Proactive behavior refers to self-initiated and future-oriented action that aims to bring about change (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006). Individuals can behave proactively in a variety of domains, such as in regard to their careers, improving their work environment, and influencing organizational strategy. Proactivity has been recognized as particularly critical in complex and uncertain work environments because it allows individuals to master situations in advance and to act on one’s own initiative without the need for closer supervision (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). Supporting its benefits, recent meta-analytic evidence suggests that proactivity is mainly beneficial (Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010).

Researchers have identified dispositional and situational antecedents of employee proactivity, as well as tried to understand the underlying motivational mechanisms linking antecedents and outcomes (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). Review articles (e.g., Bindl & Parker, 2010; Wu & Parker, 2011) have shown that proactive behavior is predicted by certain dispositional characteristics, such as proactive personality, and by situational features, such as job autonomy, transformational leadership, and supportive organizational climate. Interactions between personal and environmental
factors in shaping proactive behavior have also been identified (e.g., Griffin, Parker, & Mason, 2010; McAllister, Kamdar, Morrison, & Turban, 2007), suggesting that proactive behavior is determined by combinations of personal and situational forces.

Nevertheless, compared to research on situational antecedents of proactive behavior, dispositional antecedents to proactive behaviors have been less systematically investigated. One reason for why research has mostly focused on understanding situational antecedents to proactivity could be that these are more amenable to intervention than are stable dispositional characteristics (Geller, 2002). While we agree it is important to investigate how context influences proactivity, understanding what type of person will typically engage in proactive behaviors will provide additional insights. Proactive behaviors should be shaped by dispositional characteristics because these behaviors are by definition not required in a given job description and are thus typically not tied to formal reward and punishment systems in the organization (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Our goal in this chapter is to advance understanding of the role of personality traits for proactive behaviors at work.

Personality traits have been classified in different ways. Most typically, personality traits have been classified according to their content, notably via the Big Five personality framework (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). This type of classification is referred to as content classification. However, personality traits can also be classified according to how they influence behavior. An example of a functional classification approach is Buss and Finn’s (1987) differentiation of personality into cognitive, affective, and instrumental traits. We focus particularly on the functional classification to review how personality traits can influence proactive behavior. Our approach offers a different perspective to the question of “who” is proactive, and also helps to integrate past findings on the role of personality traits in shaping proactive behaviors.

In the following sections, we first introduce the concept of proactive behavior at work and its features. We then discuss the functional classification of personality traits proposed by Buss and Finn (1987) and review the existing literature accordingly. Finally, we identify directions for further research.

**PROACTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

Scholars have argued that different forms of proactive behaviors (e.g., career initiative, feedback seeking, and taking charge) all involve employees’
self-initiated and future-focused efforts to bring about change in a situation (Parker et al., 2006). There are at least three important elements that define proactivity: future-focus, change-orientation, and self-initiation (Frese & Fay, 2001; Parker et al., 2006). First, proactive behavior is future-focused, which means that this action is targeted at anticipated problems or at opportunities with a long-term focus. Second, proactive behavior is change-oriented, involving not just reacting to a situation but being prepared to change that situation in order to bring about a different future. Third, and underpinning the prior two elements, proactive behavior is self-initiated, which means that employees initiate a proactive goal without being told to, or without requiring explicit instructions from supervisors. Accordingly, proactivity has also been conceived of as a process in which employees generate and implement, under their own direction, a proactive goal to bring about a different future (Bindl, Parker, Totterdell, & Hagger-Johnson, 2012; Frese & Fay, 2001; Grant & Ashford, 2008).

Although there are different forms of proactive behavior across many situations, Parker and Collins (2010) differentiated three overarching categories of proactive behavior according to their goals. First, employees can proactively aim to achieve a better fit between the person and the environment. This form of proactivity is referred to as “proactive person-environment fit behavior,” and includes behaviors such as feedback inquiry, feedback monitoring (Ashford, Blatt, & VandeWalle, 2003), job change negotiation (Ashford & Black, 1996), and career initiative (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). Second, employees can proactively set out to improve the internal organizational environment, which Parker and Collins (2010) summarize as “proactive work behavior.” This form of proactivity includes behaviors such as taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999), voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998), individual innovation (Scott & Bruce, 1994), and problem prevention (Frese & Fay, 2001). Third, employees can be proactive in improving the fit of their organization with its wider environment, so-called “proactive strategic behavior.” Example behaviors of this form of proactivity include strategic scanning (Parker & Collins, 2010), issue selling credibility (Dutton & Ashford, 1993), and issue selling willingness (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998).

In contrast to the differentiation of proactive behavior based on individuals’ specific goals, Griffin et al. (2007) differentiated proactive behavior based on the level in the organization to which an individual directs his/her proactive efforts. In brief, they specified the extent to which individuals engage in self-starting, future-oriented behavior relevant to: their individual work situations or roles (individual task proactivity); to a team’s
situation or the way the team works (team member proactivity); and to their organization and/or the way the organization works (organization member proactivity). Although different types of proactivity have their own meanings, they are also positively and moderately related to each other, suggesting that different forms of proactive behavior share the same common base of proactivity, and supporting the conceptualization of proactive behavior as one overarching concept.

Three common motivational mechanisms in triggering proactive behavior have been proposed by Parker et al. (2010). In order to enact proactive behavior individuals will consider whether they feel capable of being proactive (a “can do” pathway), whether they have some sense that they want to bring about a different future (a “reason-to” pathway), and whether they experience positive affect that fosters their proactive actions (an “energized-to” pathway). These mechanisms have been supported in empirical studies with different forms of proactive behavior (e.g., Bindl et al., 2012; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2007; Parker et al., 2006), suggesting that different forms of proactive behavior have common motivational mechanisms. A systematic model of how more distal, dispositional characteristics can motivate different types of proactivity at work is currently missing, and we propose next that a functional classification of personality traits can help generate such a framework.

A FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF PERSONALITY TRAITS

In contrast to content classifications of personality traits (e.g., the “Big Five” framework), Buss and Finn (1987) draw on three aspects of behavior – cognitive, affective, and instrumental (James, 1890) – to classify personality traits. The cognitive aspect concerns the function of reflecting information processing in thinking and understanding; the affective aspect concerns the function of expressing emotional responses; and the instrumental aspect concerns the function of interacting with the environment (Elizur & Sagie, 1999; Levy & Guttman, 1975). Corresponding to these aspects, Buss and Finn (1987) identified that cognitive traits involve behavior that has a large component of thoughts, imagination, and information processing (e.g., openness to experience is a cognitive trait because it is associated with an increased tendency to consider unconventional or unfamiliar ideas); affective traits involve behaviors that have a strong
emotional component (neuroticism is an affective trait due to its association with increased experience and expression of negative, distressing emotions); and instrumental traits involve behaviors that have an impact on the environment (e.g., assertiveness is an instrumental trait because it is associated with an increased tendency to speak up, lead others, and force others to accept one’s opinions).

This functional classification framework suggests potential psychological mechanisms (i.e., cognitive, affective, or enactive) via which a specific trait can contribute to proactive behavior. For instance, extraversion as a broad personality trait has been found to be positively related to various forms of proactive behavior, such as information seeking (Tidwell & Sias, 2005), feedback seeking/relationship building (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), personal initiative (Fay & Frese, 2001), and voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). This is likely because people high in extraversion are more comfortable and skilled in communicating ideas to others and are more action-oriented in regard to influencing the environment (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). However, two facets of extraversion, assertiveness and excitement, should influence proactivity mainly via different mechanisms, according to Buss and Finn’s (1987) classification. Assertiveness, an instrumental trait, likely facilitates proactive behavior through its effect on changing the environment, such as persuading others to build networks, and accumulating social capital for implementing proactive ideas (Thompson, 2005). In contrast, excitement, as an affective trait, is more likely to contribute to proactive behaviors via the role of positive feelings, which Bindl et al. (2012) identified as especially important for envisioning proactive goals and for energizing proactive action. This example shows how a functional classification can help to understand why certain personality traits can contribute to proactive behavior, not only because of their content, but also because of their potential mechanisms associated with instrumental, affective, and cognitive aspects of behavior.

While a functional classification of personality traits appears to facilitate understanding the role of personality traits in shaping proactive behaviors, different contents within the same functional classifications should additionally matter. For instance, positive affectivity and negative affectivity are both affective traits; however, they have been differentially linked with proactive behaviors (e.g., Den Hartog & Belschak, 2007). Consequentially, we will present in our review a combination of functions (cognitive, affective, and instrumental) and content of personality traits in discussing their associations with proactive behaviors.
PERSONALITY TRAITS AS INFLUENCING FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE PROACTIVITY

In this section, we draw on Buss and Finn’s (1987) framework to review existing findings on the role of personality traits in shaping proactive behaviors. In brief, we suggest that cognitive traits will contribute to proactivity at work because these traits enhance the likelihood that an individual will recognize opportunities and will generate ideas for the future, both aspects that are akin to proactivity; affective traits will contribute to proactivity because these traits increase the experience of energy to pursue more challenging goals; and finally, instrumental traits likely contribute to proactivity at work because these traits imply a strong tendency of mastering the environment, likely activating proactive behavior. We will proceed to review each of these traits, in turn. Fig. 1 provides a schematic overview of reviewed personality traits and their proposed influencing mechanisms on proactive behaviors at work.

**Cognitive Traits**

We expect cognitive traits to take on an important role in triggering proactive behavior because, according to a goal-regulatory perspective (see Parker et al., 2010), effective proactive behavior derives from envisioning a different future, as well as planning and reflecting on past outcomes – all activities that likely require cognitive effort. As Frese and Fay (2001)
indicated, proactive behavior is not the application of a standard procedure; rather, an individual must actively consider new methods or pathways to approach a future-oriented goal. Therefore, we suggest that cognitive traits that can lead an individual to generate more new ideas and envision a different future will positively contribute to proactive behavior. Here, we review four such cognitive traits – openness to experience, curiosity, future orientation, and need for cognition – that have been previously found to relate to proactive behavior.

**Openness to Experience**

Openness to experience can be viewed as a cognitive trait because people high in openness to experience tend to appreciate new experiences and explore unfamiliar situations (Costa & McCrae, 1992). One would expect openness to experience to relate positively to proactivity, and studies support this. Openness to experience has been found to positively correlate with feedback seeking and positive framing, two kinds of proactive socialization behavior for newcomers (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Fay and Frese (2000) showed that psychologically conservative individuals, who are high in authoritarianism and rejection attitude of foreigners (and likely low on openness to experience), are less likely to engage in personal initiative. Fay and Frese (2001) also reported that individuals high in readiness to change, or “the preference for jobs that allow the change of routines and readiness to participate in qualification” (p. 114), are more likely to report personal initiative.

At the same time, however, studies have reported nonsignificant relationships between openness to experience and proactive behavior, including personal initiative (Fay & Frese, 2001), voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001), and task, relational and performance information seeking (Tidwell & Sias, 2005). These inconsistent findings can be explained by Bateman and Crant’s (1993) argument that openness to experience also implies tolerance with others’ thoughts, which might incline people against change-oriented proactivity. In other words, considering openness to experience as a single whole dimension may be overly crude because specific facets related to proactivity are grouped with nonrelevant facets. This lack of specificity could explain the unreliable relationship of openness to experience with proactivity.

Supporting this possibility, when studies consider facets of openness to experience, only three facets (i.e., facets of actions, ideas, and values) have been found to be positively related to proactive behavior. Facet of actions means willingness to try different activities and preference for novelty over
the familiar or routine; facet of ideas means curiosity and willingness to consider unconventional ideas; and facet of values means readiness to reexamine values (social, political, or religious). LePine and VanDyne (2001) found that the facet of actions was positively related to voice behavior. Major, Turner, and Fletcher (2006) found that the facet of ideas and the facet of values predicted motivation to learn, which in turn, was associated with greater engagement in personal development activities. These findings highlight that we need to focus on specific facets of openness to experiences to fully understand how this trait shapes proactive behavior.

**Curiosity**

Curiosity is “an appetitive state involving the recognition, pursuit, and intense desire to investigate novel information and experiences that demand one’s attention” (Kashdan & Steger, 2007, p. 159). We thus expect that curiosity will contribute to proactive behavior because it leads individuals to identify and exploit opportunities, especially in novel situations. Supporting this view, Kashdan and Steger (2007) reported that trait curiosity fosters proactive behaviors and proactive goal-directed efforts. Howell and Shea (2001) also reported that employees who are high in intellectual curiosity are more likely to engage in environmental scanning, which then triggers more championing behavior in innovation (e.g., conviction in innovation, building involvement and support, and persisting in the face of adversity). Similarly, Harrison, Sluss, and Ashforth (2011) found that curiosity can lead an individual to positively frame the external environment, which then enhances proactive behavior (i.e., taking charge).

**Future Orientation**

Future orientation is defined as the degree to which one is thoughtful about his/her future in motivation (goal setting), planning, and evaluation (Nurmi, 1991). Future orientation is a cognitive trait that has been theorized to positively contribute to proactive behavior. This perspective coincides with recent conceptualizations of proactivity as a goal-regulatory process that comprises elements such as envisioning (thinking ahead to bring about a better future), planning (developing plans for how to implement proactive ideas), action directed toward future impact (manifestation of anticipation and planning into concrete proactive behaviors), as well as reflection (monitoring and evaluating outcomes of proactive action; Bindl et al., 2012;
Frese & Fay, 2001; Grant & Ashford, 2008). All four phases of proactive goal regulation are influenced by a strong future orientation, which leads a person to think ahead, plan in advance, and take actions for the future. As such, it is not surprising that future-orientation can contribute to proactive behavior. Empirically, Parker and Collins (2010) have found that consideration of future consequences were positively related with three broad higher-order sets of proactive behaviors (i.e., proactive work behaviors, proactive strategic behaviors, and proactive person-environment fit behaviors).

**Need for Cognition**

Need for cognition is another cognitive trait that has been recently examined in proactivity literature (Wu, Parker, & de Jong, in press). Need for cognition is a personality variable reflecting “the tendency for an individual to engage in and enjoy thinking” (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982, p. 116). Need for cognition is expected to contribute to proactive behavior because deliberate and active thinking is needed when planning and enacting proactive actions. This thinking process has been discussed by Frese and Fay (2001), who argued that deliberate cognitive engagement is crucial to identify opportunities and find alternative ways to bring about changes. In this vein, need for cognition has been shown to be positively associated with individual innovation behavior (Wu et al., in press), with the latter being strongly related to proactive behaviors like taking charge and voice (Parker & Collins, 2010).

**Affective Traits**

We propose that affective traits will additionally influence proactive behavior because affect has been identified as a powerful activator of behavior (Carver & White, 1994; Elliot & Thrash, 2002). Affective traits comprise an individual’s typical evaluative feelings across time and situations. In this vein, individuals who are high in positive affectivity tend to frequently experience positive emotions, such as enthusiasm and alertness, whereas people who are high in negative affectivity tend to frequently experience negative emotions, such as nervousness and distress. Both of these two traits have been associated with individuals’ performance at work (Kaplan, Bradley, Luchman, & Haynes, 2009), as well as with proactive behavior more specifically (see Bindl & Parker, 2012), as we will review next.
Positive Affectivity

To date, ample evidence suggests that positive affective experience, activated positive affective in particular (Bindl et al., 2012), promotes positive ways of behaving at work (Forgas & George, 2001; Staw, Sutton, Pelled, 1994). Conceptually, these associations should prevail because positive affect facilitates individuals’ focus on positive outcomes of their behaviors (Mayer, Gaschke, Braverman, & Evans, 1992) and generates high expectancy judgments for outcomes (Wegener & Petty, 1996).

We propose that positive affect should be particularly relevant for activating proactive behaviors. This is because proactivity is self-initiated, or generated by employees’ themselves (Frese & Fay, 2001; Parker et al., 2010), and represents more internalized rather than externalized goals (Ryan & Deci, 2000). With weaker external forces on proactive behavior, there is more scope for internal influences, such as affect. For example, positive affective experience increases individuals’ tendency to choose generative behaviors (Seo, Feldman, Barrett, & Bartunek, 2004). Additionally, because proactive behaviors are change-oriented and self-initiated, they likely require effortful and complex self-regulation processes (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). As such, positive affectivity provides feelings of energy (Shraga & Shirom, 2009) and thus facilitates engagement and persistence in activities (Tsai, Chen, & Liu, 2007).

In support of these arguments, evidence suggests that positive affectivity is associated with higher levels of self-reported personal initiative (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2007) and improved proactive socialization behaviors among newcomers (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). Similarly, LePine and Van Dyne (2001) reported that indicators of positive affectivity in extraversion (positive emotions, excitement seeking) predict voice. Altogether, there is consistent evidence of a positive link between positive affectivity and proactive behaviors at work.

Negative Affectivity

Negative affect can negatively influence proactive behaviors to the extent that it may elicit negative outcome expectancies (Johnson & Tversky, 1983) and that it generates an orientation toward avoiding negative outcomes rather than approaching positive ones (Seo, Feldman Barrett, & Bartunek, 2004). Supporting this view, Ashforth et al. (2007) found negative affectivity had a negative correlation with proactive socialization behaviors among newcomers. Grant, Parker, and Collins (2009) similarly reported a negative correlation between negative affectivity and voice. In addition to purely affective experience-related measures, neuroticism (a trait from the Big Five
framework discussed earlier) is an indicator for negative affectivity that has been widely examined in the proactivity literature. Neuroticism is the tendency to experience negative, distressing emotions, such as fearfulness, social anxiety, poor inhibition of impulses, and helplessness (Costa & McCrae, 1987). Neuroticism has been found to be negatively associated with proactive behaviors, such as voicing suggestions for organizational improvement (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001) and actively seeking information on one’s performance (Tidwell & Sias, 2005).

However, negative affectivity could also promote proactive behaviors to the extent that it signals a discrepancy between an actual situation and a desired situation, thereby stimulating individuals to engage in self-initiated and change-oriented behaviors in order to reduce the perceived discrepancy (Carver & Scheier, 1982). Supporting this view, Den Hartog and Belschak (2007) reported partial evidence of a positive relationship between negative affectivity and personal initiative. However, studies by Griffin et al. (2007) and Strauss, Griffin, and Rafferty (2009) did not find a significant relationship between neuroticism and proactive behavior with respect to completing individual tasks, being a team member, and being an organization member. Neuroticism did not predict newcomer’s proactive behavior, including information seeking, feedback seeking, relationship building, and positive framing (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). These mixed findings on negative affective traits may highlight the need for further investigations on the role of negative affect in proactivity.

One possible explanation for the incoherent findings on negative affectivity with proactivity is that activation levels in negative affective traits could additionally matter in shaping proactive behaviors. Most studies to date have drawn on the PANAS scale of affectivity (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), using items such as feeling enthused, interested, and determined for positive affectivity, and feeling scared, afraid, and upset for negative affectivity. The PANAS scale did not cover all types of affect in the circumplex model of affect (Russell, 1980) but rather included only the more activated quadrants, or high-activated positive and high-activated negative affect (Tellegen, Watson, & Clark, 1999).

To date, only Bindl and colleagues (2012) differentiated affect into four quadrants of the affective circumplex model with the combinations of high versus low activation and positive versus negative valence and examined the impact of each affect category on different stages in a proactive goal process (i.e., envisioning, planning, enacting, and reflecting). They found that high-activated positive mood was positively associated with all elements of the proactive process, and low-activated negative feelings of depressive and sad
moods positively predicted employees’ envisioning of proactive goals. These findings suggest that activation levels of affect should additionally be taken into account when investigating how affective traits influence proactive behaviors.

**Instrumental Traits**

By definition, proactive behavior aims to bring about change in the environment (Parker et al., 2006). Therefore, instrumental personality traits that are associated with tendencies to influence the environment through action can positively contribute to proactive behavior. We identify proactive personality (Bateman & Crant, 1993) and generalized self-efficacy (Morrison & Phelps, 1999) as two instrumental traits for which there is solid evidence of a link with proactivity. We also review evidence on prosocial motives (Grant & Berg, 2011), and specific facets of extraversion (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001) as instrumental traits for which there is some, but not consistent, evidence. We elaborate these findings in more detail.

**Proactive Personality**

Proactive personality describes a stable tendency to “scan for opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere until they reach closure by bringing about change” (Bateman & Crant, 1993, p. 105). As such, proactive personality represents an instrumental trait that is aimed at mastering the environment and has been positively linked to multiple forms of proactive behavior. For example, meta-analytic evidence suggests that proactive personality is positively linked to voice, taking charge, creativity, networking, and career initiative, amongst others (Fuller & Marler, 2009).

**Generalized Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy represents individual beliefs to be able to perform a goal-directed behavior in a specific situation (Bandura, 1994). Although self-efficacy involves cognitive elements of behavior with respect to self-perception, we also regard it as an instrumental trait because it emphasizes the ability of certain behaviors to influence the environment (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). In line with our view, Frese and Fay (2001) similarly proposed that self-efficacy is an intermediate variable that can transfer an individual’s behavioral tendency into concrete behaviors, indicating the instrumental function of generalized self-efficacy in triggering behaviors to influence the external environment. Although Bandura (1994) and Frese and...
Fay (2001) conceptualized self-efficacy as a state construct, it has also been regarded as a trait concept and has been shown to have a positive effect on promoting proactive behaviors such as personal initiative (Fay & Frese, 2001; Speier & Frese, 1997), as well as taking charge at work (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Therefore, at the trait level, we consider self-efficacy as an instrumental trait that can contribute to proactive behavior.

**Prosocial Motive**

Prosocial motive refers to an individual’s desire to have a positive impact on other people or social collectives (Grant & Berg, 2011). Prosocial motives at work have been theorized as a strong reason to engage in proactive behaviors (Wu & Parker, 2011) because different forms of proactive behavior at work have in common an emphasis on bringing about positive and constructive change. From this perspective, prosocial motive can be regarded as an instrumental trait, albeit with a more prosocial-oriented emphasis in influencing the environment. Supporting this view, prosocial motive has been found positively related to personal initiative (De Dreu & Nauta, 2009), as well as general initiative and voice (Grant & Mayer, 2009). The positive relationship between prosocial motive and proactive behavior can also be inferred from the duty or other-centered facet of conscientiousness (Moon, 2001). Because the facet of duty reflects the extent to which an individual is concerned about the organization, high levels of prosocial motives were expected (and found) to be positively related to taking charge (Moon, Kamdar, Mayer, & Takeuchi, 2008). However, in Grant et al.’s (2009) study, high levels of prosocial motives did not have a direct positive association with voice and anticipatory helping behavior, suggesting the need for further studies to provide a cogent conclusion.

**Extraversion (The Activity and Assertiveness Facets)**

Extraversion, as a broad personality trait, describes the quantity and intensity of energy directed outward into the social world (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Extraversion can be regarded as an instrumental trait due to the extent that extraverted individuals tend to seek to interact with other individuals. Nevertheless, extraversion can additionally be regarded as an affective trait because it contains some facets (excitement seeking and positive emotions) that relate to positive affect (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Hence, when discussing the role of extraversion on proactive behavior, it is relevant to differentiate its different facets. However, most of studies only use the overall extraversion trait as a broad variable and show that extraversion is positively related to proactive behaviors, such as feedback...
seeking and relationship building among newcomers (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), information seeking (Tidwell & Sias, 2005), and voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001).

In a more fine-grained fashion, studies by Major et al. (2006) and LePine and Van Dyne (2001) suggest two specific instrumental facets of overall extraversion that can contribute to proactive behavior: the activity facet, reflecting pace of living (e.g., a sense of urgency; a need to keep busy; and to maintain a rapid tempo); and the assertiveness facet, reflecting social ascendancy and forcefulness of expression (e.g., to be dominant and forceful; to have a tendency to speak up; Costa & McCrae, 1992). The activity facet has been positively associated with a motivation to learn as well as with developmental activity (Major et al., 2006), and the activity and assertiveness facets have been positively associated with voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). However, more studies will be needed to provide a solid conclusion.

**SUMMARY AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

In our review, we suggested that the proactivity literature to date has tended to be rather disparate in its approach of considering disposition as an influencing factor of employee proactivity. By far the dominant approach has been to focus on the concept of proactive personality (Bateman & Crant, 1993) to acknowledge there are individual differences that shape proactive behaviors. Other researchers have used the Big Five personality framework to understand why people differ in proactive behavior, and yet others have identified personality traits in terms of motives that are relevant to proactivity. Although this research has provided compelling arguments for why individual personality constructs are important for understanding proactive behaviors at work, there is a need for integrating the existing findings in an overall conceptual framework. We suggest that the functional classification of personality traits (Buss & Finn, 1987) provides such a framework. Consistent with this reasoning, our review suggests that cognitive, affective, and instrumental traits can all contribute to proactive behavior. That is, proactivity research collectively suggests that proactive behavior is shaped by clear visions and thoughts about a better future, emotional energy to challenge the status quo, and an intention to influence environment, respectively.

To develop this possible integrating framework even further, we further suggest that the functional classification of personality can be linked to the
three motivational mechanisms for proactive behavior proposed by Parker et al. (2010; i.e., can do, reason-to, and energized-to motivation). Most studies we reviewed suggest the direction of the relationship between a personality trait and proactive behavior without examining potential psychological processes that take place. Conceptually, according to the functional classification of personality traits, cognitive traits should be linked to the reason-to pathway because they are helpful to develop a proactive goal that guides subsequent proactive behaviors (e.g., Bindl et al., 2012), as well as the can do pathway, because with clearer goals that result from deep thinking and imagination, an individual should be more likely to have higher confidence to engage in proactive, goal-directed behavior (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Affective traits, especially positive affectivity, can be directly linked to the energized-to pathway given that these traits reflect an individual’s typical affective experience across time and situations, likely affecting more fluctuant affective experiences. Finally, instrumental traits can be linked to the reason-to pathway because a higher tendency in mastering the environment directly provides a motive to enact behavior to influence the environment, as well as to the can do pathway, because individuals with a higher tendency of mastering the environment are also more likely to perceive themselves as having more capability to enact behaviors to influence environment. Empirical studies are now needed to test these and related speculations. In sum, we suggest that unpacking the psychological mechanisms that take place as personality shape proactive behaviors is an important topic for the future.

Additionally, a functional classification of personality traits can contribute to the investigation of the interaction effect between personality traits and situational factors in shaping an individual’s proactive behavior. Based on the functional classification, a given personality trait has its own particular function in shaping proactive behaviors. As such, situational factors that have similar functions may moderate the impact of that personality trait on proactive behavior because they might enhance or replace the functions a personality trait has. Adopting this perspective, Wu et al. (in press) focused on the interaction effect of need for cognition (a cognitive trait) and work design variables (i.e., job autonomy and time pressure) in shaping individual innovation behavior. The researchers proposed that the functions of need for cognition in triggering individual innovation behavior, such as generating new ideas (Nair & Ramnarayan, 2000) and having stronger ownership of one’s ideas due to the effortful thinking (Cacioppo, Petty, Kao, & Rodriguez, 1986), can be substituted with the situational influences of higher job autonomy and higher time
pressure because these two work design factors drive similar behavioral functions (Wu & Parker, 2011). For example, autonomy has been shown to promote both idea generation and ownership (see Parker et al., 2006). In line with these predictions, the authors found that need for cognition had a positive effect on individual innovation behavior when job autonomy or time pressure was low to moderate, but no effect when job autonomy was high. This study therefore illustrates how a functional approach to personality traits can guide an understanding of the interactions between trait and situation in shaping proactive behavior.

A final contribution of considering a functional approach to personality traits for understanding proactivity concerns interactions between, and configurations of, personality traits. The fact that personality traits have different functions implies that these functions might work together in various synergistic and/or complementary ways. For example, it might be that having a strong focus on changing the environment (proactive personality) drives ineffective or unwise proactivity if the individual lacks a strong cognitive orientation toward thinking (e.g., need for cognition). Likewise, if an individual has a high need for cognition and thereby generates proactive ideas, yet at the same time is highly neurotic in his/her affective orientation, then the individual might generate proactive goals yet fail to achieve the goal because their negative affectivity inhibits their ability to deal with challenges or overcome obstacles. These speculative combinations of personality characteristics have not been considered, yet the functional classification of personality lends itself to such considerations as proactive behavior involves thinking, affective energizing, and acting.

CONCLUSION

Proactivity is undoubtedly shaped by personality. Exactly what types of personality, and how personality plays out, has had little attention. Drawing on the functional classification of personality traits proposed by Buss and Finn (1987), we suggested that personality traits, in addition to their content, also imply different functions (i.e., cognitive, affective, and instrumental) that differentially influence proactive behavior. We now recommend future studies that simultaneously consider both content and function, that investigate the underlying mechanisms of traits in shaping proactivity, and that theorize and test the person–environment interactions and person–person interaction effects implied by the functional classification of personality traits.
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