



## Relationship between proactive personality and marital satisfaction: A spillover-crossover perspective

Julan Xie<sup>a,\*</sup>, Zhiqing E. Zhou<sup>b</sup>, Yanping Gong<sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Business, Central South University, Changsha 410083, China

<sup>b</sup> School of Psychology, Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, FL 32904, USA



### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

Marital satisfaction  
Proactive personality  
Spillover-crossover

### ABSTRACT

This study adopted the spillover-crossover model to examine proactive personality as a potential antecedent of marital satisfaction among dual-earner couples in China. We collected data from 241 Chinese dual-earner couples, and found that proactive personality was positively associated with marital satisfaction through increased work-family facilitation and decreased work-family conflict for men. However, the effect of proactive personality on marital satisfaction was complex and overall negative for women. Specifically, proactive personality was positively related to work-family facilitation and work-family conflict, which in turn positively and negatively predicted marital satisfaction, respectively. Furthermore, our results showed a direct crossover effect of marital satisfaction between partners, suggesting that the effect of people's proactive personality on their own marital satisfaction might cross over to their spouses. This study contributes to a broader understanding of the effect of proactive personality.

### 1. Introduction

Proactive personality refers to an individual's tendency to initiate environmental changes (Bateman & Crant, 1993). A great deal of research has demonstrated that proactive personality might be a distinct and incremental predictor of job performance beyond Big Five personality traits (e.g. Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010). However, little is known about the potential effect of proactive personality on family-related outcomes. In order to fill this gap, the primary interest of this study is to examine “how” and “why” proactive personality is associated with marital satisfaction. Further, previous studies suggested that individuals' personality traits might predict not only their own marital satisfaction, but also their spouses' marital satisfaction (Lester, Haig, & Monello, 1989); thus, the second goal of this study is to explore the relationship between proactive personality and spousal marital satisfaction.

The current study employs the spillover-crossover perspective (Bakker & Demerouti, 2013) as our theoretical framework. Spillover is an intra-individual process in which individuals' experiences from work (family) domain might transfer to their family (work) domain, and then influence their family-related (work-related) outcomes (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Job demands are often proposed to evoke negative experiences which would spill over to employees' family domain and interfere with their ability to fulfill family responsibilities, causing

work-family conflict; in contrast, job resources are proposed to foster positive experiences which would spill over to people's family domain and promote family-related outcomes, leading to work-family facilitation. On the other hand, crossover is an inter-individual phenomenon in which people's experiences might affect others closely related to them (Westman, 2001).

The spillover-crossover model combines the spillover and crossover literature, and theorizes that individuals' experiences of job demands and resources will first spill over to their family domain and then cross over to their partners (Bakker & Demerouti, 2013). This model delineates the process through which individuals' work conditions might influence their and their partners' well-being such as marital satisfaction, and this process has been empirically supported (e.g. Bakker, Shimazu, Demerouti, Shimada, & Kawakami, 2013; Ma, Xie, Tang, Shen, & Zhang, 2016). Thus we apply this spillover-crossover model as our theoretical framework to develop hypotheses on effects of individuals' proactive personality on their and their partners' marital satisfaction.

According to the spillover-crossover model, positive experiences of job resources might be positively associated with work-family facilitation, and then positively influences people's marriage life (Bakker & Demerouti, 2013). Proactive personality is often valued as a key resource in working life (e.g. Dikkers, Jansen, de Lange, Vinkenburgh, & Kooij, 2010; Hirschi, 2012). Proactive people usually have the

\* Corresponding authors.

E-mail addresses: [ping98@163.com](mailto:ping98@163.com) (Y. Gong), [julia\\_xie@csu.edu.cn](mailto:julia_xie@csu.edu.cn) (J. Xie).

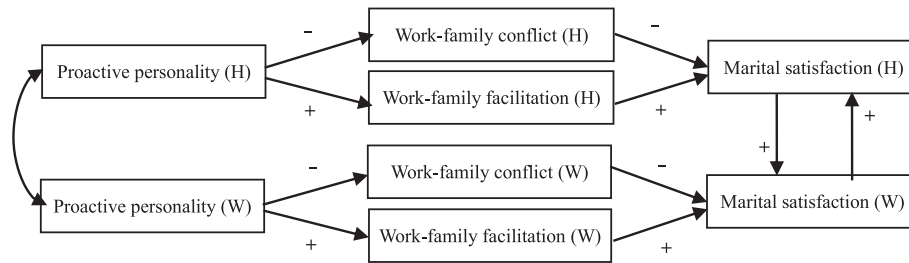


Fig. 1. The hypothesis model.

Note. (H) and (W) represent husbands' and wives' variables, respectively.

forseeability to identify opportunities, demands, and risks in the environment; meanwhile, they tend to perceive the demands and risks as personal challenges (Bateman & Crant, 1993). When they face stressors, they arm themselves with more proactive coping behaviors that can help them gain positive emotions, resources, and opportunities for growth and thus are less likely to experience increased stress. Previous studies showed that more proactive people could cope well with job demands, and succeed at work (Fuller & Marler, 2009).

As Greenhaus and Powell (2006) argued, proactive employee might be particularly more likely to receive social support, develop skills, seek flexibility, get a higher salary, and apply resources of the work domain to their family roles. In line with this rationale, proactive personality as a key resource in working life might help employees experience more work-family facilitation and subsequent higher marital satisfaction. Existing empirical evidence supported both parts of this argument by finding that proactive personality positively predicted work-family facilitation (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005), and that work-family facilitation positively predicted marital satisfaction (Ma et al., 2016; Xie, Ma, Tang, & Jiang, 2017). Taken together, we hypothesize the following relationship.

**Hypothesis 1.** Proactive personality will be positively associated with marital satisfaction through increased work-family facilitation (spillover effect 1).

Although the spillover-crossover model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2013) doesn't highlight the relationship between job resources and work-family conflict, several empirical studies found that job resources have important implications for work-family conflict (e.g. Wayne, Casper, Matthews, & Allen, 2013). Specifically, job resources might promote high work efficiency, and allow employees to have more time, energy, and flexibility to fulfill responsibilities from the family domain (Demerouti, 2012; Ferguson, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2015), thus negatively relating to work-family conflict.

The conservation of resource theory posits that people with more resources are more capable of gaining additional resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Therefore, proactive employees might gain more other resources in the work domain. Supporting this argument, proactive personality has been found to positively associate with job resources such as job control (Parker & Sprigg, 1999), leader-member exchange (Zhang, Wang, & Shi, 2012), and supervisor support (Kim, Hon, & Lee, 2010). Thus, proactive employees might benefit from these resources and experience less work-family conflict. Previous studies have found evidence for the negative association between proactive personality and work-family conflict (e.g. Aryee et al., 2005). Moreover, the negative association between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction has been well established in previous studies (e.g. Ma et al., 2016; van Steenbergen, Kluwer, & Karney, 2014). Taken together, we hypothesize the following relationship.

**Hypothesis 2.** Proactive personality will be positively associated with marital satisfaction through decreased work-family conflict (spillover effect 2).

Based on the spillover-crossover model, we also predict that

individuals' proactive personality will also have implications for their spouses' marital satisfaction through the direct crossover of marital satisfaction between partners. Direct crossover is an important mechanism to explain the crossover process (Bakker & Demerouti, 2013). It refers to a phenomenon that experiences of one partner can promote the other partner to generate similar experiences through empathy and/or emotion contagion (Westman, 2001; Westman, Vinokur, Hamilton, & Roziner, 2004). Empathy refers to the attempt to understand the subjective experiences of others (Wispé, 1986), while emotion contagion refers to a reciprocal emotional reaction toward the other person in a close relationship (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000).

In marriage life, people often exchange feelings and try to understand each other. When people perceive that the level of marital satisfaction is high/low, they might express their feelings to their spouses, and then promote their spouses to experience the same level of marital satisfaction via empathy and or emotion contagion. The direct crossover of well-being between two partners is highlighted in the spillover-crossover model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2013), and the direct crossover of marital satisfaction has been empirically supported (e.g. van Steenbergen et al., 2014). Thus, building on the aforementioned discussion and the above hypotheses, we hypothesize the following relationship.

**Hypothesis 3.** Proactive personality will positively predict spousal marital satisfaction through the direct crossover of marital satisfaction between two partners (crossover effect).

Fig. 1 summarizes the relationships tested in the current study.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants and procedure

Our participants were 241 full-time dual-earner couples from Mainland China. They were recruited by 15 undergraduate students majored in psychology. Each student approached 20 dual-earner couples among their family members or friends, resulting in a convenience sample. These couples volunteered to independently fill out two identical anonymous questionnaires in their homes. The questionnaires were in Chinese and coded to match the partners.

Of the 300 packages of questionnaires that had been distributed, 241 valid packages were returned, leading to a response rate of 80.33%. About 84% of the couples were married for > 3 years, 12% were married for 1 to 3 years, and 4% were married for less than one year. About 69% of the couples had at least one child under the age of 18. About 56% of the couples had elderly domestic helpers. The mean age was 39.22 years ( $SD = 7.61$ ) for men and 37.14 years ( $SD = 7.37$ ) for women. For both men and women, the most common level of education was university education (39% for men and 37% for women), followed by junior college education (33% for men and 31% for women).

### 2.2. Measures

All the instruments used in the present study were well-developed

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7248810>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7248810>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)