

PROACTIVE PERSONALITY, ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE, PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT AND JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG FRONTLINE WORKERS IN CHINA: MODERATING EFFECT OF JOB SATISFACTION

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Abstract: *This conceptual paper examines the relationship between three variables, namely, proactive personality, organizational climate, and person-organization fit on job performance of frontline workers in the Chinese context. The study hopes to examine the moderating effect of job satisfaction on the above-mentioned relationship. Based on the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) theory and the Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA), this research focuses on the manufacturing industry, an essential sector in China's economy. This study would adopt a quantitative research approach whereby data are to be retrieved from a structured questionnaire completed by manufacturing frontline employees in different regions of China. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) would be used to analyze the relationships between the variables. The study hopes to offer implications for improving the climate in the manufacturing sector, enhancing the match between personal and organizational values, and focusing on satisfaction needs for organizational policymakers and managers.*

Keywords: *Proactive personality, Organizational climate, Person-organization fit, Job performance, Job satisfaction*

Introduction

Frontline workers in China's industrial sector are crucial to the country's success, contributing approximately 26.2% of its GDP through manufacturing activities (Hua et al., 2023). Since they play such an essential role in the country's industrial sector, one of the largest in the world, they are crucial to the growth and development of the economy. Additionally, China's low labor costs, along with other factors such as infrastructure development, policy support, and technological improvements, have enabled it to become the "world's factory." (Chandra, V & Banga, R, 2007). This has made China an attractive location for global manufacturers to locate their operations. It has created millions of jobs in urban and semi-urban areas, offering workers from rural regions an opportunity to earn higher wages than in agriculture (Bai & Li, 2020). Under the background of the gradual disappearance of China's "demographic dividend" and the transformation and upgrading of the manufacturing industry, how to stimulate the performance of this huge group is crucial.

Current research on the relationship between positive personality, organizational climate, person-organization fit, job satisfaction, and job performance has largely evolved in parallel, with limited cross-disciplinary integration and a lack of a cohesive theoretical framework. This study aims to address this gap by proposing an integrated model that examines the complex interplay among these constructs within the unique cultural and managerial context of China. Specifically, it seeks to elucidate the critical boundary role of job satisfaction—particularly its moderating effects—within this network of relationships. By doing so, this research not only contributes to the theoretical advancement of organizational behavior in Chinese settings but also offers evidence-based management strategies for practitioners to enhance employee performance in a targeted and culturally informed manner.

This study hopes to identify the variables that would affect the job performance of the employees in China. Hence, it is proposed to examine the moderating influence of job satisfaction on the relationships between proactive personality, organizational climate, and Person-Organization (P-O) fit on the performance of frontline manufacturing workers in China. Organizations face significant changes due to increased accountability demands, more diversity, and financial cuts. This as a result will impact on frontline workers and organizational administration.

Research objectives

The following goals were created to achieve the research's purpose:

- i. To examine the relationship between proactive personality, organizational climate, person-organization fit and job performance.
- ii. To examine the moderating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between proactive personality, organizational climate, person-organizational fit and job performance.

Literature Review

Frontline manufacturing workers include assembly line employees, machine operators, and quality control inspectors. Front-line employees are often in direct contact with product outputs and customers. Their ability to ensure product quality, timely delivery, and adherence to specifications contributes directly to customer satisfaction and a company's reputation in the market. (Li, Y & Wang, X, 2020). In manufacturing, "frontline" employees include machine

operators, assemblers, welders, and quality control inspectors (McLafferty, s & Preston, s , 2023). The workers may have varied education and experience levels, and their duties may range from menial labor to positions requiring specialized training and certification. Because they are essential to the success of manufacturing businesses and play a significant role in the economy, frontline manufacturing workers have received a growing amount of attention in recent years to improve their working conditions and career progression (Wright, R. A & Gordon, S. R , 2022).

Workers in the assembly line are termed frontline employees (YingWang, 2020; Zhan et al., 2022). The bulk of the workforce falls into this category, and their primary function is to carry out routine mechanical duties. The growth of China's industrial front line has resulted in a new population, migrant workers, who often come into contact with Chinese laborers on the front line (Chan, 2018; Liu & Chen, 2019). In addition, with China's manufacturing sector's growth, many have left farming to become factory employees. In China's industrial sectors, frontline workers, particularly migrant laborers, form the largest category in the workforce.(Fang & Li, 2021).

The first frontline workers were from economically poor rural regions, but many eventually made their way to the city in search of better employment opportunities and living conditions. They are often found at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder in major Chinese cities. As a result of their low levels of education and general lack of work experience, they are limited to doing only the most fundamental forms of physical labor (Martic, 2022). low pay in China's industrial sectors often push workers to prioritize family support over their own labor rights. Many workers sacrifice personal well-being in exchange for the ability to send money back home to their families (Zhao & He, 2021).

First-generation frontline employees are known for their resilience under pressure, their dedication to their jobs, and their willingness to save costs wherever possible; nonetheless, their personalities are sometimes described as timid and afraid (Sirdeshmukh, Singh & Sabol, 2002). As the first generation of frontline workers began to leave the industrial business due to the inevitable decline in productivity that comes with age, the second generation began to fill their shoes. They are defined as today's youth that set them apart from previous generations. These include more professional aspirations, greater demands for financial and spiritual satisfaction, and less tolerance for long hours at the office. Their ideas, attitudes, standards, cultural features, legal knowledge, and even outlooks on life are quite different from the preceding generation of migrant labor (Hünefeld, Gerstenberg, & Hüffmeier, 2020).

Poor pay, long hours, lack of job security, and lax health and safety regulations are some issues raised due to the appalling working conditions among frontline employees (Park & Pierce, 2020). Though the frontline industrial workers in China contribute significantly to the country's economy's progress, there is still a lot to be done to improve their working conditions and ensure they are treated fairly (Huang et al., 2022; Wang, 2023)

Job Performance

Job performance refers to how well employees complete their employer's tasks and responsibilities (Sekhar & Patwardhan, 2023). It measures how effectively and efficiently employees carry out their duties, meet job-related goals and expectations, and contribute to the

organization's success (Bakker et al., 2020). Job performance can be evaluated based on various factors, such as the quality and quantity of work produced, ability to meet deadlines, attendance, punctuality, ability to work collaboratively with colleagues, and adherence to company policies and procedures (Koopmans, L., Bernaards, C. M., Hildebrandt, V. H., Schaufeli, W. B., de Vet, H. C., & van der Beek, A. J., 2011). Effective job performance is critical for individual career success and overall organizational performance (Arifin, 2022).

Individuals' job performance is always employed as a study's outcome metric. In addition, the term "contextual performance" denotes how an organization's activities shape its climate and culture and the setting in which its transformation and upkeep tasks are carried out. Contextual performance is crucial to organizations because it helps them achieve their objectives and improve their performance (Hameed, Khwajl, & Zaman, 2023).

Factors that Influence Job Performance Proactive Personality

An individual with a proactive personality is not afraid to change their life and the world around them (Ullah, Hameed & Mahmood, 2023). Proactive people are driven to take the initiative and effect change even without clear guidance or monetary reward (Parke, M. R., Weinhardt, J. M., & Brodsky, A., 2022). Proactive people are better equipped to react to the problems and opportunities presented in the workplace because of their greater creativity, flexibility, and resilience. (Saleem et al., 2023). In meta-analytical evaluations, individuality as a proactive personality has been shown to significantly predict performance (Srikanth, Jomon, & Thakur, 2022). Individuals contend that the interaction effect between proactive personalities affects job performance. Employees working in proactive conditions report low levels of psychological distress (Zhan & Zhao, 2023).

Organizational Climate

The term "organizational climate" describes the consensus among workers regarding their workplace (Bohórquez et al., 2023). The employees' perceptions of various aspects of their organization create the overall atmosphere or tone, such as its policies, procedures, communication patterns, leadership style, job demands, rewards, and physical environment (Prasad et al., 2020). Various factors, including leadership behavior, organizational culture, and communication patterns, can influence organizational climate. A favorable organizational climate is typically characterized by high job satisfaction, commitment, and employee motivation. In contrast, an adverse organizational climate may lead to low morale, high turnover rates, and poor job performance (Caniëls & Baaten, 2019).

Research has shown that the organizational climate can significantly impact employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance (Hoang, Wilson-Evered, & Lockstone-Binney, 2021). Positive organizational climates are associated with higher job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment. Adverse climates can lead to lower job satisfaction, higher turnover rates, and lower organizational citizenship behaviors (Kuenzi, Mayer, & Greenbaum, 2020; Suprapti et al., 2020), organizational environment. According to research on organizational climate and job performance, it is crucial for the effectiveness of individuals, groups, and whole organizations (Teresi et al., 2019; Prasad et al., 2020). As a result, the organizational climate may be defined by the values of a particular set of traits or qualities of the company's job performance. It is the quality of the organization's internal environment that its members feel impacts their behavior and is generally permanent.

Person-Organization Fit

The term "person-organization fit" refers to the degree to which an individual and the company for which they work are compatible (Kristof - Brown, Schneider & Su, 2023). It is a notion that describes the degree to which a person's qualities and values correspond to an organization's ideals, culture, and standards (Pratama, Suwarni, & Handayani, 2022). It is hypothesized that if a person and an organization are a good match for one another, positive results will follow, such as increased work satisfaction, commitment, and performance. At the individual level, it refers to the extent to which an individual's values, personality, and goals match those of the organization. At the group level, it refers to how an individual fits the values and norms of the workgroup or team (Haider et al., 2022). At the organizational level, it refers to the extent to which an individual fits with the overall culture and values of the organization (Liu, He & Cao, 2023).

According to the most prevalent viewpoint on fit—value congruence—how well an organization and a person align depends on their respective values (Srikanth, Jomon, & Thakur, 2022). According to Kraiger and Ford's (2007) theory of attraction, selection, and fatigue, which addresses goal congruence, people are drawn to and stay in organizations that share their aims (Penconek et al., 2021).

Satisfaction as a Moderator

Job satisfaction is a crucial factor that has a substantial influence on the interplay between independent factors, namely proactive personality, organizational environment, and person-organization fit, and job performance. The significance of work satisfaction is emphasized by the substantial study carried out in the domain of organizational psychology (Tyagi, Mishra, & Ansari, 2023). Job satisfaction is a psychological state characterized by contentment and happiness with one's occupation and is widely recognized as a crucial element of total workplace well-being. It is vital to comprehend the inherent connection between work satisfaction and independent factors. Job satisfaction has the potential to function as a moderator in the relationship between independent factors and job performance among frontline workers in China. Within this setting, work satisfaction assumes a pivotal role as a significant determinant that impacts and perhaps refines the connections between proactive personality, organizational environment, person-organization fit, and job performance. The correlation between an individual's level of work satisfaction and the strength and direction of the correlations among these factors may be significant.

Synthesizing the Gaps

The above research points to a research gap: the neglect of a key psychological mechanism that determines when and for whom these factors most strongly influence job performance. This study proposes that job satisfaction is a critical moderating variable. Therefore, this study moves beyond a general overview of independent factors to offer a critical synthesis and integration. Job satisfaction, an affective state reflecting contentment with one's job, is not merely an outcome but a potent lens that shapes an employee's engagement with their work environment. This study posits that a high level of job satisfaction amplifies the positive pathways to job performance. For instance, a proactive employee who is also highly satisfied will be more likely to direct their initiative towards organizational goals. Conversely, a dissatisfied proactive employee might direct their energy towards finding a new job or

resistance. Similarly, a positive organizational climate will only translate into higher performance if employees are satisfied; if they are dissatisfied, even a supportive climate may be discounted. Finally, the perception of P-O Fit is likely intrinsically linked to satisfaction; a satisfied worker is more likely to perceive a good fit, and this fit will subsequently have a stronger impact on their performance.

Hypothesis Development

Based on the above literature, the following hypotheses are suggested:

- H1: A proactive personality positively influences job performance among frontline workers in China.
- H2: A positive organizational climate enhances job performance among frontline workers in China.
- H3: A good person-organization fit positively influences job performance among frontline workers in China.
- H4: Job satisfaction moderates the relationship between proactive personality and job performance among frontline workers in China.
- H5: Job satisfaction moderates the relationship between organizational climate and job performance among frontline workers in China.
- H6: Job satisfaction moderates the relationship between person-organization fit and job performance among frontline workers in China.

Research Framework

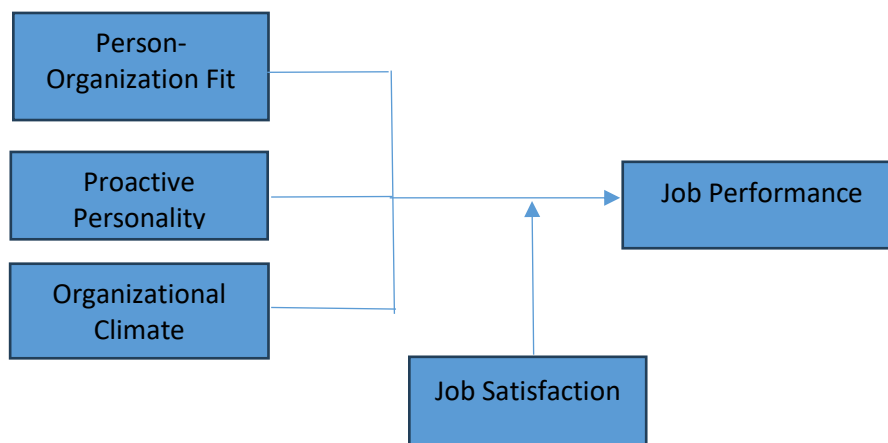


Figure 1: Research Model

Research Methodology

The research design serves as a foundational framework for guiding the study's purpose and objectives. This study aims to explore the relationships between independent variables (Proactive Personality, Person-Organization Fit, and Organizational Climate) and their impact on job performance, with a specific focus on the moderating role of job satisfaction.

A quantitative approach would be employed to empirically examine the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, job performance, with job satisfaction as

a moderator. The quantitative approach is particularly suitable for examining these complex relationships in a structured and data-driven manner (Dabija, Bejan, & Grant, 2018).

This research is to be conducted as a cross-sectional study, implying that data is collected and analyzed at a specific point in time, rather than over an extended period. The cross-sectional design allows for data collection and analysis to be carried out at a single time point, ensuring efficiency and practicality, particularly in the context of a comprehensive study involving various variables and a diverse workforce. The primary unit of analysis in this study is the individual personnel within organizations. The research seeks to understand how the variables under investigation influence the job performance of frontline workers in the context of Chinese public organizations.

Sampling Design

This study's sample design would target the frontline workers and administrators in China's public institutions. The study includes all frontline workers and administrators in China's public organizations. Stratified random sampling is used to categorize participants by job function, department, and organization. Inclusion requirements guarantee that chosen participants are frontline workers or administrators in China's public institutions. After collecting data, a comprehensive analysis is done. Regression and moderation analysis can be used to examine independent variable-job performance correlations.

Sampling Technique

To fulfil its objectives, this research would need to adopt a purposive sampling methodology due to constraints such as the absence of a sample frame, making random sampling methods impractical (Sekaran, 2003). Purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of samples based on their accessibility or relevance to the research inquiry. This approach is categorized under non-probability sampling methods and is specifically termed "purposeful sampling." It entails the selection of study subjects or cases based on predefined criteria or characteristics that are pertinent to the research question.

This research would use the purposive sampling approach to choose participants from the population of frontline industrial employees in China. Instead of randomly choosing individuals from the population, purposeful sampling entails selecting people based on certain features or criteria (Hair Jr et al., 2021). This approach is often employed when a researcher wishes to focus on a specific community or segment, such as frontline Chinese factory employees. The benefit of using purposive sampling is that it enables the researcher to focus on certain features or characteristics pertinent to the study issue. In terms of the variables of interest, this may assist in guaranteeing that the sample is more representative of the population.

Sample Size

A priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1 software (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the minimum sample size required for this study. The analysis was set for a linear multiple regression with four predictors. With an alpha of .05, a power of .80, and a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), the results indicated a required sample size of 129 participants. To account for potential incomplete or invalid responses, our target sample size was increased to 150.

Data Collection Method

Based on the study's objectives, data will be obtained and examined. The strategies and processes used to acquire information or data for research are known as data-collecting methods. The nature of the research topic, the characteristics of the population being investigated, and the resources available all influence the choice of data collection techniques (Hair Jr et al., 2021). A questionnaire aims to gather respondents' attitudes, experiences, and opinions. A specific tool or approach for collecting data is an online survey. When creating a questionnaire, the researcher must develop honest and reliable inquiries that speak to the researcher's study objectives, organize them in a sensible order, and choose the most effective administration strategy (Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, N. P., 2016).

Design of Survey Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a sequence of pre-written questions used to gather information on the variables of research (Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, N. P., 2016). The survey is divided into two main sections: Section 1 asks respondents to provide demographic information; Section 2 asks them to rate their job performance; and Section 3 asks about proactive personality, organizational climate, person-organization fit, and job satisfaction. Proactive personality is measured using Bateman and Crant's (1993) 10-item scale. The responses are shown using five Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The Cronbach alpha ranges from 0.87 to 0.89. Organizational climate is another independent variable in the study. "The members' perspective of the work environment, including the working conditions, and the members' encouragement, including the work environment," is the operational definition of organizational climate (Chen & Hu, 2008). The organizational environment was assessed using the 8 items created by Chen and Hu (2008). The scale's internal consistency is adequate, as shown by past studies and supported by the Cronbach alphas, which range from 0.85 to 0.87. The eight questions are adapted to better match the research context, using the individual analysis level as the analytical unit. Another independent variable is P-O Fit. P-O Fit examines the causes and effects of a person's compatibility with their work organization (Kristof, 1996). Four items modified from the measure of person-organization fit are obtained from Wu et al. (2020). According to earlier studies, the scale's internal consistency is sufficient, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.92.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) is used for preliminary analyses, data screening, and data coding. However, the ground-breaking SmartPLS 4 statistical program is used for the primary analysis utilizing partial least squares (PLS) route modeling. The partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), as opposed to the traditional SPSS regression analysis modeling of 1st generation approaches, is considered the most suitable method for this study's data analysis. Additionally, PLS-SEM, a method of the second-generation analysis, enables the simultaneous modeling of several exogenous latent factors and latent endogenous variables (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000).

Conclusion

This paper's primary objective is mentioned at the outset, followed by the creation of the research framework and hypotheses, the research design determined by the study's objectives, the respondent's selection, the development of the questionnaire, and the survey technique. This

chapter briefly describes how various analyses can be used to achieve the study's aims. In addition, the researcher discussed how the same instruments had been used in the pilot project to evaluate the feasibility of the updated measures and how to overcome any challenges that may arise during data collection for the main study.

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