

# Proactive Personality, Employee Creativity, and Newcomer Outcomes: A Longitudinal Study

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## Abstract

**Purpose** To examine the relationship between proactive personality, employee creativity, and newcomer outcomes (i.e., career satisfaction and perceived insider status).

**Design/methodology/approach** A survey was conducted using a 3-wave longitudinal design with 146 Hong Kong Chinese employees from various organizations. Structural equation modeling was used to test the research hypotheses including the mediation effects.

**Findings** Proactive personality was positively associated with employee creativity and employee creativity was positively associated with career satisfaction and perceived insider status. In addition, employee creativity fully mediated the relationships between proactive personality and career satisfaction and perceived insider status.

**Implications** Based on self-reported responses, these data show that newcomers with a proactive personality shape their work environments in part through creative behavior, which in turn leads to feelings of career satisfaction and perceptions of being an organizational insider. Our study's results also show that employee creativity is positively and significantly related to workers' career satisfaction and perceived insider status, suggesting that employee creativity can improve employees' attitudes toward their career

and perceptions as valued and contributing organizational insiders. Future research may examine other possible variables that might mediate the relationship between proactive personality and individual outcomes.

**Originality/value** One of the few studies that have examined the intervening mechanism by which proactive personality leads to employee outcomes and examined the effects of proactive personality on employee outcomes in Asian culture.

**Keywords** Proactive personality · Employee creativity · Career satisfaction · Perceived insider status · Longitudinal study

Proactivity at work is critical for individual and organizational success (Ashford and Black 1996; Crant 2000; Kim et al. 2005). In today's rapidly changing and decentralized environment, managers cannot anticipate all situational contingences in advance and cannot specify behaviors that they expect from organizational members (Van Dyne et al. 2000). Consequently, employees' personal initiative to identify opportunities and anticipate problems can be extremely valuable to organizations (Crant 2000). Consistent with this, researchers have found that proactive personality is associated with beneficial outcomes to individuals and organizations such as career success (Seibert et al. 1999), innovation (Seibert et al. 2001), entrepreneurship (Becherer and Maurer 1999; Crant 1995), job performance (Chan 2006; Thompson 2005), and team effectiveness (Becherer and Maurer 1999).

While it is clear that proactive personality is associated with positive individual and organizational outcomes, there are several important questions unaddressed. For example, proactive research has paid little attention to identifying the intervening mechanisms that link proactive personality to

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distal outcomes (Crant and Bateman 2004). Responding to this gap, we examined how employee creativity mediates the relationship between proactive personality and individual-level outcomes. We chose to focus on creativity as a mediating variable because proactive individuals tend to actively seek opportunities to identify new ways of doing things that can result in innovation and creative outcomes (Seibert et al. 2001). Consistent with this, Emmons (1989) noted that creativity has been theorized to be a critical cognitive process that involves proactive efforts by individuals to attain work outcomes. Furthermore, employee creativity results in beneficial outcomes for those who engage in innovative behaviors (Anderson et al. 2004; Janssen et al. 2004). That is, proactive personality positively influences employee creativity, which in turn makes employees have positive attitudes about their jobs and organizations and achieve high work outcomes. In the present study, we theorized about the role of employee creativity and directly tested whether employee creativity mediates the relationship between proactive personality and employee outcomes.

Another important issue unresolved in proactivity research is the process by which proactive personality is associated with individual outcomes in the context of employees' early career experiences. Newcomers who take an active rather than passive approach toward their new work roles experience a smoother adjustment period and more positive personal outcomes (Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg 2003; Morrison 1993). For example, newcomers who proactively seek information about their jobs experience greater task mastery, role clarity, and social integration than more reactive employees (Morrison 1993). Newcomers' proactivity is also associated with the more proximal outcome of knowledge acquisition (Ashforth et al. 2007). In our research, we build on the results of these studies by examining the extent to which proactive newcomers are more likely to exhibit creative behaviors to facilitate their early-career experiences, in particular their early-stage career satisfaction and perceived insider status.

In the interest of broadening management theory so that it has global (rather than primarily US-based) relevance and offers insights for the effective management of (nationally) diverse workforces, it is important to understand how proactive personality influences employee outcomes outside the United States. Research in a new cultural setting can contribute to assessing the generalizability of proactivity and creativity theories developed in Western settings (Hon and Kim 2007; Kim and Wang 2008; Kim et al. 2005). In addition, research has shown that in Asian cultures, individuals highly value harmony and building good relationships when interacting with other organizational members, and tend to emphasize fitting in with their organizations rather than challenging the status

quo or proactively changing the work environment (Schwartz and Bardi 2001; Triandis 1995). Accordingly, it is possible that proactive personality has different effects in Asian countries than in the United States. Thus, another contribution of the present study is to cross-validate the linkage between proactive personality and employee outcomes in Asian culture, namely Hong Kong.

To summarize, it is important to examine the process by which proactive personality leads to career outcomes for newcomers, and to identify mediating behaviors. Furthermore, it is valuable to examine the causal relationships using a non-American sample. To achieve these ends, we examined the extent to which newcomer creativity mediates the relationship between proactive personality and individual outcomes using a three-wave longitudinal design and a sample from Hong Kong, a region of mainland China.

## Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### Proactive Personality

Proactive personality refers to individuals' disposition toward engaging in active role orientations, such as initiating change and influencing their environment (Bateman and Crant 1993). Proactive people are relatively unconstrained by situational forces, and they identify opportunities, act on them, show initiative, and persevere until meaningful change occurs (Crant 2000). The key differentiating feature of proactive personality and behavior is an active rather than passive approach toward work (Bateman and Crant 1993). Several researchers have examined an array of potential outcomes of proactive personality at work. For example, Crant (1995) examined the criterion validity of the proactive personality scale developed by Bateman and Crant (1993). Using a sample of 131 real estate agents, results indicated that the proactive personality scale explained an additional 8% of the variance in an objective measure of agents' job performance beyond experience, social desirability, general mental ability, and two of the big five personality factors—conscientiousness and extraversion. Parker (1998) found that, using a sample from a glass manufacturing firm, proactive personality was positively and significantly associated with participation in organizational improvement initiatives. Becherer and Maurer (1999) examined the effects of a proactive disposition on entrepreneurial behaviors. Results from a sample of 215 small company presidents suggested that the presidents' level of proactivity was significantly associated with three types of entrepreneurial behaviors: starting versus not starting the business, the number of startups, and the types of ownership. Seibert et al. (2001) tested the effects of proactive personality on such outcomes

as voice, innovation, political knowledge, and career initiative, and found that except for voice, proactive personality significantly affected all the variables, which in turn, affected individuals' career outcomes. Recently, Thompson (2005) examined a mediated model of the relationship between proactive personality and job performance. He found that the relationship between proactive personality and job performance was mediated by network building and initiative taking on the part of the employee.

Taking stock of current proactive personality research, several important issues remain to be addressed. For example, Crant and Bateman (2004) have called for more research showing the intervening mechanisms and underlying processes that link proactive personality to work outcomes. In addition, little research has examined the effect of proactive personality on employee outcomes outside the United States. To address these issues, this study used a sample from Hong Kong to examine (1) the extent to which proactive personality predicts employee creativity, given that creativity is an aspect of proactive behavior which is usually regarded as a process that involves the identification of a problem or opportunity, and the generation of novel ideas or approaches (Amabile 1997; Shalley et al. 2000); and, (2) how employee creativity mediates the relationship between proactive personality and two individual-level outcomes: career satisfaction and perceived insider status using a sample in Hong Kong. The model shown in Fig. 1 summarizes these relationships. Next, we review the logic of the process by which creativity mediates the relationship between proactive personality and career outcomes.

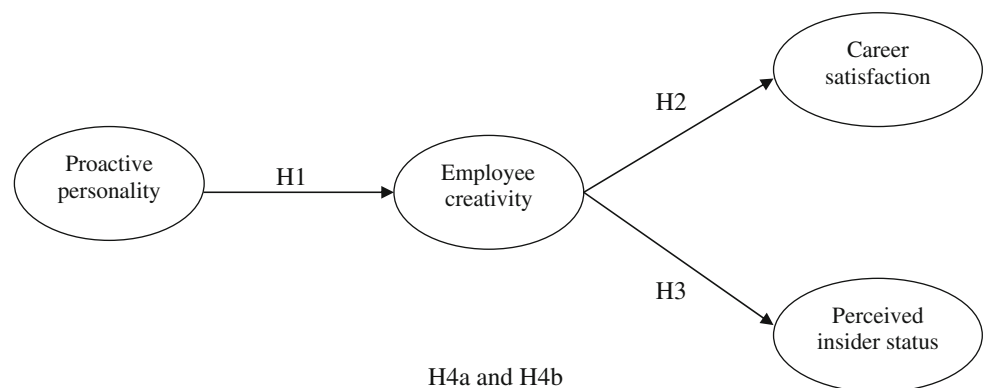
### Proactive Personality and Employee Creativity

Proactive personality is positively associated with employee creativity. Employee creativity refers to the creation of valuable, useful new products, services, ideas, procedures, or processes by individuals working together in a complex social system (Woodman et al. 1993). The

emphasis on generating new ideas reflects an action-based orientation. Employees with proactive personalities actively initiate changes to achieve their goals. A recent model of work role performance identified individual proactive behavior as one of nine core work role behaviors (Griffin et al. 2007). Proactive individuals are especially effective at looking for better ways to do things on the job when given the opportunity to do so. For example, proactive people actively work to manipulate their environment and seek out new information and practices of doing things to improve their performance (Bateman and Crant 1993), and they are motivated to learn new things and develop their talents (Major et al. 2006). In a similar vein, Seibert et al. (1999) showed that proactive people attempt to promote their career prospects. That is, proactive individuals tend to suggest new ways to achieve goals and come up with new ideas to improve performance.

Proactive personality is also associated with felt responsibility for constructive change, or the extent to which one feels personal responsibility for redefining performance by putting in effort to improve situations, develop new procedures, and correct broad problems (Fuller et al. 2006). Proactive people are more likely to tap every opportunity to go beyond normal job expectations (Thompson 2005). As a result, newcomers with a proactive disposition tend to actively seek opportunities to identify new ways to improve their job (Choi and Thompson 2005); usually through updating their knowledge and skills and identifying new work processes. Creativity is a core thread that binds together these different proactive behaviors; they share in common the notion of on-the-job innovation in an effort to create a more hospitable and productive work environment. While such changes are not guaranteed to result in improved conditions, many of the changes initiated by proactive individuals involve the use of creativity. In a similar vein, Seibert et al. (2001) found that proactive personality was positively associated with an individual's innovative behaviors such as developing new ideas and showing innovation in one's job.

**Fig. 1** The proposed structural relationships between proactive personality, employee creativity, career satisfaction, and perceived insider status



The logic behind the above arguments is not culture bound, and thus should be cross-validated across countries. For instance, Li and Gardner (1993) postulated that creativity in the Chinese setting refers to the development of new products, services, procedures, and problem solutions, which is consistent with the Western definition of creativity as representing novelty and usefulness (Amabile 1997; Oldham and Cummings 1996). Also, Chan (2006) demonstrated in a Singaporean sample that a proactive personality is positively associated with attitudinal and behavior work outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance among individuals with high levels of situational judgment effectiveness. Extrapolating from this, we predict that proactive personality can play a similar role in individual and organizational work outcomes in Asian countries or regions such as Hong Kong. Thus, we offer following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1** There is a positive relationship between proactive personality and employee creativity.

#### Employee Creativity, Career Satisfaction, and Perceived Insider Status

As Janssen et al. (2004) noted, employee creativity significantly influences individual outcomes. For example, employee creativity can increase the extent to which new employees are satisfied with their careers. New employees initially lack identification with their jobs and the activities going on around them, and are less likely to understand the contingencies in their environments for their careers. One way to cope with this lack of control and uncertainty is to modify the elements of the work context (Ashford and Black 1996; Caplan 1983). Examples of these behaviors include changing task objectives, task assignments, working methods, procedures, job design, allocation and coordination of tasks, and interpersonal communication (Janssen et al. 2004). That is, employee creativity can provide new employees with effective coping strategies for improving their job environments, which will influence affective behaviors. Consistent with this, Zhou and George (2001) found that employees' creative action can reduce levels of job dissatisfaction by changing their current work situations and by coming up with new and better ways of doing things. Seibert et al. (1999) also showed that innovative behavior is positively related to employees' career success. Thus, employees who create a useful and new idea, procedure, or process by working together in a complex social system receive greater career satisfaction because they create and influence the situations in which they work. Moreover, when new employees' creative behavior positively influences fellow employees and work

procedures, they experience satisfaction with their jobs and careers. Creative action can help new employees adapt effectively to their jobs, leading to greater career satisfaction (West and Farr 1989). Thus, employee creativity is associated with a sense of career satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 2** There is a positive relationship between employee creativity and newcomers' career satisfaction.

Employee creativity will also be associated with newcomers' perceived insider status. Perceived insider status captures the extent to which employees believe that they are insiders (rather than outsiders) within a particular organization (Stamper and Masterson 2002). The distinction between insider and outsider employees has been used to understand employment relationships, labor efficiencies, and competitive advantages (Pfeffer and Baron 1988). Insider status is in part a function of the extent to which someone perceives that they are making positive contributions to the workplace. For example, full-time employees are more likely to perceive themselves as insiders than are part-time employees (Stamper and Van Dyne 2001) because full-time employees generally receive more benefits, training, and promotion opportunities from organizations than part-time employees, and should then feel obligated to contribute more work and effort to the organization based on social exchange relationships (Blau 1964). This inducement-contribution cycle can make full-time employees feel more accepted within their work organization.

In part because employee creativity is associated with perceived contributions, it will also be associated with perceived insider status. People who are creative at work will experience positive feelings about their contributions to the organization, and their creative ideas will affect their social status and social networks. According to personal control theory (Greenberger and Strasser 1986), employees who produce creative performance at work gain a high degree of control in their jobs and demonstrate their creative abilities and skills to others. Demonstrating creative skills and abilities positively influences individuals' feelings as valuable members of the organization, enhancing their perceptions as organizational insiders. In addition, employee creativity is highly valued by organizations because it is important for organizations to survive and to have long-term effectiveness (Amabile et al. 1996; George and Zhou 2001; Oldham and Cummings 1996). Thus, organizations will offer more rewards and inducements (e.g., training and promotions) to creative employees who can contribute more creative activities. These special inducements will enhance the creative employees' perceptions of themselves as valuable (rather than expendable) members of the organization (Stamper and Masterson 2002). Hence, we predicted the following:

**Hypothesis 3** There is a positive relationship between employee creativity and newcomers' perceived insider status.

Cumulatively, the above predictions indicate mediation, such that proactive personality influences employee creativity, which in turn positively affects career satisfaction (Hypothesis 4a) and perceived insider status (Hypothesis 4b). The mediating model representing the hypotheses is displayed in Fig. 1.

## Method

### Sample and General Procedure

The total sample consisted of 146 Hong Kong employees who were working in various organizations and completed a 3-wave survey. Fifty-five percent were male. Their average age was 22.19 (SD = 1.13), and 93% were full-time employees and 7% were part-time employees. The respondents were employed in various sectors: finance (29.9%), service (13.4%), information technology (12.9%), manufacturing (6.0%), education (10.0%), and others (27.8%).

At time 1, we distributed 436 surveys to senior undergraduate students at a university in Hong Kong. The participants received a survey packet that contained the measures of proactive personality and social desirability. A total of 319 questionnaires were returned (73.2% response rate). At time 2, ~6 months later (3 months after they graduated and started to work in an organization), the second survey was distributed to those who responded to the first survey by mail. The second survey contained the measure of employee creativity. Of the 319 participants who completed the first survey, 201 returned the second survey (63.0% response rate). At time 3, again ~6 months later, a third survey was distributed to 201 employees who responded to the second survey by mail. The third survey contained the measures of career satisfaction and perceived insider status. Code numbers were used to match time 1, time 2, and time 3 surveys, and to assure the confidentiality of participant responses. Of the 201 participants who completed the second survey, 150 returned the third survey (74.6% response rate). Four cases were dropped due to incomplete responses, yielding a total of 146 useful responses. All respondents in each wave of data collection were provided with a financial incentive in the form of a gift coupon to encourage participation. The surveys were initially written in English and then were translated into Chinese, in accordance with Brislin's (1986) back-translation procedure. All translators were blind to the study's hypotheses, and two bilinguals independently translated the survey from English to Chinese and back again.

### Measures

Except for the demographic variables and control variable, all of the variables in this study were assessed on a seven-point Likert scale (where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*).

#### *Proactive Personality*

We used Seibert et al. (1999) 10-item version of Bateman and Crant's (1993) scale to measure proactive personality at time 1. Example items include "I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life," "I can spot a good opportunity long before others can," and "If I see something I don't like, I fix it."

#### *Employee Creativity*

We measured creativity at time 2 using Zhou and George's (2001) 13-item scale, which is commonly used to measure employee creativity (George and Zhou 2007; Shin and Zhou 2003). Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which they agree that each of the 13 behaviors characterize their work behaviors. Example items include "Suggests new ways to achieve goals or objectives," "Searches out new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas," and "Comes up with new and practical ideas to improve performance."

#### *Career Satisfaction*

Career satisfaction was measured with Greenhaus et al. (1990) five item scale at time 3. Example items include "I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career" and "I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals."

#### *Perceived Insider Status*

We assessed the respondents' perceived insider status at time 3 using Stamper and Masterson's (2002) 10-item scale. Example items include "I feel very much a part of my work organization" and "My work organization makes me believe that I am included in it."

#### *Control Variables*

We controlled for potential social desirability bias in the reporting of career satisfaction and perceived insider status by using Marlowe-Crowne's 10-item scale to measure social desirability (Strahan and Gerbasi 1972). Specifically, we asked the respondents to decide whether the statements concerning personal attitudes and traits are true or false as

they pertain to them personally. Example items are “I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable” and “When I don’t know something, I don’t at all mind admitting it.” For each answer the respondent provides that indicates a socially desirable response, a value of 1 is assigned. For each discordant response, a value of 0 is assigned. Thus, the total score can range from 0 (when no responses “match”) to 10 (when all responses “match”). We constrained the loadings of social desirability to be equal across all indicators of predictor and criterion variables in the model, consistent with Williams and Anderson (1994).

## Analyses

We tested the theoretical model in Fig. 1 with structural equation modeling using AMOS 6.0. Since there are computational limitations for a structural equation analysis involving too many indicators, we used three-item parcels for each construct to reduce the number of indicators consistent with other researchers (e.g., Hui et al. 1999; Ilies et al. 2006). Specifically, we combined the items with the highest and the lowest loading by averaging them until we yielded three aggregated items. We evaluated model fit using the chi-square statistic, the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and the root-mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Researchers suggest that levels of .90 or higher for GFI, CFI, and TLI, and levels of .08 or lower for RMSEA indicate that a model fits the data appropriately (Hu and Bentler 1999; Lance et al. 2007). Then we tested the research hypotheses by examining whether each structural path is statistically significant or not. In addition, we tested the mediation effects of employee creativity on the relationship between proactive personality and perceived insider status and career satisfaction using a chi-square difference test (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Hui et al. 1999). Specifically, we compared the mediated model (as illustrated in Fig. 1) to a full model which included the direct effects. Then we tested whether the  $\chi^2$  difference between the two models is significant or not. A non-significant  $\chi^2$  difference indicates a full mediation effect (Hui et al. 1999).

## Results

To assess the discriminant validity of the measures, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFA). The results of the CFA confirmed our hypothesized four-factor structure. The Chi-square statistic for this four-factor model ( $\chi^2(48) = 52.78, p < .01$ ) was significantly lower than those

for both the null model ( $\chi^2(66) = 919.170, p < .01$ ) and a one-factor model where all items loaded on a single construct ( $\chi^2(54) = 451.65, p < .01$ ). In addition, other fit indices also showed that the four-factor model (RMSEA = .02; GFI = .96; CFI = .99; TLI = .99) better fit the data compared to the one-factor model (RMSEA = .19; GFI = .70; CFI = .53; TLI = .43). As expected, each item loads on its hypothesized factor with large and significant loadings, and each construct extracts a variance that is larger than the highest variance it shares with any other construct, thus providing support for discriminant validity.

Descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and correlations for all measures are reported in Table 1. As can be seen in Table 1, the reliabilities of all the variables are acceptable (i.e.,  $\alpha$  varies from .74 to .94). As expected, employee creativity was positively correlated with career satisfaction ( $r = .38, p < .01$ ) and perceived insider status ( $r = .30, p < .01$ ), suggesting that new employees who demonstrate higher (rather than lower) creative performance are more likely to be satisfied with their careers and are more likely to perceive themselves as organizational insiders rather than outsiders.

To test the Hypotheses, we conducted structural equation analysis of the relationships among proactive personality, creativity, career satisfaction, and perceived insider status, as shown in Fig. 1 (i.e., Model 1). Model 1 represents the predicted mediating model. We drew paths from proactive personality to employee creativity and from creativity to the two work outcomes (career satisfaction and perceived insider status). As shown in Table 2, Model 1 represented a good fit to the data, indicating that the observed covariance matrix reasonably fit the hypothesized model ( $\chi^2(62) = 100.28, p < .01, GFI = .93, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .06$ ).

**Table 1** Means, standard deviations and correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Social desirability	6.13	1.14	(.77)	–	–	–	–
2. Proactive personality	4.83	.64	.09	(.81)	–	–	–
3. Employee creativity	4.14	1.04	.07	.36**	(.94)	–	–
4. Career satisfaction	4.02	1.22	.14	.17*	.38**	(.88)	–
5. Perceived insider status	4.04	.75	.03	.23**	.30**	.57**	(.74)

Note: ( $N = 146$ ). Reliabilities are in parentheses

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

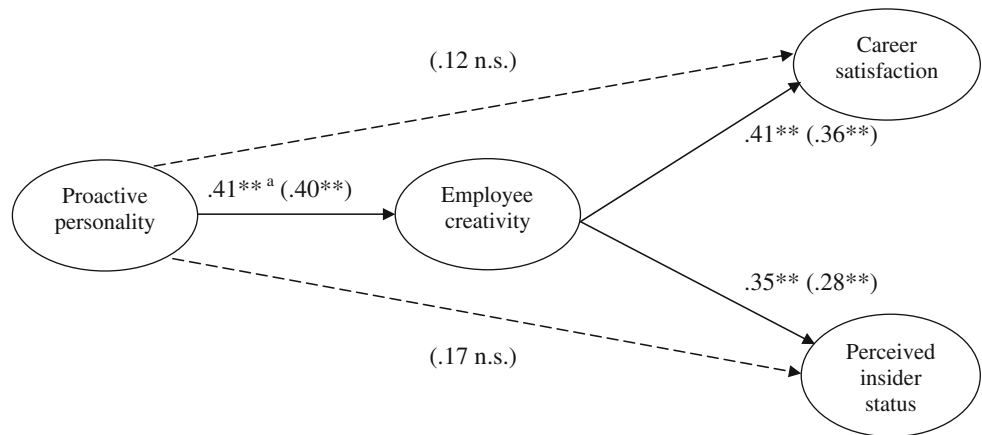
**Table 2** Comparison of structural equation models

Model and structure	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	TLI
Model 1 <sup>a</sup> : Proactive personality → creativity → career satisfaction + perceived insider status (including social desirability as controlled variable)	100.28*	62	–	.06	.93	.95	.94
Model 2: Proactive personality → creativity → career satisfaction + perceived insider status (additional line: proactive personality → career satisfaction + perceived insider status; including social desirability as controlled variable)	97.24*	60	3.04	.06	.93	.96	.94

<sup>a</sup> Baseline model

\*  $p < .01$

**Fig. 2** Estimated path coefficients of the structural model. <sup>a</sup>These numbers represent the beta coefficients for model 1. The beta coefficients for model 2 are in parentheses



Hypothesis 1 predicted that proactive personality would be positively associated with employee creativity. The significant parameter estimate is consistent with this, as shown in Fig. 2 ( $\beta = .41, p < .01, d = .90$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that employee creativity would be positively associated with newcomers’ career satisfaction. As shown in Fig. 2, creativity was positively and significantly related to career satisfaction ( $\beta = .41, p < .01, d = .90$ ), supporting hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that employee creativity would be positively associated with newcomers’ perceived insider status. The parameter estimate displayed in Fig. 2 indicates that creativity was positively and significantly related to perceived insider status ( $\beta = .35, p < .01, d = .75$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Because we found that employee creativity fully mediated the relationships between proactive personality and career satisfaction (Hypothesis 4a) and perceived insider status (Hypothesis 4b), we next compared the hypothesized model to a second model which included two additional direct paths, from proactive personality to career satisfaction and perceived insider status. Consistent with Model 1,

social desirability was included to partial out potential common method effects, and the loadings of social desirability were again constrained to be equal across all indicators of predictor and criterion variables. As shown in Table 2, the difference in chi-square between Model 1 and Model 2 was not significant (i.e.,  $\Delta\chi^2 = 3.04, df = 2, ns$ ), and the other fit indices were unaffected by including the additional two paths in the model (RMSEA = .06, GFI = .93, CFI = .96, TLI = .94). When two competing models yield similar results, the more parsimonious model should be accepted (Kelloway 1998). Along with the significant correlations between proactive personality and the two newcomer outcomes, these results suggest that employee creativity fully mediates the relationship between proactive personality and career satisfaction, and perceived insider status, supporting Hypothesis 4a and 4b.

**Discussion**

The central theme of the current study is to examine the indirect effects of a proactive personality on career satisfaction and perceived insider status, and to determine the

process by which newcomer creativity mediates these relationships. Our findings provide several important theoretical implications. First, we found that the extent to which new employees possess a proactive personality was associated with their creativity. Proactive personality has been linked to a number of desirable personal and organizational outcomes, and our findings provide evidence that employee creativity should be added to the positive correlates of a proactive disposition.

Most fundamentally, our study's results extend current proactive personality literature by addressing the underlying process by which proactive personality ultimately manifests itself in individual outcomes. Personality affects outcomes through mediating processes and mechanisms, and identifying these underlying structures has been posited as a desirable next step for moving the proactive personality literature forward (Crant and Bateman 2004; Seibert et al. 1999). The pattern of results were consistent with a full mediation model such that employee creativity mediates the relationship between proactive personality and both career satisfaction and perceived insider status. These results suggest that newcomers with a proactive personality shape their work environments in part through creative behavior, which in turn leads to feelings of career satisfaction and perceptions of being an organizational insider.

Most employee creativity research focuses on identifying its antecedents rather than its consequences. While creativity is valuable in and of itself, it is reasonable to assume that creativity also is associated with other individual and organizational outcomes. Given the scarcity of research on the consequences of employee creativity, perhaps the most noteworthy of our findings is that employee creativity is significantly associated with two individual outcomes in organizations. Our study's results show that employee creativity is positively and significantly related to workers' career satisfaction and perceived insider status, suggesting that employee creativity can improve employees' attitudes toward their career and perceptions as valued and contributing organizational insiders. These results support and extend prior researchers' argument that employee creativity is beneficial to both individuals and organizations (e.g., Amabile et al. 1996; Oldham and Cummings 1996; Shalley et al. 2000).

Another important result from this study is concerned with how proactive personality affects perceived insider status. As expected, proactive personality was positively associated with new employees' perceived insider status. This result suggests that newcomers with a proactive personality can adapt and understand their new environmental expectations quickly, resulting in the development of perceived feelings as insiders in their organizations. This finding extends current employee-organizational

relationships literature (Masterson et al. 2000; Settoon et al. 1996) by examining the effects of personality on perceived organizational membership. Moreover, this result is also consistent with Bateman and Crant's (1993) argument that a proactive personality broadly predicts a number of criterion variables.

It is noteworthy that we conducted this research in the context of a non-western culture. Almost all extant proactive personality research has been based on US samples, and one contribution of our research is to show that proactive personality is associated with desirable processes and outcomes in a non-western culture. Specifically, we found that new employees with a high proactive personality exhibited a high creative performance in Hong Kong. Our finding suggests that Seibert et al.'s (2001) results can be generalized to cultures outside of the United States. Specifically, our replication occurred in an international context where the country's prevailing social norms and expectations were quite different from Seibert et al.'s investigation of US organizations.

This study also offers some practical implications. For example, organizations that wish to emphasize creativity and innovation can be more successful if they attract people who have proactive personalities. Research suggests that employee creativity is a prerequisite to organizational innovation (e.g., Amabile 1997; Scott and Bruce 1994; Zhou and George 2001). As Schneider (1987) notes, the people make the place: the kinds of people in organizations are the fundamental determinants of how the organizations behave. As a result, for organizations to be effective in part through the creativity of their employees, they need to attract proactive individuals. However, in order to do so, organizations should create an organizational culture which values creativity since people prefer environments that have the same "personality" profile as they do (Schneider 1987). Organizations might consider reviewing selection procedures with an eye toward identifying and hiring more proactive employees.

Like all studies, this research has some limitations. Since we measured all variables through self-report surveys, there is the potential for inflated inter-item correlations due to common method variance. We took several steps to minimize its impact and to ensure that our findings had meaning despite the potential for common method variance. For example, we used a three-wave longitudinal design, as Podsakoff et al. (2003) recommended. In addition, we measured social desirability to partial out its effect on the predictor and criterion variables in controlling the common method variance problem due to social desirability. Moreover, as a possible test of method bias effects, a statistical test was conducted using the procedure recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003). The CFA model reported in the result was re-estimated with all



the indicator variables loading on a general method factor. Although the model fit was slightly improved, none of the individual path coefficients corresponding to relationships between the indicators and the general method factor was significant. Thus, while method bias may be present, it should not significantly affect results or conclusions (Spector and Brannick 1995). Nevertheless, future research should replicate our core findings using multiple data sources. Future research might also include additional personal characteristics (i.e., conscientiousness, openness to experience, general mental ability and achievement motivation) that might predict creativity.

A second limitation is that employee creativity was measured by self-assessment. However, as Janssen (2001) argued, employees' self ratings of innovative job performance may be better than supervisors' ratings. For instance, employees' reports of their own creativity may be more nuanced than those of their supervisors because employees are more aware of contextual information affecting performance. Likewise, supervisors may not be aware of the various innovative activities of their employees. Nevertheless, the use of self-reports assumes that: (1) respondents have the ability to engage in accurate introspection about their creativity, and (2) respondents are willing to report those accurate introspections. Thus, future research needs to use more objective indices of creativity such as supervisory or peer evaluations and publications, patterns or number of suggestions, and basic laboratory studies (cf. Audia and Goncalo 2007).

Finally, there are several limitations regarding the characteristics of the data used in this study. For example, given that our respondents (newcomers) have limited work experience, the generalizability of the results may be limited. Thus, future studies need to confirm the findings in this study with longer-tenured employees. In addition, the respondents may have differed significantly from non-respondents. However, given that our response rate was reasonably high (i.e., 73.5%, 63.0%, and 74.6% for time 1, time 2, and time 3, respectively), and there was no significant gender difference between respondents and non-respondents across the three points in time, the data should not have a serious problem in this regard. Also, the sample size ( $N = 146$ ) is relatively small, which might affect our ability to find strong fit between our data and the alternative, partial mediation model. Future studies need to validate current findings using a larger sample. Future research also needs to explore the measurement equivalence of the proactive personality measure and the other measures used in our study across countries. The structural (i.e., mediational) findings are more useful in drawing inferences when the measures are shown to be equivalent across countries.

These limitations notwithstanding, the present study provides insight about the process by which proactive personality influences individual outcomes. Through a three-wave longitudinal design, we showed that proactive employees are more likely to be creative and develop novel ideas in the workplace. Newcomers who exhibit greater creative performance are, in turn, more likely to hold positive work attitudes in terms of career satisfaction and perceived insider status. Although we presented theoretical arguments and statistical evidence supporting employee creativity as a mediator, the causal mechanisms by which proactive personality results in positive outcomes through creativity should be interpreted with caution. Future research should examine other variables that might mediate the relationship between proactive personality and individual outcomes. Potential mediating variables include building a social network (cf., Becherer and Maurer 1999), active career planning (Seibert et al. 1999, 2001), and personal initiative (Parker 1998). Moreover, it would be fruitful to explore the process by which proactive personality influences other individual and organizational outcomes through employee creativity, such as job performance and entrepreneurship. Finally, future research may examine additional cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes of employee creativity at both individual and team levels, and identify the circumstances under which these relationships become stronger or weaker.

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