VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

SHADING A FRESH LIGHT ON PROACTIVITY RESEARCH

Examining when and how proactive behaviors benefit individuals and their employing organizations

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Table of Content

Overview of Tables p.7

Overview of Figures p.8

Chapter 1. Introduction p.9
- The definition of proactivity p.11
- Operationalization of Individual and Organizational Consequences of Proactivity p.12
- Which Employees Engage in Proactivity? The Predictors Age and Ambition p.13
- Research Problems and Questions p.14
- Thesis Outline and Research Approach p.17
- Presentations and Publications p.21

Chapter 2. Individual and contextual predictors of workplace proactivity: What do we know now and where do we go from here? p.23
- Introduction p.24
- Methodology p.26
- Literature Review p.29
- Discussion and Implications for Future Research p.50

Chapter 3. Money talks: The influence of compensation on employees’ taking charge behavior and career satisfaction p.56
- Introduction p.57
- Theoretical Background p.60
  - Employee ambition and career satisfaction: The mediating role of taking charge behavior p.60
  - The impact of low compensation on taking charge behavior and career satisfaction for employees with higher levels of ambition p.63
- Methods p.65
  - Sample and Procedure p.65
  - Measures p.67
  - Statistical Analysis p.68
- Results p.69
Discussion

Study limitations and recommendations for future research

Implications for Organizational Practice

Chapter 4. The Organizational Consequences of Ambitious Employees’
Taking Charge and Networking Behaviors

Introduction

Theory and Hypothesis Development

Ambitious Employees’ Taking Charge Behavior at Work

Ambitious Employees’ Networking Behavior to Enhance their Career

Taking Charge Behavior as a Mediator in the Relationship between Employees’ Ambitions and their Contributions to Organizational Capabilities

Networking as a Mediator in the Relationship between Employees’ Ambitions and their Contribution to Organizational Connections

Methods

Sample and Procedure

Measures

Statistical Analysis

Results

Direct Links of the Research Model

Mediation Effects of the Research Model: Bootstrapping Analysis Results

Discussion

Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Chapter 5. The Effects of Age on Job Crafting: Exploring the Motivations and Behavior of Younger and Older Employees in Job Crafting

Introduction

Job Crafting Model: A Brief Review

Age and Motivations for Job Crafting

Age and Job Crafting Behaviors

Age and Task Crafting

Age and Relational Crafting
Overview of Tables

Table 1.1 Summary of methodology used in chapters p.20
Table 1.2 Overview of research output p.21
Table 2.1 Overview of key words used in search strings p.29
Table 2.2. Definitions and examples of Proactivity on Individual, Team and Organization-Level. p.31
Table 2.3 Types of Individual Member Proactivity p.32
Table 2.4 Types of Team Member Proactivity p.33
Table 2.5 Types of Organization Member Proactivity p.33
Table 2.6 Articles addressing individual-level predictors of workplace proactivity p.38
Table 2.7 Articles addressing contextual predictors of workplace proactivity p.45
Table 2.8 Articles addressing the effect of the interaction between individual-level and contextual predictors on individual member proactivity p.48
Table 2.9 Articles addressing the moderation and mediation effects of individual-level predictors in the link between contextual predictors and individual member proactivity p.49
Table 2.10 Articles addressing the joint moderation effect of individual-level and contextual variables on individual member proactivity p.50
Table 3.1 Overview of job positions p.66
Table 3.2 Overview of job fields p.67
Table 3.3 Descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables p.69
Table 3.4 Results of the regression analyses for direct relationships p.70
Table 3.5 Mediation results with bootstrapping p.71
Table 3.6 Results of the regression analyses for moderating effect p.72
Table 3.7 Moderation/mediation results with bootstrapping p.74
Table 4.1 Overview of job positions p.87
Table 4.2 Overview of job fields p.88
Table 4.3 Descriptive statistics and correlation among the study variables p.91
Table 4.4 Results for direct relationships p.93
Table 4.5 Mediation results with bootstrapping: Model 1 p.95
Table 4.6 Mediation results with bootstrapping: Model 2 p.96
Table 4.7 Mediation results with bootstrapping: Model 3 p.97
Table 5.1 Evidence of differences in job crafting behaviors of older and younger employees p.122
Table 6.1 Overview of main contributions per chapter p.142

Overview of Figures

Figure 1A. Research Framework p.20
Figure 3A: Research Model p.60
Figure 3B: Effect of Compensation (T1) by Employee Ambition (T1) on Taking Charge (T2) p.73
Figure 4A: Research model p.86
Chapter 1

Introduction

Scholarly research on workplace proactivity is expanding and turning in new directions. No longer is proactivity solely considered to be a work action targeted at improving the work environment or the organization (Tornau & Frese, 2013). Rather, the concept is also used to understand how individuals engage in managing their careers (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015). Consequently, two separate discourses exist that focus on discussing the consequences of proactive behavior. On the one hand, proactive actions targeted towards improving organizations are discussed in terms of organizational outcomes (e.g., Lam & Mayer, 2014; Frese, Krauss, Keith, Escher, Grabarkiewicz, Luneng, Heers, Unger & Friedrich, 2007). On the other hand, proactive actions targeted towards self-managing careers are linked and discussed with individual-level outcomes (i.e., career self-management research) (e.g., Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015; De Vos, De Clippeleer, & DeWilde, 2009). As a result, contemporary proactivity research is left with a disconnection between the two separate research streams.

This disconnection is especially problematic because it shows that both research streams neglect the interdependency that exists between individuals and their employing organizations. Any type of work action or behavior, whether aimed at achieving individual goals or organizational goals, will directly or indirectly influence the person and his/her work environment or organization (Khapova & Arthur, 2011). Thus, integrating both research streams and studying the individual and organizational consequences of proactive work and career behaviors provides opportunities to gain a more accurate and realistic understanding of contemporary proactive work and career behavior. The former is especially important because there exists a great deal of research on the benefits of proactivity for both individuals and organizations (Parker, Williams & Turner, 2006; Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010). However, these consequences are assumed to be fostered solely by either proactive work
behaviors (i.e., fostering organizational outcomes) or proactive career behaviors (i.e., fostering individual outcomes). Thus, we know little about whether the same proactive work and career behaviors foster both organizational and individual consequences. In other words, we know little about the multi-functionality of proactive career and work behaviors.

Additionally, from a practical point of view, it is important to address this research shortcoming. A contemporary trend in the Dutch labor market is the increase of the number of flexible employees who work temporarily for different employers (Freese, 2014). Because these employees are most likely less committed to their employers (i.e., compared to the group of permanent employees), they could be solely concerned with fulfilling and achieving personal career and work goals. Therefore, HR practitioners have stressed the importance of understanding how flexible employees are still able and willing to contribute to the success of organizations (Freese, 2014).

In my dissertation, I seek to address the abovementioned research gap by examining how both types of proactive behaviors—that is, career and work proactive behaviors—influence both individual and organizational outcomes. By doing so, I use proactive behaviors to investigate the process through which employees’ proactive work and career behaviors influence individual and/or organizational-related outcomes (i.e., intervening variables) (e.g., Hwang et al., 2015; Belschak & Den Hartog, 2010). With this work, I contribute to the proactivity literature by integrating the two disconnected dominant research streams in the extant proactivity research. I also benefit practitioners by demonstrating that employees can engage in proactive work behaviors for personal purposes and simultaneously contribute to organizations (i.e., through their behavior). Moreover, I specify the types of work behaviors that are beneficial for employees and organizations so that HR practitioners can stimulate flexible employees to engage in those behaviors. In the remainder of this chapter, I describe and define the key concepts used in my research studies, and I discuss my research approach.
The definition of proactivity

Proactivity refers to “anticipatory actions and/or behaviors that employees take to impact themselves and/or their environments” (Grant & Ashford, 2008, p. 4). These behaviors are characterized as 1) goal driven and determined by an individual’s particular target (Hwang, Han, & Chui, 2015), 2) change-oriented and 3) voluntarily carried out by employees (Ghitulescu, 2013). The abovementioned research streams have paid substantial attention to generating and defining different proactivity concepts. For instance, taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999), personal initiative (Frese & Fay, 2001) and voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998) are types of proactive behaviors that are conceptualized as being targeted towards influencing one’s work or organizational outcomes. Proactive behaviors such as career planning, skill development and networking are instead conceptualized as proactive career behaviors and are considered to influence individual outcomes (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015).

In this dissertation, I focus on the proactive work and career behaviors that meet all three characteristics described above, which are pertinent to all employees. Therefore, I do not focus on those proactive behaviors that are generated for specific employee types such as newcomers (e.g., Kammeyer-Mueller, Livingston & Liao, 2010). Specifically, I include in my research the following proactive behaviors: taking charge, networking and job crafting. Additionally, in one of my chapters, I have conducted a systematic literature review in which I include other proactivity constructs (e.g., voice, personal initiative, feedback seeking and knowledge sharing), which are conceptualized to function on both the team and the organizational level (i.e., team and organization member proactivity). The definitions of all proactivity constructs are specified in detail in chapters, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this dissertation.
Operationalization of Individual and Organizational Consequences of Proactivity

Individual Consequences

As I stated earlier, the individual-level outcomes of proactivity are discussed in extant research in terms of career-related outcomes (e.g., Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015; De Vos, De Clippeleer & DeWilde, 2009). Career has been defined as an “unfolding sequence of a person’s work experiences over time” (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005 p.178). The success of this unfolding sequence of work experiences is dependent upon the accomplishment of personal career goals (Seibert, Crant & Kramer, 1999). More specifically, career success is understood as the “accomplishment of desirable work-related outcomes at any point in a person’s work experience over time” (Arthur et al., 2005 p.179). In the literature, career success is divided into two dimensions: objective and subjective career success. Objective career success refers to more tangible measures of success such as promotions, rank and salary level. Subjective career success stems from an individual’s perception of success and is commonly assessed with job satisfaction or career satisfaction (Ballout, 2007; Fuller & Marler, 2009). In this dissertation, I consider career satisfaction to be one of those individual consequences of employees’ proactive behaviors because research shows that employees may play an active role in contributing to career satisfaction development or change over time (Seibert et al., 1999; Joo & Ready, 2012).

Organizational Consequences

Quinn’s (1992) model of organizational core competencies, namely, culture, capabilities, and connections, offers a helpful framework for understanding the contributions of employees’ proactive behaviors to organizations. According to Quinn (1992), culture represents an organization’s purpose, mission, and core values. Capabilities involve the knowledge and skills embodied in organizational activities. Connections involve the suppliers, customers,
alliance partners, and other external contacts of organizations. Since its inception, the model has been widely used by strategic and management scholars to connect individual and organizational resources (e.g., DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Glynn, 1996; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Nonaka & Toyama, 2003). These studies have shown that employees shape organizations by bringing their work values and motivations to the workplace (e.g., Gratton, 2007). Employees also reinforce an organization’s knowledge and capability base by bringing in externally acquired knowledge (e.g., Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). Moreover, employees contribute to their organization’s business contacts by bringing their personal and professional network into the work environment (Dahl & Pedersen, 2004). In this dissertation, organizational consequences are captured by the two organizational core competencies, capabilities and connections, and I suggest that employees contribute to these core competencies by engaging in proactive work and career behaviors.

Which Employees Engage in Proactivity? The Predictors Age and Ambition

As previously argued, proactivity has received much attention in academic work. Hence, a great deal of research exists that has examined predictors of proactive behaviors (e.g., Belschak & Den Hartog, 2010; Bjørkelo, Einarsen & Matthiesen, 2010; Burnett, Chiaburu, Shapiro, & Li, 2013). Although the majority of these studies focus especially on individual-level predictors (Ghitulescu, 2013), there are still two specific individual-level variables that have received little attention in proactivity research.

The first variable I refer to is age. This variable has been investigated in relation to several performance dimensions such as core task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, counterproductive work behaviors (Ng & Feldman, 2008) and innovation-related behaviors (Ng & Feldman, 2013). Given the mixed results that have been found in these research studies, Ng and Feldman (2008) have especially called for more research investigating the effects of age across a broader array of performance dimensions. In this
thesis, I answer to this call by investigating how age influences the proactive behavior *job crafting*. This is important to study as the mean age of the workforce is rising in most industrial countries, and there is a greater number of older workers present in contemporary workforces (Toossi, 2009). Thus, an understanding of the effects of age will help us to better understand how proactivity takes place on an individual level in the contemporary workforce, that is, whether and how older and younger employees engage in proactive behavior *job crafting*.

The second variable I refer to is the personality trait ambition. Personality factors are being increasingly taken into account to explain how individual characteristics shape work behaviors (Bipp & Demerouti, 2014). A recent meta-analysis by Tornau and Frese (2013) shows that in the past two decades, proactivity scholars have especially focused on examining how the Big Five personality factors influence proactivity. Particularly, conscientiousness and extraversion have been found to be positively related to proactivity (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). A closer examination of one of the variables, extraversion, has been given in several research studies. Hence, the latter construct has been divided into different facets such as ambition and sociability (DeYoung, Quilty, & Peterson, 2007; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). Scholars argue that ambition in particular drives the desire to create change in the workplace (Huang, Ryan, Zabel & Palmer, 2014). Yet, few scholars have made efforts to link ambition with the different types of proactive behaviors to examine its influence on individual and organizational outcomes. In my dissertation, I provide evidence that ambitious employees indeed engage in proactive work and career behaviors, which in turn positively influences individual and organizational outcomes.

**Research Problems and Questions**

As previously mentioned, this dissertation focuses on examining the individual and organizational consequences of employees’ proactive work and career behaviors. Proactivity
research considers that individuals engage in certain proactive career behaviors to benefit themselves (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015; De Vos et al., 2009) or engage in proactive work behaviors to benefit organizations (Lam & Mayer, 2014; Frese et al., 2007). I integrate both research streams and argue that both types of proactive behavior influence the individual and his or her employing organization. To achieve my research goal, I have established five research questions and four research objectives as a guide for this thesis.

First and foremost, I decided to start my research by conducting a systematic literature review to understand proactivity in all its complexity and potential. Earlier proactivity research emphasized an actor-centered approach by focusing on individuals and their stable differences in personality (e.g., Crant, 2000; Bateman & Crant, 1993). This initial focus has been extended to include temporary states as predictors of proactivity (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli & Hetland, 2012) and also team members (LePine & van Dyne, 1998) and organization members (Strauss, Griffin & Rafferty, 2009) as proactive actors. Furthermore, several studies have stressed the importance of the influence of contextual factors on proactivity (e.g., Ohly & Fritz, 2010; Ghitulescu, 2013; Belschak & den Hartog, 2010) and the effects from the interplay between individual and contextual factors (e.g., Grant & Rothbard, 2013; Frazier & Fainshmidt, 2012) on proactivity at the individual, team and organizational levels (Hauschildt & Konradt, 2012; Belschak & den Hartog, 2010). Indeed, this argument has been reiterated more recently by Chiaburu, Smith, Wang and Zimmerman (2014) in their call for a more comprehensive understanding of the factors predicting proactivity at different organizational levels. Hence, to respond to this recent research call and to better understand how proactivity takes place in organizations, I sought to gain understanding of the interplay among individual and contextual determinants of proactivity on the individual, team and organizational levels. My first research objective is to answer the following question: What do we know about individual-level and contextual predictors of workplace proactivity on
individual, team and organizational levels, and what it is that we still need to know in order to refine extant workplace proactivity theory?

The systematic literature review demonstrates that in some cases, the interplay between individual-level variables and contextual factors is detrimental to individual proactivity. To gain further insight into this problematic issue, I decided to focus my second research objective on the organizational factors (i.e., HR management tools such as compensation) that hinder individual proactivity. Additionally, I have examined how the latter relationship influences the individual-level outcome career satisfaction. This objective is in line with a recent study that calls for more research identifying organizational factors that inhibit proactivity and its individual outcome career satisfaction (Ng & Feldman, 2014) rather than focusing on those factors that foster it (e.g., Abele & Spurk, 2009; Aryee, Chay & Tan, 1994). By doing so, I link the personality trait ambition solely with taking charge behavior because this type of proactive behavior has been found to positively influence career success (Fuller & Marler, 2009). Following this, I employ two research questions in my second research objective: 1) How does compensation influence the relationship between employees’ ambition and their respective taking charge behavior? And 2) What is the effect of this interaction on employees’ subsequent career satisfaction?

Third, a large body of literature has provided evidence that employees’ work behaviors directly or indirectly influence individual and organizational outcomes (e.g., Hambrick, 2007; Khapova & Arthur, 2011; Tangirala, Kamdar, Venkataramani & Parke, 2013). Yet, as previously mentioned, research studying the individual and organizational consequences of proactive behaviors is generally examined separately from one and another. I address this shortcoming by suggesting that individuals engage in proactive work and career behaviors for personal purposes (e.g., career purposes), which also benefits their employing organization. I also make clear how these individuals contribute to organizations. Because prior work found
taking charge and networking behaviors to positively influence career and organizational outcomes (Fuller & Marler, 2009), I link ambition with these two behaviors and use them as the proactive behaviors in my third study, in which I answer to the following question: To what extent do ambitious employees’ proactive career behaviors, such as taking charge at work and networking, lead to their contributions to their employer?

Because two studies revealed that proactive behaviors indeed have consequences for individuals and for their employing organizations, I decided to conduct a qualitative study to explore what exactly individuals do when they engage in proactive behaviors and what drives them to do so (i.e., motivations). Career scholars proposed that individuals may have several motivations to take proactive initiatives and to shape their career, such as exploring and creating job opportunities, developing human capital, improving work-life balance, etc. (King 2004; Sturges, 2008). There are many different ways for individuals to proactively shape their careers (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015), but I have chosen to focus in my final research objective on job crafting behavior. This behavior allows employees to shape and improve their person-job fit and work motivations, and to simultaneously benefit work place behavior and the organization as a whole (Bipp & Demerouti, 2014). To make sure I represent the contemporary workforce, I have incorporated the influence of age in this final research objective (Toossi, 2009), in which I answer the following question: How do older and younger employees engage in job crafting behaviors and what are their motivations to do so?

**Thesis Outline and Research Approach**

To achieve my research objectives, I have organized this dissertation around four main studies. Each of the four chapters represent a separate study and model, wherein the abovementioned research questions will be addressed. All four chapters are connected with one and another because they cover the same topic “proactive behaviors”. However, chapters 3 and 4 investigate the individual and organizational consequences of proactive behaviors and
include a similar research design (i.e., longitudinal with 2 waves) and study setting (i.e., alumni data set). Nevertheless, these latter two chapters represent a separate study and model and can be regarded as a standalone piece. Table 1.1 summarizes the research methodologies of each study and figure 1A presents the research framework.

Chapter 2 seeks to understand the complex process of proactivity on different organizational levels (i.e., individual, team and organization). I conducted a systematic literature review to analyze individual-level and contextual determinants of proactivity on the individual, team and organizational levels. By doing so, I analyzed interaction and mediation effects between individual-level and contextual determinants. The review reveals that on the individual level, proactive behavior is the outcome of a complex interaction of person and context. However, on the team and organizational level, we lack research on the interplay between individual-level and contextual determinants to make this assumption. Thus, proactivity research is left with an incomplete understanding of the complex process (i.e. a process that is codetermined by individual and contextual variables) through which proactivity is influenced at the team and organizational levels.

Chapter 3 addresses one of the research recommendations from chapter 2 and aims to examine how compensation influences the relationship between employee ambition and taking charge behavior and the subsequent impact on employees’ career satisfaction. Using an original alumni dataset from a large public university in The Netherlands, the chapter provides evidence that taking charge behavior increases the career satisfaction of employees with higher levels of ambition when they receive greater compensation for that behavior. It also shows that low compensation inhibits ambitious employees’ taking charge behavior and their subsequent career satisfaction.

Chapter 4 builds on chapter 3 and aims to study the organizational consequences of ambitious employees’ taking charge and networking behaviors. The same alumni dataset
used in chapter 3 was also used in this study. In this chapter, I propose that employees’ ambition is directly linked to the organizational core competencies, capabilities and connections. I further propose that the proactive behaviors taking charge and networking (i.e., instrumental and psychosocial) mediate the direct relationships. The results demonstrate that ambitious employees contribute to a) strengthening organizational capabilities by taking charge at work and b) expanding organizational connections through instrumental networking. The findings reveal that psychosocial networking did not mediate the relationship between employees’ ambitions and individual contributions to organizational connections.

Finally, chapter 5 discusses the final study, in which the job crafting behaviors and the motivations of older and younger employees are explored. This chapter is based on an exploratory design using interviews with thirty-one employees (i.e., 15 older employees and 16 younger employees) from a socially responsible non-profit organization in the Netherlands. The findings reveal that there are differences and similarities in how older and younger employees engage in job crafting behaviors and in what drives them to do so (i.e., job crafting motivations). These differences and similarities, together with their theoretical and managerial implications are discussed in further detail in chapter 5.

Finally, all four chapters end with an in-depth discussion of the implications for proactivity and personality literature in particular, as well as for human resource management research. The implications of all four chapters are discussed in chapter 6.
Table 1.1 Summary of methodology used in chapters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Chapter 2</th>
<th>Chapter 3</th>
<th>Chapter 4</th>
<th>Chapter 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systematic Literature Review</td>
<td>Longitudinal (2 waves)</td>
<td>Longitudinal (2 waves)</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
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Figure 1A: Research Framework
Presentations and Publications

Table 1.2 provides an overview of the research output from my thesis, including submissions, conference presentations and press-releases which are all written in the first-person plural, reflecting the numbers of co-authors involved.

Table 1.2: Overview of research output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Paper title, authors and current status</th>
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Press-Release.

Chapter 2

Individual and contextual predictors of workplace proactivity: What do we know now and where do we go from here?

Abstract

Purpose: In this paper, 75 studies were reviewed on workplace proactivity that are published over the past 20 years. By doing so, individual and contextual factors were analyzed that affect workplace proactivity at the individual, team and organizational levels.

Design/methodology/approach: A systematic literature review.

Findings: The review reveals that, at the individual level, proactive behavior is the outcome of a complex interplay between person and context. However, at the team and organizational levels, research is still underdeveloped.

Research limitations/implications: Because research is still underdeveloped at the team and organization levels, this paper suggests that the nature of the interplay between person and context needs further theoretical advancement in these research areas.

Originality/value: With growing evidence that workplace proactivity is not only a result of individual characteristics, more studies are examining the effects of contextual factors on proactivity in organizations. While this research has already resulted in a substantial body of literature on the predictors of proactivity in the organizational context, this is the first study that puts effort into integrating these studies’ findings.

Keywords: proactivity, team member proactivity, organization member proactivity, individual-level and contextual predictors
Introduction

Scholarly and practitioner interest in workplace proactivity has grown substantially over the past twenty-five years. The concept emerged as part of the industrial/organizational psychology literature to explain individual differences in the propensity to engage in proactive behaviors (e.g., Seibert, Crant and Kraimer, 1999; Seibert, Kraimer and Crant, 2001; Crant, 2000; Seibert and Kraimer, 2001; Bateman and Crant, 1993). Today, twenty years later, this concept is one of the most cited in the organizational and management literature (Fay & Sonnentag, 2010; Tornau & Frese, 2013). This topic has also increasingly been studied from other than the individual perspective with the aim of explaining how contextual factors influence workplace proactivity as one of the key behaviors in contemporary organizations (Belschak and den Hartog, 2010; Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012; Liang and Gong, 2013). As a consequence of this research, it has become clear that employees’ proactive behavior is not only the result of personality and individual characteristics; it is also a product of the everyday social interactions among peers, managers, subordinates and other social groups (Kroon, Kooij and van Veldhoven, 2013; Hauschildt & Konradt, 2012; Erkutlu, 2012; Ohly and Fritz, 2010; Ghitulescu, 2013; Belschak and den Hartog, 2010). Hence, proactivity not only influences individual outcomes but also teams and organizations through so-called team and organization member proactivity (e.g., Griffin, Neal and Parker, 2007; Strauss, Griffin and Rafferty, 2009; Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012; Thompson, 2005).

Interestingly, while more studies investigating the predictors of proactivity in organizations have emerged, little effort has been made to integrate the findings on proactivity at the individual, team and organizational levels. Such integration is warranted given the rich breadth of studies available, which suggests that organizational behavior research has moved beyond a pure main-effect approach that highlights either individual or contextual characteristics as predictors of workplace behavior toward a more complex approach that
underscores the interplay among (a) stable or transient characteristics of individuals (i.e.,
individual-level factors) and (b) contextual factors in predicting workplace behavior (e.g.,
Zhou and Hoever, 2014; Grant and Rothbard, 2013; Frazier and Fainshmidt, 2012). However,
no study exists yet that provides a comprehensive and in-depth review of the interaction and
interdependence between individual-level and contextual predictors of individual, team and
organization member proactivity. Indeed, this argument was recently reiterated by Chiaburu,
Smith, Wang and Zimmerman (2014) in their call for a more comprehensive understanding of
the factors that predict proactivity at different organizational levels. I offer this review to
address this research shortcoming. My aim is to gain a better understanding of what we know
about individual-level and contextual predictors of workplace proactivity at the individual,
team and organizational levels and to determine what we still need to learn to refine extant
workplace proactivity theory.

The scope of this paper differs significantly from a number of meta-analyses and
review papers that have been published on the topic of proactivity thus far. For example,
Crant’s (2000) review was the first to provide a robust exploration and critique of the main
streams of thought at that time. However, that study is now fifteen years old and therefore
needs updating. Another review, by Grant and Ashford (2008), addressed the nature and
consequences of proactive behavior. Similarly, Fay and Sonnentag (2010) provided an
informative exploration of temporal perspectives in proactivity research. However, both of
these papers focused on specific, albeit important, dimensions in the field. A meta-analysis
conducted by Thomas, Whitman and Viswesvaran (2010) summarized the empirical evidence
associated with proactive personalities, personal initiative, voice, and taking charge and
investigated the extent to which these proactive constructs relate to key organizational factors,
personality traits, and individual factors. Similarly, Tornau and Frese’s (2013) paper provided
an important step toward clarifying our conceptual understanding of proactivity by examining
its construct validity. The latter two papers focused solely on four proactivity constructs but did not examine what influences proactivity and how it is influenced. Moreover, all of these review papers focused on individual member proactivity and neglected the team and organization dimensions (Thompson, 2005; Ohly and Fritz, 2010).

Having introduced the aim of this paper, I turn now to the review methodology. I then discuss and define the constructs of proactivity and review the research that has explored the effects of individual and contextual characteristics (and the interplay between the predictors) on individual, team and organization member proactivity. To encourage future research in the field, I identify gaps in the existing literature and suggest a future research agenda.

Methodology

Data collection

Based on the research purpose described above, I have formulated a clear research question as a guideline for the review; “What do we know about individual-level and contextual predictors of workplace proactivity at the individual, team and organizational levels, and what do we still need to learn to refine the extant workplace proactivity theory?” I began the review by establishing parameters for working definitions of workplace proactivity and the concepts individual-level and contextual predictors. Beginning with the latter, I followed Zhou and Hoever (2014) and referred to individual-level predictors as “stable or transient individual characteristics such as personality traits, work motivations, an individual’s emotional state and creative abilities”. To capture and define contextual predictors, I also followed the authors’ suggestion and included the influence of aspects of the task, the physical environment, and the social environment (which may include relationships with and between coworkers, teams, leaders and customers). The working definition of workplace proactivity was established as “self-starting, change-oriented and future-focused work actions” (Parker, Bindl and Strauss, 2010, p. 828). In the section below, I will pay more
attention to defining workplace proactivity and the three proactivity constructs – individual, team and organization member proactivity. Furthermore, to analyze only proactive actions or behaviors, I have deliberately focused on empirical/observable manifestations of proactive behavior (e.g., taking charge, personal initiative, job crafting or voice) as my proactivity outcomes rather than the trait-like dimensions of proactivity (e.g., proactive personality; Bateman and Crant, 1993). For the purpose of my study, I sought to review research that examined individual-level and contextual predictors of individual, team and organization member proactivity and the limited body of literature that explored the interplay between those two categories of predictors. In selecting studies to include in the review, I included only empirical research that focused on proactive behaviors and that examined proactivity as an outcome in 1) direct relationships between predictors and outcomes; 2) relationships examining the effects of moderators and mediators; 3) relationships examining moderated-mediated effects; and 4) relationships examining mediated-moderated effects.

After constructing the working definitions and research purposes described above, I identified the key concepts from articles on proactive behaviors. These key concepts were proactive behaviors, job crafting, taking charge, voice and personal initiative, which I used in combination with the concept “work” to search for relevant articles. By doing so, I followed de Menezes and Kelliher (2011) and used the ISI Web of Knowledge. All of the keywords used in this search are shown in Table 2.1. It is also worth noting that, for each search, I filtered articles based on management and applied psychology research. To ensure a comprehensive review of the literature, I included articles that were published between 1993 and 2014, thus creating five search strings that were applied in September 2014. I then used the identified abstracts as an initial base for selecting papers to include in the final review.

This initial search provided a preliminary sample of 129 articles. Then, I excluded those papers that focused on concepts that are distinct from, although related to, proactivity,
such as creativity at work (e.g., Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2013), thriving at work (e.g., Paterson, Luthans and Jeung, 2014), goal regulation (e.g., Bindl, Parker, Totterdell and Hagger-Johnson, 2012), organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Marinova, Moon, and van Dyne, 2010) and deviant work behavior (e.g., Vadera, Pratt and Mishra, 2013). In some cases, the lack of fit between the focus of my review and the respective paper was apparent from the title and abstract. However, to be certain, I read all 129 papers. After this fairly intense period of reading, I excluded 54 papers because they focused on one or more of the following themes, which, although arguably related to my research topic, were outside the parameters of this particular project: proactive personality used as an outcome, proactive socialization processes, proactive behaviors used as predictors, and moderators and/or mediators. The final sample comprised 75 empirical studies (including quantitative, qualitative and field studies) with specific and direct relevance to my review project and purpose (Anderson, Herriot and Hodgkinson, 2001).

However, to further enhance the credibility and consistency of my review, I extended the analysis of the papers beyond my specific research purpose. For example, I recorded details of each paper’s research findings, methodological and theoretical approach, identified limitations and recommendations for future research. I also recorded the organizational and national contexts within which the respective study had been carried out. This approach allowed me to make more sense of my findings.
Table 2.1 Overview of key words used in search strings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Proactive behavior + work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Job crafting + work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Taking charge + work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Voice + work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Personal initiative + work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Literature Review**

**Defining Workplace Proactivity**

The first definition that marked the field of studies on the topic of proactive behavior was that by Crant (2000). He defined proactive behavior as “taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones; it involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting to present conditions” (Crant, 2000, p.436). This definition implies that employees engage in proactive activities as part of their in-role behavior where they fulfill basic job requirements, but also as part of their extra-role behavior such as trying to redefine their role in the organization.

Almost a decade later, scholars proposed broader definitions of proactive behavior that extend their implications not only for individuals but also for their environment. One example is Grant and Ashford (2008), who defined proactivity as “anticipatory actions that employees take to impact themselves and/or their environments” (p.8). This trend consequently led to the emergence of studies on proactivity at the three levels of analysis – individual, team and organization (e.g., Leana, Appelbaum and Shevchuk, 2009; Griffin, et al., 2007; Tims, Bakker, Derks and van Rhenen, 2013) – thereby capturing proactivity in the entire workplace. In this review, I follow Griffin and his coworkers’ (2007 p. 332) definition and examples of proactivity on the individual, team and organizational levels, which are presented in Table
2.2. At the individual level, scholars suggest that individuals engage in self-starting, future-oriented behavior to change their own individual work situations, individual work roles, or themselves. The authors refer to this type of proactive behavior as *individual member proactivity*. At the team level, scholars propose that team members undertake proactive actions individually to impact how their team operates as a whole, which they call *team member proactivity*. Finally, at the organizational level, proactivity relates to actions that employees take individually to benefit or impact their employing organization as a whole. This type of proactivity has been referred to as *organization member proactivity* (Griffin et al., 2007). While proactivity research at the team and organizational levels is developing, my review will show that studies of individual member proactivity clearly dominate.

Finally, it is notable that, in the extant research, all three levels of proactive behavior are general and non-context specific, meaning that they may occur in a wide array of organizational contexts (Crant, 2000; Tornau and Frese, 2013). Through my literature review, I found several proactivity constructs that capture individual, team and organization member proactivity that are all discussed in the analysis of my review below. An overview of all of the constructs, their respective levels and definitions and how they have been operationalized in the literature is provided in Tables 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5.
Table 2.2. Definitions and examples of Proactivity on Individual, Team and Organization-Level. Derived from Griffin et al. (2007 p. 330)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proactivity</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Member Proactivity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior contributes to individual effectiveness</td>
<td>Initiates better ways of doing core tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team Member Proactivity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior contributes to team effectiveness</td>
<td>Develops new methods to help the team perform better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Member Proactivity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior contributes to organization effectiveness</td>
<td>Makes suggestions to improve the overall efficiency of the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>Original definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Voice is defined “as promotive behavior that emphasizes expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than merely criticize. Voice is making innovative suggestions for change and recommending modifications to standard procedures even when others disagree” (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998, p. 109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual proactivity</td>
<td>Individual proactive work behaviors are anticipatory actions and initiatives that employees take to create change or improve current circumstances (Crant, 2000; Grant and Ashford, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking charge</td>
<td>Taking charge entails voluntary and constructive efforts, by individual employees, to effect organizationally functional change with respect to how work is executed within the contexts of their jobs, work units, or organizations (Morrison and Phelps, 1999, p. 403).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal initiative</td>
<td>Personal initiative is work behavior characterized by its self-starting nature, its proactive approach, and by being persistent in overcoming difficulties that arise in the pursuit of a goal (Frese and Fay, 2001, p. 134).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job crafting</td>
<td>Job crafting is formally defined as “the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work” (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001, p.179).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback seeking</td>
<td>Feedback seeking behavior is defined as “individuals’ proactive search for evaluative information about their performance” (Ashford and Tsui, 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking behavior</td>
<td>Networking refers to behaviors for developing and maintaining relationships with others who can potentially positively impact one’s work and/or career (Forret and Dougherty, 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing is “individuals sharing organizationally relevant information, ideas, suggestions, and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
expertise with one another” (Bartol and Srivastava, 2002, p. 65).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Original definition</th>
<th>Dominant operationalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team member personal initiative</td>
<td>The extent to which individual team members engages in personal initiative taking (Schraub et al., 2014)</td>
<td>Peer rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2.4: Types of Team Member Proactivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Original definition</th>
<th>Dominant operationalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization Member Initiative Taking</td>
<td>Organizational initiative taking involves individually spearheading positive change in the organization at large (i.e., not limited to the scope of one’s immediate tasks) (Thompson, 2005 p. 1013)</td>
<td>Peer/supervisor rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2.5: Types of Organization Member Proactivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Original definition</th>
<th>Dominant operationalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization Member Initiative Taking</td>
<td>Organizational initiative taking involves individually spearheading positive change in the organization at large (i.e., not limited to the scope of one’s immediate tasks) (Thompson, 2005 p. 1013)</td>
<td>Peer/supervisor rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individual-level Predictors of Workplace Proactivity

I found a set of papers (n=17) that examine individual-level predictors of proactivity. Table 2.6 provides an overview of the articles and the individual-level predictors. Furthermore, I found that investigations of individual-level predictors have received the most attention in individual member proactivity research compared with team and organization member proactivity. Below, I synthesize my findings with respect to the individual-level predictors on (a) individual, (b) team, and (c) organization member proactivity.

Individual Member Proactivity

My review revealed that the influence of individual characteristics on individual member proactivity has been studied from (a) a single individual-level predictor approach and (b) a multiple individual-level predictor approach. The single individual-level predictor approach can be separated into two research streams: one that confirms a positive and/or neutral relationship between the individual-level predictor and individual member proactivity and another that offers evidence of the negative effects of individual-level predictors on individual member proactivity. Conversely, in the multiple individual-level predictor approach, studies found multiple individual-level predictors to have a positive effect on individual member proactivity.

With regard to the single individual-level predictor approach and the positive and neutral relationships, proactive personality was found to have a major positive effect on voice and networking behavior (Liang and Gong, 2013) as well as on job crafting (Bakker, Tims and Derks, 2012). An employee’s self-concept (e.g., self-efficacy, felt responsibility for change, perceived capability to be proactive) was found to also directly influence individual member proactivity (e.g., Ohly and Fritz, 2007; Fuller, Marler and Hester, 2006; Groen, Wouters and Wilderom, 2012). Furthermore, a state affect (i.e., positive or negative) directly influences personal initiative (Den Hartog and Belschak, 2007). Individual emotion-regulation
variables were found to have a strong effect on individual member proactivity, especially on taking-charge behavior (Bal, Chiaburu, and Diaz, 2011). Adding to this line of research, Fritz and Sonnentag (2009) studied the temporal dynamics of an employee’s mood on his/her proactivity during the same workday and the following day. They found that being in a positive mood on one workday is positively associated with proactive behavior both on that day and the next day. In a similar vein, Binnewies, Sonnentag and Mojza (2009) found that when employees rested and felt physically and mentally refreshed in the morning, they were more likely to engage in proactive behavior later that same day.

With respect to negative effects, Tangirala, Kamdar, Venkataramani and Parke (2013) found that achievement orientation, i.e., the extent of employees’ ingrained personal ambition to get ahead professionally (Costa & McCrae, 1992), had negative effects on voice behavior. Adding to this line of research, Crant, Kim and Wang (2011) studied the relationship between shyness and voice behavior and found that the more employees were shy at work, the less they would speak up. In another study, Parker and Collins (2010) focused on measuring the extent to which employees were focused on achieving their performance goals. The authors found that the higher employees scored on this variable, the less they would engage in proactive behaviors at work.

Continuing with the multiple individual-level predictor approach, studies have found that interactions between multiple individual-level predictors have a positive effect on individual member proactivity. For instance, Tangirala et al. (2013) found that duty orientation, which is understood as an employee’s sense of moral and ethical obligation (Costa and McCrae, 1992), has a positive effect on voice. Interestingly, however, voice efficacy, which is understood as employees’ self-assurance about their personal capability to speak up at work (McAllister, Kamdar, Morrison and Turban, 2007), increased the positive influence of duty orientation on voice. Similarly, Liang and Gong (2013) found that core self-
evaluations, which are understood as individuals’ core beliefs about themselves and their capabilities (Judge, Locke, and Durham, 1997), moderated the direct, positive relationship between the individual-level predictor proactive personality and the proactive behavior voice. Moreover, these relationships were stronger among employees with high levels of core self-evaluation.

Continuing with the individual level of proactivity analysis, some studies adopting the multiple individual-level predictor approach examined the impact of motivation on individual member proactivity. For example, Fuller, Marler and Hester (2012) found that the proactive motivation construct FRCC (i.e., felt responsibility for constructive change) influenced the relationship between role breadth self-efficacy and taking-charge behavior. FRCC, they reported, “reflects the extent to which an individual feels personally responsible for continually redefining performance (i.e., doing things better) rather than solely performing his or her own task well according to current performance standards (i.e., doing the job right)” (Fuller et al., 2006, p. 1092). The authors also found that FRCC moderates the relationship between role breadth self-efficacy (RBSE) (i.e., an assessment of one’s ability to engage in a specific set of proactive, integrative, and interpersonal tasks (Parker, 1998)) and taking-charge behavior, which became stronger when FRCC was high compared with when it was low.

**Team Member Proactivity**

While much of the literature has focused on how individual characteristics foster individual member proactivity, some authors have investigated how these individual characteristics relate to team member proactivity. My review suggests that this stream of research is scarce, and the limited number of studies mainly adopt a single individual-level predictor approach. In contrast to individual member proactivity, at the team level, the individual-level predictors were all found to positively influence team member proactivity.
To illustrate the abovementioned finding, Strauss et al. (2009) focused on team members’ self-concept and found that team members’ role breadth self-efficacy and their confidence in their ability to take on proactive, integrative and interpersonal tasks (Parker, 1998) had a positive impact on their proactivity. Similarly, using self-leadership as an antecedent of team member proactivity, Hauschildt and Konradt (2012) found that team members’ ability to lead themselves and be independent enhanced their own level of proactivity, thereby enhancing team effectiveness (Griffin et al., 2007).

**Organization Member Proactivity**

To proceed with the organizational level of proactivity analysis, studies have particularly examined how work orientation, personality and role-breadth self-efficacy impact the extent to which individuals engage in proactive behavior to contribute to organizational effectiveness (Griffin et al., 2007). My review shows that, similar to team member proactivity, studies focusing on organization member proactivity are scarce and adopt a single individual-level predictor approach. The studies mainly demonstrate a positive link between the individual-level predictors and organization member proactivity. Interestingly, this type of proactivity is associated with the performance and learning orientations of individuals, unlike individual and team member proactivity.

To illustrate the abovementioned, Belschak and den Hartog (2010) used dyad data and found that employees with a high learning goal orientation, those that aim primarily at acquiring new skills and knowledge from work tasks, contribute more to organizations by engaging in proactive behavior than employees with a low learning goal orientation. Similarly, employees with high levels of performance-prove orientation and those who focus on attaining high levels of performance contribute more to organizations by engaging in proactivity than do employees with a low performance-prove orientation. Conversely, a performance-avoid orientation (i.e., employees with a tendency to avoid negative work
outcomes) had a negative impact on employees’ proactivity. Furthermore, the individual-level predictors of proactive personality and role-breadth self-efficacy, which were found to predict individual and team member proactivity, also positively influence organization member proactivity (e.g., Thompson, 2005; Strauss et al, 2009).

Table 2.6 Articles addressing individual-level predictors of workplace proactivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Individual-Level Predictors</th>
<th>Workplace Proactivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liang and Gong (2013)</td>
<td>proactive personality</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakker et al (2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohly and Fritz (2007)</td>
<td>employees’ self-concept (e.g. self-efficacy, felt responsibility for change, perceived capability to be proactive)</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuller et al (2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groen et al (2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Den Hartog and Belschak (2007)</td>
<td>state affect variables</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bal et al (2011)</td>
<td>individual emotion-regulation</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fritz and Sonnentag (2009)</td>
<td>temporal dynamics of an employees’ mood</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binnewies et al (2009)</td>
<td>taking a rest and feeling physically and mentally refreshed in the morning</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangirala et al (2013)</td>
<td>achievement orientation</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crant et al (2011)</td>
<td>shyness</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parker and Collins (2010)</td>
<td>performance goal orientation</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangirala et al (2013)</td>
<td>duty orientation + voice efficacy</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liang and Gong (2013)</td>
<td>core self-evaluations + proactive personality</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuller et al (2012)</td>
<td>proactive motivation construct FRCC + role breadth self-efficacy (RBSE)</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strauss et al (2009)</td>
<td>team members’ role breadth self-efficacy</td>
<td>Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hauschildt and Konradt (2012)</td>
<td>team member’s ability to lead themselves</td>
<td>Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belschak and den Hartog (2010)</td>
<td>learning goal orientation + performance-prove orientation + performance-avoid orientation</td>
<td>Organization Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson (2005)</td>
<td>proactive personality + role-breadth self-efficany</td>
<td>Organization Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strauss et al (2009)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contextual Predictors of Workplace Proactivity

I also found a set of papers that examined the contextual predictors of workplace proactivity. This set of papers (n=17) is similar in amount to the studies I found that examined the individual-level predictors of proactivity. Furthermore, it is again notable that the literature exploring contextual predictors of team and organization member proactivity is far more limited than the literature focusing on contextual predictors of individual member proactivity. I synthesize my findings below with respect to the contextual predictors on individual, team, and organization member proactivity. Table 2.7 provides an overview of the contextual predictors that are addressed in the studies below.

**Individual Member Proactivity**

There is a fairly extensive body of literature that examines how employee proactivity varies as a function of the characteristics of work tasks and the nature of the work itself. My review demonstrates that studies adopting a context-centered approach on individual member proactivity focus on demonstrating that single contextual predictors positively predict individual member proactivity. However, they make use of multiple contextual predictors to explain the following: 1) why and how the main contextual predictor positively predicts individual proactivity; 2) when the positive effect is likely to disappear (boundary conditions); and 3) when the positive effect becomes weaker (i.e., multiple contextual predictor approach). Hence, the studies suggest that the context is a complex environment consisting of different factors that combine to positively or negatively influence individual member proactivity.

Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli and Hetland (2012), for example, reported that employees increased their levels of job crafting by increasing their access to work resources and reducing work demands on days when they had high levels of autonomy and work pressure. Similarly, Ohly and Fritz (2010) distinguished between chronic time pressure and daily time pressure and explored their respective relationships with employee proactivity on a
daily basis. Chronic work characteristics are assumed to be trait-like characteristics of a job (Fried and Ferris, 1987), while daily work characteristics are more state-like because they reflect the nature of a specific job on a specific day (Butler, Grzywacz, Bass, and Linney, 2005). The authors showed that both chronic time pressure and daily time pressure are positively related to daily individual proactive behavior.

Several other studies have examined the impact of work characteristics such as discretion, complexity and job control on individual member proactivity. For instance, Ghitulescu’s (2013) study on teacher proactivity showed that task discretion and complexity, both of which relate to the degree to which employees can choose how to proceed with their work (Frese, Garst, and Fay, 2007; Morrison, 2006), were associated with increased levels of individual proactivity. The same study also showed that complexity was positively related to proactive behavior among teachers experiencing increased task discretion (i.e., more freedom to decide how to perform tasks (Johns, 2006)) compared with those who reported lower task discretion (moderating effect). Other studies have reported that job control is positively related to employee proactivity (Ohly, Sonnentag, Pluntke, 2006; Sonnentag and Spychala, 2012; Ohly and Fritz 2010).

I also discovered a number of studies that focus on the extent to which leaders and organizations influence employee proactivity. For instance, Walumba and Schaubroeck (2009) found a positive relationship between ethical leadership and voice behavior, which is mediated by a psychologically safe work climate. They also found a sequential mediation between ethical leadership and a psychologically safe work climate in the relationship between leader personality and employee voice behavior. Specifically, they found that the personality of the employees’ leader was indirectly related to the employees’ voice behavior through the mediating influence of ethical leadership and, in turn, through a psychologically safe work climate. Continuing with the theme of leadership, it also influences the likelihood
of employees engaging in job crafting as another form of proactive behavior. Van Dam, Nikolova and van Ruysseveldt (2013), for example, found that when employees have a strong relationship with their direct leader, they are more likely to engage in job crafting, compared with employees who have weak relationships with their respective leaders.

Extending my focus beyond the theme of employee relationships with leaders to wider workplace relationships, several research models have shown that support from coworkers, supervisors and organizations directly influences employee proactivity. Tucker, Chmiel, Turner, Hershcovis and Stride (2008), for example, reported that employees are more likely to voice their opinions and provide suggestions about the organization’s safety policies if they believe that their employer and co-workers support employee safety more generally. They also found that the direct, positive link between perceived organizational support for safety and employee voice is mediated by perceived coworker support for safety. Echoing this theme, Ohly et al. (2006) also reported that supervisor support has a positive relationship with personal initiative. More recently, Liu, Lee, Hui, Kwan, and Wu (2013) showed that proactivity can be influenced by the combined effect of employees’ work-related opportunities and their perceived organizational support. Specifically, they found that perceived organizational support mediates the relationships between flexibility and developmental i-deals and employee proactivity, where developmental i-deals are the special opportunities that employees can use to expand their competencies (Rousseau, Hornung and Kim, 2009) and flexibility i-deals are special arrangements for work schedules (Rousseau, 2005).

Finally, proactivity is also impacted by other contextual influences, such as organizational justice and commitment and career-related opportunities. For example, the recent research by Takeuchi, Chen and Cheung (2012) drew attention to the interactive effects between contextual predictors, whereby interpersonal justice has a positive relationship with
voice behavior. Moreover, the relationship between these two variables is moderated by perceptions of procedural justice such that the relationship becomes weaker when procedural justice is perceived to be high rather than low (Takeuchi, et al., 2012). The same study also found that distributive justice moderates the two-way interaction effect on voice behavior such that it is less pronounced when distributive justice is low. In another study, Crawshaw, van Dick and Brodbeck (2012) found that when employees have an unfavorable (rather than favorable) view of their career development opportunities, their perceptions of procedural justice are strongly and positively related to their proactive behavior, but only when their organizational commitment is high.

**Team Member Proactivity**

I have already introduced some of the key themes in the literature regarding how the context impacts an individual’s propensity to engage in proactive behavior (i.e., individual member proactivity). Extending our understanding of proactivity to the level of teams, however, my review reveals that studies using a context-centered approach to team member proactivity demonstrate 1) that leadership and team supportiveness variables positively influence team member proactivity; and 2) that leadership positively influences team member proactivity (i.e., mediated effect). Thus, in addition to the single contextual predictor approach, these studies also adopt a multiple contextual predictor approach (i.e., unlike the studies that address and investigate individual-level predictors in team member proactivity research, in which they adopt only a single contextual predictor approach).

To illustrate these approaches, Williams, Parker and Turner (2010) found that favorable interpersonal norms are positively related to team member proactivity. Team members assess the way they work together and decide whether the within-team environment encourages proactivity. If the established and perceived norms include team members' supporting and respecting each other, they are also more likely to engage in proactive
behavior to benefit their teams. In line with this research, Griffin and others (2007) also found that perceptions of team supportiveness are strongly related to team member proactivity. Exploring the effect of different leadership styles on team member proactivity, several studies have reported that transformational leadership is positively associated with team member proactivity (e.g., Williams et al., 2010; Belschak and den Hartog, 2010). Additionally, Williams et al. (2010) reported that this relationship is mediated by favorable interpersonal norms (i.e., high levels of team supportiveness). Schraub, Michel, Shemla and Sonntag (2014) also explored the effect of leader emotional management on team members’ personal initiative, where leader-emotion management is understood as the degree to which leaders are capable of managing their own and their employees’ emotions (Van Knippenberg, Van Knippenberg, Van Kleef and Damen, 2008). The authors found that the more capable leaders are in respecting different opinions in the team, overcoming the frustration of team members, demonstrating and encouraging enthusiasm, and cheering team members on (Jordan and Lawrence, 2009), the more likely team members will take the initiative to improve team effectiveness.

**Organization Member Proactivity**

My review reveals that the limited number of studies taking a context-centered approach to organization member proactivity focus on demonstrating that social contacts between employees and leaders in particular have a positive impact on organization member proactivity. In addition, attention has been paid to explaining how social contacts between leaders could also weaken or enhance that effect. The variables of employees’ perceived influence at work and managers’ consultation were examined to determine how organization members’ proactivity can be fostered. Thus, although research in this area is limited, researchers recognize the importance of the concept to organizations and focus on studying how leaders and employees can contribute to increasing it. Studies in this research stream also
adopt both single and multiple contextual predictor approaches.

For instance, Lui, et al. (2013) examined how dyadic vertical social exchanges among employees, direct leaders (i.e., supervisors), and skip-level leaders (i.e., a supervisor’s boss) influence employees’ upward voice directed at different organizational leaders. Upward voice refers to employees’ expression of constructive, work-related ideas to organizational leaders (Detert and Burris, 2007); hence, upward voice is directed at improving organizational effectiveness. Specifically, the authors found that social exchanges between leaders and employees (LMX) facilitate employees engaging in voice behavior toward their direct leader and that social exchanges between skip-level leaders and employees (SMX) facilitate employees’ voice behavior to the skip-level leader. They also found that social exchanges between leaders (LLX) operate as a moderator, thus enhancing the effects of LMX on voice to the direct leader and weakening the effects of SMX on voice to the skip-level leader.

Another recent study by Tangirala and Ramanujam (2012) examined the role of employees’ perceived influence at work and their managers’ consultation in relation to voice behavior targeted at different leaders (i.e., upward voice). They reported a positive relationship between employees’ perceived influence at work and their upward voice. They also found that employees’ reports of consultations with their manager were positively related to their upward voice behavior, with their perceived influence at work acting as a mediator.
### Table 2.7 Articles addressing contextual predictors of workplace proactivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Contextual Predictors</th>
<th>Workplace Proactivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petrou et al (2012)</td>
<td>autonomy + work pressure</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohly and Fritz (2010)</td>
<td>chronic time pressure + daily time pressure</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghitulescu (2013)</td>
<td>task discretion + task complexity</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walumba and Schaubroeck (2009)</td>
<td>ethical leadership + a psychological safe work climate + leader personality</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Dam et al (2013)</td>
<td>strong relationship with direct leader</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker et al (2008)</td>
<td>perceived coworker support for employee safety + perceived organizational support for safety</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohly et al (2006)</td>
<td>supervisor support</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu et al (2013)</td>
<td>employees’ work-related opportunities + perceived organizational support</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takeuchi et al (2012)</td>
<td>interpersonal justice + perceptions of procedural justice + distributive justice</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawshaw et al (2012)</td>
<td>employees’ view of their career development opportunities + perceptions of procedural justice + organizational commitment</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams et al (2010)</td>
<td>favourable interpersonal norms</td>
<td>Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffin et al (2007)</td>
<td>perceptions of team supportiveness</td>
<td>Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schraub et al (2014)</td>
<td>leader emotion management</td>
<td>Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lui et al (2013)</td>
<td>dyadic vertical social exchanges among employees, direct leaders (i.e. supervisors), and skip-level leaders (i.e. supervisor’s boss)</td>
<td>Organization Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangirala and Ramanujam (2012)</td>
<td>employees’ perceived influence at work + manager’s consultation</td>
<td>Organization Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workplace Proactivity as an Outcome of the Interplay between Individual-level and Contextual Predictors

Based on the literature I have reviewed thus far, it is clear that employees’ willingness to engage in proactive behaviors is influenced by individual-level and contextual factors. Exploring the impact of these sources of influence individually furthers our understanding of how proactive behavior might be encouraged among individual employees on a practical level. However, to advance the theory further and specifically to develop a theoretically grounded understanding of workplace proactivity, a more composite understanding is now required. Indeed, I/O Psychology researchers have often argued that traits and individual characteristics do not fully determine individual behavior; rather, they are also a function of and shaped by contextual influences (Tett and Burnett, 2003).

Extending this line of argument to the field of proactivity, it is clear that this form of individual behavior is impacted as much by the interplay between an employee and his/her work context as it is by the employee’s own personality traits. It is important to note, however, that my review demonstrates that this interplay between individual-level and contextual predictors has been given more attention in studies focusing on individual member proactivity rather than on team and organization member proactivity. I found a set of papers (n=7) that addressed the joint effects of individual-level and contextual predictors solely on individual member proactivity. Below, I explore and discuss this area of research.

The Influence of the Context on Individual-Level Predictors and Proactivity

My review reveals that in studies where individual-level factors are used to predict individual member proactivity, contextual factors are mainly used as moderators in this link such that the contextual factors 1) positively moderate the link; 2) negatively moderate the link; or 3) serve as boundary conditions.
To illustrate the boundary conditions, Grant and Rothbard (2013) identified the interaction between individual and contextual factors by proposing that ambiguity moderates the effects that individual characteristics have on individual member proactivity. Specifically, the authors focused on the impact of individual values, such as the extent to which someone is prosocial and values security, on proactivity. The authors found that security values were negatively related to proactivity and prosocial values were positively related to proactivity, but only in contexts where there were high levels of ambiguity (i.e., in a weak situation with unclear organizational expectations toward employees).

In another study, Binnewies and coworkers (2009) demonstrated that contextual factors serve as moderators with positive effects on the link between individual-level predictors and individual member proactivity. Specifically, they reported that employees take more initiative on days when they are more rested than on days when they are not. However, this relationship was moderated by the amount of control they had over their performance/job (i.e., contextual factors). Specifically, if employees had the power to adapt their performance to obtain more rest (i.e., high job control), they would take more initiative at work (i.e., the link becomes much stronger).

To illustrate how contextual factors could have a negative moderation effect in the relationship between individual-level predictors and individual member proactivity, I turn to the study by Griffin, Parker and Mason (2010). The authors identified the role that leaders play in influencing employee proactivity. They introduced an important cautionary note warning that problems with a leader’s vision can potentially have a negative impact on proactivity, especially among individuals with low self-levels of self-esteem (i.e., individual characteristics). For example, in one of the few longitudinal studies in the field, the authors reported that proactivity among individuals with low role breadth self-efficacy decreases over time if their leader has an idealized picture of the future based on organizational values
(Rafferty and Griffin, 2004, p. 332). Table 2.8 provides an overview of the abovementioned interactions and articles.

Table 2.8 Articles addressing the effect of the interaction between individual-level and contextual predictors on individual member proactivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Individual-Level Predictors</th>
<th>Contextual-Level Moderators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant and Rothbard (2013)</td>
<td>security values + prosocial values</td>
<td>ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binnewies et al (2009)</td>
<td>taking rest</td>
<td>job control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffin et al (2010)</td>
<td>leader’s vision</td>
<td>role breadth self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A Work-Context-Predicting Proactivity and the Important Role That Individuals Play in This Matter

I found that in studies where contextual factors are used to predict individual member proactivity, individual-level variables are used as moderators and mediators in this link to demonstrate how and why contextual factors are linked with proactivity. Thus, when contextual factors influence employee proactivity, studies demonstrate that they are partly expressed as a function of individual characteristics.

To illustrate the mediating effects, I turn to two recent studies. First, the study by Frazier and Fainshmidt (2012) found that voice climate, defined as shared employee perceptions of the extent to which they are encouraged to speak up and make suggestions in the workplace (Morrison, Wheeler-Smith, and Kamdar, 2011), fostered employee voice behavior. However, this relationship was mediated by individual levels of psychological empowerment, which referred to an active intrinsic motivational state that provides employees with a sense of control over their work (Spreitzer, 1995). In a similar vein, Sonnentag and Spychala (2012) showed that both the contextual variables of job control and time pressure were positively related to proactive behavior. However, the authors provided an explanation for this link by demonstrating that the link was mediated by the individual-level variable role breadth self-efficacy.
Continuing with the illustration of the moderating effect of individual-level variables, Bal and colleagues (2011) examined how emotion regulation moderates the relationship between psychological contract breach (Rousseau, 1995) and proactivity. A key point here is that an employee experiences a psychological contract breach when organizations do not fulfill their perceived obligations to the employee. Where individual proactivity is concerned, Bal et al. (2011) found that it diminishes proactive behaviors. However, when engaging in cognitive change (i.e., reappraising or reinterpreting situations to modify their subjective meaning (Diefendorff, Richard, Yang, 2008 p. 499), employees are less likely to experience feelings of breach and are less inclined to decrease important proactive actions such as sharing knowledge with their colleagues and taking charge at work. In contrast, the authors found attentional deployment forms of emotion regulation (i.e., focusing one’s attention away from the emotion-provoking event or target (Diefendorff et al., 2008 p.499) to accentuate the detrimental effects of breach on proactive behaviors. Table 2.9 provides an overview of the articles and the abovementioned mediation and moderation effects.

Table 2.9 Articles addressing the moderation and mediation effects of individual-level predictors in the link between contextual predictors and individual member proactivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Contextual Predictors</th>
<th>Individual-Level Mediators</th>
<th>Individual-Level Moderators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frazier and Fainshmidt (2012)</td>
<td>voice climate</td>
<td>individual levels of psychological empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonmentag and Spychala (2012)</td>
<td>job control + time pressure</td>
<td>role breadth self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bal et al (2011)</td>
<td>psychological contract breach</td>
<td></td>
<td>cognitive change + attentional deployment forms of emotion regulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exceptional Cases: A Joint Moderation Effect of Individual-Level and Contextual Variables

Finally, my review demonstrated that in exceptional cases, multiple moderators are used that include both contextual and individual-level factors to demonstrate how they jointly influence individual proactivity. To illustrate this approach, Den Hartog and Belschak (2012) found that the relationship between transformational leadership and proactive behavior is moderated by both the individual-level variable employee role breadth self-efficacy and the contextual variable job autonomy. The authors specifically showed that when autonomy is low, transformational leadership relates more strongly to proactive behavior for individuals with low role breadth self-efficacy than for those with high levels of role breadth self-efficacy. Conversely, when job autonomy is high, transformational leadership relates more strongly to proactive behavior for individuals high in role breadth self-efficacy rather than for those low in role breadth self-efficacy.

Table 2.10 Articles addressing the joint moderation effect of individual-level and contextual variables on individual member proactivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Contextual Predictors</th>
<th>Individual-Level Moderator</th>
<th>Contextual Moderator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Den Hartog and Belschak (2012)</td>
<td>transformational leadership</td>
<td>role breadth self-efficacy</td>
<td>job autonomy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion and Implications for Future Research

The research aim of this review was to provide a more complete understanding of individual-level and contextual predictors in individual, team and organization member proactivity research. My review identified sets of individual-level and contextual factors predicting the three levels of proactivity. However, it also identified that the study of the interplay between individual-level and contextual factors contains a significant gap in team and organization member proactivity research. Below, I discuss these findings and offer an agenda for future research.
Individual-Level Predictors. My review of individual-level factors predicting workplace proactivity yielded two interesting insights. First, I found that much more attention has been paid to studying individual-level predictors in relation to individual member proactivity rather than to team and organization-member proactivity. For instance, I found an overlap of certain individual-level factors that were studied on individual, team and organizational levels such as proactive personality and self-concepts (i.e., role breadth self-efficacy, self-leadership), while other factors such as state affect variables (i.e., positive or negative), emotion-regulation variables, motivation variables and recovering variables were solely studied in relation to individual member proactivity. However, studying these individual-level variables on the team and organizational levels might prove similarly interesting. With regard to state affect variables, researchers have argued that a positive affect can promote more innovative behaviors (George, 1990) and might lead to individuals setting more proactive goals and persisting in the achievement of proactive goals, not only for their own benefit but also to contribute to proactivity that benefits their teams and/or their employing organizations (Strauss et al., 2009). Motivation variables are also particularly interesting to study in relation to team and organization member proactivity. Because the proactive efforts are directed toward improving team and organization effectiveness (Griffin et al.2007), the consequences of the behaviors affect a broader range of peers and employees and could be considered too “risky” by employees and leaders. Therefore, motivation variables may play a larger role in these streams of proactivity research.

Second, with regard to team and organization member proactivity, I found that the majority of research has focused on the examination of the positive predictors of proactivity, which might be partly a result of the phenomenon itself because proactivity is often viewed as an outcome that is especially prone to disruptions and, hence, requires careful nurturing (Burnett, Chiaburu, Shapiro and Li, 2013), as noted above. However, focusing on the
individual-level factors that encourage rather than discourage team and organization member proactivity might not adequately reflect the reality of contemporary work contexts. For instance, research has demonstrated that some Big Five personality factors have a negative or no effect on proactivity types (e.g., Nikolaou, Vakola, Bourantas, 2008; Crant et al., 2011; Bjørkelo, Einarsen and Matthiessen, 2010), which suggests that some individuals simply might not be able to engage in proactivity.

Contextual Predictors. My review demonstrates that there has been more research attention paid to studying how multiple contextual factors jointly influence individual member proactivity rather than how they jointly influence team and organization member proactivity. Specifically, I found that the majority of studies examine how multiple contextual variables combine to either positively or negatively influence each other and the subsequent individual member’s proactivity. However, with regard to team and organization member proactivity, my review demonstrates that studies have focused more on examining how single contextual variables influence the process. While such work is in line with the scholars’ objectives to build theory (Chen, Bliese & Mathieu, 2005), it limits our understanding of how the context influences proactivity on the team and organizational levels. Thus, while previous research suggests that team proactivity is similar to individual-level proactivity in function (Williams et al., 2010; Morgeson and Hofmann, 1999), my review suggests that scant research exists on the team level to make this assumption.

Proceeding with organization member proactivity, the contextual factors that are mainly examined in extant studies involve social ties with coworkers, supervisors and leaders and employees’ perceived influence at work (e.g., Thompson, 2005; Lui et al., 2013; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012). This approach might be ascribed to the suggestion that proactive employees must form ties with influential peers who can support their proactive behaviors, which is especially important when their proactive behavior involves change.
directed at the organization at large (Thompson, 2005). However, organization member proactivity might also be dependent on several other contextual factors. For instance, my review has clearly shown that a relatively broad range of contextual factors impact individual member proactivity, such as job design characteristics, levels of autonomy, career development opportunities and learning and development opportunities. When such opportunities are granted, employees may perceive that their employers care for their well-being. In return, they might feel more committed to the employer and put more effort into fostering organization member proactivity (Lui et al., 2013) rather than solely engaging in proactivity for personal benefits.

**What Do We Still Need to Learn About the Predictors of Workplace Proactivity?**

A comparison between proactivity studies at the individual and the team and organizational levels reveals a blind spot with regard to investigating the effect of the interplay between individual-level and contextual factors at the team and organizational levels. Below, I offer a research agenda that I hope will inspire a fresh wave of research on workplace proactivity.

Beginning with *team member proactivity*, the lack of research may relate to the difficulty of obtaining data that describe the role that contextual factors play in team outcomes (Zhou and Hoever, 2014). However, studying the interplay between individual and contextual factors and their effect on team proactivity might prove particularly interesting for the following reasons. Although individuals possess the ability to engage in proactive behaviors (i.e., individual-level factors), once they are part of teams, their proactivity will likely be influenced by the team and its members (i.e., contextual factors) (Hinsz, Tindale and Vollrath, 1997). Attempts to engage in proactivity will likely not only occur in an individual’s mind but will be shared first with the rest of the team (Zhou and Hoever, 2014), which suggests that the reaction of the team might positively or negatively influence proactivity. However, because relatively few studies have focused on proactivity at the team level (Erkutlu, 2012), I
recommend that future researchers focus first on examining more individual-level and contextual variables that influence team member proactivity separately before studying their interplay. By doing so, researchers can follow proactivity studies that examined individual-level and contextual factors of individual member proactivity (e.g., Den Hartog and Belschak, 2007; Bal et al., 2011; Ohly & Fritz, 2010) and test whether the same factors also predict team member proactivity. Proceeding then with studying their interplay, I especially recommend that researchers focus on variables that capture the composition and structure of teams, such as diversity in age, gender, ethnicity, and ambition. These variables will capture differences in ideas and attitudes toward proactivity and, hence, might explain to what extent teams support their members in engaging in proactive work behaviors.

Similarly, other avenues for future research are to further explore potentially important individual-level and contextual predictors of organization member proactivity and to examine to what extent these factors jointly influence organization member proactivity. Given that there is a large structural distance between employees and their organization at large, I recommend that future researchers particularly focus on the following contextual factors. First, because it is difficult for individuals to evaluate to what extent their proactivity will benefit their organization, it is important that organizations promote proactivity and share how employees’ proactive efforts contribute to the collective outcome (Strauss et al., 2009). Any contextual variable aimed at measuring such a contribution deserves specific attention. Additionally, in this research stream, it is also important to focus on the job positions of employees, as the job position might influence the opportunities that employees perceive to have for engaging in proactive behaviors (Berg, Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2010). An employee with a higher job position, such as a manager, might for example understand the organization’s vision and goals better than an employee with a lower job position (e.g., administrative employee). Therefore, it is likely to assume that there is a stronger positive link
between a manager and organization member proactivity. Finally, due to the multicultural settings of today’s contemporary organizations (Chua, Morris and Mor, 2012), I recommend that future researchers incorporate the original national culture of employees as an intervening contextual factor when studying the relationship between individual-level factors and the contextual factors suggested above. In line with prior work, I believe that such cultural factors influence employees’ work behaviors (Zhou and Hoever, 2014), which in turn influence their decisions to engage in proactive behaviors (Strauss et al., 2009).
Chapter 3

Money talks: The influence of compensation on employees’ taking charge behavior and career satisfaction

Abstract

Purpose: This paper investigates how compensation influences the relationship between employee ambition and taking charge behavior, and the subsequent impact on employees’ career satisfaction.

Design/methodology/approach: A two-wave quantitative investigation was conducted among alumni of a large public university in The Netherlands.

Findings: The results show that taking charge behavior increases the career satisfaction of employees with higher levels of ambition, when they receive greater compensation for that behavior. It also shows that a low compensation inhibits employees’ taking charge behavior and their subsequent career satisfaction.

Research limitations/implications: Further cross-cultural research, strengthened by more objective measurement of variables is needed to replicate the present findings.

Practical implications: The study highlights the importance of organizational compensation strategies for employees with higher levels of ambition and discusses additional management tools to encourage employees with lower levels of ambition to engage in more taking charge behaviors.

Originality/value: This is the first empirical study to examine the impact of compensation on employee willingness to engage in taking charge behavior and the subsequent implications for career satisfaction. It is also the first study to explore the related impact of ambition on perceptions of career success

Keywords: ambition, taking charge, career satisfaction, compensation
Introduction

An increasing number of people are taking responsibility for managing their own careers, rather than ceding that responsibility to managers/organizations (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015). Given the related implications for employee turnover and performance, this trend has given rise to an increasing interest in employees’ perceptions and experiences of career success and career satisfaction (e.g., Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005; Park, 2010). Indeed, assumptions about individuals as the ‘masters’ of their own careers, who define their own interpretations of career success and satisfaction is of great interest to contemporary careers scholars and practitioners alike (e.g. Haines, Hamouche & Saba, 2014; Chen, Friedman & Simons, 2014; Heslin, 2005; Colakoglu, 2011).

The current careers literature suggests that more individually defined career success can be achieved by engaging in a variety of proactive behaviors at work (Fuller & Marler, 2009). Amongst such behaviors are ‘taking charge’, engaging in organizational citizenship behaviours, and displaying self-determination to others (Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Paterson, Luthans & Jeung, 2014; Moran, Diefendorff, Kim & Liu, 2012). A key plank of this line of thinking is that individuals must be self-directed in managing their job situations and in achieving their own career success (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015). In other words, that in order to achieve a sense of satisfaction and success, they must engage in what has been defined as ‘taking charge behavior’ (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). However, as Ng and Feldman (2014) note, the major focus of much contemporary careers scholarship is on identifying those factors that promote career satisfaction (e.g., Abele & Spurk, 2009; Aryee, Chay & Tan, 1994), whereas we know very little about the factors that inhibit it. For example, a great deal of scholarly and practitioner literature focuses on the positive effects of management tools that facilitate individual proactive behavior at work such as increasing job-autonomy, managers’ leadership style, and organizational climate (e.g. Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012;
Raub & Liao, 2012). By comparison, very little is known about whether the same management tools might also inhibit career success.

In order to address this gap, more research is needed on how organizational factors might support and/or inhibit employees’ willingness to engage in taking charge behaviors and the impact on their subsequent career satisfaction (Ng & Feldman, 2014). This is a particularly important area of research given the growing body of evidence suggesting that if organizational approaches to people management are not aligned with employees’ career aspirations, their positive effects are likely to diminish and may even have a negative impact (Shipton, West, Dawson, Birdi, & Patterson, 2006; Gottschalg & Zollo, 2007).

Drawing on a larger study of graduates’ mobility, work attitudes, and career behavior, this paper reports empirical evidence of the extent to which people management tools, such as compensation, may support or inhibit employees’ proactive career behaviors and especially their willingness to engage in taking charge behaviors. Specifically, I focus on Morrison and Phelps (1999) concept of taking charge behavior as one type of career behavior which has a direct impact on job performance. I also examine the impact of this behavior on their subsequent career satisfaction (Kuijpers, Schyns & Scheerens., 2006). Given the widely acknowledged impact of personality variables on proactive work behaviors (Neal, Yeo, Koy, & Xiao, 2012) and career satisfaction (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012), I use the personality dimension ‘ambition’ as a key influence on employee behavior. Indeed, recent research has shown that this personality variable is the most important predictor for proactive behaviors (Huang, Ryan, Zabel & Palmer, 2014) and subsequent career satisfaction (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). My research agenda, then, is premised on the following two main arguments.

First, I argue that ambition will trigger employees to engage in taking charge behavior. Prior work shows that employees with higher levels of ambition actively engage in proactive
career behaviors such as taking charge (Barrick Mount & Li, 2013), because of their need for more responsibility and influence over their work (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Extending this line of enquiry further, I also argue that by engaging in taking charge behavior, such individuals will experience greater career satisfaction. This argument signals the extent to which taking charge has a mediating effect and echoes the work of other scholars who have demonstrated that proactive career behavior positively predicts career success (e.g. De Vos, De Clippeleer, & Dewilde, 2009; Forret & Dougherty, 2004). Second, I argue that more traditional HR management tools such as compensation may inhibit taking charge behavior among individuals with higher levels of ambition and their subsequent career satisfaction. This may be especially the case if they do not meet their expectations of achieving career satisfaction (i.e. moderated mediated effect). Existent literature supports this argument because compensation has been shown to have a positive impact on employees’ work behaviors and attitudes (Gupta & Shaw, 2014), but only if it is aligned with an employee’s individual career plan (Shipton, et al., 2006; Gottschalg & Zollo, 2007). Since, higher pay or compensation are important career goals for individuals with higher levels of ambition (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012), low compensation will likely inhibit their taking charge behavior and subsequent career satisfaction.

Moving on from these two key assumptions, the paper will seek to answer the following two research questions: First, how does compensation influence the relationship between employees’ ambition and their respective taking charge behavior? Second, what is the effect of this interaction on employees’ subsequent career satisfaction? Answering these two research questions will contribute to the contemporary careers literature by increasing our understanding of some of the potential barriers to career success (Ng & Feldman, 2014). Given my focus on ambition, I will also contribute to Huang and others’ work (2014) on the effects of employee ambition. Their meta-analysis has shown that ambition is the most
important predictor of employees’ proactive behavior at work (Huang et al., 2014). However, I aim to introduce a more nuanced understanding by demonstrating that there are conditions to this relationship.

I turn now to the concept of ambition and its potential outcomes, as discussed in the current literature. I will also present the hypotheses underlying my research questions. Given that my study design includes both moderated and mediated relationships among the respective variables, I draw on two-wave data in my analysis. Figure 3A displays my research model graphically.

Figure 3A: Research Model

Theoretical Background

Employee ambition and career satisfaction: The mediating role of taking charge behavior

Career satisfaction can be loosely understood as “an individual’s internal apprehension and evaluation of his or her career, across any dimensions that are important to that individual” (van Maanen, 1977, p. 9). Whereas this classic definition remains pertinent, more recent work has also highlighted the dynamism of career satisfaction and the extent to which it is impacted by personality variables (e.g. Abele & Spurk, 2009a; Joo & Ready, 2012). Employee ambition
is one of the personality variables that has been shown to have an especially positive effect on career satisfaction (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012), hence its centrality in this paper.

Extant research defines ambition as a personality variable that triggers individuals to persistently strive for success, attainment and accomplishment at work (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012 p. 759). As such, it impacts on the “things that individuals do with their personality traits (i.e., conscientiousness, openness to learning, sociability, extraversion and neuroticism) in a context” (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012, p. 760). Moreover, we can expect that the positive relationship between ambition and individual career outcomes is likely to be influenced and/or facilitated by other individual and contextual variables. Indeed, a recent review paper by Li, Barrick, Zimmerman and Chiaburu (2014) showed that there is a set of mediating variables (i.e., leadership, autonomy, empowerment, self-efficacy, social relationships, etc.) and a set of moderating variables (i.e., job autonomy, job complexity, job and social characteristics, etc.) that facilitate the relationship between personality variables and their outcomes. Extending this line of thinking further, in this paper I argue that taking charge behavior is one such variable that helps maintain and may even increase career satisfaction among ambitious employees. I present the rationale behind this argument next.

**Effects of taking charge behavior**

Taking charge is positioned in the literature as extra-role behavior that involves “voluntary and constructive efforts, by individual employees, to effect organizationally functional change with respect to how work is executed within the contexts of their jobs, work units, or organizations” (Morrison & Phelps, 1999, p. 403). Individuals who take charge in their work environment do so by offering suggestions to identify an opportunity or to improve a situation relating to their work responsibilities and expectations. (Fuller, Barnett, Hester, Relyea & Frey, 2007). Yet, this form of proactive behavior is not only directed at improving specific
work situations or events, it may also trigger employees to proactively shape their careers more generally in accordance with their own values and aspirations (Fuller & Marler, 2009).

Although anyone could conceivably engage in taking charge behavior, employees with higher levels of ambition are much more likely to do so (El Baroudi, Fleisher, Khapova & Jansen, 2013). For instance, Barrick et al. (2013) have reported that highly extraverted, ambitious employees are more likely to feel a sense of significance about what they do and especially if they can take charge of their work contexts and responsibilities. Moreover, because, such individuals tend to care about their personal work interests (Greenberg, Roberge, Ho & Rousseau, 2004), they will likely seek to engage in taking charge behavior to achieve a greater sense of work significance (Barrick et al., 2013). In a similar vein, other research has also shown that employees with higher levels of ambition also strive to achieve a higher organizational status (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). In order to accomplish increased organizational status, therefore, they are likely to engage in specific leadership activities, such as taking charge behavior and taking personal initiative (Barrick, Stewart & Piotrowski, 2002; Barrick, et al., 2013). Responding to earlier calls to examine employee work behavior with a one-year time lag (Koys, 2001), I draw the literature together by proposing the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Employee ambition (T1) is positively related to taking-charge behavior (T2).

Furthermore, I argue that engaging in taking charge behavior will help employees with higher levels of ambition to increase their career satisfaction. Indeed, prior research indicates that proactive work behavior is positively related to subjective career outcomes such as career satisfaction (Seibert, Crant & Kraimer, 1999). Likewise, Fuller and Marler (2009) argue that individuals who take the initiative to advance in their workplace (i.e., to take charge) are equally proactive with respect to their own career trajectories. These individuals, for example, are thought to engage in career-development activities, such as career planning, skill
development, and consultation with others (Seibert, Kraimer & Crant., 2001), precisely because of their need for achievement (Thompson, 2005) and motivation to learn (Major, Turner & Fletcher., 2006). In keeping with this line of enquiry, recent research has also reported that individuals with higher levels of ambition tend to engage in networking behavior because such behavior enables them to successfully advance their careers and career opportunities (e.g., Thompson, 2005; El Baroudi et al, 2013). Thus, I propose the following hypothesis:

_Hypothesis 2:_ Taking charge (T2) fully mediates the positive relationship between employee ambition (T1) and increased career satisfaction.

**The impact of low compensation on taking charge behavior and career satisfaction for employees with higher levels of ambition**

_The moderating role of compensation_

Prior work has noted that taking charge and other forms of proactive behaviors can entail a greater degree of personal risk than more passive work behaviors (Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Parker, Williams & Turner, 2006). For example, some supervisors and/or managers may see an employee’s willingness to take charge as a threat to their own position/authority (Frese & Fay, 2001), as an attempt to ingratiate (Bolino, 1999), or as an ill-timed distraction (Chan, 2006). Therefore, some employees might worry about the negative consequences of taking charge behavior (Burnett, Chiaburu, Shapiro & Li, 2013). Indeed, in their study, Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin (2003) found that 22.5% of respondents said that they worried about being punished for presenting new ideas to their respective manager/supervisor or other work colleagues. Others worried about being replaced, penalized, or losing their status as a top performer if they made suggestions about improving their work context or about increasing work performance.
These findings have stimulated a growing interest in the factors that might encourage or discourage employees from engaging in taking charge behaviors, such as providing supervisory support (Detert & Burris, 2007; Grant, Parker, & Collins, 2009), organizational support (Choi, 2007; Burnett et al., 2013) and rewards (Zhou & George, 2001). The impact of rewards may be extrinsic (i.e. rewards received for performing the job such as salary and/or promotions) (Kosteas, 2011) or intrinsic (i.e. rewards associated with the job itself such as possibilities to develop new skills) (Linz & Semykina, 2012). It is notable that extrinsic rewards have been found to be an important incentive for taking charge behavior in recent research (Burnett et al., 2013).

In this study I will report that whereas higher compensation motivates ambitious employees to engage in taking charge behavior at work, lower compensation discourage them from doing so. Current research shows that incentives may lead to greater willingness among employees to engage in innovative change behavior (i.e. taking charge), and especially among those employees who support the respective change (Kang, Morris & Snell, 2007). Since employees with higher levels of ambition usually aim to increase their levels of compensation (Lucas, Diener, Grob, Suh & Shao, 2000), lower compensation is likely to discourage them from taking charge. Especially, if they work hard and show initiative and they still don’t get rewarded for their behavior. Indeed, Barrick, et al (2013) argue that when individuals with higher levels of ambition are in a situation where there is no need to compete (i.e. extra efforts are not being appreciated and rewarded), their motivation to excel diminishes, along with their motivation to take charge. This could suggest that these employees will lack the motivation to compete at work, if they receive lower compensation. This will, in turn, negatively influence their willingness to take charge. Thus, I propose the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3:** Compensation (T1) positively moderates the positive relationship between employee ambition (T1) and taking charge (T2), with employee ambition having a
strong impact on taking-charge behavior when compensation is high than when compensation is low.

A moderated mediated effect

Given my predictions that taking charge will fully mediate the relationship between employee ambition and increased career satisfaction (Hypothesis 2) and that compensation will positively moderate the positive relationship between employee ambition and taking charge (Hypothesis 3), by extension, I also hypothesize that taking-charge behavior will offer a more viable explanation for the relationship between employee ambition and increased career satisfaction when compensation is high than when compensation is low. In other words, I expect employees with higher levels of ambition to engage in taking charge behavior and to be more satisfied at work, when their compensation is high than when it is low. I expect that the opposite will happen when compensation is low. Thus, based on the above rationale, I integrate two hypotheses into a new hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Compensation (T1) moderates the extent to which taking charge (T2) mediates the relationship between employee ambition (T1) and increased career satisfaction, taking charge is more likely to mediate this relationship when compensation (T1) is high than when compensation is low

Methods

Sample and procedure

This study was initiated in 2011 by a large public university in the Netherlands. The project is part of an ongoing longitudinal initiative to record graduates’ mobility, work attitudes, and career behavior on an annual basis. As a large-scale project, 4,880 business and economics graduates were invited to participate in a web-based survey. The survey covered concepts such as attitudes and conditions at work along with career-related behavior and background factors. The sample included alumni from both undergraduate and postgraduate programs
from 1950 to 2012. To examine potential increases in career satisfaction and the mediated
effect of taking charge, the data were collected in two phases: January 2011 (N = 558) and
June 2012 (N = 555).

The response rate varied across time (T1 = 28% and T2 = 12%) because of the higher
number of potential participants in the follow-up study. In addition to normal attrition, the
nonresponse analysis revealed that non-respondents tended to be retirees who completed the
survey in the first round only. I also suspect that other non-responses may reflect
unemployment or general disinterest in participating in the project. My selected sample (n = 181)
focuses on only those participants who had graduated at least one year before the first
phase and who were employed at the time of the survey. The sample comprised 77.3% males,
and was predominantly of Dutch nationality. The higher ratio of male respondents to females
in this study reflects the overall gender distribution among economics and business graduates.
The average age of the respondents was 37.7 years with a median age of 35 years at T1 and
38.7 years with a median age of 36 years at T2. The majority of the respondents were married
or cohabitating with children (T1: 39.8%, T2: 45.3%) or married or cohabitating without
children (T1: 34.3%, T2: 33.1%). The remainder were single with no children (T1: 21.5%,
T2: 18.8%), single with children (T1: 1.7%, T2: 0.6%), or single and living with their parents
(T1: 2.2%, T2: 1.1%). Finally, respondents described themselves as holding a wide variety of
high level positions. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 present an overview of the job positions and fields.

Table 3.1: Overview of job positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Senior Vice President</th>
<th>Vice President</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Administrative/Support Employee</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Top-level Executive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values are percentages of N = 181
Table 3.2: Overview of job fields

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Finance, Banking, and Insurance</th>
<th>Consulting</th>
<th>Business and Professional Services</th>
<th>Accounting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values are percentages of N = 181. The other fields included health care, agriculture, architecture, utilities, nonprofit sectors, retail, transportation, telecommunications, research, education, the Internet, government, wholesale, marketing, real estate, athletics, entertainment, and food services.

Measures

*Employee ambition.* The participants responded to five items from a scale developed by Gray and O’Brien (2007), such as “I hope to become a leader in my career field”; “When I am established in my career, I would like to manage other employees”; and “I hope to move up through any organization or business I work in” (1 = “strongly disagree,” 5 = “strongly agree”). I averaged the item scores to generate the total scores for employee ambition (T1 $\alpha = .77$; T2 $\alpha = .78$).

*Taking charge.* The participants also completed Morrison and Phelps’s (1999) 10-item scale for taking charge. Each of the items was prefaced with “In my job, I often…” and read as follows: “…try to adopt improved procedures for performing my job”; “…try to correct a faulty procedure or practice”; and “…try to implement solutions to pressing organizational problems.” They were invited to mark their response using a five-point scale ranging from 1, “I strongly disagree,” to 5, “I strongly agree,” with an option of “not applicable.” I averaged the item scores to generate the total scores for taking charge ($\alpha$ across waves = .91).

*Career satisfaction.* The participants responded to four items from a scale developed by Turban and Dougherty (1994). Example items are “I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career so far” and “Given my age, my career is on or ahead of schedule.” Participants were invited to indicate their response on a five-point scale ranging from 1, “I
strongly disagree,” to 5, “I strongly agree.” I averaged the item scores to generate the total scores for career satisfaction (T1 $\alpha = .82$; T2 $\alpha = .86$).

**Compensation.** The participants completed one item for compensation: What is your current salary (gross/per month)?” For this item, they were invited to use a seven-point scale ranging from 1, “1500 and less,” to 7, “7001 and more.” In line with the approach of prior studies (e.g., Joo & Ready, 2012), I also assessed the construct validity in terms of the scale multidimensionality of the proposed latent variables (i.e., confirmatory factor analysis). These analyses indicated that no common method threat to validity existed ($\chi^2 = 367.71$, TLI, CFI $\geq 0.91$, and RMSEA $\leq .05$).

**Statistical analysis**

My hypotheses focus on increased career satisfaction, and were tested using hierarchical regression analyses in IBM SPSS Statistics 21.0. To investigate the effect of the predictor employee ambition (T1) on increased career satisfaction I followed Jansen, Vinkenburg, and Khapova (2008) by entering the control variables (T1) and the T1-level of the dependent variable in the first step and the predictor (T1) in the second step. In accordance with previous studies, I also controlled for the variables bonus, work experience, marital status, age, and gender. Further, in hypotheses 3 and 4, I controlled for work hours and gender (e.g., Joo & Ready, 2012; Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995).

Following Baron and Kenny (1986 p. 1176), I tested hypotheses 1 and 2 via mediated regression analyses and on the basis of bias-corrected confidence intervals derived from 5,000 bootstrapped estimates of each path (Hayes, 2009). Next, I tested hypothesis 3 by following the same regression procedure used to test the relationship between employee ambition (T1) and increased career satisfaction. Employee ambition (T1) and compensation (T1) were grand-mean-centered before I created their product term (Aiken & West, 1991).
Finally, to test hypothesis 4, which integrates hypotheses 2 and 3 in a moderated-mediation model, I followed the procedures developed by Edwards and Lambert (2007). I tested the differences in the conditional indirect effect of employee ambition (T1) on increased career satisfaction (by controlling for career satisfaction T1) through taking charge (T2) (at a high versus low compensation value) on the basis of bias-corrected confidence intervals derived from 5,000 bootstrapped estimates of each path (Hayes, 2009). As recommended by Aiken and West (1991), I defined high and low compensation as one standard deviation above and below the mean.

Results

Descriptive statistics, internal consistency, and correlations for the study variables across waves are displayed in table 3.3. All of the study variables were positively correlated with one another, except for employee ambition (T1) and compensation (T1); taking charge (T1) and compensation (T1); and taking charge (T1) and career satisfaction (T2).

Table 3.3: Descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Compensation T1</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Compensation T2</td>
<td>11.88</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.80**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Employee ambition T1</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Employee ambition T2</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.66**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Career Satisfaction T1</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Career Satisfaction T2</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.71**</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Taking Charge T1</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>(.91)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Taking Charge T2</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>(.91)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Sample sizes for the correlations range from 174 to 181. Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients appear on the main diagonal.

* p < .05; ** p < .01
Table 3.4 summarizes my findings related to the main relationship between employee ambition and increased career satisfaction. When the T1 level of the dependent variable (T2) is controlled for, the results show that the predictor is significant beyond the control variables. Employee ambition (T1) is thus positively linked with change in career satisfaction ($b = .11$, $p < .05$). Hence, a positive relationship does exist between ambition and increased career satisfaction.

Table 3.4: Results of the regression analyses for direct relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Satisfaction T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H1:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus T1</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Experience T1</td>
<td>.48*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status T1</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age T1</td>
<td>-.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender T1</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Satisfaction T1</td>
<td>.67**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Ambition T1</td>
<td>.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.54**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values are based on the entry of all variables listed on that step. Regression coefficients are standardized values.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$
Table 3.5 shows the results of testing hypothesis 1 and the mediation hypothesis 2. Support for hypothesis 2 was achieved by showing that employee ambition (T1) is positively linked to increased career satisfaction, when career satisfaction (T1) is controlled for (see the support for my main relationship above), and to taking charge (T2) \( (b = .23, p < .01) \) (hypothesis 1). Moreover, when career satisfaction (T2) is regressed on both employee ambition (T1) and taking charge (T2) (while still controlling for career satisfaction (T1)), taking charge (T2) becomes a significant predictor \( (b = .14, p < .05) \), whereas employee ambition (T1) becomes a non-significant predictor \( (b = .05, p > .05) \) (Baron & Kenny, 1986) (95% confidence interval = .0009, .0860). Thus, hypotheses 1 and 2 are fully supported.

Table 3.5: Mediation results with bootstrapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Satisfaction T2</td>
<td>Taking Charge T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Satisfaction T1</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Ambition T1</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.10**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Satisfaction T1</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Ambition T1</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Charge T2</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values are based on the entry of all variables listed on that step. All values were tested for significance using bias-corrected confidence intervals from 5,000 bootstrapped intervals. Regression coefficients are standardized values.

* \( p < .05 \)

** \( p < .01 \)
Table 3.6 displays the results of testing hypothesis 3. As shown in the table, the relationship between employee ambition (T1) and taking charge (T2) is positively moderated by compensation (T1) ($b = .21, p < .01$), thus lending support for hypothesis 3. The pattern of the interaction was examined by plotting the interaction effect on the dependent variable one standard deviation above and below the mean of the independent variable (Aiken & West, 1991). As figure 3B shows, when compensation (T1) is low, the difference in taking-charge behavior between individuals with lower and individuals with higher levels of ambition is small. When compensation (T1) is high, however, taking-charge behavior is much more prevalent among individuals with higher levels of ambition than among individuals with lower levels of ambition. Thus, supporting my argument, lower compensation inhibits taking charge behavior among employees with higher levels of ambition. Hence, hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 3.6: Results of the regression analyses for moderating effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Taking Charge T2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H4:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Hours T1</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender T1</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Satisfaction T1</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation T1</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Ambition T1</td>
<td>.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Ambition T1 * Compensation T1</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.18**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values are based on the entry of all variables listed on that step. All independent variables are centered variables, except for control variables work hours T1 and gender T1. Regression coefficients are standardized values.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$
Finally, table 3.7 summarizes the results of hypothesis 4. Analyses involving the direct measure of increased career satisfaction (while controlling for career satisfaction T1) show that the conditional estimates of the indirect effect of employee ambition (T1) on increased career satisfaction, via taking charge T2, is less strong (but still significant) when compensation (T1) is low (-1 s.d.) ($b = .02, p < .05$) (95% confidence interval = .0007, .0656) and much stronger when compensation (T1) is high (+1 s.d.) ($b = .07, p < .05$) (95% confidence interval = .0097, .1569) (i.e. there is no boundary condition). Thus, hypothesis 4 is not supported.
Table 3.7: Moderation/mediation results with bootstrapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Conditional Indirect Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Charge T2</td>
<td>Career Satisfaction T2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Hours T1</td>
<td>-.01*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender T1</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Satisfaction T1</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation T1</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Ambition</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Ambition T1 * Compensation T1</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Hours T1</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender T1</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Satisfaction T1</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Ambition T1</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Charge T2</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation Low T1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.02*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation High T1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.53**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values are based on the entry of all variables listed on that step. The independent variables employee ambition T1 and compensation T1 are centered variables. All values were tested for significance by using bias-corrected confidence intervals from 5,000 bootstrapped intervals. Regression coefficients are standardized values.

* p < .05
** p < .01
Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which compensation influences the relationship between employee ambition and taking charge behavior, and the subsequent interaction of this influence on employees’ career satisfaction. The results from the two-wave longitudinal study, conducted among alumni of a large public university show that taking charge behavior increases career satisfaction among employees with higher levels of ambition when they receive high levels of compensation for their behavior. However, if compensation is low, employees with high levels of ambition are less likely to engage in taking charge behavior, which also reduces their career satisfaction. Specifically, my study suggests two key findings. First that taking charge fully mediates the positive relationship between employee ambition and increased career satisfaction. Second, that compensation positively moderates the relationship between employee ambition, taking charge, and increased career satisfaction, with a much stronger moderation effect when compensation is high than when compensation is low.

Taken together, these findings make two important empirical and theoretical contributions to the current careers literature as well as to the compensation and benefits literature. First, they extend previous research on employee ambition by providing clearer and more complete theoretical accounts for how and why employee ambition is related to changes in career satisfaction. Echoing prior research on personality variables and work behavior (Colbert, Barrick & Bradley., 2013), work outcomes (Hambrick, 2007), and proactive behavior (Seibert et al., 2001), I identified taking charge behavior as an important mechanism explaining the link between employee ambition and increases in career satisfaction. My findings suggest that individuals with higher levels of ambition use their proactive capabilities at work to engage in taking charge behavior, which in turn increases their career satisfaction. Although prior research has studied proactive behavior (e.g., Fuller & Marler, 2009; Seibert et
as a one-dimensional construct related to career satisfaction, my study demonstrates that it is best understood as a more nuanced concept involving different dimensions of proactive behavior, such as taking personal initiative and engaging in voice. More specifically, this more nuanced perspective should be incorporated into studies of the relationship between employee ambition and career satisfaction.

Second, the results demonstrate that individuals with higher levels of ambition are more likely to engage in taking-charge behavior and be more satisfied at work, when their compensation is high than when their compensation is low. This finding supports previous research suggesting that compensation plans must be firmly aligned with employees’ career goals in order to motivate them effectively (Shipton, et al., 2006; Gottschalg & Zollo, 2007). Furthermore, it shows that inappropriate compensation plans have the potential to inhibit employees’ career satisfaction (Ng & Feldman, 2014). This finding is especially important because it suggests that whereas compensation plans can serve to augment employee willingness to take charge of their work contexts and thus to improve performance, they can also do the reverse. This may be especially problematic among highly motivated employees as it would mean wasting an important organizational resource (El Baroudi et al, 2013).

Conversely, my study shows that compensation is not an incentive for taking-charge behavior among individuals with lower levels of ambition. Rather, it could be that these individuals have a low level of self-efficacy and therefore may feel that they are not able to take charge at work (Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012), regardless of their level of compensation. However, my findings do not speak directly to this and thus signal an area for further exploration. Indeed, this finding calls for more research on the role of compensation in the link between employee ambition and taking-charge behavior.
Study limitations and recommendations for future research

Like all studies, this study also has some limitations. First, I collected data by using a survey design, which increases my concerns about self-report bias. Although the longitudinal nature of my research enhances the validity of my findings, I acknowledge that strong causal inferences cannot be drawn from this research (Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson & Bliese, 2011). This concern is especially pertinent with regard to taking charge behavior, which is based on a self-reported measure (Love & Dustin, 2013).

Moreover, my findings relate to highly educated individuals (i.e. graduates) working in the Netherlands. Scholars have argued that the specific social situations sought by individuals in which to enact their ambitions are likely to vary across cultures (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). Thus, my study findings may not be generalizable to other cultural contexts. However, because the sample is quite diverse in terms of job position, job field, and organizations, I do not believe that this limitation of generalizability is a serious shortcoming. Other scholars may, nevertheless, consider examining the extent to which my findings can be replicated in cross-cultural research.

Implications for Organizational Practice

From a practical point of view, my research offers some important insights. First, it demonstrates that managers should remain vigilant about the impact of compensation strategies on employees with higher levels of ambition, because lower compensation may inhibit their career satisfaction. This is especially problematic; because such individuals may opt to leave an employer whom they feel is not compensating them appropriately (Shaw & Gupta, 2007). Moreover, they are likely to have more opportunities to do so precisely because of their higher levels of career proactive behavior (Nyberg, 2010). Where organizations are concerned this is especially problematic because it means that they will ultimately end up
losing those employees who were willing to put extra effort into contributing to organizational performance (El Baroudi et al., 2013).

The findings of this study have also suggested that it may be inappropriate to reward employees with lower levels of ambition. Organizations that focus on bringing positive constructive change in their workforce, should adopt other strategies (than compensation) to foster taking charge behavior of this group of employees. For instance, they might introduce management and supervisory systems to encourage positive and supportive interactions between ambitious and less ambitious coworkers. Indeed, the quality of exchanges and support of co-workers encourages individuals to engage in positive extra role behaviors (Love & Dustin, 2013). Managers and supervisor can do this by introducing teambuilding activities to improve interactions within work groups (Love & Dustin, 2013), by building developmental relations between ambitious and less ambitious employees (Joo & Ready, 2012) and by using assignments to learn less ambitious employees how to learn from their ambitious coworkers’ experiences and work behaviors (Noe, 2002).
Chapter 4

The Organizational Consequences of Ambitious Employees’ Taking Charge and Networking Behaviors

Abstract

Purpose: This paper seeks to contribute to the literature on the relationship between personality and work-related outcomes by examining the organizational consequences of ambitious employees’ taking charge and networking behaviors.

Design/methodology/approach: A two-wave investigation was conducted among alumni of a large public university in The Netherlands.

Findings: The study results demonstrate that ambitious employees contribute to a) strengthening organizational capabilities by taking charge at work and b) expanding organizational connections through instrumental networking. I also found that psychosocial networking did not mediate the relationship between employees’ ambitions and individual contributions to organizational connections.

Research limitations/implications: Future studies would benefit from examining the mediation effects using three-wave data and including more objective measurements.

Originality/value: This study is original in that it is the first that links individual ambitions to organizational core competencies.

Keywords: ambition, organizational core competencies, taking charge, networking
Introduction

Despite criticism concerning the validity of personality constructs (Murphy, 2005), both organizational scholars and practitioners have continued to regard these measurements as a relevant predictors of work-related behaviors and outcomes (Barrick, Mount, & Li, 2013; Barrick, 2005). However, research in this area has predominantly relied on the psychological five-factor model (the Big Five model) (e.g., McAdams & Pals, 2006; Chiaburu, Oh, Berry, Li, & Gardner, 2011). Consequently, scholars have increasingly called for research that extends beyond the Big Five paradigm (e.g., Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009) and incorporates other personality traits, such as ambition. Ambition is “the persistent and generalized striving for success, attainment, and accomplishment” (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012, p. 759). According to this perspective, ambition is a middle-level or level II personality variable (McAdams & Pals, 2006) that remains stable and consistent over time (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012) and tends to directly affect individual behavior (Cantor, 1990).

Individual ambition has received substantial controversial publicity in the past years. The common thread in this publicity is that ambitious employees tend to attend to their personal success in the work context (Holstad, Korek, Rigotti, & Mohr, 2014). Specifically, research shows that when ambitious employees engage in organization-supporting behavior (e.g., organizational citizenship behavior and related concepts), it is to meet their personal career goals (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Even if they take charge at work, their goal is to make themselves more visible and obtain promotion (Tangirala, Kamdar, Venkataramani & Parke, 2013). Consequently, relative to other employees, ambitious employees are likely to use different strategies for career development, including networking (Arthur, Claman & DeFillippi, 1995). Researchers have specifically addressed the concept of instrumental networking (Molloy, 2005), which focuses on a) networking to attain professional growth
opportunities, and b) networking as brokeraging (Stovel & Shaw, 2012) in pursuit of personal profit and accumulation of power.

However, a growing number of studies suggest that this negative view of individual ambitions might limit researchers’ understanding of the advantages that this individual trait potentially offers to organizations (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). Ambitious employees can serve a brokerage role not only within the organization and to their personal benefit but also among organizations and to the benefit of their employer. For example, achievement orientation of ambitious employees has the same effect on behaviors that are beneficial for both themselves and for their employing organizations (Tangirala et al., 2013). Employees scoring high on achievement orientations focus on improving task performance, which has positive effects on the well-being of the organization as well as on their personal careers (Moon, 2001). Ambitious employees also engage in citizenship behaviors such as interpersonal helping, which benefits the organization by enabling coordination at work while also serving employees’ ambitions to get ahead by allowing them to build a positive image and effective interpersonal networks (Hui, Lam, & Law, 2000).

In this paper, I address the positive consequences of an employee personality trait – individual ambition – and focus on the following question: To what extent do ambitious employees’ proactive career behaviors, such as taking charge at work and networking, lead to their contributions to their employer? In accordance with prior work, I argue that ambition directly affects employees’ work behavior (Cantor, 1990); these behaviors are likely to influence or trigger organizational outcomes (Hambrick, 2007). Because prior work found that taking charge and networking behaviors positively influence career and organizational outcomes (Fuller & Marler, 2009), I use these two work behaviors as the proactive career behaviors examined in this study. In the next section, I further develop my theoretical underpinnings and offer hypotheses.
Theory and Hypothesis Development

Ambitious Employees’ Taking Charge Behavior at Work

Morrison and Phelps (1999, p. 403) defined taking charge behavior as “voluntary and constructive efforts, by individual employees, to effect organizationally functional change with respect to how work is executed within the contexts of their jobs, work units, or organizations.” The authors argue that this form of proactive behavior focuses on the internal means of accomplishing organizational goals, such as work methods, policies, and procedures. This form of proactive behavior clearly fits within more behaviorally oriented concepts and differentiates itself from proactive personality constructs (Tornau & Frese, 2013). In this paper, I also argue that ambition is positively linked to various forms of proactive behavior, such as taking charge. In chapter 3, I have tested this relationship and found that ambition is positively related to employees’ taking charge behavior. In this chapter I draw on this finding, and suggest that ambition also relates positively to employees’ instrumental and psychosocial networking. Below, I present relevant hypotheses.

Ambitious Employees’ Networking Behavior to Enhance their Career

Higgins and Thomas (2001) studied multiple concurrent developmental relationships, namely, those relationships that individuals identify (at a single point in time) as having been important to their career development. They argued that individuals who seek emotional and appraisal support in their career engage in the development of psychosocial relationships, while career support is associated with the development of instrumental relationships. The latter are developed with senior-level individuals from inside or outside of organizations and offer employees special access to information and resources that are beneficial for their careers.

Evidence from the literature, particularly with respect to mentoring, suggests that ambitious employees tend to actively engage in instrumental networking. First, van Emmerik,
Geschiere and Schouten (2006) found that due to the agentic (i.e., ambitious) qualities and behaviors of men, they are able to use networking effectively and instrumentally to achieve career goals. Second, ambitious employees have been found to exhibit a greater propensity to become mentors at work (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997) as this activity provides them with opportunities to expand and enhance their social relationships to benefit their careers (Van Emmerik, Baugh & Euwema, 2005). Finally, in another study, Nabi (2003) argued that ambitious individuals have a more optimistic outlook regarding their future careers and, hence, are more likely to engage in developing a network of contacts for information and consultation to facilitate their career progress (Greenhaus, Collanan & Godshalk, 2000). Hence, I propose the following:

**H1:** Employees high on ambition engage in more instrumental networking.

By contrast, psychosocial relationships are developed to obtain guidance, deep emotional support (Kram, 1988), psychosocial support and companionship (Peluchette, 1993). Ambitions might be stimulated in unrealistic directions, which in turn might cause unrealistic approaches to job and career expectations and hence create work-related stress (van Emmerik et al, 2005). Because they are extremely performance oriented, ambitious employees are in need of role models or inspirational leaders who help these employees reduce negative work-related outcomes such as mental exhaustion (Mohr, Müller, Rigotti, Aycan, Tschan, 2006) and depression (Dormann & Zapf, 1999). Following recent research showing that ambitious employees indeed appreciate support at work to a greater extent than less ambitious employees (Holstad et al., 2014), I expect the following:

**H2:** Employees high on ambition engage in more psychosocial networking.
Taking Charge Behavior as a Mediator in the Relationship between Employees’ Ambitions and Their Contributions to Organizational Capabilities

In the strategic management literature, organizational capabilities are depicted as critical success factors that help organizations build and sustain a competitive advantage (Barney, 2002). While historically, organizational routines were regarded as the building blocks of organizational capabilities, more recent developments in the strategic management literature stress the importance of more “dynamic organizational capabilities” (Ouakouak, Ouedraogo, & Mbengue, 2014). Dynamic organizational capabilities are defined as an organization’s ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). According to this perspective, not only the bundle of resources but also the mechanisms by which organizations learn and accumulate new skills and capabilities are important (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1990).

By engaging in taking charge behavior, ambitious employees engage in several behaviors that are beneficial for themselves and for organizational capabilities. For example, Frese and Fay (2001) found that employees who take greater charge at work have a tendency to become more familiar with the work environment, which leads to a better accumulation of knowledge and skills. Such individuals also tend to engage more in innovative behavior (Ohly, Sonnentag, & Pluntke, 2006), which fosters new ideas, novel solutions, and optimal functioning (Fredrickson, 2000). Other research has demonstrated that these individuals report higher levels of work engagement and hence are more likely to be capable of acquiring and mobilizing new job skills and resources (Hakanen, Perhoniemi, & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008). Thus, while taking charge helps ambitious employees to develop their own personal competencies, at the same time, it allows them to contribute to organizational capabilities by bringing in new knowledge, skills and resources. Thus, I propose the following:
H3: Taking charge behavior mediates the relationship between employees’ ambitions and their individual contributions to organizational capabilities.

Networking as a Mediator in the Relationship between Employees’ Ambitions and their Contribution to Organizational Connections

Organizational connections have been described in the literature as “external contacts such as suppliers, customers, alliance partners and all other external contacts” (DeFillippi, Arthur & Lindsay, 2009). The literature appears to agree that these types of external contacts benefit organizations in several ways. For example, they provide the organization with the necessary market- or industry-specific information (Higgins & Thomas, 2001) and positively influence corporate decisions (Bae, Kang & Wang, 2011).

I suggest that the networking behavior of ambitious employees allows them to meet their personal career goals, while at the same time, it helps increase organizational connections for several reasons. First, Knoke (2001) found that the individual networking behavior of powerful and ambitious individuals, such as leaders, often creates both intra- and inter-organizational connections. Second, a large body of empirical research suggests that managers’ personal contacts facilitate organizational connections. Prior research refers to managers as ambitious employees (Diefenbach, 2007). Indeed, evidence has shown that the networking behavior of ambitious managers helps to increase the number of prospective clients (Forret & Dougherty, 2001) and strengthens supplier relations (Uzzi, 1997). Similarly, Inkpen and Tsang (2005) found that a central element of an organization’s connections is built into the supplier and customer relationships established in part through the managers’ contacts. Hence, I propose the following hypotheses:

H4: Instrumental networking mediates the relationship between employees’ ambitions and their individual contribution to organizational connections.
H5: Psychosocial networking mediates the relationship between employees’ ambitions and their individual contribution to organizational connections.

Based on the foregoing discussion, I present my conceptual model in Figure 4A.

Figure 4A: Research model

Methods

Sample and Procedure

The sample used in this study is the same sample that is used in chapter 3. Therefore tables 3.1, 3.2, 4.1 and 4.2 are identical to on and another. In line with chapter 3, this study is thus too part of the ongoing initiative to annually record graduates’ mobility, work attitudes, and career behaviors at a large public university in the Netherlands. The sample frame includes alumni from both under- and postgraduate programs from 1950 to 2012. The major advantage of using this sample is that it provided access to a large pool of working professionals (over 70,000 registered graduates as of April 2013) who share similar vocational backgrounds.

In this large-scale project, 2,000 graduates were initially invited to participate in a web-based survey, and 558 graduates returned completed questionnaires (a response rate of 28 percent). After 18 months, a second survey was sent to the initial invited participants and
to an additional 2,880 potential participants. A total of 555 graduates returned completed questionnaires for this follow-up survey (a response rate of 11 percent). However, after list-wise deletion, total panel data were obtained from 181 participants who completed both surveys. Thus, the response rate for the second-wave survey was 32 percent (181/558). Accordingly, the final attrition rate was 67 percent ((558-181)/558). Non-response analyses revealed that in addition to normal attrition, dropouts tended to be retirees who only completed the first-wave survey. I also suspect that other dropouts are related to unemployment or a general disinterest in participating in the project.

My sample (n=181) consists only of participants who had graduated at least one year prior to the first-wave survey and were employed at the time of this survey. In total, 77.3% of these individuals were males who were predominantly of Dutch nationality. The average age of the respondents was 37.7 years with a median age of 35 years at T1 and 38.7 years with a median age of 36 years at T2. The majority of the respondents were married or cohabitating with children (T1; 39.8%, T2; 45.3%) or married or cohabitating without children (T1; 34.3%, T2; 33.1%). The remaining respondents were single with no children (T1; 21.5%, T2; 18.8%), single with children (T1; 1.7%, T2; 0.6%), or single and living with parents (T1; 2.2%, T2; 1.1%). Finally, the participants described themselves as holding a wide variety of high job positions. Table 4.1 and 4.2 display an overview of the job positions and fields.

Table 4.1: Overview of job positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Senior Vice President</th>
<th>Vice President</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Administrative Employee</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Top-Level Executive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values are percentages of N = 181
Table 4.2: Overview of job fields

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Finance, Banking, &amp; Insurance</th>
<th>Consulting</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Accounting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values are percentages of N = 181.

**Measures**

All variables, unless specified otherwise, were measured at each wave using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

**Employees’ Ambitions.** The participants responded to five items from a scale developed in Gray and O’Brien (2007). This scale, typically used to measure career aspirations, was adapted for use in this study to measure employees’ ambitions. Example items are “I hope to become a leader in my career field” and “I hope to move up through any organization or business I work in”. I averaged the item scores to form total scores for the employees’ ambitions (T1 $\alpha = .77$; T2 $\alpha = .78$).

**Taking Charge.** The participants completed Morrison and Phelps’s (1999) 10-item scale for taking charge. The items were prefaced with “In my job, I often…” and, for example, read as follows: “…try to adopt improved procedures for performing my job” and “…try to implement solutions to pressing organizational problems.” The respondents used a five-point scale with an option of “not applicable.” I averaged the item scores to form total scores for taking charge ($\alpha$ across waves = .91).

**Instrumental Networking.** The participants responded to seven items from a scale developed in Higgins (2001). This scale, used to measure developmental relationships, was adapted for use in this study to measure instrumental networking. The items were prefaced with “In my network of relationships, I have people who…” and, for example, read as follows: “…provide useful experiences for me professionally” and “…open doors for me professionally” (1 = “not at all,” 5 = “to a great extent”). I averaged the item scores to form total scores for instrumental networking ($\alpha$ across waves = .92).
**Psychosocial Networking.** The participants responded to six items from a scale developed in Higgins (2001). I again adapted this scale to measure psychosocial networking. The items were prefaced with “In my network of relationships, I have people who…” and, for example, read as follows: “…coach me on difficult work-related issues” and “…counsel me on work and non-work-related issues” (1 = “not at all,” 5 = “to a great extent”). I averaged the item scores to form total scores for psychosocial networking (T1 $\alpha = .90$; T2 $\alpha = .88$).

**Individual Contribution to Organizational Capabilities.** This variable is part of the Individual Contributions to Organizational Core Competencies multidimensional scale devised by Fleisher, Khapova, and Jansen (2014). Participants responded to an eight-item scale measuring individual contributions to organizational capabilities. An example item includes “I use what I learn outside my organization in my work”. I averaged the item scores to form total scores for individual contribution to organizational capabilities (T1 $\alpha = .80$; T2 $\alpha = .86$).

**Individual Contribution to Organizational Connections.** The participants responded to five items from Fleisher et al.’s (2014) scale. The items were prefaced with “In my work,…” and, for example, read as follows: “…I take notice of professionals outside my organization who can be helpful”. I averaged the item scores to form total scores for the individual contribution to organizational connections (T1 $\alpha = .84$; T2 $\alpha = .83$).

**Control Variables.** I began with a list of variables that may be related to ambitions, taking charge, and instrumental and psychosocial networking at work. These variables have been employed as controls in prior research and include gender, age, education, organizational tenure, organizational size, and work experience (cf., Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Higgins & Thomas, 2001). I did not control for differences in education because all participants graduated from the same university and were highly educated. I followed the strategy used by Singh, Ragins and Tharenou (2009) when selecting
control variables in their study. Only gender, age, and work experience correlated with my dependent variables, but I controlled only for gender (1 = male, 2 = female) in all analyses because gender had a low inter-correlation with age ($r = -.28, p < .01$) and work experience ($r = -.27, p < .01$).

**Statistical Analysis**

MacKinnon, Fairchild, and Fritz (2007) argued that mediation requires temporal precedence, with intervals of equal duration from X to M to Y. To have intervals of equal duration (I had two waves of data), I calculated the mean for each mediator at times 1 and 2 and used these recomputed variables as mediators in the analyses. Moreover, to avoid any methodical issues, I first tested the measurement models for each variable. These analyses showed that the factor structures of the research variables were consistent across waves ($\chi^2 = 5737.31$, NNFI, CFI $\geq 0.93$, and RMSEA $\leq .05$). Next, I followed a recent study of Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson and Bliese (2011) and tested my mediation hypotheses by constructing bias-corrected confidence intervals from 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2009). In line with this study, I also used Baron and Kenny’s (1986, p. 1176) path diagram model to test whether there is a mediation effect.

**Results**

The descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables are displayed in table 4.3. All study variables were positively correlated with one another. The control variable gender was only (negatively) related to taking charge (T1) ($r = -.16, p < .05$), individual contribution to organizational capabilities (T1) ($r = -.18, p < .05$), and individual contribution to organizational connections (T2) ($r = -.15, p < .05$).
Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics and correlation among the study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Employees' Ambitions T1</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td></td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Employees' Ambitions T2</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Taking Charge T1</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Taking Charge T2</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Instrumental Networking T1</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Instrumental Networking T2</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Psychosocial Networking T1</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Psychosocial Networking T2</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Individual Contribution to Organizational Capabilities T1</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Individual Contribution to Organizational Capabilities T2</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Individual Contribution to Organizational Connections T1</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Individual Contribution to Organizational Connections T2</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Sample sizes for the correlations range from 174 to 181. The variable gender is from time 1.

* Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients appear on the main diagonal.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$
Direct Links of the Research Model

Table 4.4 shows the standardized regression results of the regression analyses that tested the direct relationships of my research model. The equations explained significant variance in taking charge (T1; $F = 21.42$, $R^2 = .20$, $p < .01$) (T2; $F = 8.79$, $R^2 = .09$, $p < .01$), instrumental networking (T1; $F = 4.99$, $R^2 = .05$, $p < .01$) (T2; $F = 13.07$, $R^2 = .13$, $p < .01$), psychosocial networking (T1; $F = 6.93$, $R^2 = .07$, $p < .01$) (T2; $F = 7.14$, $R^2 = .07$, $p < .01$), individual contribution to organizational capabilities (T2) ($F = 7.44$, $R^2 = .77$, $p < .01$), and individual contribution to organizational connections (T2) ($F = 9.58$, $R^2 = .10$, $p < .01$).

The signs on the standardized regression coefficients suggest that employees’ ambitions positively predicted taking charge (T1; $b = .42$, $p < .01$) (T2; $b = .30$, $p < .01$) (thus confirming the finding in chapter 3), instrumental networking (T1; $b = .23$, $p < .01$) (T2; $b = .36$, $p < .01$), psychosocial networking (T1 & T2) ($b = .27$, $p < .01$), individual contribution to organizational capabilities (T2) ($b = .24$, $p < .01$), and individual contribution to organizational connections (T2) ($b = .26$, $p < .01$). The control variable gender did not have a significant effect on the direct positive relationships. Taken together, these results provide full support for hypotheses 1 and 2.
Table 4.4: Results for direct relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Charge T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees' Ambitions</td>
<td>.42**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>.03*</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values are based on the entry of all variables listed on that step. The variable gender is from time 1. Regression coefficients are standardized values.

* p < .05

** p < .01
Mediation Effects of the Research Model: Bootstrapping Analysis Results

Baron and Kenny (1986) suggest that support for mediation hypotheses is attained when the independent variable positively relates to the outcome variables and to the mediator (the analyses showed significant results for the direct links of my research models). Support is also attained when the outcome variable is regressed on both the independent variable and the mediator, and the mediator is a significant predictor whereas the dependent variable becomes an insignificant predictor.

Following the aforementioned, Table 4.5 (model 1: H3) shows that the mediator taking charge meets all mediation conditions; employees’ ambitions (T1) positively relates to the mediator taking charge in step 1 ($b = .32, p < .001$). In step 2, employees’ ambitions (T1) becomes an insignificant predictor ($b = .08, p > .05$), whereas the mediator taking charge becomes a significant predictor ($b = .32, p < .001$) (95% confidence interval = .0415, .1982). Thus, hypothesis 3 is supported.
Table 4.5: Mediation results with bootstrapping: Model 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees' Ambitions</td>
<td>.32***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.18***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees' Ambitions</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Charge</td>
<td>.32***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.17***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The independent variable employees' ambitions and the control variable gender are from time 1. The dependent variable individual contribution to organizational capabilities is from time 2. The mediator taking charge is the mean of times 1 and 2. The coefficients are standardized $B$ values. All values were tested for significance using bias-corrected confidence intervals from 5,000 bootstrapped intervals.

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

Table 4.6 (model 2: H4) shows that employees’ ambitions (T1) positively relate to the mediator instrumental networking in step 1 ($b = .37, p < .001$). In step 2, employees’ ambitions (T1) becomes an insignificant predictor ($b = .14, p > .05$), whereas the mediator instrumental networking becomes a significant predictor ($b = .32, p < .001$) (95% confidence interval = .0585, .1992), supporting hypothesis 4.
Table 4.6: Mediation results with bootstrapping: Model 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Employees’ Ambitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.11***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 2:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees’ Ambitions</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental Networking</td>
<td>.32***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.21***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The independent variable employees’ ambitions and the control variable gender are from time 1. The dependent variable individual contribution to organizational connections is from time 2. The mediator instrumental networking is the mean of times 1 and 2. The coefficients are standardized B values. All values were tested for significance using bias-corrected confidence intervals from 5,000 bootstrapped intervals.

* p < .05  
** p < .01  
*** p < .001  

The final table 4.7 (model 3: H5) shows that employees’ ambitions (T1) positively relate to the mediator psychosocial networking in step 1 (b = .32, p < .001). Concerning the final mediation criteria, in step 2, the mediator psychosocial networking becomes a significant predictor (b = .25, p < .001), whereas the independent variable employees’ ambitions (T1) only decreases in significance (b = .18, p < .05) (95% confidence interval = .0296, .1576). Thus, hypothesis 5 is not supported.
Table 4.7: Mediation results with bootstrapping: Model 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Psychosocial Networking</td>
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<td><strong>Step 1:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees’ Ambitions</td>
<td>.32***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.10***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees’ Ambitions</td>
<td>.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial Networking</td>
<td>.25***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.16***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The independent variable employees’ ambitions and the control variable gender are from time 1. The dependent variable individual contribution to organizational connections is from time 2. The mediator psychosocial networking is the mean of times 1 and 2. The coefficients are standardized $B$ values. All values were tested for significance using bias-corrected confidence intervals from 5,000 bootstrapped intervals.

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

I also conducted the Sobel test to attest to the validity of my mediation effects by making use of MacKinnon and Dwyer’s (1993) formula. The Sobel test results (two-sided) indicated that there is indeed only a significant mediation effect for taking charge ($T = 3.60, p < 0.001$) and instrumental networking ($T = 2.86, p < 0.01$).
Discussion

The purpose of this study is to advance the extant literature regarding the relationship between personality and work-related outcomes. In particular, I address recent concerns relating to the “dark side” of personality traits such as ambition (Spain, Harms & Lebreton, 2014) and suggest that ambition can offer potential benefits to organizations. Specifically, I conducted a two-wave study among alumni of a large public university to examine the relationship between employees’ ambitions and their individual contribution to organizational core competencies: capabilities and connections. I also proposed that two individual behaviors—taking charge and networking—mediate this relationship. My results yield the following conclusions:

- Employees’ ambitions predict individual contributions to organizational capabilities and connections.
- Taking charge fully mediates the relationship between employees’ ambitions and their contribution to organizational capabilities.
- Employees’ instrumental networking fully mediates the relationship between employees’ ambitions and their contribution to organizational connections.

With these findings, I make several important and novel contributions to the extant management and organizational behavior literature. Specifically, I demonstrate that there is a positive side to the personality trait of ambition for organizations.

First, with evidence of the link between employees’ individual ambitions and their contributions to organizational core competencies, I contribute to scholarly debates concerned with increasingly individual employee orientations and their decreasing commitment to their employers (Dickmann & Mills, 2010). My study contributes to newly emerging evidence that individual career orientations and individual ambitions can also be beneficial for organizations. For example, Somaya, Williamson, and Lorinkova (2008) recently
demonstrated that when patent attorneys leave their law firms for better job opportunities at their customers’ organizations, their former employers receive more new contracts from these customers. In turn, Agrawal, Cockburn, and McHale (2006), through their study of reallocated inventors, showed that knowledge flows to an inventor's prior location are approximately 50% greater than if they had never been at that location. Through my measurement instrument of individual contributions to organizational core competencies, I examined the extent to which individuals bring their contacts and relationships to the projects that they work on. I also examined the extent to which ambitious employees bring knowledge and competencies acquired elsewhere to their present employer. I hope that my study will inspire many more investigations into the organizational consequences of employees’ contemporary career orientations and behaviors.

Second, this study extends the literature on the role of employees in taking charge and shaping organizational capabilities. Specifically, I found that ambitious employees are likely to take charge and thus contribute to the formation of an organization’s practices and routines. This finding is consistent with the literature on taking charge and proactive behaviors, which suggests that employees who engage in these behaviors to a greater extent individually contribute to organizations by creating new and better knowledge (Frese & Fay, 2001; Fredrickson, 2000) and by acquiring and mobilizing new job resources (Hakanen, et al., 2008). A recent review of various concepts of proactive behavior at work suggested that taking charge is an especially important concept because it captures employees’ self-directed behavior, which is focused on improving work and changing internal organizational environments (Tornau & Frese, 2013). Self-directed behavior has also been associated with the ability to positively influence colleagues (Parker & Collins, 2010). Thus far, however, scholars have primarily studied the antecedents and consequences of taking charge solely on an individual level. Among some of the associated constructs are the Big Five personality
traits (Tornau & Frese, 2013), job performance (Thomas, Whitman & Viswesvaran, 2010), and performance evaluations (Grant, Parker & Collins, 2009). More research is needed to examine the concept’s relationship with a broader range of individual and organizational constructs.

Third, I contribute to the literature by demonstrating the mediating role of networking behavior on the individual contributions of ambitious employees to organizational connections. I found that instrumental networking is especially beneficial, while psychosocial networking is less important. My finding concerning instrumental networking is consistent with the literature on networking behaviors at work, which suggests that employees who are more active in developing personal relationships contribute individually to organizations by increasing their number of external contacts (i.e., prospective clients, supplier relations, customer relations) (e.g., Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Uzzi, 1997; Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). My finding concerning psychosocial networking indicates that organizations do not benefit from all employees’ networking behaviors. Specifically, my findings indicate that the purpose of networking might determine its importance. These findings are in line with network behavior research, which suggests that networking activities are oriented toward achieving specific goals (Vissa, 2012). More research is needed to examine the mediating effects of different types of networking behaviors at work on the link between employees’ ambitions and their individual contributions to organizational connections.

Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

My study has limitations that should be acknowledged and addressed in future research. First, as previously mentioned, I had only two waves of data, which could pose a challenge for investigating mediation effects. I measured my mediators at two time points and studied the mean effect (of the two times) of the mediators in hypotheses 4, 5, and 6. Hence, I cannot rule out the possibility that my mediation results resulted from common method bias (i.e., variance
that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs that the measures represent) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). Nevertheless, two waves of data can be utilized to analyze causal mediation (Hakanen et al., 2008), and therefore I believe that my asserted causal inferences are confirmed in my data analysis.

Another weakness of my measurement method is the reliance on self-reported data. Relationships between variables measured with the same method, usually self-reported surveys, are widely argued to be inflated owing to the action of mono-method bias or common method variance (Podsakoff et al, 2012). Concerns about inflated relationships are minimized through my study design regarding the direct links. Because I used the measurement of my predictors (T1) and outcomes (T2) from different time points, transient mood effects are less likely to explain my direct relationships (Kammeyer-Mueller, Livingston, & Liao, 2011).

Finally, given the relatively high attrition rate of my sample, I should be cautious about generalizing the study data to the originally examined population. However, I minimized this risk by comparing participants who completed both surveys with individuals who only completed the first survey (Menard, 1991). In particular, I conducted t-tests and $\chi^2$ analyses of key demographic characteristics and found no significant differences between respondents and non-respondents. Thus, although the sample size examined in this study is small, the sample should be marginally sufficient for data analysis.
Chapter 5

The Effects of Age on Job Crafting:
Exploring the Motivations and Behavior of Younger and Older Employees in Job Crafting

Abstract

Purpose:
This paper contributes to the job-crafting theory of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) by exploring the effects of age on job-crafting behaviors (i.e., task crafting, relational crafting and cognitive crafting) and on job-crafting motivations (i.e., the need for personal control, the desire to create and sustain a positive self-image and the need for human connection).

Design/methodology/approach:
Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 younger and 15 older employees (n=31) at a socially responsible non-profit organization in the Netherlands. The qualitative data were analyzed in two major steps: 1) identifying job-crafting motivations and behaviors in older and younger employees and 2) identifying and comparing the differences in the job-crafting motivations and behavior between older employees and younger employees.

Findings:
I found that both older and younger employees are likely to engage in job-crafting behavior to assert control over their jobs and to create a positive self-image. However, younger employees may have two competing motivations (personal control and positive self-image) for engaging in such job-crafting behavior. Whereas both younger and older employees engage the most in task crafting, younger employees are more likely to engage in all three types of job-crafting behavior; additionally, I found that the three different forms of job-crafting behavior in younger employees occur in conjunction with one another.

Research limitations/implications:
This study contributes to the original job-crafting model of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) by including the effect of age in the model, and by demonstrating the importance of studying the three original main job-crafting motivations and behaviors separately from one another.

**Practical implications:**
This paper addresses the multigenerational challenges of the contemporary workforce. It demonstrates that managers may play a pivotal role in stimulating older employees to engage in job-crafting behaviors by informing them about job-crafting strategies and providing them with more opportunities to engage in job crafting.

**Originality/value:**
This paper is original in that it re-examines, refines and enriches the job-crafting model of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), which is receiving a growing interest among researchers and business practitioners.

**Key words:** job crafting, age, older employees, younger employees, motivations
Introduction

The concept of job crafting, which is defined as “the physical and cognitive changes that individuals proactively make in the task and relational boundaries of their work” (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 179), has received much interest from both researchers and practitioners (Bakker, 2010; Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2013). However, perhaps because they were inspired by the concept’s agentic perspective on employees, few authors have engaged in re-examining, refining and/or enriching the original job-crafting model. Instead, most emerging papers have consisted of tests of the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) model in various populations and work contexts (e.g., Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski, 2008; Leana, Appelbaum & Shevchuk, 2009). To my knowledge, only the study by Berg, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2010) examines the original job-crafting model. Their study concludes that the process of job crafting is much more complicated than the original theoretical paper from Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) suggests. For example, whereas the model treats perceived opportunities to craft as fixed limits, Berg et al (2010) found that perceived challenges limit the opportunities that employees see for job crafting.

In this paper, I propose that the influence of age on job crafting is another important aspect of job crafting that received scant attention from Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) in their original work. To illustrate, life-span theorists propose that individuals go through different trajectories of development across their lifetimes. These experiences (work and non-work) influence the development of skills and work beliefs and may, in turn, contribute to work motivations across life spans (Kanfer & Ackermann, 2004 p.442). Indeed, Kooij, de Lange, Jansen, Kanfer and Dikkers (2011) found in their study that the relationship between age and work motivations is significant, meaning that work motivations do change across the life span. This finding suggests that the job-crafting motivations of older and younger employees might be different and that therefore the actual job-crafting behaviors could also
be different. How older and younger employees engage in job crafting and what their job-crafting motivations are remains unknown in research on job crafting. In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study also has important implications for practice. Given the aging workforce (Avery, McKay & Wilson, 2007), addressing this issue is timely and may help managers better understand how their older and younger employees engage in this form of proactive behavior.

The purpose of this article is to enrich the job-crafting model of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) by including the effects of age in the model. I explored the different job-crafting behaviors of older and younger employees and the motivations that shape these behaviors. To accomplish my goal, I undertook a qualitative study in 2010 and conducted 31 interviews with employees at a socially responsible non-profit organization in the Netherlands. Before presenting my eventual findings, I present a brief theoretical review of the effects of age on job crafting.

**Job Crafting Model: A Brief Review**

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) define job crafting as “the physical and cognitive changes that individuals proactively make in the task and relational boundaries of their work” (p. 179). In doing so, employees engage in three forms of job crafting behavior. The first form, *task crafting*, involves changing the job’s task boundaries by changing the number, scope or type of job tasks performed at work. The second form, *relational crafting*, entails changing the relational boundaries of the job, which involves changing either the quality and/or the amount of interaction with others at work. Employees can decide how frequently they wish to interact with others on the job and can also determine the quality of those interactions. The third form, *cognitive crafting*, occurs when employees change the cognitive task boundaries of their jobs, which may take many different forms, according to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001); one way involves altering how one sees the job (either as a set of discrete work tasks or as an
integrated whole). This form of job-crafting behavior often stimulates employees to change how they approach their jobs.

The motivation for job crafting arises from three individual needs. Job crafting will often result from situations in which employees believe that their needs are not being met in their job as it is currently designed (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001 p.183). The first motivation is the need for personal control. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argue that having or taking control over job tasks or the overall purpose of work constitutes a basic human need for individuals because it will help them avoid alienation from work (Rogers, 1995; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001 p.179/181). The second motivation concerns the desire to create and sustain a positive sense of self in one's own eyes (Steele, 1988; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001 p.183) and in the eyes of others (Baumeister, 1982; Erez & Earley, 1993; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001 p.183). This motivation arises when employees have jobs that make the positive construction of the self difficult. Employees will change the tasks and relationships that comprise their jobs to enable a more positive sense of self to be expressed and confirmed by others. The third motivation concerns a need for human connection and arises because individuals are motivated to forge connections with others as a means of introducing meaning into their lives (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001 p.183).

**Age and Motivations for Job Crafting**

Several theories implicitly or explicitly suggest that work motivations change as individuals become older. For example, the life-span developmental theory proposes that individuals experience shifts in the availability of internal and external resources throughout their life span. Whereas younger adults are typically on a trajectory of growth or gains in resources, older adults are faced with growing loss (Baltes & Smith, 2003; Brandstädter, 1998; Freund, 2006). According to Freund (2006), this finding implies that younger adults are more likely to
be motivated to achieve higher levels of performance than to counteract losses. Conversely, older adults are likely to show greater motivation to counteract losses than to optimize their level of performance. Thus, the life-span developmental theory suggests that the job-crafting motivations of both younger and older employees arise because of a need for personal control. However, for younger employees, this motivation is expressed as a need to control their performances, whereas for older employees, it is expressed as a need to control losses.

Research by McAdams, Aubin and Logan (1993) suggests that generativity motives – the tendency to care for others and help the broader society and future generations – increase with age. Kanfer and Ackermann (2004) argue that employees who are driven by generativity motives will focus their attention on the process and collaborative nature of goal accomplishments at work. Compared with younger employees, older employees will be more likely to seek human connections.

Therefore, I expect significant differences in individual motivations for job crafting among younger and older employees. Although existing theories concerned with age differences speculate about what the possible differences might be, research exploring employee motivations for job crafting is needed to clarify these differences.

**Age and Job Crafting Behaviors**

De Lange, Taris, Jansen, Kompier, Houtman and Bongers (2009) suggest that, due to their accumulated work experience, older employees have led careers that better fit their self-concept than their younger colleagues. In addition, Edwards, Cable, Williamson, Schurer, Lambert and Ship (2006) argue that older employees typically have occupations with more job control than their younger colleagues. Because two individual needs (personal control and positive self-image) are expected to be more fulfilled by older employees, I assume that older employees will engage less in job crafting than their younger peers. I continue by relating existing theory about age to the three types of job-crafting behaviors.
Age and Task Crafting

Older and younger employees are likely to engage differently in task crafting, which may be explained by the differences in the work style ascribed to both groups. A person’s work style refers to his/her approach to problems and outlook on work-related issues (Williams, Parker & Turner, 2007). Older employees have been found to have a more routinized work style than their younger peers (Maurer, 2001). In particular, Yeatts, Folts and Knapp (2000) have shown that older employees invest more time and energy in the traditional or routinized approach to performing job tasks. This approach is by contrast to younger employees who have gained their experience in a work environment in which flexibility is the norm (Yeatts & Hyten, 1998; Yeatts et al, 2000). In a similar vein, Furunes and Mykletun (2005) found that older employees approach job tasks differently and have a professionalism related to the job routine that younger employees do not have.

Additionally, it has been argued that older employees will not accept a different work style than their own (Garg, 1991). Consistent with this argument, older employees were found to be less receptive to new ideas, less adaptable and more rigid than younger employees (Maurer, 2001). In light of these theories, I expect older employees to be less motivated (than younger employees) to craft their tasks.

Age and Relational Crafting

I further suggest that older and younger employees craft their relational boundaries at work differently. Several theories and related streams of literature support this suggestion. One example is the relational demography theory. Relational demography refers to an individual’s demographic characteristics that are relative to a referent other or group (Goldberg, 2005; Armstrong-Stassen & Lee 2009). Relational age denotes how an individual’s age compares with the actual or perceived age distribution within the organization, work group, or
supervisor–subordinate dyad (Armstrong-Stassen & Lee, 2009). In her study, Lawrence (1990) found that higher proportions of younger peers in work groups are likely to lead older employees to have less trust in their group members; involving a greater number of older peers would stabilize the work group and lead to better relationships (Finkelstein, Burke & Raju, 1995). The effect of perceived relative age is particularly salient for older employees (Cleveland & Shore, 1992).

The socio-emotional selectivity life-span theory from Carstensen, Pasupathi, Mayr and Nesselroade (2000) offers another explanation, which suggests that individuals select goals in accordance with their perceptions of the future as being limited or open-ended (Lang & Carstensen, 2002), and this selection in turn affects how they craft their social interactions. For example, younger generations perceive time as open-ended (holding a “time since birth” perspective) and are likely to be motivated by growth- or knowledge-related goals that can be useful in the more distant future, which includes acquisition of new information and new contacts. By contrast, older generations perceive time as a constraint (holding a “time till death” perspective) and are more motivated by achieving short-term emotion-related goals, such as deepening one’s existing relations (de Lange et al, 2009).

In light of these streams of literature, I expect that both older and younger employees will be likely to engage in relational job crafting – with certain significant differences, however. In particular, I expect the following: older employees are likely to be more motivated to improve the quality of their relationships and increase the amount of interaction they have with their fellow peers. By contrast, I expect that younger employees are likely to be more motivated to increase the amount of interaction they have by forming new relationships.
Age and Cognitive Crafting

As opposed to older employees, younger employees are described in the literature as individuals who continuously want to learn (Lang & Carstensen, 2002) and acquire new information (de Lange et al, 2009). Moreover, there are more possibilities to gain knowledge for younger employees compared to older employees. For example, the literature on older employees suggests that similarly situated older employees may be treated less favorably than younger employees with respect to access to training (Maurer, 2001) and that older employees have less access to employer-funded and employer-provided training than younger employees have (Armstrong-Stassen & Lee, 2009). Younger employees can use the acquired new knowledge to think of different and more efficient ways of performing tasks, whereas older employees are less able to do so. In turn, younger employees are more likely to change the way they think about their work than older employees and to change the way they approach their jobs, which is a consequence of cognitive crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Based on this literature, I expect that younger employees are likely to be more motivated to engage in cognitive crafting.

If older employees engage in this form of job crafting, I suggest that this behavior arises because of their interpersonal relationships at work. As has been previously argued, older employees will be more motivated to deepen their existing relationships at work (de Lange et al, 2009 p.5). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) found that such relationships provide a direction for knowledge sharing. I therefore assume that older employees might change the way they think about job performances because of the experiences of their colleagues. Job meaning results from the influential information offered by other employees about their experience of the tasks that embody work (Wrzesniewski, Dutton & Debebe, 2003).

Although the literature allows us to make different assumptions about the effects of age on job-crafting motivations and behaviors, it says nothing about the actual motivations
and behaviors of older and younger employees. I seek to redress this shortcoming by including the effect of age in the original job-crafting model of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001).

**Methods**

**Context and Sample**

My aim was to elaborate theory around the forms of job crafting as defined by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) by exploring the effects of age on job-crafting motivations and behaviors. Although the authors previously have applied themselves to distinguish main job-crafting motivations and behaviors, no scholars have yet studied how and why older employees engage in these behaviors compared to younger employees. Thus, this study fits the criteria of using a qualitative study design. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 19) noted: “Qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known. It can be used to gain novel and fresh slants on things about which quite a bit is already known.”

I searched for an age diverse sample that would allow me to divide participants into groups of older employees (aged 45+) and younger employees (aged 44 and younger) to compare their job-crafting motivations and behaviors. Kooij, de Lange, Jansen and Dikkers (2009) found that researchers who examine older employees in organizations often put the threshold at 40 or 45, while other authors have described older employees as aged 45+ (Ilmarinen, 2001; Tikkanen, 1999; Furunes & Mykletun, 2005). Applying this criterion, I conducted this research in a socially responsible non-profit organization that aims at providing care and assistance to homeless and socially vulnerable citizens. This organization is located in the Netherlands with approximately 202 employees (and a number of volunteers and trainees). Employees in the sample occupy managerial positions (positions that require
higher educational levels) and operational positions (positions that require lower educational levels). For the most part, employees work with little direct supervision and have a high degree of decision latitude in their jobs.

My sample was selected based on two criteria. First, because I sought to compare different job-crafting motivations and behaviors of older and younger employees, the sample had to consist of a group of 15 older and a group of 15 younger employees. Second, the sample had to be selected by making use of theoretical sampling techniques, which are supposed to decrease the prevalence of biases in samples and increase their representativeness (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007, p. 218). To meet this last criterion, all employees were divided into two groups: one group of older employees (aged 45+) and one group of younger employees (aged 44 and younger). Older and younger employees were randomly selected from both groups and invited by email to participate in the study. My final sample consisted of 16 younger employees who all occupy operational positions and 15 older employees. Out of these 15 older employees, four occupy managerial positions, and the others occupy operational positions.

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection involved semi-structured interviews (n=31). I used the interview protocol of Berg et al (2010), whose interview protocol explored how employees describe their perceptions of and experiences with job crafting. In each interview, questions were posed about the following. First, I asked about the three different job-crafting behaviors in the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) model. I sought to pose these questions in a general way such that participants were encouraged to describe their own beliefs and assumptions. According to Saunders et al (2007 p.318), this approach is a good way of overcoming interviewer bias (where interviewers create a bias in responses). If participants did not understand a specific question, general examples of job crafting were given. Second, I asked
about the job crafting motivations behind such behavior. Third, and finally, I asked about desired job crafting behavior. Because certain jobs and tasks tend to provide more opportunities for job crafting behavior than others (Lyons, 2008), this last question was asked to explore the desired job crafting behavior of participants who occupy jobs that provide fewer opportunities for job crafting.

The interviews were performed at the workplace of the participants. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by utilizing data sampling, which restricts transcribing to the sections of interviews that are pertinent to specific research questions (Saunders et al, 2007 p.475). In this study, the only interview sections transcribed were those in which participants mentioned a proactive behavior that they had previously undertaken or wanted to undertake and that fit in the three different job-crafting behaviors of the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) model. Additionally, their job crafting motivations were also transcribed.

Data Analysis

In an iterative fashion, I analyzed the qualitative data by traveling back and forth among the data. This analysis utilized two major steps.

*Step 1: Identifying the job-crafting motivations and behaviors of older and younger employees.* I began by employing three coding schemes for each individual job-crafting behavior. The categories of the coding schemes were derived from the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) model, which meant that I used a directed approach in my qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). According to Saunders et al (2007 p. 479), this approach is a good way of creating meaningful categories for classifying data. The first coding scheme was employed to analyze how participants engaged in task crafting. According to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), employees engage in task crafting by altering the form or number of activities they engage in while doing a job. I used these two activities as the categories for the first coding scheme. The second coding scheme was employed to analyze
how participants engaged in relational crafting. Because this practice involves changing either
the quality or amount (or both) of interaction with others at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton
2001), I used these two activities as the categories for this coding scheme. The last coding
scheme was employed to analyze how the participants engaged in cognitive crafting.
According to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), this activity refers to altering how one sees a
job. I used this activity as the category for this last coding scheme. Finally, to analyze the job-
crafting motivations of participants, a motivations category was added to all coding schemes
with three subcategories: (1) personal control, (2) positive self-image and (3) human need for
connection to others.

Because the transcripts consist only of proactive behaviors that fit into the three
individual job-crafting behaviors and job-crafting motivations of the Wrzesniewski and
Dutton (2001) model, I was able to assign quotes to the right coding schemes. The data of the
older and younger employees were coded separately. After having coded the data of all
participants according to the coding schemes, the transcripts were read again to make sure that
no relevant data were missing.

Step 2: Comparing and identifying the differences between the job-crafting
motivations and behaviors of older and younger employees. In this phase, I integrated all
three coding schemes into one. I used the coding schemes from the first phase to note how
often participants mentioned engaging or wanting to engage in the three different job-crafting
behaviors and how often they mentioned the three different job-crafting motivations. These
data were coded separately for both groups, which allowed me to compare the data from both
groups. Next, I offer a brief overview of my findings, followed by a discussion of how my
findings elaborate the job-crafting theory. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the
implications of my study for job-crafting theory.
Findings

In this section, I present my findings and use them to describe how older and younger employees engaged in the three job-crafting behaviors and what their job-crafting motivations are. I also include a table with examples of job-crafting behaviors and motivations that were given by several participants.

Task Crafting: Altering the form of activities

Older employees

Most of the older employees described making proactive changes to the form of their assigned job activities by changing the way they performed their tasks. Consistent with Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), asserting more control over their jobs and creating a positive self-image were among their key motivations. The main motivator, which is the desire to assert more control over their jobs, arose from the need for work efficiency. The need to create and sustain a positive self-image arose when employees are not satisfied with the content of their jobs and when they had the belief that their colleagues were not satisfied with their job performances.

Additionally, I found that the key motivators also occurred in conjunction with one another. One of the home assistants explained how he made his job more challenging (positive self-image) and how this change could help him perform his work better (personal control): I felt that my job was actually more appropriate for lower-skilled employees, because I was only busy with practical things. For example, serving food to clients. I wanted more of a challenge... so I started to talk with clients about their personal problems. That was really interesting, and I learned more about my clients, which is useful for the performance of my work. (participant 18, home assistant)
Younger employees
Younger employees also engaged in this activity by changing the way they performed their tasks to work more efficiently. Unlike older employees, younger employees were thus only motivated to assert control over their work. Several younger employees also mentioned changing how they performed their tasks because they noticed that their colleagues worked more efficiently. In these cases, a cognitive change with respect to tasks occurred and triggered task crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). For example, a facility manager explained changing her thoughts about how to do archival work because of a colleague, which forced her to change how she performed this task. To illustrate: *I am not really good at archival work, but I need to do this work anyway. I have a colleague who can do it a lot better and faster than me. So whenever he does the archival work, I try to observe what he is really doing. He brings structure to his work and I am now trying to do that as well. Otherwise this archival work will remain a never-ending task.* (participant 3, facility manager)

Task Crafting: Altering the number of activities

Older employees

Almost all older employees described altering the number of their assigned job activities by increasing the number. Employees occupying higher positions discussed engaging in this behavior to assert control over their job performance. Other employees had the desire to create and sustain a positive self-image by feeling that they had the ability and expertise to do more tasks or other tasks than they were formally assigned. In a few cases, I again found that such job-crafting motivations occurred in conjunction with one another.

The following example of a receptionist illustrates how he is motivated to create a positive self-image: *I heard that we will expand soon; hopefully, I will then get a leading role in the mailroom. I mean, I know I am old, and I think my younger coworkers have a greater...*
chance of getting that position. But I have gained relevant experience in my life to hold such a responsibility. You know, even if I am old, I still would like to develop myself and get a higher position. Besides that, I feel that I can do a lot more than what I do now. (participant 9, receptionist)

**Younger employees**

Younger participants also engaged in this behavior mostly by increasing the number of their activities at work; a few mentioned decreasing their activities. The main motivation behind their behavior was to create a positive self-image. However, unlike older employees, younger employees sought to do this by creating a positive sense of themselves in the eyes of others (Baumeister, 1982; Erez & Earley, 1993; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001 p.183). Their additional motivation was to assert control over their work to conduct their jobs more efficiently. The following example describes an employee who engaged in task alteration so that his clients had a positive image about him: Some of our clients have the responsibility to deliver our mail to institutions located throughout the city. This usually happens once a week, and they are allowed to borrow a bicycle from the organization to do this. But, one of my clients wanted to work more, which is a good thing, so I gave him permission to borrow a bicycle twice a week. This is actually against our policy, but I think that my client has good intentions, and I feel that supporting him is the right thing to do. (participant 31, personal assistant)

Finally, these findings – concerning the task-crafting behavior of younger employees – reveal that this form of job-crafting behavior triggers cognitive job-crafting behavior. One of the younger employees mentioned that he noticed that he had to change his attitude toward colleagues to improve their collaboration because of his additional team manager tasks.
Relational Crafting: Altering the quality of interaction

Older employees

All older employees engaged in this behavior to assert control over their jobs. They discussed engaging in this behavior to control conflicts at work and improve their work performance. For example, the service manager indicated that she adjusted the quality of her interactions to improve the atmosphere in the store and the work performances of her colleagues: *How I interact with colleagues depends on where I am at that moment. When I work in one of my stores, I have informal conversations with my employees, because I feel that this leads to a better atmosphere and the employees perform better.* (participant 10, service manager)

Younger employees

Almost all younger employees described altering the quality of their interactions by changing the topics of conversations. Their main motivation was to control their jobs by trying to improve the execution of their work.

A further motivator was fulfilling a basic human need to connect with others. Participants discussed wanting to communicate with certain colleagues about topics other than work. Their aim was to introduce meaning into their lives (Baumeister & Leary, 1995)) because they wanted to learn from the life experiences of others: *I also like to talk about topics other than work with colleagues who are the same age as me. I can get along with them much better, maybe that is because we are at the same stage of our lives and we face the same problems. It is nice then to hear each other’s solutions and ideas and to learn from this.* (participant 14, home assistant)

Finally, I found that cognitive crafting could trigger relational crafting. For example, the employee of the policy department mentioned changing her perception about the employees of the organization. She explained that during the past two years, some of her colleagues worked for a short period in the organization and left quickly. Therefore, she
decided not to invest much time in relationships with colleagues and interacted with them only about work-related issues. She altered her thoughts about what her job is relationally, which – according to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) – is an aspect of cognitive crafting. By contrast, I found that task crafting might also trigger cognitive crafting, which in turn might foster relational-crafting behavior. The care coordinator noticed (because of his additional team manager tasks) that his colleagues did not appreciate his dominant attitude. He therefore decided to change the way he communicated with them.

**Relational Crafting: Altering the amount of interaction**

**Older employees**

Most of the older employees described participating in this form of job crafting by either decreasing or increasing the amount of interaction with specific colleagues. They were mainly motivated to assert control over their jobs because they mentioned doing so for the purpose of their work performance or to avoid workplace conflict. Only a few mentioned wanting to fulfill a basic human need to connect with others by forming friendly relationships. For example, a team manager discussed forming a friendly relationship with a colleague because he finds sociability at work important. The following example illustrates the control motivation and shows how cognitive crafting might foster relational-crafting behavior: *I noticed how well a colleague communicated with her clients. You know, our clients don’t always listen to us, they are hard to deal with. But this colleague had good conversations with her clients. So I started to talk with her a lot to ask her how she was able to make them listen to her. Her advice was useful, and now I try to improve how I communicate with clients.*

(participant 18, home assistant)

**Younger employees**

Most participants described engaging in this behavior by decreasing the amount of their interaction with others at work. They mentioned changing the amount of their interactions for
the purpose of their work performance (control motivation). For example, a personal assistant indicated that she increased the amount of interaction with a specific colleague to learn from him and improve her work performance. Consistent with Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), this finding reveals that relational crafting triggered cognitive crafting, which in turn fostered task-crafting behavior. The employee described changing the way she thought about how to conduct her work, and she finally changed her thinking.

A further motivator was creating and sustaining a positive self-image. Participants discussed decreasing the amount of their interactions because their relationships affected the positive images that colleagues had about them: *I could collaborate very well with one colleague, but once, she attacked me verbally about work in front of everyone. Honestly, I did not do anything wrong, and now other colleagues will think I don’t work well. I think it was totally unfair of her to attack me like that, even if I did something wrong we can talk about that in private. Now, I avoid talking to her.* (participant 20, personal assistant)

**Cognitive Crafting: Changing the cognitive task boundaries**

**Older employees**

Older employees engaged the least in this third form of job-crafting behavior. Unlike task and relational crafting, participants did not indicate that they wanted to engage in this behavior. However, the cognitive changes in their work occurred because of their accumulated work experience. In turn, this accumulated work experience triggered behavioral changes in the way they performed their jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In most cases, older employees reacted to this change by trying to assert control over their work. For example, a service manager explained how she unexpectedly noticed that the motivation level was low at her workplace. Therefore, she had to change her own behavior and began motivating employees to avoid having a lack of staff.
Several employees mentioned reacting to the cognitive change by creating and sustaining a positive self-image in their own eyes: *When I had just started, I worked together with social workers. They seemed to be well qualified, and I got a bit insecure about my own skills. I needed a lot of time for certain tasks, because I was afraid I would not perform as well as they did. But later on, I realized that their knowledge of work was quite limited. So, I gained more self-confidence, and I picked up requests easily.* (participant 18, home assistant)

**Younger employees**

Younger employees also discussed engaging in this behavior because of their accumulated work experience. This change triggered a behavioral change in the way they did their jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Most participants reacted to this change by trying to assert control over their work performance. A few participants indicated that they wanted to create a positive self-image in the eyes of others. The following example illustrates this tendency and shows that cognitive crafting might also lead to task crafting: A personal assistant described how she noticed that certain clients were not well-groomed. Therefore, she began advising clients about their appearance during counseling conversations. However, she explained that she stopped giving such advice when she perceived that her clients and colleagues did not appreciate it (participant 13). The following table illustrates other examples of job-crafting behaviors.
Table 5.1 Evidence of differences in job-crafting behaviors of older and younger employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of Job Crafting</th>
<th>Older Employees</th>
<th>Younger Employees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task crafting:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Altering the form of</td>
<td><em>Dinner and lunch should be prepared on time every day for our clients. I noticed just recently that my colleagues had problems with meeting the deadline. So I figured out how we could work faster, and I came up with the idea to order smarter. Now, I order sliced vegetables instead of whole pieces in order to save time.</em> (personal control) (team manager)</td>
<td><em>Last year, I started doing the administration of the bills of our residents. But I couldn’t find the information I needed. The administration was a real mess, so I thought of introducing a new, better-organized system.</em> (personal control) (financial administrative employee)</td>
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<tr>
<td>activities</td>
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Our clients are stubborn and don’t always listen to us. But I noticed that my colleague jokes a lot with her clients when she wants them to do something. For example, once she asked a client to clean up his room and he refused. When she made a couple of fun jokes, he surprisingly started...
<p>| Altering the number of activities | I would like to do more HRM tasks, because I often deal with HRM issues during my current job. But honestly, I want to do more, because I know I am able to do more (positive self-image) (prevention officer) Doing interviews with volunteers is not a formal task of mine, but I started doing the interviews a while ago. I don’t think that any of my other colleagues have the required expertise to do the interviews. So I do it now because we need to recruit the best volunteers in our team in order to reduce our high workload a bit (personal | I would like to manage more projects. Now, this is something sector managers do, but they seem to have a busy schedule. So I can do a lot of their | Other than my main tasks, I do additional team manager tasks as well. Also, if there is some work left that is undone, I finish this. My effort is really necessary, and I want my organization to achieve good results. Besides, my colleagues will know that I contribute to achieving good organizational results and that I deserve to work here (positive self-image) (care coordinator) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Crafting: Altering the quality of interaction</th>
<th>work, because I have the expertise and experience to do this. I will discuss this with them soon, I am sure that they will appreciate me doing this. (positive self-image) (policy employee)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have had a couple of intense conflicts with one colleague, because he is a person who acts out of emotion. Unfortunately, we have to collaborate often for work. So I only communicate with him for work purposes and I try to do this in a professional way. For example, I don’t laugh when I talk and I certainly don’t make any jokes. It’s a pity that I have to do this, but I need to make sure that we’ll not have another conflict; otherwise, it will</td>
<td>I try to deepen my relationship with colleagues by talking to them about personal issues instead of only work. I think we need to get to know each other better, because then we know what we can and cannot say to each other. This is useful for giving feedback. You know how to do this better when you know the person better. If this works out well, we will give each other easier feedback and we’ll improve our collaboration and performances. (personal control) (home assistant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(control) (service manager)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive Crafting</strong></td>
<td><strong>Altering the amount of interaction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Before I started working here, I was told that I would do administrative tasks as well. I was happy to hear this, because it meant that I could do more than just answering phone calls. But in</em></td>
<td><em>I need the contribution of some colleagues for the implementation of my own work. I form and adjust my relationships based on the work I have to do. For example, now I communicate a lot with a colleague from another department, because we work together on a project. When we finish the project, I am sure I’ll contact him less often. (personal control) (prevention officer)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>When I had just started working here, I obviously underestimated the empowerment of employees. I have to do more work than I expected to be doing, and I still have to adjust myself to this workload.</em></td>
<td><em>When I had just started working here, I talked a lot with one specific colleague. But he started to have feelings for me and he obviously wanted more in our relationship. So I decided to talk less often to him. I don’t want such a relationship at work, because this will affect our collaboration. (personal control) (personal assistant, participant 11)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
practice, this turned out not to be true, which I find very disappointing. Unfortunately, my work is now too boring for me. (positive self-image) (receptionist)

The longer I worked here, the more I felt that the organization started to require more from the staff. A lot of employees couldn’t handle this and got fired or left the organization voluntarily. To make sure I wouldn’t lose my job, I did my best and worked harder to adjust to these new requirements. (personal control) (personal assistant)

For example, if there is coffee on the ground people send a request to the facility service and ask for a cleaner. I don’t understand why they can’t get a napkin and clean the coffee themselves. (personal control) (facility manager)

In the beginning, we didn’t work with computers, and now we do. I never expected that I would need a computer for my tasks, and honestly, I am not really good at working with computers. So I looked for a colleague who knows a lot about computers and who was willing to help me out with this. Luckily, I found one, and now I can do my computer tasks a lot faster. (personal control) (personal assistant)
Discussion

I began my article by discussing why the influence of age should have been included in the original job-crafting model of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001). Here I continue this discussion by relating my findings to the previous literature.

I found that both older and younger employees engaged the most in task crafting. However, younger employees participated more in all three forms of job-crafting behavior. This finding supports the assumption of de Lange et al (2009) who suggested that older employees would engage less in job crafting because they had achieved careers that better fit their self-concept and occupations with more job control (Edwards et al, 2006).

Building on the research of Berg et al (2010), who found that the three different forms of job-crafting behavior are interrelated and can trigger or be triggered by one another, I found that this interrelationship occurs more often with the job-crafting behavior of younger employees. Whereas Berg et al (2010) did not directly find that task and relational crafting give rise to cognitive crafting, I found that this might be the case for relational crafting.

Moreover, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argued that job-crafting motivations arise from three individual needs: asserting personal control, creating a positive self-image and a need for human connection to others. In my study, I found that motivations for cognitive crafting do not arise from individual needs but from accumulated work experience.

Finally, to my knowledge, both older and younger employees are motivated to engage in job crafting to assert control over their work. Their additional motivation is to create and sustain a positive self-image in their own eyes (older employees) and in the eyes of others (younger employees). Moreover, I found that the different job-crafting motivations (particularly of younger employees) occur in conjunction with one another.
Theoretical Implications

I sought to relate existing theory about older and younger employees to different job-crafting behaviors. Here, I return to those behaviors and discuss how my study builds or extends the job-crafting theory of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001).

Task Crafting. I began this paper by arguing that older employees would be less motivated to craft their tasks because the literature suggests that older employees are less flexible in adjusting their work style (Garg, 1991). However, in my study, both older and younger employees engaged in this behavior for the same purpose. Employees changed the way they performed their tasks or wanted to conduct their jobs differently because they were motivated to find more efficient ways of working (personal control motivation). However, younger employees engaged much more in this type of behavior. Given this finding, I propose that older employees are indeed less flexible in adjusting their work style than their younger peers. Throughout their accumulated work experience, older employees had learned how to work efficiently; thus, there is no need to change their work style.

Furthermore, I also found that most of the older and younger employees engaged in this type of behavior by increasing the number of their activities. Whereas most of the older employees were motivated to assert a certain control over their jobs, younger employees were more motivated to create a positive self-image in the eyes of others. Although previous research suggests that older employees (compared to younger employees) are motivated to substantially reduce the levels of effort in their work tasks (Kanfer & Ackermann, 2004 p. 453), my research shows that older employees are willing to increase their levels of effort if that will help them to assert more control over their work. Conversely, younger employees will increase their levels of effort to convince colleagues that they are motivated and able to deliver good results. This finding supports the assumption of Kooi et al (2009), who argued that older employees tended to adjust their personal preferences to meet the demands of their
current work situation, whereas younger employees tended to adjust the current work situation to achieve or maintain the desired developmental outcomes.

Relational Crafting. Based on Carstensen’s socio-emotional selectivity life-span theory (Carstensen et al, 2000) and the relational demography theory, I expected that older employees would be more motivated (than younger employees) to improve the quality of their interactions and to increase the amount of interactions with their fellow peers. However, I found that both older and younger employees only changed the topics of their conversations. Whereas all older employees engaged in this behavior to assert control over their jobs, younger employees also wanted to fulfill a basic human need for connection to others. Although this finding does not speak directly to the social context, it is plausible that the social context has formed the behavior of older employees. If the social context of these older employees consists only of younger colleagues, then I predict that older employees might encounter difficulty in deepening their relationships. Previous studies have shown that younger generations are particularly motivated to continuously engage in new social interactions (De Lange et al, 2009). When studying such job-crafting behavior in older employees, further research should include the social context to validate my prediction. In this case, the effect of perceived relative age is particularly significant for older employees (Cleveland & Shore, 1992).

Furthermore, I expected younger employees to be more motivated to increase the amount of their interactions to acquire new information for purposes of their work. I found that (1) both older and younger employees discussed decreasing or increasing the amount of their interactions with colleagues in executing their work (personal control motivation) and (2) younger employees engaged more in this behavior than older employees. However, contrary to my expectations, whether younger employees increase (form new social interactions) or decrease the amount of their interaction depends on the execution of their
Cognitive Crafting. I discussed that I expected older employees to engage in this type of behavior because of their interpersonal relationships with their peers. Because I expected these older employees to deepen their existing relationships at work (de Lange et al, 2009), I expected them to share work-related knowledge in their relationships (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) and change the way they think about how to conduct their jobs (because of the accumulated work experience of their colleagues) (Wrzesniewski et al, 2003). My research shows that older employees engage the least in this job-crafting behavior. As previously discussed, I also found that older employees did not deepen their existing relationships, and I predict that this fact is the reason for their cognitive crafting behavior. However, future research must study whether cognitive crafting arises because of such deep relationships to validate my prediction.

With respect to the behavior of younger employees, I argued that younger employees would be more motivated to engage in job-crafting behavior because they aim at continuously acquiring new knowledge (Lang & Carstensen, 2002). Therefore, younger employees can change the way they think about their work more often than older employees. Consistent with my previous expectations, I found that (1) younger employees engaged much more in this form of job-crafting behavior and (2) that several younger employees deliberately changed the way they performed their tasks because they noticed that one of their colleagues performed tasks more efficiently.

Limitations and Future Research

Sample. As with all attempts to build and elaborate theory from a limited sample, caution is warranted when generalizing these findings to other organizations. For example, Lyons (2008) found that context may influence the likelihood of employees engaging in job-crafting activities. Different organizations are supposed to offer opportunities, invitations, and
(perhaps) incentives to employees to modify their jobs. I also believe that changes in organizational cultures may influence job-crafting activities.

**Research opportunities.** As noted in the introduction, my work focuses on exploring the job-crafting motivations and behaviors of older and younger employees. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argued that the activity has both individual and organizational effects. Future researchers may wish to more explicitly compare the individual and organizational effects of the job-crafting behaviors of older and younger employees.

Another future research opportunity is to study the collaborative job-crafting behaviors of older employees. Leana et al (2009) refer to collaborative job crafting as an activity that is conducted by informal groups of employees, who together determine how to alter the work to meet shared objectives. I believe that older employees will engage more in such activities because they focus their attention more on the process and collaborative nature of goal accomplishments at work (Kanfer & Ackermann, 2004).

Finally, I recommend future researchers to draw further on the research of Berg et al (2010) and focus on studying how older employees from different organizational levels engage in job-crafting behavior. I found in my study that older employees from lower organizational levels were more motivated to craft their tasks (than older employees at higher organizational levels) because they were not satisfied with their current job tasks. However, because of a lack of time, I could not pay much attention to this effect.

**Context.** Finally, I must also be careful about the unique nature of my setting. I previously argued that perceived age dissimilarity (in the social context at work) might influence the relational and cognitive job-crafting behavior of older employees. However, I have not examined whether older employees perceived age dissimilarity in their social context. Therefore, I was not able to make any assumptions about this effect, and I recommend that future researchers address this question further.
Implications for Organizational Practice

Job crafting matters to organizations and their employees. Prior studies have demonstrated that job crafting should receive more attention at work because of its positive effects on well-being (Tims, Bakker and Derks, 2013), work behavior and performance outcomes (Lyons, 2008). Furthermore, job crafting is supposed to help employees meet personal and organizational goals (Berg et al., 2010). My study reveals that older employees are less motivated to engage in job-crafting behaviors than younger employees. Thus, one implication of my study is that managers should stimulate the job-crafting behaviors of older employees to enable them to contribute more to organizational goals. For example, managers might inform older employees about job-crafting strategies and explain to them the positive individual and organizational consequences, because job-crafting may lead to higher levels of work engagement and work performance (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Additionally, managers might stimulate older employees with lower job positions to take the initiative in making their work more challenging, or they could provide them with more opportunities to engage in job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). My findings show that these employees may have job-crafting desires that they are not able to fulfill themselves.

Finally, because I found that not all types of job-crafting behaviors may be beneficial for work collaborations and organizations in general (e.g., blocking off communication with colleagues and making decisions that are against organizational policies), I recommend that managers communicate work responsibilities in a clear manner to all employees. Managers should be aware of their employees’ job-crafting behaviors and, when required, assist them with job crafting to align with organizational goals (Tims, Bakker, Derks and van Rhenen, 2013).
Conclusion

Although job crafting was introduced by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), many other researchers have recognized its value and importance (Grant & Ashford, 2008). There was a great deal of knowledge that originated prior to this study; however, not much attention has been paid to further building and elaborating the original job crafting framework. Because of an aging workforce (Avery et al, 2007), it is an exciting time to study the effect of age on job-crafting motivations and behaviors. My research shows that older and younger employees engage differently in the three forms of job-crafting behavior. In addition, younger employees are more motivated than older employees to engage in the activity. I hope that future researchers will address my recommendations and shore up the limitations of this study to deepen researchers’ knowledge about job-crafting activities.
Chapter 6

Conclusions and Discussions

This thesis aims at understanding the individual and organizational consequences of employees’ proactive work and career actions. In the first chapter of this thesis, four empirical studies were introduced with their associated research questions and findings. Each chapter revealed unique findings and theoretical implications, all contributing to the main purpose of this thesis. In this final chapter, the main findings from the four chapters are summarized and discussed in terms of their theoretical and managerial implications, followed by a discussion of the thesis’ main limitations and recommendations for future research.

Main Research Findings

In the previous chapters I discussed the findings of four empirical studies that were designed to answer to the following research questions:

1. What do we know about individual-level and contextual predictors of workplace proactivity on individual, team and organizational levels, and what it is that we still need to know in order to refine extant workplace proactivity theory?

2. How does compensation influence the relationship between employees’ ambition and their respective taking charge behavior? And what is the effect of this interaction on employees’ subsequent career satisfaction?

3. To what extent do ambitious employees’ proactive career behaviors, such as taking charge at work and networking, lead to their contributions to their employer?

4. How do older and younger employees engage in job crafting behaviors and what are their motivations to do so?

Here, I integrate all four studies and discuss how they jointly address the main research purpose of this thesis. Because all chapters offer a separate model and/or separate research
questions, I decided to summarize and discuss the findings around four themes derived from the main theme of this thesis (i.e., proactive behaviors) and from the key concepts used in the four empirical studies. The four main themes are as follows: 1) personal factors and individuals’ proactive work and career behaviors, 2) contextual factors and individual’s proactive work and career behaviors, 3) the interplay between personal factors and contextual factors and its joint impact on individuals’ proactive work and career behaviors and 4) the individual and organizational consequences of proactive work and career behaviors.

**Personal factors and individuals’ proactive work and career behaviors**

The first theme identified in this thesis refers to how personal factors such as age and personality traits influence or prompt individuals to proactively take action at work. Chapter 5 illustrates how age plays an important role in explaining how and why individuals engage in proactive behaviors at work. Specifically, this chapter identifies the differences and similarities in the job crafting behaviors and motivations of older and younger employees. The differences are found in how older and younger employees engage in job-crafting behaviors, while similarities were found in their job crafting motivations. For instance, the job crafting process of younger employees is an interrelated process that is triggered by a cognitive change (i.e., cognitive crafting) that in turn gives rise to two other job crafting behaviors, task crafting (i.e., adapting how tasks are being performed or adapting the quantity of tasks) and relational crafting (i.e., adapting relationships and/or communication styles).

However, older employees mentioned engaging less in job crafting behaviors, but when they did so, it was mostly because they had to adjust their work responsibilities or how they performed certain tasks (i.e., task crafting). Both groups of employees mentioned engaging in job crafting behaviors to assert control over their work (i.e., job-crafting motivation). Chapter 2 adds to the research conducted in chapter 5 by demonstrating that more personal factors influence proactive behaviors. It illustrates the extent to which personality traits, self-concept
variables, state-affect variables and emotion-regulation variables are negatively or positively associated with individuals’ proactive work and career behaviors. These results demonstrate that the proactive behaviors of individuals differ from one and another because of differences in individual characteristics. Chapters 3 and 4 focus specifically on linking one personality variable, ambition, with the proactive behaviors taking charge and networking and show that this personality variable triggers employees to take more charge at work and to engage in more networking for career purposes (i.e., instrumental) and for psychosocial support (i.e., psychosocial networking). These two chapters recognize the importance of distinguishing between different types of proactive behaviors to study their relationship with specific personality traits such as ambition.

*Contextual factors and individuals’ proactive work and career behaviors*

The second theme concerns how contextual factors (e.g., organizational support, management tools, work and task characteristics, psychical and social environment) hinder or facilitate proactivity. This theme directs attention to the way in which proactivity is contextually embedded. Chapter 5 demonstrates how the job crafting behavior of younger employees is influenced by their social work environment. The cognitive change that triggered the job-crafting process of younger employees stemmed from their observations of how coworkers conduct tasks. In cases where younger employees found that their colleagues worked more efficiently, they followed their colleagues’ work style and adapted their own way of working (i.e., task crafting). Furthermore, the findings reveal that they also engaged in job crafting to impress their colleagues and clients. Chapter 2 identifies more contextual factors and shows that the context may be a complex factor that is unconducive to higher proactivity.

Specifically, the results demonstrate that several contextual factors such as variables concerning the effects of work and task characteristics, as well as leadership variables may jointly negatively or positively influence proactivity. The results show that in some cases,
these contextual factors influence one and another by inhibiting the initial positive effect that contextual factors appear to have on proactivity. Supporting these findings, chapter 3 demonstrates that, indeed, contextual factors such as compensation may inhibit the taking charge behavior of certain groups of employees (i.e., ambitious employees) if it is not “high” enough. In this case, the taking charge behavior of ambitious employees, and therefore also their subsequent career satisfaction (i.e., individual outcome), will be weaker.

The interplay between personal factors and contextual factors and its joint impact on individuals’ proactive work and career behaviors

The third theme refers to the interplay between personal factors and contextual factors and focuses on the joint impact that these factors have on proactivity. Chapter 2 demonstrates that personal factors and contextual factors combine to support individuals to take proactive work and career actions, while in other cases, this combination hinders them in doing so. Hence, this chapter emphasizes that the context may play a particularly influential role in hindering proactivity even though individuals possess traits and characteristics that foster proactivity. Furthermore, the results also yield evidence for the contrary relationship. Although the context may create conditions that stimulate individuals to take proactive work and career actions, only those individuals who possess characteristics that foster proactivity will eventually engage in the behavior. Chapter 3 again provides empirical support for this finding because it investigates the moderating effect that compensation (i.e., contextual factor) has on the link between employee ambition (i.e., personal factor) and the proactive behavior taking charge. The significant results demonstrate that compensation positively moderates the abovementioned direct link, meaning that high compensation only motivates highly ambitious individuals to take more charge at work. The taking charge behavior of less ambitious employees remained almost the same when they received low or high compensation.
Individual and organizational consequences of proactive work and career behaviors

The final theme concerns the individual and organizational consequences of individuals’ proactive work and career behaviors. Chapters 2 and 5 helped explain what drives or triggers individuals to take proactive work and career actions and what inhibits them from doing so (i.e., personal and contextual factors and the interplay between the two). Building on this work, chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate that once individuals take proactive work and career actions, these actions benefit themselves and their employing organizations. For instance, chapter 3 shows that the proactive work behavior taking charge increases the career satisfaction of employees with higher levels of ambition. However, it also emphasizes the importance of the influence of organizational factors in this link. The taking charge behavior and the subsequent career satisfaction are found to be greater when higher compensation was given to these individuals. Building further on these results, chapter 4 demonstrates that ambitious employees also benefit their employing organization by engaging in proactive work and career behaviors. In this chapter, the personality trait employee ambition was linked to the organizational core competencies capabilities and connections. Furthermore, it was suggested that taking charge mediates the direct positive link between employee ambition and organizational capabilities and that instrumental and psychosocial networking mediate the positive link between employee ambition and organizational connections. I found significant results for all hypotheses except for the mediating effect of psychosocial networking. This chapter thus recognizes that the purpose of individuals’ networking behavior might determine its importance to organizations.


**Theoretical Contributions and Implications**

Table 6.1 summarizes the main contributions of all four studies (i.e. chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5). In this section, I integrate the main contributions of all four chapters to discuss the theoretical contributions and implications of my dissertation.

*Proactivity: a product of individual characteristics, but do work meanings also play a role?*

My first research contribution concerns the factors that trigger individuals to engage in proactive work and career behaviors. In my first and second theme, I have demonstrated that individual characteristics (i.e., personal factors) play an important role in shaping individuals’ proactive behaviors. My research findings thus support proactivity research that highlights the importance of taking an actor-centered research approach (e.g., Liang & Gong, 2013; Tangirala et al., 2013). This research stream acknowledges that differences between individuals’ proactive work and career actions can be ascribed to differences in individual characteristics regarding, for instance, personality variables (Bakker et al., 2012), self-concepts (Groen et al., 2012; Ohly & Fritz, 2007), an individual’s mood at work (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2009) and an individuals’ psychical health (Binnewies et al., 2009). Contributing to this research reasoning, my research provides evidence for the importance of individuals’ ambition in proactivity research. Although scholars have recently argued that ambition drives the desire to create change in the workplace (Huang et al., 2014), few scholars have made efforts to link this personality trait with the different types of proactive behaviors. I have addressed this shortcoming in my research, and I demonstrate that individuals’ personal desires and aspirations (i.e., ambition) drive them to engage in proactive work and career behaviors to fulfill their personal needs.

Nevertheless, my research also identifies an important question that deserves attention in future research. Although several studies recognize that age is an important personal factor
explaining differences in employees’ work behaviors (e.g., Ng & Feldman, 2008; de Lange, Taris, Jansen, Kompier, Houtman & Bongers, 2009), my research demonstrates that it could also encompass similarities in work and career behaviors. Chapter 5, the study addressing the job crafting behaviors and motivations of older and younger employees reveals that along with differences, there are also similarities in the behaviors and motivations of both groups of employees. Although my findings do not speak directly to this, it could be that the meaning of work limited the differences. The study was conducted in a socially responsible non-for-profit organization in the Netherlands. Employees who aim to work for such an organization do so mainly because of its mission and vision (Lyons et al., 2006). Hence, it could be that the participants were more concerned about their vulnerable clients than about their personal desires, which could have shaped their job crafting behaviors and motivations. However, it could also be that these similarities in the job crafting behaviors and motivations of older and younger employees were created by a strong work situation, in which individual differences in work behaviors are eliminated by strong performance management practices (Mischel, 1968). Future research could empirically investigate my suggestions to validate them.

Proactivity: the result of an interplay between an individual and his/her work context

The second contribution of my research concerns the interplay between individual-level and contextual factors and demonstrates that proactivity is an outcome of a complex process that is determined by the characteristics of an individual and the characteristics of his/her work environment. Chapter 2 shows that extant research has especially focused on identifying those combinations of individual and contextual factors that foster proactivity (e.g., Frazier & Fainshmidt, 2012; Sonnentag & Spychala, 2012) or hinder it (e.g., Griffin et al., 2010; Bal et al., 2011). My research contributes to this line of thinking by showing that the same combination of individual-level and contextual factors can, in different cases, foster or inhibit proactivity. Chapter 3 illustrates that the same contextual factor, compensation, fosters the
taking charge behavior of ambitious employees when it is high, but it inhibits the behavior when it is low. Hence, I highlight that it is important to understand the role of contextual factors in the interactive effect of individual-level and contextual factors on individual proactivity. Moreover, a further distinction should be made between different employee types because the findings of chapter 3 show differences between individuals with higher and lower ambition levels.

*Consequences of individuals’ proactive work and career behaviors*

Finally, my research confirms that indeed any action at work (i.e., whether targeted at benefitting work-related issues or career issues) might have consequences for individuals and for their employing organizations. Chapters 2 and 5 have helped to gain understanding of how the complex proactivity process is likely to occur in organizations. Chapters 3 and 4 further demonstrate that once this individual proactivity occurs, it has consequences for the individual and for his/her employing organization. Specifically, I provide evidence that the same proactive behavior, taking charge, is used by individuals to increase their career satisfaction (i.e., chapter 3) and to contribute to organizational capabilities (i.e., chapter 4). Thus, although taking charge is considered to be a proactive behavior targeted towards improving work and/or organizational outcomes in extant proactivity research (e.g., Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Burnett et al., 2013), I contribute to this research by demonstrating that it can also be a valid career self-management tool (i.e., proactive career behavior) (King, 2004). Likewise, although networking behavior is known to be a proactive career behavior that individuals engage in for career purposes (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015; Wolff & Moser, 2009), the results of chapter 4 provide evidence that this behavior could also serve to expand organizational connections and thus benefits organizations at large. I therefore contribute to proactivity research by integrating two research streams (i.e., proactive career self-management research and
proactivity research that is studied in relation to work and organizational outcomes) that are currently primarily studied separately.

Table 6.1: Overview of main contributions per chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Main Contributions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL AND CONTEXTUAL PREDICTORS OF WORKPLACE PROACTIVITY ON INDIVIDUAL, TEAM AND ORGANIZATION-LEVEL, AND WHAT IS IT THAT WE STILL NEED TO KNOW IN ORDER TO REFINE EXTANT WORKPLACE PROACTIVITY THEORY</td>
<td>Chapter 2 is the first study that emphasizes individual-context interactive effects on proactivity on individual, team and organizational level. It is the first systematic review that distinguishes between proactivity on different organizational levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>MONEY TALKS: THE INFLUENCE OF COMPENSATION ON EMPLOYEES’ TAKING CHARGE BEHAVIOR AND CAREER SATISFACTION</td>
<td>This is the first empirical study to examine the impact of compensation on employee willingness to engage in taking charge behavior and the subsequent implications for career satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF AMBITIOUS EMPLOYEES’ TAKING CHARGE AND NETWORKING BEHAVIORS</td>
<td>This study is original in that it is the first that links individual ambitions to organizational core competencies. It is also the first study that introduces proactive behaviors as mediators in the relationship between individual ambitions and organizational core competencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>THE EFFECTS OF AGE ON JOB CRAFTING: EXPLORING THE MOTIVATIONS AND BEHAVIOR OF YOUNGER AND OLDER EMPLOYEES IN JOB CRAFTING</td>
<td>Chapter 5 contributes to the original job-crafting model of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) by 1) including the effect of age in the model, and 2) by demonstrating the importance of studying the three original main job-crafting motivations and behaviors separately from one another.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Practical Contributions and Implications

Although proactivity is considered to be a voluntary work behavior (Ghitulescu, 2013), organizations have increasingly made the behavior a hidden responsibility (Boswell, Moynihan, Roehling & Cavanaugh, 2001). It is increasingly expected that employees should engage in proactive behaviors to help organizations achieve success (Grant & Ashford, 2008). However, the relevancy of these behaviors for individuals has also become a popular topic in recent proactivity research (e.g., Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015; De Vos et al., 2009). Consequently, several studies paid attention to discussing practical implications that either facilitate (e.g., Bakker et al., 2012; Ghitulescu, 2013) or hinder proactivity at work (e.g., Fuller, Marler, Hester & Otondo, 2015). Drawing on my four chapters, I provide new practical contributions that focus especially on explaining how proactivity should be facilitated in organizations. My recommendations for managers are threefold.

Relevancy of an environment that supports proactive individuals

My research shows that individual proactivity is a product of an ideal combination of a proactive individual and an environment that supports and stimulates proactivity (chapter 2). Chapter 2 demonstrates that if an individual possesses characteristics that foster proactivity, but his/her work environment does not support proactivity, this combination would be detrimental to proactivity. Likewise, even if organizations occupy a particularly influential role in fostering proactivity, when individuals do not possess the right traits and characteristics, they will not engage (or engage less) in proactive behavior. The latter relationship was empirically studied and confirmed in chapter 3, in which the results indicate that the HR management tool “compensation” only fosters the taking charge behavior of ambitious employees and not the behavior of those who are less ambitious. Based on these findings, I agree with prior studies in which it is argued that desired work behaviors such as
proactivity are not solely a matter of selecting individuals with proactive personalities but also a matter of either assigning these individuals to work environments that support or foster the behavior (e.g., Fuller, Hester & Cox, 2010; Bakker et al., 2012) or allowing them to craft such supporting environments (i.e., job crafting). To achieve the former, I would especially recommend the following organizational interventions.

*Personality tests as recruitment assessments*

First, HR managers could establish personality tests and use them as an assessment during the recruitment process. Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate that ambition in particular is positively linked with proactive work and career behaviors. Hence, organizations should focus on selecting those employees that score high on ambition because they will know how to satisfy their own career needs (chapter 3) and the needs of their employing organizations (chapter 4). Nevertheless, extra caution is needed when the focus is solely targeted on personality tests. Chapter 2 demonstrates that this is especially salient for the Big Five personality traits. Several studies show that some of the Big Five personality factors have a negative effect or no effect at all on certain proactivity types (e.g., Nikolaou, Vakola, Bourantas, 2008; Crant, Kim & Wang, 2011; Bjørkelo, Einarsen & Matthiessen, 2010). Thus, although the assumption exists that personality traits foster proactivity (e.g., Liang & Gong, 2013; Williams et al., 2010; Thompson, 2005), managers should identify which traits foster or inhibit proactivity to include them in the test for an accurate proactivity assessment.

*Enhancing proactivity through learning and development practices*

Second, I acknowledge that selecting individuals based on proactive personality traits such as ambition might limit recruiters to focusing their selection on a smaller group of participants. Moreover, the results of the tests may not be reliable and valid, as these tests are potentially open to being faked by motivated applicants (Morgeson, Campion, Dipboye, Hollenbeck,
Murphy & Schmitt, 2007). Therefore, I recommend that HR managers should also use tools that will help individuals to learn how to become more proactive. Research indicates that proactivity can be developed through the processes of motivational states (Parker & Collins, 2010). This approach is appropriate for all employee types: those that are proactive by nature and those that are not. For instance, chapter 2 demonstrates that the individual-level variables positive affect (e.g., Den Hartog & Belschak, 2007), role breadth self-efficacy and felt responsibility for change (e.g., Fuller, Marler & Hester, 2006) positively influence proactivity. Evidence from previous research demonstrates that these variables are malleable, meaning that they can be influenced, developed or changed over time (e.g., Frese, Garst, & Fay, 2007; Bono, Foldes, Vinson, & Muros, 2007). Accordingly, several implications have been discussed in prior studies to explain how managers can enhance these variables and their subsequent proactive behavior (see for example Fuller et al., 2015; Lam et al., 2014; Ghitulescu, 2013). To these extant implications, I add another tool that has not yet been (to my knowledge) introduced in extant proactivity research. HR managers can create workshops and training programs to inform employees about these variables and to teach them how they can enhance these individual characteristics themselves. By making use of assignments or case studies, employees can practice and learn independently or in groups how to build the required competencies and skills. An organizations’ intranet is an ideal way to make these assignments accessible to everyone.

*Relevancy of using the “right” HR practices*

Finally, research suggests that various human resource (HR) practices are likely to contribute to the development of employees’ proactive behaviors such as incentivizing education, compensation, and/or promotion practices (Fuller et al., 2015). Chapter 3 studied the effect of compensation on taking charge behavior and demonstrated that this HR practice is solely effective for ambitious employees. Hence, I recommend that HR managers select employees
based on their personality traits (i.e., ambition) and work motivations to investigate which practices are the most effective for the different groups. Moreover, as chapter 3 also indicates that higher compensation in particular fosters the taking charge behavior of ambitious employees, I recommend that HR managers also pay attention to how the HR practices should be used to be effective strategies for the different employee groups. HR managers that address age-diverse work forces might consider dividing their staff into different age groups when applying this recommendation into practice. As chapter 5 shows, there are differences in how older and younger employees engage in job crafting; hence, different HR practices might be effective for the different age groups.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although I make use of different research methods (i.e., qualitative, quantitative and systematic literature review) to address the individual and organizational consequences of proactive work and career behaviors, there are some notable limitations (as with most research). In chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, the limitations are discussed for the separate studies in detail. In this section, I discuss the limitations that apply to all chapters.

First, in my job crafting study, I conducted a qualitative study to explore how older and younger employees engage in job crafting and what their motivations are to do so. This was the most appropriate research design at that time because no job crafting scales existed. Moreover, conducting a qualitative study allowed me to re-examine, refine and enrich the job-crafting model of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), which has received scant attention from other researchers. Currently, more studies exist that focus on investigating job crafting questions quantitatively (e.g., Bakker et al., 2012; Tims et al., 2013). I recommend that future researchers address a similar job crafting research question by making use of a quantitative research design. Specifically, a longitudinal quantitative research design is recommended because it allows researchers to study the causal directions of relationships between variables.
(Bakker et al, 2012) and it allows disentangling differences between age groups (de Lange et al., 2009).

Second, another important limitation of my research is that the findings are all based on self-report and may therefore be subject to bias (Frese & Zapf, 1988). However, others argue that this problem of common method variance may be overstated and could be more a question of measurement bias than bias of the method itself (Spector, 2006; de Lange et al, 2009). Nevertheless to address this research limitation, future research could make use of other measurement techniques in which, for instance, direct peers such as supervisors or managers are responsible for answering interview questions.

Third, I make use of one alumni dataset in the studies in chapters 3 and 4 to empirically test my hypotheses. This dataset consists mainly of Dutch participants that are all highly educated. Because the majority of the participants are highly educated, the generalizability of my findings may be limited, especially when it concerns proactive work and career behaviors (e.g., Ghitulescu, 2006; Lyons, 2008; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). However, in chapter 5 the participants hold a variety of different job positions that require high and lower education levels, hence I did investigate how less educated individuals engage in the proactive behavior job crafting. Nevertheless, future research could examine whether the proactive work and career behaviors studied in chapters 3 and 4 (i.e., taking charge and networking behaviors) are equally applicable to other samples and work settings to validate my findings.

Finally, I recognize that I cannot generalize my findings to other national contexts. The participants of all three studies (chapters 3, 4 & 5) were mainly of Dutch origin working in Dutch organizations. It is plausible that Dutch employees have different work values and motivations than employees coming from different backgrounds and countries such as countries in North America, South America, the MENA countries and so forth. For this
reason, there may be differences in how employees engage in proactive work and career behaviors in other countries. Moreover, even the work context that influences employees’ proactive work and career behaviors (as is demonstrated in chapter 2), differs by country and could account for cross-cultural differences in proactive work and career behaviors. Thus, a potential avenue for future research is to conduct a cross-cultural study that addresses similar research questions to identify differences or similarities in the research findings.

**Future Research Agenda**

This dissertation demonstrates that when individuals make efforts to shape their work and careers, they benefit themselves and their employing organizations. With my findings, I refine and broaden research and the literature concerning career and work proactivity. At the same time, as discussed in chapters, 2, 3, 4 and 5, I have also addressed several research gaps that have been recently brought to attention by several scholars. Nevertheless, there are still several exciting research ideas and recommendations for the future. Proactivity is a contemporary topic that is part of our everyday work lives, and hence its impact and consequences cannot be neglected and deserve the utmost attention in the present and in the future.

First, in my dissertation, I have focused solely on the (positive) consequences of proactive work and career behaviors for individuals and organizations. However, I agree with Bakker et al (2012), who argue that future studies should investigate the negative consequences of proactive behaviors such as job crafting behavior. The authors explained that employees usually work in interdependent teams, and their job crafting behavior might increase their own resources while simultaneously decreasing their colleagues’ resources (e.g., colleagues might lose time to do their own work when they focus on helping others). I would like to add to this interesting and important future research recommendation that we must investigate this for all different proactive work and career behaviors. It should be taken
into account that different behaviors may have a different negative impact on colleagues. For instance, if one employee is active and successful with taking charge behavior, it might affect the self-esteem of others or lead to feelings of jealous especially for those employees that make an effort to engage in taking charge behaviors but do not manage to handle the challenging responsibilities of the behavior.

Another interesting research direction would be to examine the extent to which learning and development practices are effective for proactive individuals. This is important to study because organizations spend big amounts of money on learning and development practices, which may be unnecessary for their group of proactive employees. Due to their proactive behavior, these individuals accumulate new knowledge and skills (Frese & Fay, 2001; Hakanen et al, 2008), and hence they tend to know how to learn and what to learn. The findings of this dissertation are in line with the latter because they demonstrate that ambitious employees often engage in proactive behaviors. These employees have established their career goals, and they know how to achieve them (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). This also applies to learning and development goals. Therefore, a question for future research may be “Are formal learning and development practices only useful and effective for non-proactive employees?”

Third, proactivity has always been linked in extant research to work-related purposes and desires. Therefore, I have previously discussed and explained how the job crafting behavior of the participants in chapter 5 could have been shaped by the desire to care for vulnerable clients instead of caring for personal work ambitions. I would like to add to this that religion might also play an important role in proactivity research. Those individuals who apply religious rules in practice, might consider putting extra effort at work and adding value to organizations, to be a religious obligation. Nevertheless, the impact that religion might have on proactivity remains unclear in proactivity research and will hopefully be investigated
by scholars in the future.

Finally, because scholars have suggested that proactivity is a behavior that can be enhanced and developed (Parker & Collins, 2010), we should question whether this behavior can be developed and enhanced by parents when they raise their children. Should it be part of an individual’s education during his/her early and later life (i.e. until he has learned how to be proactive)? Should it also be part of education programs at schools and universities? Future research is needed to elucidate this possibility, especially because being proactive could be a useful and effective behavior in every aspect of life.
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English Summary

Proactivity researchers consider individuals to be active agents who engage in proactive work and career behaviors to satisfy their own personal career needs, as well as the needs of their employing organizations. Although these behaviors are primarily intended to have a positive impact on individuals and their employing organizations, the contrary might also occur if organizations do not offer the support that individuals need to have to freely engage in these behaviors. This dissertation suggests that in particular ambitious employees have the desire to engage in proactive behaviors and know how to benefit themselves and their employing organizations.

To provide evidence for the abovementioned, this dissertation focuses on examining how both types of proactive behaviors (i.e., career proactive behaviors and work proactive behaviors) influence individual and organizational outcomes. In addition to ambition, age was used as another key concept in one of the research studies. In total, four empirical studies were conducted using a variety of research methods (i.e., systematic literature review, longitudinal quantitative research designs and qualitative research). To begin with chapter 2, this chapter seeks to better understand how the complex process of proactivity is likely to occur at different organizational levels (i.e., individual, team and organizational) by identifying the effects of interactions and interdependence among individual-level and contextual determinants of proactivity. The findings show that proactivity is the outcome of a complex process that is codetermined by individual-level and contextual variables, especially on the individual level. These results recognize the importance of selecting proactive individuals and placing them in a work environment that supports and stimulates proactivity.

Chapter 3 addresses one of the research recommendations of chapter 2. It examines how the contextual variable compensation influences proactive behavior and its subsequent impact on the individual outcome career satisfaction. I find that ambitious employees take
more charge at work (i.e., proactive behavior) and are more satisfied when they receive higher compensations. On the contrary, a low compensation does not have this effect on the taking charge behavior and career satisfaction of ambitious employees. With regard to less ambitious employees, neither low nor high compensations increase their taking charge behavior and career satisfaction.

Chapter 4 builds on chapter 3 and aims to study the organizational consequences of ambitious employees’ taking charge and networking behaviors (i.e., proactive behaviors). In this chapter, I propose that employees’ ambition is directly linked to the organizational core competencies, capabilities and connections. I further propose that the proactive behaviors taking charge and networking (i.e., instrumental and psychosocial) mediate the direct relationships. The results demonstrate that ambitious employees contribute to a) strengthening organizational capabilities by taking charge at work and b) expanding organizational connections through instrumental networking. This chapter provides evidence that employees engage in proactive career and work behaviors to shape their own careers, and that this same behavior also benefits their employing organization.

Finally, chapter 5 explores the job crafting behaviors and motivations of older and younger employees in a socially oriented non-for-profit organization in the Netherlands. The findings reveal that there are differences and similarities in how older and younger employees engage in job crafting behaviors and what drives them to do so (i.e. job crafting motivations). I assume that the similarities between the job crafting behaviors and motivations could be ascribed to the purpose or vision of the non-for-profit organization. Both groups of employees have chosen to work for this organization, and it is fair to assume that their own work values are in line with the values of the organization. Therefore, they might have engaged in job crafting behavior to help support and achieve the organizational goals and mission.

Taken together, the findings presented in this dissertation demonstrate that in order for
individuals to be active agents and to engage in career and work behaviors, they must possess traits that allow them to do so (i.e., being ambitious), they must be motivated to engage in the behaviors and they must work in an organization that supports and stimulates their behavior. When these conditions are met, both the individuals and their employing organizations reap the benefits. This dissertation recognizes the importance of its findings for both researchers and practitioners, and hence, interesting theoretical and practical challenges are discussed in detail in chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

**Dutch Summary**

Onderzoekers die zich bezighouden met het bestuderen van proactief gedrag, erkennen dat individuen proactief zijn op werk om tegemoet te komen aan hun eigen persoonlijke carrière behoeften alsook de behoeften van hun werkgever. Hoewel dit proactieve gedrag ten eerste bedoeld is om een positieve impact te hebben op de individuen en hun werkgevers, is het tevens mogelijk dat het een averechts effect kan hebben als werkgevers niet het gedrag aanmoedigen en steunen. Dit proefschrift suggereert dat vooral de ambitieuze werknemers de behoefte hebben om proactief te zijn op werk en hiermee een positieve bijdrage leveren aan hun werkgevers en/of organisaties.

Om bewijs te leveren voor het bovengenoemde, legt dit proefschrift de focus op twee soorten proactieve gedragingen, namelijk 1) proactief gedrag dat gericht is op het vorm geven van carrières en 2) proactief gedrag dat gericht is op het vormgeven van werk-gerelateerde zaken. Er wordt bestudeerd hoe deze twee soorten gedragingen een invloed hebben op individuen en organisaties. Naast ambitie, is de variabele leeftijd ook gebruikt als een hoofdconcept in een van de onderzoek studies. In totaal zijn er vier empirische onderzoeken uitgevoerd die gebruik maken van verschillende onderzoeksmethoden, zoals systematische literatuur reviews, longitudinaal kwantitatieve onderzoeken en kwalitatieve onderzoeken. Om te beginnen met hoofdstuk 2 van dit proefschrift; dit hoofdstuk tracht meer inzicht te geven op
hoe het complex proces van proactief gedrag plaatsvindt in verschillende organisatieniveaus (d.w.z. individueel, team en organisatieniveau). Dit wordt gedaan door te onderzoeken wat voor effect de interacties en samenhang tussen verscheidene individuele en contextuele factoren hebben op proactief gedrag. De resultaten tonen aan dat proactief gedrag het resultaat is van een complex proces, dat bepaald wordt door de interactie en samenhang tussen individuele en contextuele variabelen. Dit vindt vooral plaats op individueel niveau. De resultaten erkennen tevens het belang van het plaatsen van proactieve werknemers in een werkomgeving die proactief gedrag ondersteunt en aanmoedigt.

Hoofdstuk 3 beantwoordt een van de onderzoek aanbevelingen van hoofdstuk 2. In dit hoofdstuk wordt onderzocht hoe de contextuele variabele “vergoeding” proactief gedrag beïnvloedt en hoe dit vervolgens carrière tevredenheid beïnvloedt. Mijn resultaten tonen aan dat ambitieuze werknemers meer leiding geven op werk (d.w.z. een vorm van proactief gedrag) en daardoor meer tevreden zijn met hun carrière, als zij een hogere werkvergoeding. Daarentegen, hebben lagere werkvergoedingen niet ditzelfde effect op het gedrag van ambitieuze werknemers en hun carrière tevredenheid. Wat betreft de werknemers die minder ambitieus zijn; geen van de werkvergoedingen (laag of hoog) stimuleren hen om meer leiding te geven op werk.

Hoofdstuk 4 bouwt voort op hoofdstuk 3 en onderzoekt de consequenties die de proactieve gedraging “leiding geven” en “netwerken” hebben op organisaties. In dit hoofdstuk stel ik voor dat de variabele ambitie direct gerelateerd is aan de organisatie’s kern competenties; bekwaamheden en connecties. Ik stel tevens voor dat de proactieve gedragingen “leiding geven” en “netwerken” een mediërend effect hebben op de directe relaties. De resultaten tonen aan dat ambitieuze werknemers een bijdrage leveren aan a) de bekwaamheden van organisaties omdat zij leiding geven op werk en b) de connecties van organisaties omdat zij actief zijn in netwerken. Dit hoofdstuk levert bewijs dat werknemers
proactief zijn in carrière en werk gerelateerde zaken om vorm te geven aan hun carrière, maar ook om een positieve bijdrage te leveren aan hun werkgevers.

Ten slotte onderzoekt hoofdstuk 5 het job crafting gedrag en de job crafting motivaties van oudere en jongere werknemers in een non-for-profit organisatie in Nederland. De resultaten onthullen dat er verschillen en overeenkomsten zijn in de job crafting motivaties van oudere en jongere werknemers en in hoe beide groepen werknemers deelnemen aan het gedrag. Ik veronderstel dat de overeenkomsten tussen de job crafting gedragingen en motivaties van oudere en jongere werknemers toegeschreven kunnen worden aan het doel of visie van de non-for-profit organisatie. Ik neem aan dat beide groepen werknemers de keuze gemaakt hebben om voor die organisatie te werken, omdat hun eigen werk waarden overeenkomen met de organisatiewaarden. Mede hierom kan het zijn dat zij deel nemen aan job crafting om de organisatie doelen en missie te steunen

Samenvattend, de resultaten weergegeven in dit proefschrift tonen aan dat individuen proactief kunnen zijn, als zij beschikken over de juiste eigenschappen (d.w.z. ambitieus zijn), als zij gemotiveerd zijn om deel te nemen aan het gedrag en als zij in een organisatie werken die proactief gedrag ondersteunt en aanmoedigt. Wanneer is voldaan aan deze voorwaarden, zal het gedrag ten goede komen aan zowel de individuen als aan hun werkgevers. Dit proefschrift erkent het belang van de resultaten voor zowel onderzoekers als practitioners en dus worden er interessante theoretische en praktische uitdagingen besproken in detail in de hoofdstukken 2, 3, 4, 5 en 6.

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**Short Bio**

Sabrine El Baroudi was born in The Hague (The Netherlands) on 12 December 1986. In 2005 she received her VWO diploma from the Aloysius College in The Hague and started her business studies at the VU University of Amsterdam. In 2010, she obtained her Master of Science degree in Business Administration (cum laude). In September 2012 she started her PhD-research at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEWEB) at the VU University Amsterdam. Prior to her PhD, she worked for 3 years as a consultant in the areas of HRM, social support programs, marketing & internet strategy.

    During her PhD she worked as a visiting researcher at the University of Toronto in
Canada on several cross-cultural research projects (2012-2014). She also worked as a teaching instructor and taught several management courses to Bachelor and Master students at the VU University in Amsterdam. Her research has been presented in international research conferences, for example in Berlin, Ashridge, London and Amsterdam. Her main research interests are employee satisfaction, employee motivation, proactive work and career behaviors, aggressive work behavior, learning and development, talent management and diversity management. Sabrine works as an Assistant Professor in HR and Management at the American University in Dubai since August 2015.

**Summary for Back of Book**

Given the increasing importance of proactivity in today’s workplace, understanding who engages in proactive behavior and how this behavior could be enhanced can help businesses gain a competitive advantage. In addition to this, organizations cope with fewer resources for their employees and therefore it is important that employees know how to manage and satisfy their own career needs by being proactive. Because proactivity serves career and work purposes, it has been divided in the extant literature into two categories: proactive work behaviors and proactive career behaviors. The first category, proactive work behaviors, are supposed to influence work related outcomes and are therefore primarily linked to organizational outcomes in proactivity research. Proactive career behaviors, however, are mainly linked to individual outcomes, as these behaviors are assumed to influence or benefit the individual. This dissertation has given proactivity research a new fresh shade and provides evidence that both types of proactive behaviors influence individual and organizational outcomes. Through four empirical studies, it shows that individual proactivity can be understood and identified by selecting individuals based on their age and personality trait ambition. It furthermore demonstrates that for individuals to engage in proactive work and career behaviors, they should be working in an environment that stimulates and supports these
behaviors. To help enhance and facilitate this important contemporary work behavior, novel and practical approaches are also offered in this dissertation.