Call for Papers in

*Journal of Organizational Behavior*

**Exploring the Consequences of Proactive Behaviors: New Directions**

*A Special Issue Guest-edited by*

Wu Liu  
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subrahmaniam Tangirala  
University of Maryland

Cynthia Lee  
Northeastern University

Sharon K. Parker  
University of Western Australia

Submission Deadline  
November, 30, 2016
Call for Papers

Exploring the Consequences of Proactive Behaviors:

New Directions

Background and Focuses

In an age where flatter organizational structures, rapid changes in customer demands and empowerment practices are prevalent, employees are expected to be proactive at the workplace. Proactive behaviors are those that are self-initiated, future-oriented and change-inducing (e.g., Grant & Ashford, 2008). Proactive behaviors have been studied under different labels such as voice, proactivity, taking charge, personal initiative, feedback seeking, or issue selling (Parker & Collins, 2010). Research on these behaviors has provided invaluable insights on their antecedents. Underpinning this focus on antecedents is an assumption that proactive behaviors are beneficial to individuals, teams or organizations.

Although there is emerging evidence about the value of proactive behavior (e.g., Detert, Burris, Harrison, & Martin, 2013), many questions remain. For instance, what are organizational conditions in which employee proactivity has positive effects on team outcomes? What is the causal direction in the association between proactive behaviors and work outcome? Are there health related consequences such as burnout or psychological well being for proactive employees? Do the consequences of proactivity vary across different cultures? To answer such questions, future investigations should adopt new perspectives and methods to more systematically examine the extent to which proactive behaviors influence employees, teams, and organizations.

The goal of this special issue of JOB is to enrich our understanding of the consequences of proactive behaviors. We invite theoretical and empirical papers using quantitative, qualitative,
or mixed-methods approaches. Papers could address a wide range of issues, including but not limited to the following topics:

**I. Examine the interplay between proactive behaviors and work contexts**

There is a potential reciprocal relationship between the work context and employees proactive behaviors. Work context can facilitate or inhibit positive outcomes for proactive employees; and at the same time, proactive employees do not merely respond to their circumstances but seek to change their context to make it more receptive to proactivity. Hence, research needs to examine the context under which proactive behaviors are (un)successful and how proactive behaviors enable changes in the work context. For example, under what conditions are proactive employees more successful at the workplace? How and when would proactive behaviors lead to positive changes of the work context in which employees are embedded? Can proactive behaviors spread via contagion to peers?

We advocate taking a multi-level perspective to examine the interplay between proactive behavior and work contexts. A multi-level perspective can include examination at the dyadic, team, or organizational level.

a. **Dyadic context.** How do dyadic contexts, such as relationship quality and status differences, shape how proactive behaviors are received? Are such dyadic contexts influenced by proactive behaviors?

b. **Team context.** Would proactive behaviors be more likely to influence team processes (e.g., team conflict and idea generation) and outcomes (e.g., team performance and innovation) in certain kinds of teams? Would team characteristics, such as team structure and team climate, be influenced by team members’ proactive behavior?
c. Organizational context. Why are proactive behaviors reinforced or rewarded in some organizations, but not others? Would factors such as organizational culture and implicit theories of top management influence whether proactivity has positive outcomes? Is it possible that proactive behaviors engaged by employees could lead to bottom-up changes in organizational contexts (e.g., organizational structure and culture)?

II. Adopt new methods

Research on proactive behavior has largely employed field-based survey techniques (e.g., Morrison, 2011), which certainly help establish external validity. However, to confirm causality, we need to explore the consequences of proactive behavior via randomized experiments. Additionally, scholars have noted that, “proactive behaviors are not isolated incidents that occur at one point in time. Rather, they are informed, cultivated, and constrained by past experiences, successes, and setbacks” (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Use of experience sampling methods might help us examine how proactive behaviors may increase, decrease, or fluctuate with time and examine issues such as how the success or failure of proactive behaviors at any particular time can influence the occurrence of such behaviors at the next opportunity.

III. Take a multi-cultural perspective

Few studies have examined proactive behaviors in multi-cultural contexts. More research needs to explore how the culture context under which proactive behaviors are enacted might influence their consequences. For example, how does cultural dissimilarity between the employees and their managers influence how employees’ proactive behaviors are evaluated and treated? Would the same proactive behavior lead to different consequences in different cultural contexts? Would such cultural factors explain why certain proactive behaviors (e.g., individual
career related proactive behavior versus team focused proactive behaviors) are more effective than others? Do cultural factors influence the strategies that individuals use when being proactive, given that they might anticipate different reactions from others based on the cultural context?

**IV. Broaden the Scope of Investigation to include a wider variety of dependent variables.**

Although proactive behaviors are believed to have beneficial task-related consequences for individuals and organizations (e.g., improved individual and team performance), there is little research on the health or well-being consequences of proactive behaviors. For instance, will proactive behaviors increase burnout or stress that comes with seeking to change the work context? Does the sense of agency that comes from being proactive increase employee wellbeing in the long term?

**Submission Process**

All manuscripts will be reviewed simultaneously for this special issue. Manuscripts must be submitted before November 30, 2016 at [https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/job](https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/job).

All submissions will go through the JOB regular double-blind review process and follow the standard norms and processes. For more information about this call for papers, please contact the JOB Managing Editor ([JOBedoffice@wiley.com](mailto:JOBedoffice@wiley.com)) or the Special Issue Editors:

**Wu Liu** ([wu.liu@polyu.edu.hk](mailto:wu.liu@polyu.edu.hk))

**Subrahmaniam Tangirala** ([stangirala@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:stangirala@rhsmith.umd.edu))

**Cynthia Lee** ([c.lee@neu.edu](mailto:c.lee@neu.edu))

**Sharon K. Parker** ([sharon.parker@uwa.edu.au](mailto:sharon.parker@uwa.edu.au))
References:


