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## Article

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# **Character Strengths at Work: Predictive Role of Signature Strengths and Demanded Strengths for Work Role Performance and Deviant Behavior**

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## **Abstract**

Character strengths are presumed to highlight those qualities that are best in people and reflect people's potential for achieving personal well-being and contributing to the workplace. The present study intended to corroborate the predictive role of character strengths and strengths use for self and supervisory ratings of job performance and deviant behavior. The sample consisted of employees ( $N = 178$ ) who provided information about the study variables whereas their respective supervisors ( $N = 152$ ) provided data for outcome variables (i.e., work role performance and deviant behaviors of the reporting employees). The findings showed that character strengths and strengths use are associated positively with self and supervisory-rated job performance and negatively with deviant behavior. Signature strengths use predicted self-rated work role performance while demanded strengths use predicted both self and supervisory-rated work role performance and deviance. The study suggests that the use of strengths at work improves one's work role performance and reduces the likelihood of deviant behaviors.

**Keywords:** Values in Action, character strengths, signature strengths, demanded strengths, job performance, deviant behaviors.

## **1. Introduction**

A couple of decades ago, the construct of character strengths emerged (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and provided promising support for application in the field of work psychology (Hill, 2003; Hodges & Clifton, 2004). Peterson and Park (2006) proposed that strengths of character

are an ignored but critically important resource for organizations. Character matters because it leads people to do the right thing, and the right thing can be productive and profitable. This turned the attention of researchers and practitioners toward the study of character strengths and strengths use at work. However, most of the studies were performed in American and European countries with low representation of other Asian and African nations. It is important to pay attention to cultural aspects of expression and the development of strengths instead of implementing strengths development programs blindly on culturally different samples. Since there is a clear lack of research on character strengths in Pakistan, our research will therefore focus on the role of possession and use of character strengths for employee behaviors in the specific work context of Pakistan. In most of the work to date, the association of character strengths and strengths use has been examined with positive work behaviors. However, we intended for a simultaneous evaluation of positive and negative work behaviors to get a more comprehensive overview.

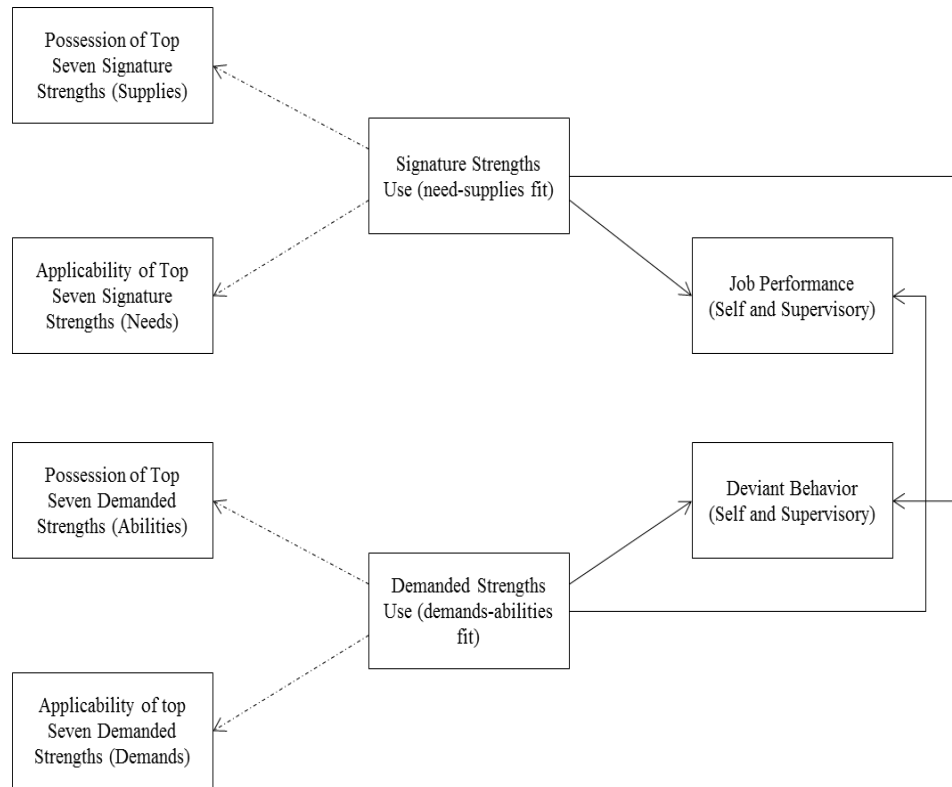
The Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Character Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) laid the foundation of human excellence on strengths rather than weaknesses. Character strengths are defined as the positive traits that manifest in human feelings, thoughts, and behaviors which provide a sense of fulfillment (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The classification consists of 24 character strengths organized into six clusters. Strengths that involve the use and acquisition of knowledge are grouped as cognitive strengths (e.g., curiosity). Strengths that entail the accomplishment of goals despite internal or external opposition are termed emotional strengths (e.g., honesty). The strengths which involve “tending and befriending” others are referred interpersonal strengths (e.g., social intelligence). Strengths that trigger healthy life in the community are named civic strengths (e.g., fairness). Strengths that guard against excess are grouped as temperance strengths (e.g., modesty). Lastly, strengths that provide meaning and establish connections to the larger universe are called theological strengths (e.g., hope). An individual may possess all of the 24 character strengths however, up to seven strengths are considered one’s core strengths. These highly endorsed character strengths are termed signature strengths and are essential to one’s identity (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Signature strengths are fulfilling in nature and associated with intrinsic motivation, excitement, yearning, inevitability, and invigoration after applying the strengths. Possession of character strength alone does not guarantee the use of strengths rather environment plays an important role in this regard. Strengths use mainly depends upon two conditions (Harzer & Ruch, 2013). Possession of character strength to a certain degree is the first and foremost condition to display strength-related behavior (Saucier et al., 2007), and environmental factors are the second condition that enables the display of a particular strength (Saucier et al., 2007; Ten Berge & De Raad, 1999). For instance, the display of strength-related behavior of an individual might be encouraged or discouraged according to the situation.

### *1.1 Theoretical Framework*

The fundamental proposition of person-environment fit theories goes along very well with basic theoretical assumptions of character strengths. Within the scope of person-environment (PE) fit theory (e.g., Caplan 1987; Kristof 1996), PE fit is defined as the congruence between the person (e.g., personality) and the environment (e.g., work; cf. Edwards & Shipp, 2007; Kristof, 1996). The underlying assumption of the PE fit theory is that the closer the match between the person and the environment, the better the outcomes, and that people are more likely to thrive (e.g., Edwards & Shipp, 2007). Overall, strengths use can be interpreted in the light of the complementary person-environment (PE) fit theory (Caplan, 1987; Kristof, 1996). The congruence between the job tasks and the individual signature strengths can be subsumed within the concept of complementary person-job fit. Complementary person-job fit represents the degree to which job and individual each supply what the other needs (Kristof, 1996). Needs-supplies-fit and demands-abilities-fit are the two subdivisions of complementary person-job fit (Edwards & Shipp, 2007; Kristof 1996). The signature strengths use matched the former fit and demanded strengths use with the later fit. In line with the needs-supplies-fit, the more often the job responsibilities permit one's signature strengths use, the more the job supplies this requirement thus the closer will be the match (Harzer & Ruch 2013). In accordance with the demands-abilities fit, the more often an individual possesses the abilities that are the demand of the job tasks, the more likely the individual to fulfill the demands. As a result, these two fits should be related to work/related outcomes such as work role performance and deviant behavior. To this end, the study aimed to examine the role of character strengths and strengths use in self-rated and supervisory-rated work role performance and deviance. The proposed research model is presented in Figure 1 (after the next paragraph).

Grounded on the person-environment fit theory, the (forthcoming) figure shows that both signature strengths use (need-supplies fit) and demanded strengths use (demands-abilities fit) were computed from possession and applicability of character strengths. It is anticipated that signature strengths use and demanded strengths use lead to self and supervisory-rated work role performance and deviant behaviors. Work role performance is based upon the work role performance model (Griffin et al., 2007) which operationalized three forms of performance (proactivity, proficiency, and adaptivity) at three levels (individual, team member, and organization member) to apprehend the efficiency of a specific form of performance at a specific level. In contrast, behaviors that disrupt the functioning of the organization and threaten the well-being of its member are labeled as deviant behavior (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Among them, deviant behaviors that are directed toward other individuals working in the organizations (e.g., managers) refer to as interpersonal deviance while those directed towards the organization (e.g., theft) and referred to as organizational deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

## Character Strengths at Work



**Figure 1.** Theoretical and Hypothesized Model -->Indicator variables for computation of strengths use (fit variables)

### 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Formulation

An extensive review of existing literature indicated that possession, and applicability of character strengths as well as the use of strengths yielded associations across health-related (Hoge et al., 2020; Strecker et al., 2020; Weziak-Bialowolska et al., 2023) and work-related outcomes (Mubashar et al., 2021; Mubashar et al., 2022). A recent literature review by Miglianico et al. (2020) summarized the status of strengths use research in the organizational setting. They concluded that when employee use their strengths they perform better in a proactive way, are adaptable to change, feel satisfied with their jobs and life, show helping behaviors, experience positive emotions, and are less likely to perform counterproductive behaviors. Moreover, they also proposed a five-step intervention model to promote a strengths culture in organizations.

### *2.1. Character Strengths, Strengths Use and Performance*

Character strengths and strengths use has been explored with various variants of job performance (Dubreuil et al., 2021) such as task performance (Harzer & Ruch, 2014; van Woerkom & Meyers, 2015), work role performance (Harzer et al., 2017; Harzer et al., 2021) and in-role behaviors at work (Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017; Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2016). Moreover, researchers also explored the role of specific character strengths or clusters of character strengths in job performance (Peterson & Byron, 2008) and creative performance (Avey et al., 2012). Overall, the findings established a positive association of character strengths and strengths use with variants of job performance. However, the major focus of strengths use-based research was on signature strengths (with few exceptions; Harzer et al., 2017; Littman-Ovadia et al., 2017). Among these two, Harzer et al. (2017) focused on demanded strengths fit along with signature strength fit, and happiness strengths fit taking insight from person-job fit theory. Results showed that character strengths and strength-related fits explained unique variances in work role performance.

Moreover, strength-based intervention programs also supported the fact that the use of strengths at work facilitates job performance of employees (Dubreuil et al., 2016). Literature also guided about the mediating or moderating mechanisms through which character strengths and strengths use contributed to job performance such as personality (Harzer et al., 2021), harmonious passion (Forest et al., 2012), positive affect (Littman-Ovadia et al., 2017; van Woerkom & Meyers, 2015) and work engagement (Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017).

### *2.2. Character Strengths, Strengths Use and Deviant Behavior*

Limited evidence exists regarding the role of character strengths and strengths use with counterproductive work behaviors (Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2016; Littman-Ovadia et al., 2017), particularly with deviant behavior (i.e., Harzer et al., 2017; Harzer et al., 2021). This limited literature indicated that specific character strengths showed a negative association with counterproductive work behaviors (Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2016) particularly the association between perseverance and counterproductive work behavior was mediated by employees' sense of meaning and their perceptions of work as a career and calling. Littman-Ovadia et al. (2017) found that signature strengths and happiness strengths were negatively associated with counterproductive work behavior. However, the study of Harzer et al. (2017) found no association of signature and demanded strengths with deviant behaviors (after Bonferroni correction).

### *2.3. Hypotheses Formulation*

The above literature substantiated the findings on character strengths and strengths use concerning self and supervisory-rated work role performance. However, the literature is non-conclusive regarding the association of character strengths and signature strengths use and deviant behavior as well as only limited evidence exists regarding demanded strengths

use (see Harzer et al., 2017 for exception). Accordingly, our research aimed to gather evidence about the contribution of character strengths and strengths use (signature strengths use and demanded strengths use) in the Pakistani workplace considering one positive and one negative work behavior. It is expected that character strengths, signature strengths use, and demanded strengths use are associated positively with work role performance and negatively with deviant behavior.

Within the scope of this study, two forms of ratings (self and supervisory) were taken for work role performance and deviant behavior. The use of both self and supervisory ratings can be used to counter common method bias in self-ratings (Doty & Glick, 1998). It is expected that self-ratings may exhibit common method bias and may show more significant associations (in terms of numbers and strength) than supervisory ratings. The study contributes to the existing literature by exploring character strengths and strengths use with supervisory-rated work role performance (as explored limitedly; Harzer & Ruch, 2014) and deviant behavior (no evidence). Moreover, the study also advances the existing evidence on the non-conclusive nature of literature about character strengths and deviant behavior. However, the prime aim was to examine the predictive role of signature strengths use and demanded strengths use in self and supervisory-rated work role performance and deviant behavior. It is anticipated that signature strengths use and demanded strengths use both predict self and supervisory ratings of work role performance and deviance.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1 Procedure and Participants*

The participants were contacted by professional contacts of the researchers, corporate group emails, and by visiting organizations from different cities of Punjab (e.g., Lahore and Faisalabad). They were informed about the requirements and aim of the research. In total, 200 employees filled in all the assessment measures which were thoroughly screened. The first final sample consisted of 178 employees (50 women, 128 men) from several occupations (e.g., customer services, and academia). The participants' mean age was 34.57 years ( $SD = 7.85$ , range = 22-58 years). Most of them reported that they have a master's degree ( $n = 110$ ), followed by those with a higher degree ( $n = 41$ ). However, few of them ( $n = 23$ ) finished a college degree, and only four reported having matriculation certificates. Most of them had a full-time job ( $n = 167$ ) whereas a small number of them had a part-time job ( $n = 11$ ). The average tenure of the employees' jobs was 7.54 years ( $SD = 5.66$ , range = 0.25-25.50 years). Consent was also taken from the employees about the supervisory ratings of job performance and deviant behaviors. In total, 160 supervisors provided data for outcome variables. After a thorough screening, the second sample consisted of 152 supervisors (115 men, 37 women) with a mean age of 32 years ( $SD = 6.07$ , range = 22- 56 years). Most of the supervisors ( $n = 130$ ) rated their relationship with their respective employees as friendly. Two-thirds of the supervisors rated that they knew their employees well.

### 3.2 *Instruments*

#### 3.2.1 The Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS 120; Littman-Ovadia, 2015; Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

The VIA-IS 120 assesses the 24-character strengths through 120 items, five items to measure each character strength. Participants rate each item about themselves on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = not like me at all to 5 = very much like me. The sample item is “work at my very best being a group member.” (Teamwork). VIA-IS 120 showed moderate to good internal consistencies which ranged from  $\alpha = .69$  to  $\alpha = .85$  with a median of  $\alpha = .78$ .

#### 3.2.2. The Applicability of Character Strengths Rating Scales (ACS-RS; Harzer & Ruch, 2013)

The ACS-RS is a 96 items scale that measures the applicability of 24-character strengths in a specific context, such as work, four similar items are used for all 24 subscales with brief definitions narrating character strengths-appropriate behavior (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The four similar items measure (a) demand of a behavior, (b) perception of being helpful, (c) perception of as important for self, and (d) display of behavior in the daily working context, on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = never to 5 = [almost] always). Internal consistencies of the ACS-RS ranged from  $\alpha = .83$  to  $\alpha = .95$  with a median of  $\alpha = .87$ .

#### 3.2.3. The Work Role Performance Scale (WRPS): Griffin et al., 2007

The WRPS measures the total work role performance and nine dimensions of performance through 27 items. Three items measure a particular dimension of work role performance. Participants rate each item about work role performance on a five-point Likert scale where 1 = (almost) never to 5 = very often. It measures three aspects of work role performance namely, proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity at the individual, team, and organizational levels. The sample item is “Made changes to the way your core tasks are done”. Internal consistencies of the WRPS of self-ratings presently ranged from  $\alpha = .73$  to  $\alpha = .96$  with a median of  $\alpha = .78$ . WRPS of supervisory ratings presently ranged from  $\alpha = .63$  to  $\alpha = .96$  with a median of  $\alpha = .73$ .

#### 3.2.4. The Workplace Deviance Scale (WDS); Bennett & Robinson, 2000

WDS measures two dimensions of employees’ deviant behavior by 19 items. It measures interpersonal deviance by 7 items and organizational deviance by 12 items. The respondents indicate the engagement of a specific deviant behavior during the past year on a 7-point answer scale ranging from 1 = never to 7 = daily. The sample item is “Being late at work”. Cronbach alpha for self-ratings of interpersonal and organizational deviance was  $\alpha = .86$  and  $\alpha = .89$  respectively and for supervisory ratings were  $\alpha = .67$  and  $\alpha = .87$  respectively.



### 3.2.5. Computation of Strengths Use

Signature strengths use and Demanded strengths use were computed by considering both scores of character strengths on VIA-IS 120 and ACS-RS using a computational method of Harzer and Ruch (2013). A character strength, among the seven top possessed character strengths, was simply measured as signature strengths use, if (a) the score of that strength on VIA-IS-M was 3.5 or higher- “at least slightly possessed” and if (b) the score of that strength on ACS-RS score was 4 or higher- “often applicable”. Resultantly, the scores of participants on signature strengths use varied between 0 (do not use their signature strengths) to 7 (use all of their top seven signature strengths). A character strength among the seven top demanded character strengths were simply measured as demanded strengths use, if (a) the score of that strength on VIA-IS-M was 3.5 or higher- “at least slightly possessed” and if (b) the score of that strength on ACS-RS score was 4 or higher- “often applicable”. In this case, the focus was on the most demanded character strengths at work considering two ratings of ACS-RS (perception of being helpful at work and display of behavior in the daily working context). Resultantly, the scores of participants on demanded strengths use varied between 0 (do not use the demanded strengths) to 7 (use all of the top seven demanded strengths).

## 4. Data Analysis and Results

After data collection, the data was thoroughly screened using descriptive statistics, box plots, and normality (skewness and kurtosis) and participants with suspicious responses were removed. Furthermore, descriptive statistics and reliabilities of the measures were assessed. The descriptive analyses indicated variability in the responses of the participants as the actual range of score was almost near to the potential score and mean scores were approximately near the midpoints of the Likert scale of the instruments. Skewness and kurtosis indicated the normality of the data as they fell within the acceptable range (i.e.,  $\pm 2$ ; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014, except for supervisory-rated deviant behavior). Reliability analyses yielded satisfactory to good internal consistencies of the scales (see method section for reliability).

After these preliminary analyses, partial correlations were calculated to evaluate the associations of the character strengths and strengths use (i.e., signature strengths use and demanded strengths use) with self and supervisory-rated work role performance and deviant behavior taking age, gender, education, and job tenure as control variables. Table 1 (a, b) presents the overview of partial correlations.

**Table 1a: Partial Correlations of Character Strengths, Signature Strengths Use, Demanded Strengths Use with self-Ratings of Work Role Performance and Deviant Behavior**

Variables	Work Role Performance										Deviant behavior	
	I_Prof	I_Ada p	I_Pro a	T_Pro f	T_Ad ap	T_Pro a	O_Pro f	O_Ad ap	O_Pro a	Total	IPD	OD
Creativity	.41***	.44***	.47***	.43***	.41***	.41***	.39***	.47***	.42***	.49***	-.16*	-.15*
Curiosity	.31***	.35***	.33***	.34***	.36***	.32***	.28***	.38***	.34***	.38***	-.07	-.07
Judgment	.36***	.34***	.34***	.26***	.31***	.29***	.29***	.36***	.33***	.36***	-.17*	-.08
Love of learning	.26**	.21**	.27***	.24**	.31***	.22**	.20**	.30***	.23**	.28***	-.08	-.01
Perspective	.31***	.34***	.35***	.31***	.27***	.28***	.28***	.30***	.31***	.35***	-.09	-.07
Bravery	.41***	.38***	.34***	.38***	.30***	.31***	.29***	.42***	.33***	.40***	-.14	-.14
Perseverance	.36***	.38***	.38***	.29***	.36***	.31***	.31***	.41***	.37***	.40***	-.20**	-.25**
Honesty	.50***	.41***	.42***	.42***	.38***	.36***	.36***	.47***	.38***	.47***	-.19*	-.25**
Zest	.23**	.28***	.28***	.27***	.31***	.22**	.28***	.32***	.29***	.31***	-.10	-.16*
Love	.31***	.28***	.35***	.24**	.34***	.16*	.22**	.33***	.21**	.31***	-.08	-.12
Kindness	.36***	.33***	.39***	.36***	.38***	.26**	.31***	.46***	.33***	.40***	-.17*	-.14
Social Intelligence	.32***	.38***	.42***	.33***	.37***	.29***	.33***	.41***	.32***	.40***	-.12	-.09
Teamwork	.36***	.34***	.40***	.30***	.37***	.30***	.35***	.42***	.36***	.41***	-.15*	-.15*
Fairness	.43***	.39***	.44***	.30***	.39***	.34***	.36***	.46***	.38***	.44***	-.15*	-.13
Leadership	.44***	.43***	.50***	.42***	.46***	.42***	.37***	.54***	.44***	.51***	-.15	-.13
Forgiveness	.28***	.29***	.27***	.25**	.28***	.19*	.27***	.32***	.27***	.31***	-.19*	-.18
Modesty	.33***	.32***	.31***	.23**	.28***	.29***	.24**	.32***	.28***	.33***	-.16*	-.14
Prudence	.30***	.26**	.28***	.17*	.22**	.22**	.23**	.23**	.27***	.28***	-.18*	-.12
Self-regulation	.26**	.20**	.23**	.21**	.20**	.17*	.18*	.24**	.26**	.25**	-.15*	-.16*
Appreciation	.31***	.29***	.27***	.32***	.27***	.23**	.24**	.35***	.26**	.32***	-.20*	-.18*
Gratitude	.22**	.22**	.20**	.23**	.27***	.18*	.22**	.27***	.21**	.26**	-.17*	-.14
Hope	.30***	.36***	.28***	.36***	.33***	.26**	.30***	.38***	.33***	.37***	-.20**	-.21**
Humor	.21**	.27***	.24**	.25**	.28***	.19*	.18*	.30***	.24**	.27***	.01	.01
Spirituality	.31***	.28***	.25**	.24**	.24**	.23**	.20**	.27***	.27***	.29***	-.18*	-.16*
SSU	.40***	.42***	.44***	.44***	.55***	.41***	.48***	.53***	.47***	.53***	-.20**	-.19*
DSS	.44***	.45***	.48***	.43***	.48***	.38***	.52***	.53***	.46***	.53***	-.23**	-.24**

Note. I\_Prof = Individual task proficiency, I\_Ada = Individual task adaptivity, I\_Proa = Individual task proactivity, T\_Prof = Team member proficiency, T\_Adap = Team member adaptivity, T\_Proa = Team member proactivity, O\_Prof = Organizational member proficiency, O\_Ada = Organizational member Adaptability, O\_Proa = Organizational member Proactivity, Total = Total Performance. IPD = Interpersonal deviance, OD = Organizational deviance. Love = Capacity to love and be loved, Appreciation = Appreciation of beauty and excellence, SSU = Signature strengths Use, DSS = Demanded strengths use.

N = 178. \* p < .05. \*\* p < .01. \*\*\* p < .001.

Character Strengths at Work

**Table 1b: Partial Correlations of Character Strengths, Signature Strengths Use, Demanded Strengths Use with Supervisory Ratings of Work Role Performance and Deviant Behavior**

Variables	Work Role Performance										Deviant behavior	
	I_Prof	I_Ada p	I_Pro a	T_Pro f	T_Ad ap	T_P roa	O_Pro f	O_Ad ap	O_Pro a	Total	IPD	OD
	Creativity	.23**	.23**	.20*	.16*	.20*	.19*	.12	.12	.12	.20*	-.10
Curiosity	.25**	.23**	.15	.19*	.23**	.10	.16*	.16*	.21**	.22**	-.09	-.04
Judgment	.27**	.21*	.13	.15	.24**	.18*	.11	.20*	.15	.21**	-.31***	-.23**
Love of learning	.26**	.29***	.22**	.22**	.24**	.19*	.16	.20*	.18*	.25**	-.08	-.06
Perspective	.24**	.24**	.22**	.13	.16*	.21*	.20*	.21*	.13	.23**	-.19*	-.15
Bravery	.16	.11	.09	.11	.09	.04	.08	.07	.06	.10	-.18*	-.07
Perseverance	.14	.08	.02	.18*	.14	.04	.06	.07	-.06	.08	-.21**	-.05
Honesty	.28**	.19*	.02	.23**	.14	.05	.17*	.14	.05	.16	-.26**	-.18*
Zest	.16*	.17*	.16*	.07	.10	.08	.16	.14	.14	.16	-.24**	-.20*
Love	.25**	.27**	.14	.22**	.25**	.16	.16*	.17*	.10	.22**	-.26**	-.18*
Kindness	.11	.08	-.04	.09	.05	-.02	-.01	.02	-.03	.03	-.23**	-.16
Social Intelligence	.12	.08	.06	.12	.18*	.09	.02	.12	.06	.11	-.27**	-.20*
Teamwork	.24**	.21*	.13	.17*	.17*	.10	.19*	.16*	.14	.20*	-.22**	-.16
Fairness	.16*	.08	-.01	.17*	.13	-.01	.02	.05	.02	.08	-.28**	-.24**
Leadership	.26**	.23**	.10	.12	.16	.08	.08	.16*	.11	.17*	-.27**	-.19*
Forgiveness	.30***	.28**	.16*	.18*	.23**	.18*	.21*	.23**	.19*	.25**	-.12	-.07
Modesty	.28**	.31***	.24**	.23**	.26**	.21*	.25**	.28**	.25**	.30***	-.13	-.14
Prudence	.25**	.20*	.12	.14	.14	.13	.18*	.19*	.10	.19*	-.18*	-.10
Self-regulation	.15	.15	.08	.12	.15	.09	.08	.11	.01	.12	-.23**	-.13
Appreciation	.27**	.23**	.18*	.23**	.24**	.14	.06	.17*	.11	.21*	-.25**	-.18*
Gratitude	.21**	.22**	.20*	.11	.16	.16*	.17*	.15	.16	.20*	-.22**	-.16
Hope	.38***	.36***	.28**	.24**	.26**	.20*	.26**	.27**	.26**	.33***	-.34***	-.26**
Humor	.06	.04	.07	.03	.06	-.03	.01	.06	.12	.06	-.11	-.07
Spirituality	.23**	.20*	.14	.09	.15	.12	.17*	.20*	.10	.18*	-.31***	-.22**
SSU	.26**	.14	.12	.17*	.18*	.15	.22**	.13	.13	.19*	-.25**	-.19*
DSS	.36***	.31***	.22**	.28***	.32***	.24*	.31***	.26**	.19*	.32***	-.30***	-.17*

Note. I\_Prof = Individual task proficiency, I\_Ada = Individual task adaptivity, I\_Proa = Individual task proactivity, T\_Prof = Team member proficiency, T\_Adap = Team member adaptivity, T\_Proa = Team member proactivity, O\_Prof = Organizational member proficiency, O\_Ada = Organizational member Adaptability, O\_Proa = Organizational member Proactivity, Total = Total Performance. IPD = Interpersonal deviance, OD = Organizational deviance. Love = Capacity to love and be loved, Appreciation = Appreciation of beauty and excellence, SSU = Signature strengths Use, DSS = Demanded strengths use. N = 152. \* p < .05. \*\* p < .01. \*\*\* p < .001.

Table 1 (a, b) shows that character strengths and both kinds of strengths use correlated positively with work role performance and negatively with deviant behavior. The correlation coefficient for self-rated work role performance with character strengths and both kinds of strengths use ranged between .17 ( $p < .05$ ; prudence, self-regulation) and .55 ( $p < .001$ ; signature strengths use) with a median of .32. For supervisory-rated work role performance, correlation coefficients of character strengths and both kinds of strengths use ranged between .16 ( $p < .05$ ; 11-character strengths) and .36 ( $p < .001$ ; demanded strengths use) with a median of .22. For self-rated deviant behavior, correlation coefficients ranged from -.15 ( $p < .05$ ; teamwork, fairness, and creativity) to -.25 ( $p < .01$ ; perseverance and honesty) with a median of -.18. While correlation coefficients for supervisory-rated deviant behavior ranged from -.17 ( $p < .05$ ; demanded strengths use) to -.34 ( $p < .001$ ; hope) and the absolute median value of correlation was -.23.

Specifically, all 24-character strengths and both kinds of strengths use correlated positively with all dimensions of self-rated work role performance. Fifteen-character strengths, signature strengths use and demanded strengths use negatively correlated with interpersonal deviance while nine-character strengths and both kinds of strengths use negatively correlated with organizational deviance. For supervisory ratings, forgiveness, modesty, hope, and demanded strengths use correlated positively with all dimensions of work role performance. Ten-character strengths and both strengths use correlated negatively with both dimensions of deviant behaviors. The remaining character strengths and signature strengths use correlated positively with a few dimensions of supervisory-rated work role performance and negatively with supervisory-rated deviant behaviors.

Further, 24 sets of hierarchical multiple regression analyses (one for each dependent variable) were run considering signature strengths use and demanded strengths use as predictors of work role performance and deviant behavior. For this purpose, gender, age, education, and job tenure were taken as control variables. Table 2 presents the standardized regression weights and variance of each model.

Character Strengths at Work

**Table 2: Multiple Hierarchical Analyses predicting self and Supervisory Ratings of Work Role Performance and Deviance from Signature Strengths Use, Demanded Strengths Use for self-Ratings**

Predictors	Work Role Performance										Deviant behavior	
	I_Prof	I_Adap	I_Proa	T_Prof	T_Adap	T_Proa	O_Prof	O_Adap	O_Proa	Total	IPD	OD
For self-ratings												
Gender	.20**	-.16*	-.04	-.13	-.07	.03	-.12	-.13*	-.08	-.11	.33***	.20*
Age	.21*	.15	.14	.09	.06	.09	.09	.17*	.18*	.15	-.03	-.07
Education	.02	-.03	.04	-.02	.00	.07	.01	.00	.05	.02	-.17*	-.15*
Job tenure	-.03	-.01	.09	.03	.06	.06	.07	-.02	.05	.04	-.13	-.12
SSU	.15	.18	.19	.26*	.43***	.29**	.22*	.30**	.27**	.29**	-.07	-.02
DSU	.32**	.31**	.33**	.24*	.16	.16	.35***	.29**	.25*	.31**	-.16	-.21*
$\Delta R^2$	.19	.21	.24	.21	.31	.18	.28	.31	.23	.31	.05	.05
For supervisory ratings												
Gender	-.03	.01	-.07	-.02	-.01	-.09	-.02	-.06	-.09	-.05	.24**	.18
Age	-.01	-.01	.12	.08	.10	.15	-.05	.12	.14	.09	.04	-.14
Education	.14	-.16*	-.06	-.18*	-.16*	-.06	.13	-.08	-.06	-.13	.14	-.03
Job tenure	.11	.20	.11	.11	.08	.09	.28**	.10	.06	.15	-.08	-.02
SSU	.02	-.14	-.07	-.06	-.08	-.04	.02	-.09	-.01	-.06	-.08	-.14
DSU	.37**	.42***	.28*	.33**	.38***	.28*	.30**	.32**	.20	.37**	-.24*	-.07
$\Delta R^2$	.13	.10	.05	.08	.10	.06	.09	.07	.03	.10	.08	.04

Note. Standardized regression coefficients are presented in the table. Age, education, and tenure in years. Gender (1 = female, 2 = male). I\_Prof = Individual task proficiency, I\_Adap = Individual task adaptivity, I\_Proa = Individual task proactivity, T\_Prof = Team member proficiency, T\_Adap = Team member adaptivity, T\_Proa = Team member proactivity, O\_Prof = Organizational member proficiency, O\_Adap = Organizational member Adaptability, O\_Proa = Organizational member Proactivity, Total = Total Performance. IPD = Interpersonal deviance, OD = Organizational deviance. SSU = Signature strengths Use, DSS = Demanded strengths use. For self-ratings N = 322, and for supervisory ratings N = 152. \* p < .05. \*\* p < .01. \*\*\* p < .001.

The table shows that the overall model explained 18% (in team member proficiency) to 31% variance (in organizational member adaptability and total performance) in self-rated work role performance while 3% (in organizational member proactivity) to 13% variance (in individual task proficiency) in supervisory-rated work role performance. Moreover, the overall model explained a 5% variance in self-rated deviance while 8% and 4% variance in supervisory interpersonal and organizational deviance respectively. All the regression analyses can be reliably interpreted for the prediction of self-rated outcomes from signature strengths use and demanded strengths use [ $F(6, 171) = 15.30, p < .001$  (organizational member adaptability) -  $F(6, 171) = 4.41, p < .001$  (organizational deviance)] and supervisory-rated outcomes [ $F(6, 145) = 4.57, p < .001$  (total performance) -  $F(6, 145) = 2.24, p < .05$  (organizational deviance)] except for organizational proactivity.

Regression analyses yielded that few demographics (that were entered as control variables) predicted the work role performance and deviant behavior. Both kinds of strengths use emerged as predictors of self and supervisory-rated outcomes. Specifically, signature strengths use emerged as a predictor for seven dimensions of self-rated work role performance but not for any supervisory-rated outcomes. For self-ratings, demanded strengths use significantly predicted seven dimensions of work role performance (exception for individual member performance) and organizational deviance. For supervisory ratings, demanded strengths use significantly predicted nine dimensions of work role performance (except for organizational proactivity) and interpersonal deviance.

## 5. Discussion

Our study substantiated the association of character strengths and variants of strengths use (signature strengths use and demanded strengths use) with self and supervisory-rated work role performance and deviant behavior. The main focus was to identify the predictive role of signature strengths use and demanded strengths use for work role performance and deviant behavior. Supervisory ratings of work role performance and deviant behavior were taken along with the self-ratings to reduce common method bias. The study provided initial affirmation from a relatively less-studied and culturally distinct sample from Pakistan. Moreover, it contributes to the existing literature by considering demanded strengths use along with self and supervisory-rated work role performance and deviant behavior. As a whole, the findings showed that both signature strengths use and demanded strengths use matter at work.

Consistent with the expectations and literature, character strengths and strengths use correlated positively with job performance and negatively with deviance (Harzer & Ruch, 2014; Harzer et al., 2017; Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2016; Littman-Ovadia et al., 2017). A study conducted by Harzer et al. (2017) also provides evidence about relational aspects of character strengths and strengths use with job performance but not with deviant behavior (maybe due to Bonferroni correction). The correlational analysis also highlighted the issue of common method bias that is depicted in the inflated correlation of character strengths

and strengths use with self-ratings of work role performance (Doty & Glick, 1998). This might be due to the social desirability effect and length of the scales administered. The researcher tried to minimize common method bias in self-ratings by randomizing items of the measures. Moreover, supervisory ratings were also taken on work role performance and deviance to see the difference. The self-ratings were particularly taken to study the nomological relations between character strengths and outcomes and to identify the pattern of relations (Luthans et al., 2007).

Regression analyses yielded that both signature strengths use as well as demanded strengths use predicted outcomes. Signature strengths use particularly contributed to self-ratings of work role performance only. However, demanded strength use predicted both self and supervisory-rated work role performance and deviance (with few exceptions). The predictive role of signature strengths use in self-rated work role performance supported the fundamental theoretical notion of the VIA framework that strengths are fulfilling in nature (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and needs-supplies fit (Kristof, 1996) that an individual's need to behave consistently with the signature strengths. Signature strengths use appears to be a highly valuable asset for employees as it predicted self-rated job performance in earlier studies (Harzer & Ruch, 2014; Harzer et al., 2017; Littman-Ovadia et al., 2017) with limited evidence regarding supervisory-rated job performance (Harzer & Ruch, 2014). By drawing on self-determination theory, Kong and Ho (2016) examined the role of strength use at work and established that strength use can produce performance benefits. Similarly, Gradito Dubord and Forest (2022) proposed a theoretical framework considering both the strengths-based approach and the deficit correction approach for employee optimal functioning using self-determination theory. Since both approaches attained differential empirical support, they suggested organizations to emphasize on employees' strengths, instead of improving on weaknesses, to advance their functioning at work.

Interestingly, demanded strengths use predicted self and supervisory-rated work role performance and deviance more strongly than signature strengths use. The work environment calls for the display of specific strengths in accordance with the nature of the task. Probably, a supervisor can better identify whether an employee display demanded strength-relevant behavior or not. Thus, the prediction of demanded strengths use is in accordance with demands-abilities-fit (Kristof, 1996).

### *5.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications*

The research about character strengths and strengths use in Pakistan is in its growing phase and needs to be advanced further. Our study provided an initial insight into the role of variants of strengths use for work role performance and deviant behavior and urge researchers and practitioners to further extend it using different research methodologies (Ruch et al., 2020). Recently, a mixed-method study offered encouraging evidence concerning the efficacy of the strengths-based intervention targeting students' well-being in Pakistan's collective society (Green, 2022). These findings point to the likely implication for practice in the work setting as well. Further, our study explored two types of strengths

use as well as taking self and supervisory ratings. Future researchers can build their research on the tenets of this research. The study utilized and explored the demanded strengths use at work that was limitedly explored previously. The present study implicates the meaningful role of demanded strengths use in the employee's behaviors. More specifically, the employees who use their strengths as per the demands of the work environment (demand-ability fit) are even better performers of the organization ultimately. Signature strengths use also plays an important role in self-rated work role performance, however, needs to explore with other work outcomes and in specific work settings. The use of strengths indirectly contributes to the prosperity of the organization.

Practically, organizational psychologists and human resource managers can take insight from the findings. The HR managers can consider the findings even during the selection of employees for a particular job. For instance, an individual's signature strengths use can be identified earlier and cross-checked with the demanded strengths of a job. Those with the matched pairing can be selected for a specific job to reap more benefits for the organization. Moreover, an organization can benefit from this finding and may provide training to their employees for the promotion of strengths use. Employers can even realign the responsibilities of the employees according to their signature strengths in line with the job demands.

### *5.2 Limitations and Future Directions*

The major limitation of this research is the use of a cross-sectional research design which limits causal inferences. Therefore, future researchers should study character strengths and variants of strengths use at work using longitudinal and experimental designs. Moreover, this research collected data from different professions which may limit profession-specific and work domain-specific inferences. Therefore, research can be conducted considering any particular profession. Another limitation was the low response rate of employees due to the supervisor's ratings which may create a non-representative sample. For instance, the low-performer employees may have not given consent to participate in the research or the deviant workers refused after knowing the nature of the research. In the future, researchers should consider different strategies to get a more representative sample.

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