, which specified the sequence of variables in the mediation path, it is still premature to definitively identify causal relationships among development i-deals, approach job crafting, and thriving based on our current data. We encourage future researchers to adopt a between-subjects field experimental design by manipulating the organizational practice of development i-deals and tracing individuals' engagement in approach job crafting and subsequent levels of thriving. Meanwhile, our results in Study 2 show that, although Time-2 approach job crafting is positively related to Time-3 thriving ($\beta = 0.13, p < 0.05$) when we control for Time-1 thriving, Time-1 thriving is positively related to Time-2 approach job crafting ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.01$). These results indicate that thriving can potentially motivate individuals to expand job boundaries. It is also possible that approach job crafting may help individuals negotiate more development i-deals, as approach crafting involves seeking resources that could be provided by i-deals. To better untangle the reciprocal relationships and resource gain cycle among development i-deals, approach job crafting, and thriving, future research should adopt a cross-lagged research design by repeatedly measuring these three variables at a minimum of three points in time.

Third, although we have accounted for the confounding effects of flexible and financial i-deals, organizations might also adopt other HR practices to boost employee thriving (e.g., Allothmany et al., 2022). To clarify the unique role of development i-deals in promoting individual thriving, future research should control for the effects of other HR practices (e.g., HPWS). Separately, we find that flexible and financial i-deals cannot promote individual thriving from a job expansion perspective, as an approaching crafting-based mechanism is not supported for these i-deals. Nevertheless, given that flexible and financial i-deals can benefit individuals' family lives (e.g., work-life balance and family income; Anand & Mitra, 2022), it is possible that those i-deals could facilitate individual thriving through other cross-domain pathways (e.g., family-to-work enrichment). Future research could explore this possibility.

Moreover, we urge scholars to explore a more nuanced understanding of thriving with the goal of update the SEMT by integrating diverse perspectives. Goh et al. (2022, p. 203) notes that "looking at the breadth of antecedents and outcomes identified at the individual level, it seems evident that the SEMT does not offer a full explication of the nomological network of thriving at work; there is potential for other (supplementary or complementary) perspectives (e.g., COR theory; Gerbasi et al., 2015) to be used to advance the understanding of thriving at work." Echoing this, our findings support the utility of COR theory in broadening the SEMT, which future research can build on to bring new insights to existing studies on thriving. For example, as noted earlier, agentic work behaviors in thriving literature need to be more specific while also being worthy of expansion. It is likely that not all agentic actions can foster thriving experiences. Building on findings that agentic behaviors assisting in resource generation rather than resource reservation can enable thriving, future studies can investigate how other proactive or exploratory behaviors (Wu & Parker, 2017) or job expansion behaviors (e.g., boundary spanning; Aldrich & Herker, 1977) can help individuals accumulate resources or seek opportunities to sustain a sense of thriving.

Furthermore, as some contexts may be more or less likely maximize the utility of certain resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018), future research should explore how to match contextual factors with different workplace resources to enhance individuals' levels of thriving. Although our findings are consistent across different organizations and cultures, workplace climate is still likely to play a role in affecting the feasibility or effectiveness of individuals utilizing development i-deals to achieve thriving. For example, in organizations with a strong inclusive climate in which individualized needs are respected (Shore et al., 2018), individuals should feel safe to fully utilize development i-deals to explore opportunities and experience thriving at work.

Last but not least, as we only collected data at the individual level, we encourage scholars to extend our findings by collecting multilevel data to explore how individuals might thrive in various team settings. For example, in some team settings, i-deals might be given only to certain individuals, or different individuals might be granted different types of i-deals (e.g., Anand et al., 2022). Also, the overall LMX quality (i.e., LMX mean) may differ across teams, as may the level of within-team dispersion in LMX relationships (LMX differentiation) (Liden et al., 2006). Morganson et al. (2017, p. 383) particularly note that "applying the logic of COR theory, a workgroup that comprises higher LMX relationships may be considered more resource-rich than a workgroup that comprises primarily lower-quality LMX relationships." Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate individuals' thriving experiences in different team contexts characterized by distinct demographic, social, relational, and/or structural characteristics. These team contexts might influence individuals' job expansion efforts and affect their thriving experience. For example, although individuals with relatively higher LMX relationships and more i-deals are often more resourceful in crafting their jobs and thus experience thriving to a greater extent, it is also possible that, even with strong LMX relationships and development i-deals, they would thrive less in teams where the overall climate is characterized by envy and unfairness

(Marescaux et al., 2019; Ng, 2017). This could be especially true in Eastern cultures where individuals are likely to experience adverse peer reactions more often because such cultures place a greater emphasis on collective effort (Hofstede, 1980; Ng & Feldman, 2015). More importantly, for individuals who enjoy a high-LMX relationship in predominantly low-LMX teams where the supervisor is resource constrained, the supervisor may rely more heavily on those individuals for task completion (Morganson et al., 2017). In such cases, they may still not have enough resource support to leverage their development i-deals to expand their job boundaries and thereby increase thriving.

11 | CONCLUSION

Thriving individuals are core human resources that contribute to sustainable organizational performance. Taking a COR-based resource perspective, this study investigates whether, how, and when development i-deals can promote individual thriving. Our findings offer new insights regarding the development of a thriving workforce by showing that individualized HR practices (i.e., development i-deals) and leadership (i.e., LMX) can jointly promote individuals' thriving through promoting their self-initiated, approach-oriented job crafting behaviors. To further advance our knowledge on individual thriving, we encourage researchers to build on our findings to refine the SEMT and further explore how other HR and leadership practices can work together to promote a thriving workforce, and to reveal the underlying behavioral mechanism by which this occurs.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the first author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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ENDNOTE

ⁱ This model accounts for the moderating role of LMX in the relationships between flexibility and financial i-deals and both approach and avoidance job crafting. The interactive effect of LMX and financial i-deals is not significant for either approach job crafting ($\gamma = -0.07$, *ns*) or avoidance job crafting ($\gamma = -0.09$, *ns*), whereas the interactive effect of LMX

and flexibility i-deals is not significant in approach job crafting ($\gamma = -0.01$, *ns*) but is significant on avoidance job crafting ($\gamma = -0.18$, $p < 0.05$). The simple slope test shows that when LMX is low, employees who obtain flexibility i-deals engage in more avoidance job crafting (simple slope_{low-LMX} = 0.19, $p < 0.01$; simple slope_{high-LMX} = -0.10, *ns*). As avoidance job crafting may have negative consequences for employees and organizations (e.g., Fong et al., 2021; Petrou & Xanthopoulou, 2021), this finding cautions organizations and supervisors of offering low-LMX employees flexibility i-deals. For simplicity, we include only the main findings here.

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APPENDIX 1: MEASURES

Development i-deals

- The extent to which in your current jobs you had successfully negotiated on-the-job activities.
- The extent to which in your current jobs you had successfully negotiated training opportunities.
- The extent to which in your current jobs you had successfully negotiated special opportunities for skill development.
- The extent to which in your current jobs you had successfully negotiated career development.

Flexibility i-deals (control)

- The extent to which in your current jobs you had successfully negotiated flexibility.
- The extent to which in your current jobs you had successfully negotiated individually customized work schedule.

Financial i-deals (control)

- My supervisor has ensured that my compensation arrangement (e.g., hourly vs. salaried) meets my individual needs.
- Because of my personal circumstances, my supervisor has created a compensation arrangement that is tailored to fit me.
- Because of my unique skills and contributions, my supervisor has been willing to negotiate my compensation.
- Beyond formal policies, my supervisor has raised my pay because of the exceptional contributions that I make to the organization.
- After my initial appointment, I negotiated with my supervisor to develop a compensation plan that rewards my unique contributions.

Approach job crafting

- I try to develop my capabilities.
- I try to develop myself professionally.
- I try to learn new things at work.
- I make sure that I use my capacities to the fullest.
- I decide on my own how I do things.
- I ask my supervisor to coach me.
- I ask whether my supervisor is satisfied with my work.
- I look to my supervisor for inspiration.
- I ask others for feedback on my job performance.
- I ask colleagues for advice.
- When an interesting project comes along, I offer myself proactively as project co-worker.

- If there are new developments, I am one of the first to learn about them and try them out.
- When there is not much to do at work, I see it as a chance to start new projects.
- I regularly take on extra tasks even though I do not receive extra salary for them.
- I try to make my work more challenging by examining the underlying relationships between aspects of my job.

Avoidance job crafting (control)

- I make sure that my work is mentally less intense.
- I try to ensure that my work is emotionally less intense.
- I manage my work so that I try to minimize contact with people whose problems affect me emotionally.
- I organize my work so as to minimize contact with people whose expectations are unrealistic.
- I try to ensure that I do not have to make many difficult decisions at work.
- I organize my work in such a way to make sure that I do not have to concentrate for too long a period at once.

Thriving at work

- I find myself learning often.
- I continue to learn more as time goes by.
- I see myself continually improving.
- I am developing a lot as a person.
- I am not learning. (reverse coded)
- I feel alive and vital.
- I have energy and spirit.
- I feel alert and awake.
- I am looking forward to each new day.
- I do not feel very energetic (reverse coded)

Leader-member exchange (LMX)

- Regardless of how much power he/she has built into his/her position, my supervisor would be personally inclined to use his/her power to help me solve problems in my work.
- I can count on my supervisor to “bail me out,” even at his or her own expense, when I really need it.
- My supervisor understands my problems and needs.
- My supervisor recognizes my potential.
- My supervisor has enough confidence in me that he/she would defend and justify my decisions if I were not present to do so.
- I usually know where I stand with my supervisor.
- How would you describe your working relationship with your supervisor?