

Linking Proactive Personality and Proactive Behavior: The Mediating Effect of Regulatory Focus

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This study investigates the linkage between proactive personality and proactive behavior using regulatory focus theory (RFT). Using a sample of 188 supervisor/subordinate dyads, I examine the different effects of promotion and prevention foci on employee behavior. Results indicate that work regulatory focus (WRF) mediates the relationships between proactive personality and both task performance and proactive behavior (taking charge and problem prevention). Findings indicate that RFT is useful in predicting different types of employee behavior. This study extends the domain of proactivity in the workplace by demonstrating that RFT provides incremental understanding of the motivational processes that underlie proactive behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Research into what motivates employees receives considerable attention in the management literature. Over the past decade, motivation research has focused on what drives employees to engage in behaviors aimed at bringing about meaningful change in an organization's environment such as proactive behavior (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant, 2000). One such motivational construct that has received increased attention is proactive personality. Empirical evidence indicates that proactive personality is related to various proactive behaviors including voice, taking charge, creativity, feedback seeking, mentoring, and career planning (Fuller & Marler, 2009; Ng & Feldman, 2012; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001; Spitzmuller, Sin, Howe, & Fatimah, 2015; Tornau & Frese, 2013). Proactive personality is also related to overall job performance, including task and contextual performance (Fuller & Marler, 2009; Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010; Tornau & Frese, 2013).

A proactive personality does not guarantee that proactive behaviors will occur as prior research suggests proactive personality is only a distal predictor of proactive behavior acting through cognitive motivational states (Fuller, Marler, & Hester, 2006). Scholars agree that personality is only a distal antecedent of behavior leading some to recommend that theoretical models include constructs which are more proximal to behavior (Barrick & Mount, 2005; Elliot & Thrash, 2002; Judge & Illies, 2002; Parker, Bindl, and Strauss, 2010). Despite the growth of studies linking proactive personality with proactive behavior and job performance, more research addressing the mechanisms through which proactive personality leads to behavior is needed (Fuller, Hester, & Cox, 2010; Spitzmuller et al., 2015). To help address this gap, I provide an empirical test of a model of proactivity which includes a motivational mechanism seldom examined in the proactivity literature, regulatory focus.

Regulatory focus theory (RFT; Higgins, 1997, 1998) provides insight into the cognitive motivational processes underlining behavioral regulation during goal pursuit. RFT examines the differences in how

people view goals in order to explain why people adopt certain behaviors over others to achieve their goals (Brockner, Higgins, & Low, 2004; Gamache, McNamara, Mannor, & Johnson, 2015; Scholer & Higgins, 2008). RFT suggests that people will change their goal pursuit means in response to feedback about current and future states. Empirical results indicate that regulatory focus accounts for additional variance beyond personality related variables (e.g., conscientiousness, extraversion) in models predicting organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), counterproductive work behavior (CWB), and innovative performance (Lanaj, Chang, & Johnson, 2012).

Although regulatory focus is typically portrayed as a chronic disposition, it is believed to be malleable. One's regulatory focus responds to and can be altered by factors in one's environment such as supervisor influence (Johnson & Wallace, 2011). That is, regulatory focus can operate as a trait and/or a state (Gamache et al., 2015). The ability to function as either a trait or a state makes regulatory focus a superlative variable for predicting employee behavior. Prior research indicates that proactive personality is positively related to both promotion and prevention foci (Aryee & Hsiung, 2016; Strobel, Tumasjan, Sporrle, & Welp, 2013; Waterwall, 2017). Based on the evidence presented above, I suggest that RFT is well suited to explain the link between proactive personality and proactive behavior.

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the link between regulatory focus and proactive behavior. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions: "Does regulatory focus predict different types of proactive behavior? If so, do different forms of regulatory focus (promotion and prevention) uniquely predict different forms of proactive behavior?" Addressing these research questions will provide needed clarity to the proactivity literature. The present research illustrates the extent to which RFT provides incremental understanding of the motivational processes that underlie work behavior. At the same time results from this study address scholarly calls for research examining the mechanisms that link proactive personality to proactive behavior (Fuller et al., 2010; Spitzmuller et al., 2015) and calls for research which incorporates regulatory focus as a motivational mechanism in models of proactive behavior (Glaser, Stam, & Takeuchi, 2016).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Regulatory Focus Theory

Regulatory focus theory (RFT) is concerned with the process by which individuals self-regulate their behavior during goal pursuit (Higgins, 1997, 1998). RFT attempts to account for individual differences in how people view goals and provide an explanation as to why people adopt certain strategic means to achieve their goals (Brockner et al., 2004; Gamache et al., 2015; Scholer & Higgins, 2008). RFT is based on self-discrepancy theory (SDT) which states that people are motivated to align their self-concept and self-guide (Higgins, 1987). A person's self-concept or actual-self represents the attributes a person believes he or she actually possess (Higgins, 1987). Self-guides represent internalized standards a person feels he or she should possess. According to Higgins (1987), self-guides can take the form of an ideal-self or an ought-self. The ideal-self represents the attributes that a person would like to possess and is represented by one's hopes and aspirations (Higgins, 1987). The ought-self represents the attributes that a person believes he or she should possess and is a representation of a person's sense of duty, obligation, and responsibility (Higgins, 1987). Individuals experience negative emotions (e.g., discomfort, dejection, fear, sadness) when a discrepancy exists between their self-concept and their self-guide. SDT suggests that individuals are motivated to reduce or eliminate the negative emotions caused by the discrepancy (Higgins, 1987). Behavioral regulation will occur when one perceives a discrepancy between their self-concept (current state) and self-guide (desired state).

RFT describes two systems by which individuals regulate behavior during goal pursuit: a promotion focus and a prevention focus. A person's regulatory orientation affects how they view goals and indicates a preference for adopting one strategic means over another (Scholer & Higgins, 2008). A promotion focus is characterized by a concern with advancement, growth, and accomplishment and involves striving for goals following an ideal self-guide (Higgins, 1997, 1998). Individuals adopting a promotion focus will use eagerness-related means during goal pursuit in an effort to ensure hits and avoid errors of omission

(Higgins, 1997, 1998). Self-regulation occurs in response to the presence or absence of positive outcomes. A promotion focus is associated with behaviors which increase the likelihood of success such as taking risks (Wallace, Butts, Johnson, Stevens, & Smith, 2016), OCBs, and innovation (Lanaj et al., 2012; Shin, Kim, Choi, Kim, & Oh, 2017).

Prevention focus is characterized by a concern with safety, security, and fulfilling duties and obligations (Higgins, 1997, 1998). Individuals adopting a prevention focus follow the ought-self guide and are motivated to avoid losses or errors of commission. Self-regulation occurs in response to the presence or absence of negative outcomes (Higgins, 2000). Accordingly, prevention focused individuals will use vigilance-related means during goal pursuit. A prevention focus is associated with behaviors which decrease the likelihood of failure such as task performance and safety performance (Aryee & Hsiung, 2016; Lanaj et al., 2012). In the workplace, prevention focus employees are less likely than promotion focus employees to take risks or seek opportunities to develop new routines (Wallace et al., 2016).

Promotion and prevention foci are independent of one another and individuals can be high or low in both at the same time (Wallace, Johnson, & Frazier, 2009). As suggested by Higgins, Roney, Crowe, and Hymes, “all people possess both systems, but different socialization experiences could make one system predominant in self-regulation” (1994, p. 277). A person’s regulatory orientation is shaped by personal traits and contextual factors, and is relatively stable but can vary from one situation to the next (Higgins, 1997, 1998; Johnson, Smith, Wallace, Hill, & Baron, 2015; Liberman, Idson, Camacho, & Higgins, 1999; Moss, Ritossa, & Ngu, 2006; Wallace, Little, Hill, & Ridge, 2010; Zacher & de Lange, 2011). An assumption of RFT is that individuals adapt to stimuli in order to become more compatible with their environment (Camacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003; Higgins, 2000). Thus, regulatory focus can be examined as either a chronic (general regulatory focus) or a situationally induced (work regulatory focus) disposition.

General regulatory focus (GRF) represents a stable individual difference akin to personality (Higgins & Silberman, 1998) whereas situational regulatory focus is more state-like and is shaped as individuals respond to stimuli in their environment (Johnson & Wallace, 2011). Situational regulatory focus, sometimes referred to as work regulatory focus (WRF) in organizational research (Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008; Wallace et al., 2009) is more strongly related to work attitudes and behaviors than general regulatory focus (Lanaj et al., 2012). In a work context, regulatory focus can be manipulated through mechanisms such as reward structures, leadership style/behavior, task framing, and interpersonal interactions (Brockner et al., 2004; Freitas et al., 2002; Gamache et al., 2015).

Proactive Personality and Regulatory Focus

An individual with a proactive personality is described as, “one who is relatively unconstrained by situational forces, and who effects environmental change” (Bateman & Crant, 1993, p. 105). Individuals with a proactive personality adopt an active approach in their work roles, identify opportunities, display personal initiative, and are persistent in their desire to bring about constructive change in their environments (Crant, 1995). Proactive personality plays an important role in proactive idea implementation and proactive problem solving (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006) and has been linked to job performance and proactive behavior (Fuller & Marler, 2009; Tornau & Freeze, 2013).

Proactive personality may act as an antecedent of regulatory focus by facilitating the adoption of a promotion focus or a prevention focus. Indeed, empirical evidence indicates that proactive personality is positively related to both work promotion and work prevention foci (Aryee & Hsiung, 2016; Strobel et al., 2013) but no study has offered a rationale as to the nature of these relationships or offered testable hypotheses. Proactive personality and regulatory focus are future oriented motivational constructs that describe how people pursue their goals. Proactive behavior involves “taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones” (Crant, 2000, p. 436). Both improving current circumstances or creating new ones are strategies in which either a promotion or a prevention-oriented individual can pursue goals, but the way these strategies are viewed and how one goes about executing them will be different under each regulatory focus. Individuals adopting a promotion focus are motivated to achieve

success and be recognized. They will approach their goal of achieving gains and avoiding nongains using eagerness related means. This can involve feedback seeking to improve current circumstances or taking charge to create new ones. On the other hand, individuals adopting a prevention focus are motivated by a desire to avoid losses and will use vigilant means during goal pursuit. Under a prevention orientation, one could improve current circumstances by preventing problems or create new circumstances through job change negotiation. Therefore, I expect proactive personality to be positively related to both work promotion focus and work prevention focus.

***Hypothesis 1a:** Proactive personality is positively related to work promotion focus.*

***Hypothesis 1b:** Proactive personality is positively related to work prevention focus.*

Work Regulatory Focus and Proactive Behavior

Proactive behavior has been defined as “taking initiative in improving current circumstances; it involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting to present conditions” (Crant, 2000, p. 436), “self-initiated and future-oriented action that aims to change and improve the situation or oneself” (Parker et al., 2006, p. 636), and “anticipatory action that employees take to impact themselves and/or their environments” (Grant & Ashford, 2008, p. 4). Research in the proactive behavior domain identifies numerous factors which are thought to be related to proactive behaviors including the Big Five personality factors, personal initiative, supervisor proactive personality, job satisfaction, role-breadth self-efficacy (RBSE), and felt responsibility for constructive change (FRCC) to name a few (Fuller & Marler, 2009, Spitzmuller et al., 2015; Tornau & Frese, 2013). The volume of proactivity research and the number of variables that are suggested to be related to proactive behavior has large web of ideas and concepts. In an effort to provide more clarity to the proactivity literature Parker et al. (2010) developed a model of proactive motivation which draws from self-regulation theory (Bandura, 1991) and goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990). The model illustrates the pathways and mechanisms through which personality related variables lead to proactive behavior. Parker et al. (2010) conceptualize proactive behavior as “a goal driven process involving both the setting of a proactive goal and striving to achieve that proactive goal” (Parker et al., 2010, p. 1). One of the frameworks’ key assumptions is that discrepancies between current and future selves motivate proactive goal setting and goal striving (Strauss & Parker, 2015).

Building on prior research (Parker et al., 2010; Strauss, Griffin, and Parker, 2012), I suggest that RFT is useful in linking proactive personality to proactive behavior for at least two reasons. First, proactive personality is not as malleable as WRF and, as a construct, does not account for contextual influences on behavior. Unlike proactive personality, which is a “relatively stable” disposition (Bateman & Crant, 1993, p. 103), WRF is state-like and can vary from one situation to the next in response to contextual factors (Higgins, 2000). Thus, because one’s WRF accounts for environmental factors, WRF is an ideal mediating mechanism to link proactive personality to different forms of proactive behavior in the workplace.

Second, proactive goal generation requires one to think about a desired future outcome and select a strategy to achieve the desired outcome (Parker et al., 2010). This overlaps with a key tenet of RFT, behavioral regulation occurs in response to discrepancies between current and desired end states (Higgins, 1997, 1998). According to RFT, individuals adopt goal pursuit means which help them achieve desired outcomes or avoid undesirable outcomes (Higgins, 1997). From the perspective of RFT, proactivity can be promotion goal oriented, achieving something positive, or prevention goal oriented, avoiding or reducing negative outcomes (Bateman, 2017). For example, individuals adopting a promotion focus are more likely to engage in behaviors that allow them to become more effective (Brennkmeijer & Hekkert-Koning, 2015) such as taking charge.

On the other hand, prevention focus is related to strategies that are similar to a conformist behavioral style (Brebels, De Cremer, & Sedikides, 2008). Empirical findings indicating that prevention focus is related to behaviors that are less proactive in nature such as task performance, safety performance (Lanaj

et al., 2012), and citizenship behaviors aimed at protecting the status quo (Shin et al., 2017). This does not mean that prevention focused individuals do not engage in proactive behavior. Rather, their motivation to do so is not the same as a promotion focused individual. A person adopting a prevention focus may engage in proactive behavior in order to reduce the likelihood of experiencing a loss or committing errors. For example, prevention-oriented employees would be motivated to prevent the reoccurrence of work-related problems (i.e., problem prevention; Frese & Fay, 2001; Parker & Collins, 2010).

Given the existing empirical evidence in support of the positive relationship between proactive personality and proactive behavior, and the relationship between regulatory focus and work behaviors, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: *Work promotion focus mediates the relationship between proactive personality and taking charge.*

Hypothesis 3: *Work prevention focus mediates the relationship between proactive personality and problem prevention.*

Work Regulatory Focus and Task Performance

Prior research indicates that proactive personality is related to task performance (Fuller & Marler, 2009; Spitzmuller et al., 2015). However, the nature and strength of the relationship between proactive personality and task performance often varies between studies. RFT may be able to explain some of this variation by accounting for the differences in how task performance is viewed in relation to work. From the perspective of RFT, task performance is best viewed as a goal that employees strive to accomplish rather than as a behavior. Although the goal (task performance) is the same regardless of one's regulatory orientation, what the goal represents and the underlying motivation to achieve the goal are different under each system.

Under a promotion orientation, task performance represents as necessary component of work as not meeting minimum performance expectations may result in job loss. Although promotion-oriented individuals are not concerned with losses, only gains/hits, losing one's job removes the ability to obtain hits. Therefore, because task performance is seen as a minimal goal which must be met in order to be able to strive for achievement/advancement, I expect promotion focus to be positively associated with task performance. On the other hand, under a prevention focus, task performance is viewed as a job obligation and therefore, a maximal goal. Failing to fulfill one's duties or meet obligations will result in experienced negative emotions and could ultimately result in a loss. Employees adopting a prevention focus will not divert resources into actions that don't directly contribute to their assigned roles except in cases where not doing so might result in a loss. Based on the rational provided, promotion and prevention focus will mediate the relationship between proactive personality and task performance such that the relationship will be stronger for prevention focus.

Hypothesis 4a: *Work promotion focus mediates the relationship between proactive personality and task performance.*

Hypothesis 4b: *Work prevention focus mediates the relationship between proactive personality and task performance.*

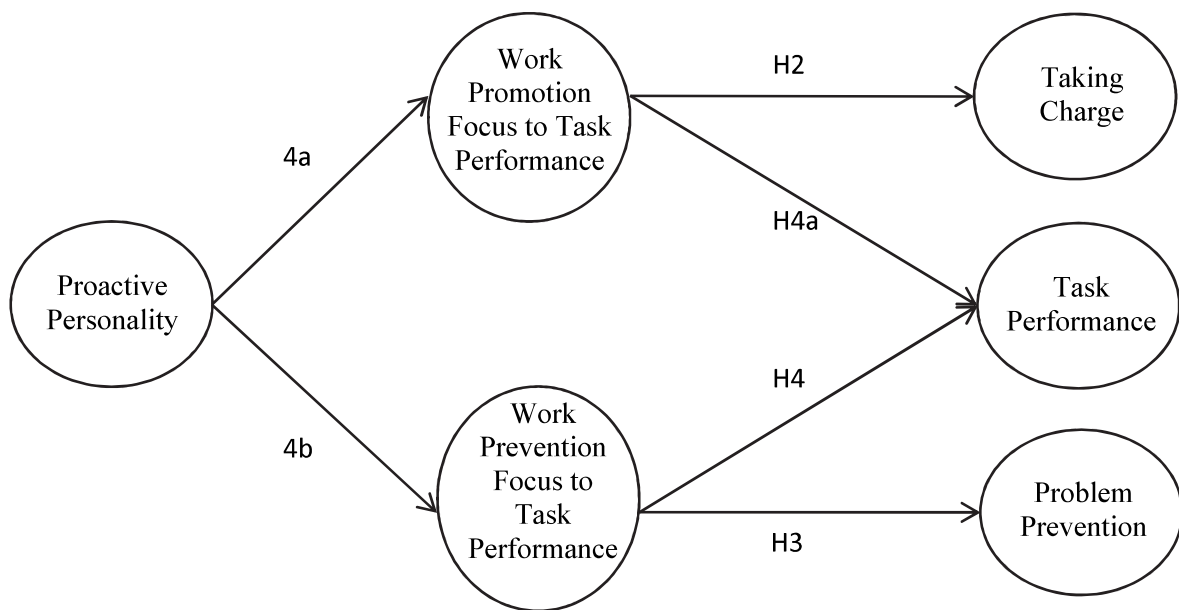
METHOD

Participants

The hypothesized model (see Figure 1) was tested using a sample of working students and their supervisors recruited from a large public university in the United States. In total 615 students were invited to participate in the study. Once consent was received a separate email contain instructions and a link to Qualtrics was sent to the supervisors and subordinates. Of the 615 students invited, 247 volunteered to

participate in the study and completed the survey. A total of 55 observations were removed due to supervisors not completing their survey. The final sample consists of 381 participants representing 188 supervisor-subordinate dyads. It should be noted that there were 3 supervisors who participated on behalf of more than 1 student. Specifically, two supervisors responded on behalf of three subordinates and one supervisor responded on behalf of two subordinates. In all other cases supervisors rated only one subordinate. Gender was represented evenly for both supervisors (49% male) and subordinates (51% male). Ages ranged from 21-68 ($m = 42$, $s.d. = 12.70$) for supervisors and 18-59 ($m = 25$, $s.d. = 9.72$) for subordinates. Subordinates reported working with their supervisor for an average of 2.43 years ($s.d. = 0.86$).

FIGURE 1
HYPOTHESIZED MODEL



MEASURES

Work Regulatory Focus

Wallace and Chen's (2006) 12 item Regulatory Focus at Work Scale (RWS) was used to assess subordinate WRF. The RWS consists of six items measuring work-prevention focus ($\alpha = .86$) and six items measuring work-promotion focus ($\alpha = .81$). The RWS asks respondents to rate how often they focus on several thoughts and activities when they are working. Prevention focus items include "following rules and regulations" and "doing my duty at work." Promotion focus items include "accomplishing a lot at work" and "work activities that allow me to get ahead". RWS uses a 5-point Likert-type response format (1 = Never and 5 = Constantly).

Proactive Personality

The 10-item Proactive Personality Scale (Seibert et al., 2001) was used to assess subordinate proactive personality ($\alpha = .90$). A sample item is "I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life". The proactive personality scale uses a 7-point Likert-type response format (1 = Strongly disagree and 7 = Strongly agree).

Proactive Behavior

Supervisors rated subordinate taking charge and problem prevention. Taking charge was measured using Morrison and Phelps' (1999) 10-item taking charge measure ($\alpha = .87$). A sample item is "This person often tries to bring about improved procedures for the work unit or department". Problem prevention was measured using three items from Parker and Collins's (2010) measure ($\alpha = .83$). "Tries to find the root cause of things that go wrong" is a sample item measuring problem prevention. A 5-point Likert-type response format with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used for taking charge and from very infrequently to very frequently for problem prevention.

Task Performance

Supervisors rated subordinate task performance using five items from Williams and Anderson's (1991) in-role performance scale ($\alpha = .92$). Items were selected to represent behaviors that "a good employee ought to do" (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983: 657). "Obeys company rules and regulations even when no one is watching" and "Fulfills responsibilities specified in job description" are sample items. Items are measured using a 7-point Likert-type response format anchored at 1 = Strongly disagree and 7 = Strongly agree.

Control Variables

Organization Innovation Climate

Supervisors responded to six items from the Organizational Climate Measure (Patterson et al., 2005) which measures the degree to which organizations emphasize change, innovation, growth, and adaptation. Employees working in organizations which promote flexibility and creativity are more likely to engage in proactive behavior than employees working in organizations which do not emphasize or support proactivity (Rusetski, 2011). Therefore, organization innovation climate is included as a control variable to serve as an indication of the level of proactive behavior that is expected in one's organization. Items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type response format (1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree; $\alpha = .86$).

Gender

Prior research indicates that females are more likely to adopt a prevention focus than a promotion focus (Byron, Peterson, Zhang, & LePine, 2018; Strobel et al., 2013; Wu, McMullen, Neubert, & Yi, 2008). Further, research indicates that engaging in proactive behavior may be related to gender (e.g., males are more likely to take charge than females; Fritz & Sonnentag, 2009). Therefore, employees were asked to report their gender to assess if there are any associations between gender and the other variables included in the present study.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations among the study variables. Given that gender was not significantly related to any of the variables in the study it was not included in subsequent analyses.

Hypotheses were tested using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro for SPSS. The methods developed by Hayes (2013) propose to overcome the deficiencies of the causal steps procedure (Baron & Kenny, 1986) by using bootstrapping to simultaneously estimate of all paths in the mediated model to provide a bias-corrected 95% confidence interval (CI). PROCESS provides estimates of direct and indirect effects that can be directly interpreted without reference to the causal steps procedure. Prior research indicates that bootstrap methods should be used over traditional tests of mediation (Shrout & Bolger, 2002) as bootstrap analysis can correct for nonnormal distribution of mediated effects (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002). In the present study, hypotheses were tested using a bootstrap sample of 5000.

Table 2 shows the results of the analyses testing Hypothesis 1a and 1b. Organizational innovation climate and work regulatory focus were included as control variables. Results indicate that proactive

personality is positively related to both promotion ($\beta = 0.26, p < .01$) and prevention ($\beta = 0.18, p < .01$) foci supporting Hypothesis 1a and 1b.

TABLE 1
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND CORRELATIONS

Variables	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Work Promotion Focus	4.16	0.47	(.81)							
2. Work Prevention Focus	4.51	0.49	0.48**	(.86)						
3. Proactive Personality	5.76	0.73	0.50**	0.31**	(.90)					
4. Taking Charge	3.60	0.70	0.36**	0.27**	0.38**	(.87)				
5. Problem Prevention	3.58	0.84	0.27**	0.24**	0.32**	0.74**	(.83)			
6. Task Performance	6.21	1.23	0.22**	0.25**	0.20**	0.18*	0.25*	(.92)		
7. Organizational Innovation	3.75	0.85	0.18*	-0.03	0.35**	0.32**	0.31**	0.08	(.86)	
8. Gender	0.51	0.50	-0.05	-0.06	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.02	-0.08	(-)

Notes: $N = 188$. Gender (0 = female, 1 = male).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF ANALYSES PREDICTING WORK PROMOTION FOCUS AND WORK PREVENTION FOCUS

	<u>Work Promotion Focus</u>	<u>Work Prevention Focus</u>
<u>Control Variables</u>		
Work Prevention Focus	0.48**	0.36**
Work Promotion Focus		0.33** 0.28**
Organizational Innovation	0.20**	0.17** 0.13 0.08
R^2	0.52**	0.37**
<u>Independent Variable</u>		
Proactive Personality		0.26** 0.18*
ΔR^2		0.11** 0.09**
F-Value (d.f.)	39.69 (183)	23.76 (183)

Notes: The first column displays the beta coefficients derived from the model with just the control variables. The second column displays the beta coefficients from the final full model.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Results of the bootstrap procedure used to test Hypothesis 2, 3, and 4a-b are presented in Table 3 and Figure 2. Proactive personality exerted a significant and positive indirect effect on taking charge (indirect effect = 0.11, SE = 0.05, 95% CI = [0.04 to 0.23]) through work promotion focus. However, the direct effect of proactive personality on taking charge (direct effect = 0.19, SE = 0.07, 95% CI = [0.05 to 0.33]) is also significant. Together, results suggest that work promotion focus partial mediates the relationship between proactive personality and taking charge which partially supports Hypothesis 2. The indirect effect of proactive personality on problem prevention through work prevention focus is significant (indirect effect = 0.05, SE = 0.03, 95% CI = [0.01 to 0.11]) as is the direct effect of proactive personality on problem prevention (direct effect = 0.23, SE = 0.08, 95% CI = [0.07 to 0.40]). Results indicate that work prevention focus partial mediates the relationship between proactive personality and problem prevention which partially supports Hypothesis 3.

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF ANALYSES PREDICTING EMPLOYEE WORK BEHAVIOR

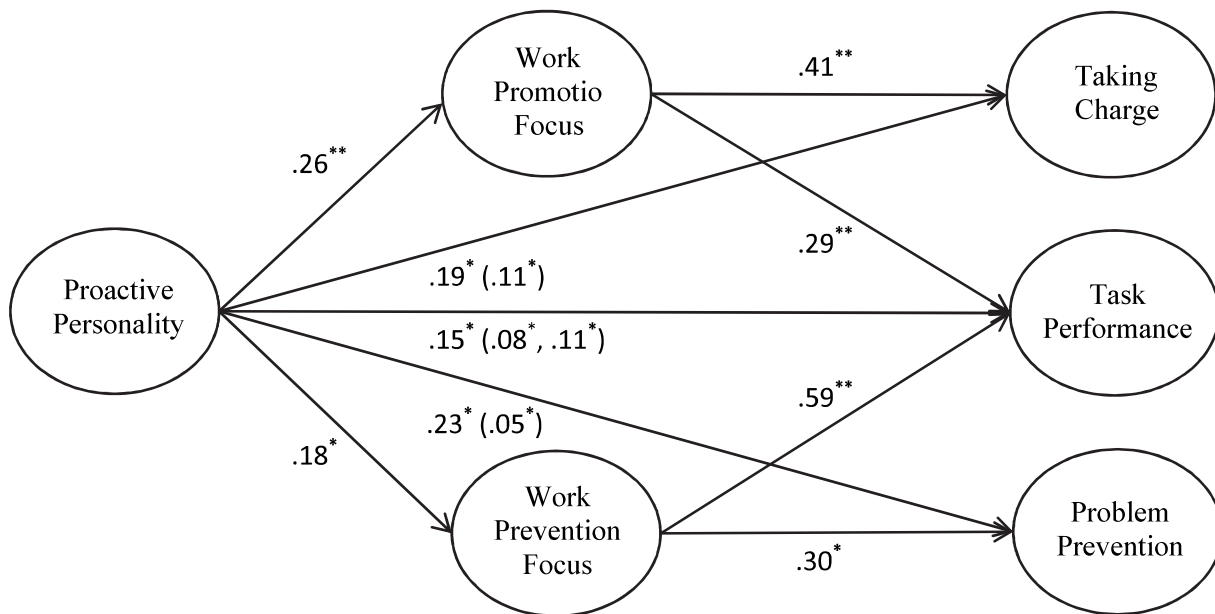
	<u>Taking Charge</u>		<u>Problem Prevention</u>		<u>Task Performance</u>	
<u>Control Variables</u>						
Organizational Innovation	0.17*	0.14	0.22**	0.21**	0.08	0.05
Proactive Personality	0.30**	0.19**	0.28**	0.23**	0.30**	0.15
R ²	0.43**		0.38**		0.20*	
<u>Independent Variable</u>						
Work Promotion Focus	0.41**				0.29**	
Work Prevention Focus			0.30**		0.59**	
ΔR ²	0.08**		0.06**		0.07**	
F-Value (d.f.)	21.19 (183)		14.70 (183)		5.73 (181)	

Notes: The first column displays the beta coefficients derived from the model with just the control variables. The second column displays the coefficients from the full model.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 4a-b stated that work regulatory focus would mediate the relationship between proactive personality and task performance. As seen in Figure 2, the indirect effect of proactive personality on task performance via promotion (indirect effect = 0.08, SE = 0.05, 95% CI = [0.02 to 0.20]) and prevention foci (indirect effect = 0.11, SE = 0.08, 95% CI = [0.04 to 0.29]) were both significant. The direct effect of proactive personality on task performance (direct effect = 0.15, SE = 0.13, 95% CI = [-0.04 to 0.29]) was not significant. Taken together, the results support Hypothesis 4a and 4b and suggests that regulatory focus fully mediates the relation between proactive personality and task performance for these data.

FIGURE 2
RESULTS OF THE BOOTSTRAP PROCEDURE



Notes: Indirect effects appear in parentheses
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications

This study answers the call for more research investigating regulatory focus as a mediating mechanism linking proactive personality and proactive behavior (Glaser et al., 2016). Until now, RFT has received little attention in proactive behavior research. However, proactivity researchers are starting to recognize regulatory focus theory's potential to explain how and why proactive behaviors occur. For example, five chapters from a recently published review of proactivity in the workplace (Parker & Bindl, 2017) refer to RFT (one of the chapters refers to self-discrepancy theory which is the basis for RFT). In addition to the five chapters mentioned above, three chapters refer to future work selves, a concept very similar to promotion focus.

The findings from this study suggest that RFT provides incremental understanding of the motivational processes that underlie proactive behavior beyond that of core proactive motivation constructs (e.g., proactive personality). Proactive personality was found to be positively related to both work promotion and work prevention foci. This suggests that even prevention-oriented individuals can be proactive as being proactive may be necessary to guard against loss. Results from the present study are similar to those reported by Strobel et al. (2013) which indicate that proactive personality is more strongly related to a promotion focus than a prevention focus.

Results indicate that WRF mediates the relationships between proactive behavior and three types of work behavior (taking charge, problem prevention, and task performance). Specifically, work promotion focus was positively related to taking charge and task performance whereas work prevention focus was positively related to problem prevention and task performance. Results indicate that the nature and strength of the relationship between proactive personality and task performance is dependent on one's regulatory focus. Task performance is viewed as a minimal goal under a promotion focus and as a maximal goal under a prevention focus. Therefore, task performance can be expected to be higher under a

prevention focus than a promotion focus because fulfilling one's obligations (task performance) is the source of motivation under a prevention focus. Prior research reports mixed findings regarding the relationship between prevention focus and task performance with some reporting a negative relationship between work prevention focus and task performance (Lanaj et al., 2012) and others reporting a positive relationship (Shin et al., 2017; Wallace et al., 2009). Findings from this study provide additional evidence to support a positive relationship between prevention focus and task performance.

As one of the first studies examining the effect of proactive personality on multiple forms proactive behavior through WRF, this study provides credence to the robustness of RFT in predicting proactive behavior in the workplace. In doing so, this study adds to the regulatory focus and proactivity literatures by providing a finer grained understanding of the dynamics among subordinate motivational states (proactive personality and regulatory focus), and different forms of work behavior. Unlike proactive personality, which is a stable personality trait, regulatory focus is both trait and state-like and can vary from one situation to the next (Higgins, 2000). In a work context, regulatory focus can be manipulated through task framing and leadership styles such as transformational and transactional leadership (Johnson, King, Lin, Scott, Walker, & Wang, 2017; Kark, Katz-Navon, & Delegach, 2015). Thus, supervisors must be aware of their subordinate's regulatory orientation and the mechanisms which can be used to evoke each focus.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study is not without limitations. First, although data were collected from two sources to reduce common method variance, all data were collected at one time. Scholars posit that individuals "exhibit different levels of proactive behavior over time and as work conditions change" (Crant, Hu, & Jiang, 2017, p. 200). Given that WRF is influenced by factors within one's environment, a longitudinal study, in which proactive personality is measured at T1 and work behaviors at T2 might be more suitable to address the arguments presented in this study.

Second, although organizational innovation climate was included in order to control for the impact of the work environment on employee motivation and behavior, other factors present in the work environment may have influenced the relationships examined in this study. For example, supervisors framing tasks as either approaching gains or avoiding loss. Therefore, the data may provide spurious results due to other contextual factors in the work environment such as supervisor personality and/or behavior.

Third, regulatory focus was operationalized as situational (work) rather than chronic (general). This was done because situational regulatory focus is more malleable (shaped by both traits and contextual factors) than GRF. Given that both GRF and proactive personality are traits, one could argue that GRF and proactive personality may operate in tandem to shape WRF. Alternatively, GRF may be an antecedent to proactive personality or vice versa. Future research utilizing an experimental design would be beneficial in establishing a causal relation between GRF and proactive personality.

Further, given that WRF is shaped by factors in the work environment, it's plausible that WRF may fluctuate day to day as a function of the changing nature of the work environment. At the same time, assuming WRF remains constant in a given environment, it would be interesting to examine the long-term effects of sustaining one regulatory focus over another. For example, prevention focus is associated with agitation and frustration (Crowe & Higgins, 1997), due to the psychological effects of continuously framing situations as loss or nonloss. Over time, employees who sustain a prevention focus may experience anxiety or burnout which may lead to a decrease in both in role and extra role behaviors. Future research using a longitudinal design is needed to better understand the relationship between regulatory focus and behaviors over time.

Last, only two proactive behaviors were examined in this study. Taking charge and problem prevention were selected as they are both categorized as proactive work behaviors (Parker & Collins, 2010) and each is associated with either an approach or avoidance strategy. Problem prevention is action taken to "prevent the reoccurrence of work problems" whereas taking charge are efforts to "bring about improved procedures" (Parker & Collins, 2010 p 637). One behavior is trying to prevent something from

happening and the other is trying to create opportunities to allow something to happen. Future regulatory focus research should include other forms of proactive behavior. Ideally, behaviors would be chosen that are theoretically aligned with either a promotion or a prevention focus. For example, a domain specific form of proactive behavior, safety proactivity, is a suitable candidate. Safety proactivity refers to behaviors that are anticipatory, self-initiated, change oriented, and intended to enhance safety in the workplace (Curcuruto & Griffin, 2017). Research indicates that promotion focus has a small negative relation to safety performance, whereas prevention focus has a large positive relation to safety performance (Lanaj et al., 2012), therefore, it is likely that prevention focus will be a stronger predictor of safety proactivity.

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