

**Eine aktives Performanz-Konzept in der  
Arbeits- und Organisationspsychologische:  
Entwicklungen und neue Forschungsfragen**

**5. Tagung der Fachgruppe Arbeits- und  
Organisationspsychologie 2007**

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**What do I want to achieve with this talk?**

- 1) Argue for the change of a traditional performance concept
- 2) Present overview of an active performance concept in work and organizational psychology
- 3) Positive function of active performance
- 4) Change active performance through training
- 5) Present my view on research opportunities in this area

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## **Traditional performance concept**

- Psyclit: Performance – 950 hits in last 25 years – Journal of Applied Psychology – most of it is on performance rating
- Work tasks and work characteristics as givens to which employees need to adapt
- Performance = performance rating (e.g., Landy & Farr, 1980, Psych. Bull)
- Campbell has suggested several times that a definition based on behavior needs to be developed in contrast to equating performance with performance ratings
- More attention went into raters, rater characteristics, rating process, etc. than into the question of what performance is

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## **The change of the traditional performance concept in the 1990s**

- First inklings of changes of traditional performance concept:
  - Campbell, J. P., McCloy, R. A., Oppler, S., & Sager, C. E., 1993
  - Organ, e.g. Smith, Organ & Near, 1983 JAP
  - Borman and Motowidlo, 1993
- But even here – the concepts were mainly non-active, that is in the task domain employees were to do what the tasks prescribed

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## Definition of performance

”Performance is ... synonymous with behavior ... It includes only those actions or behaviors that are relevant to the organization’s goals and that can be scaled (measured) in terms of each individual’s proficiency (that is, level of contribution). Performance is what the organization hires one to do, and to do well. Performance is not the consequence or result of action, it is the action itself. ”

Campbell et al., 1993, p. 40

Campbell, J. P., McCloy, R. A., Oppler, S. H., & Sager, C. E. (1993). A theory of performance. In N. Schmitt & W. Borman (Eds.), *Personnel selection in organizations* (pp. 35-70). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

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## Organizational Citizenship Behavior

- Altruism
- Generalized compliance
- Later added three more factors: Courtesy, Civic Virtue, Sportsmanship

**Smith, C. A., Organ, D. W., & Near, J. P. (1983). Organizational citizenship behavior: its nature and antecedents. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68, 653-663.**

**Organ, D. (1988). *Organizational citizenship behavior: The good soldier syndrome*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.**

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## Task and contextual performance

- Task performance: Activities that contribute to the technical core directly or service it indirectly
- Contextual performance: Activities that do not support the technical core directly but "support the organizational, social, or psychological environment in which the technical core must function" (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993, p. 72,73)

Borman, W. C., & Motowidlo, S. J. (1993). Expanding the criterion domain to include elements of contextual performance. In N. Schmitt & W. C. Borman (Eds.), *Personnel selection in organizations* (pp. 71-98). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

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## Active Performance is Orthogonal to differentiation between Task and Contextual Performance, e.g. Active vs Passive Concepts and Altruism

### Altruism

<i>Active</i>	<i>Passive</i>
<b>I help you</b>	<b>Please help me</b>

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## **One defense of the traditional performance model in modern times: Adaptive performance**

- Handling emergencies and crises
- Handling work stress
- Solving problems creatively
- Dealing with uncertain work situations
- Learning work
- Demonstrating interpersonal adaptivity
- Cultural adaptability
- Physical adaptability

**Pulakos, E. D., Arad, S., Donovan, M. A., & Plamondon, K. E. (2000). Adaptability in the workplace: Development of a taxonomy of adaptive performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 612-624.**

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## **Outline**

- Traditional performance concept
- Change of this concept
- Overview of active performance concept
- Positive function of active performance
- Change towards active performance through training
- Research opportunities

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## **Why change to an active performance concept?**

- Performance is more than just doing the tasks that are prescribed
- In modern work places – less possible to describe the tasks in detail, because of
  - frequent changes in the work tasks
  - modern work places require more social coordination that cannot be simply required by management
  - modern work places require more (self-) regulation of tasks than traditional work

## **Why change to an active performance concept? – 2 –**

- The idea was never true that people only did what they were told to do and that efficiency was higher when they did what they were told to do – this had been critiqued by many who were critical of Taylorisms, e.g., by Fricke, Volpert, and Hacker
- But we need a concept that goes further than task redefinition (which is one of the oldest ideas for an active performance concept) and it needs to include a new orientation of the performance concept
- Thus, the need to add an active performance concept

## **Why are People Active?**

- An ontological given (orientation reflex, curiosity, mastery motive)
- Active approach leads to:
  - better handling of errors
  - active approach leads to an action oriented mental model
  - better knowledge of situation (exploration)
  - better survival (including sexual procreation and better support for your genes through work)
- Active approach in learning: deliberate practice – boundary lines of your skills
- Active goal developments reduce monotony
- Active performance → more use of conscious level of regulation

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## **Development of active performance concepts in the 1990s**

- Active Feedback Seeking; Ashford & Tsui, 1991
- Personal Initiative; Frese et al., 1996
- New factors of contextual performance: Persisting with enthusiasm, volunteering for activities that are not part of own job; Borman et al., 2001
- Role Breadth Self-Efficacy; Parker, 1998
- Taking Charge; Morrison & Phelps, 1999
- Voice; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998
- Job crafting; Wrzesniewski, & Dutton, 2001
- Engagement; Macey & Schneider, in press

# Engagement

- Vigor
- Dedication
- Absorption

Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (in press). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*.

Also Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 397-422.

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## **In Germany: An active performance concept existed since the 1970s**

- Best-worker concept by Hacker (1973), Expertise concept by Hacker (1992) with the components of:
  - high anticipation of future events and preparation
  - planning
  - extensive signal repertoire

- Also “innovative qualification” Fricke, 1975

But these concepts did not influence international science, and they did not lead to many empirical studies for quite some time

Hacker, W. (1973). *Allgemeine Arbeits-und Ingenieurpsychologie*. Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften.

Hacker, W. (1992). *Expertenkönnen. Erkennen und Vermitteln*. Göttingen: Hogrefe.

Fricke, W. (1975). *Arbeitsorganisation und Qualifikation. Ein industriepsychologischer Beitrag zur Humanisierung der Arbeit*. Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft.



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## I equate Active Performance with Personal Initiative (PI)

- Self-starting
- Pro-active (future oriented)
- Overcoming barriers
- Changing the environment

The Opposite of Personal Initiative Is the **Reactive Approach:**

- Does what one is told
- Is oriented towards now, not future
- Stops when difficulties arise
- Reacts to environment

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## **Meaning of Self-Starting**

- Self-starting is different from the “normal” or obvious approaches (social comparison approach)
- Doing the obvious → self-starting is low
- If a high ranking manager takes up an innovation that is “in the air”, that other managers also talk about, it is not self-starting

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## **Meaning of Pro-Active**

- Scanning for opportunities and problems that may appear in the future
- Preparation at the present time for being able to deal with these future problems and to exploit opportunities

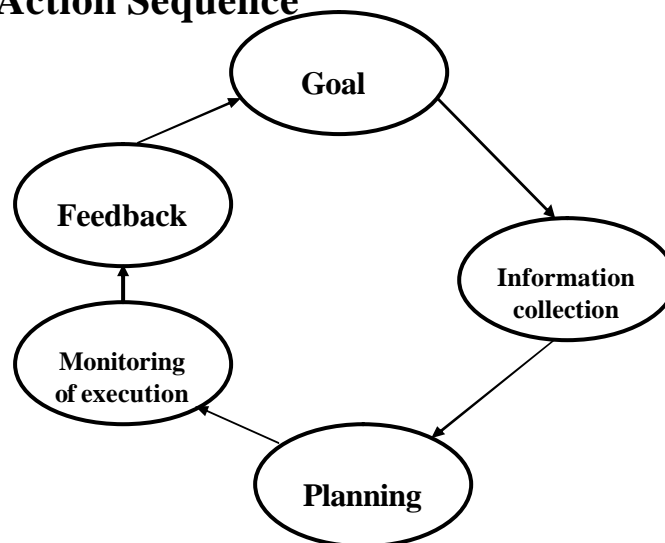
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## Meaning of Overcoming Barriers

- Protecting one's goals and adapting one's plans to overcome problems on the way towards the goal
- Active dealing with problems instead of giving up
- Dealing with own anxieties and frustrations – self-regulation

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## The Action Sequence



Frese, M., & Zapf, D. (1994). Action as the core of work psychology: A German approach. In H. C. Triandis, M. D. Dunnette, & L. M. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (2 ed., Vol. 4, pp. 271-340). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press

## Facets of Active Performance

<i>Action sequence</i>	<i>Self-starting</i>	<i>Proactive</i>	<i>Overcome barriers</i>
<i>Goals / redefinition of tasks</i>	-Active goal redefinition	-Future problems and opportunities anticipated and converted into goal	-Protect goals when frustrated or taxed by complexity
<i>Information collection and prognosis</i>	-Active search, i.e. exploration, active scanning	-Consider future problem areas and opportunities	-Keep search up in spite of complexity and negative emotions

Frese, M., & Fay, D. (2001). Personal Initiative (PI): A concept for work in the 21st century. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 23, 133-188.

## Facets of Active Performance -2-

<i>Action sequence</i>	<i>Self-starting</i>	<i>Proactive</i>	<i>Overcome barriers</i>
<i>Plan and execution</i>	-Active plan	-Back-up plans (action plans for opportunities ready)	-Overcome barriers Quick return to plan when disturbed
<i>Monitoring and feedback</i>	-Self-developed feedback and active search for feedback	-Develop pre-signals for potential problems and opportunities	-Protect feedback search

## Use of an Active Performance Concept

- Useful in any achievement situations
- Examples: Educational and work settings
- Jahoda: mental health: active orientation

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## Differences/Similarities to Other Concepts

- **Taking charge:** high overlap: taking charge a bit more on innovation
- **Voice:** High correlations
- **Proactive Personality:** Self-reported questionnaire – also correlation to subjective personal initiative questionnaire: Very high correlation .96, reliability corrected, BUT interview different → behavior
- **Job crafting:** Crafting of a job is the result of active performance

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## Differences/Similarities to Other Concepts

– 2 –

- **OCB:** Difference – orthogonal to active performance – one can show passive or active OCB, e.g., helping, e.g., helping because being asked to help vs. volunteering to help
- The same is also true of parts of **contextual performance**
- **Engagement:** usually use of questionnaire – similarities to proactive personality

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## Misunderstandings of an Active Performance Concept

- Equating to doing more, showing more physical activities (“being overactive”): the opposite for best-worker (higher efficiency)
- Equating to proactive (often proactive behavior is used in the literature): proactive means that one is active now for future purpose (pro=before)
- Equating behavior with personality – “proactive personality”: Personality is one factor contributing to active performance, but only one
- Equate with motivation in general (or intrinsic motivation): Active performance may well be oriented towards achieving external rewards

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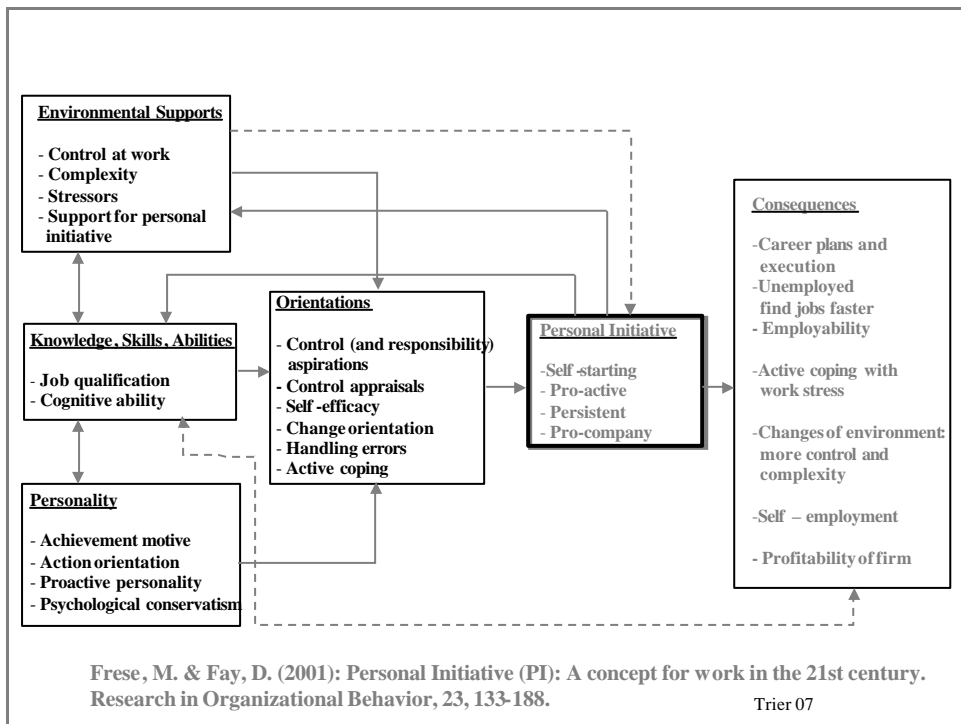
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## Measuring Personal Initiative: Interview, Coded Answers

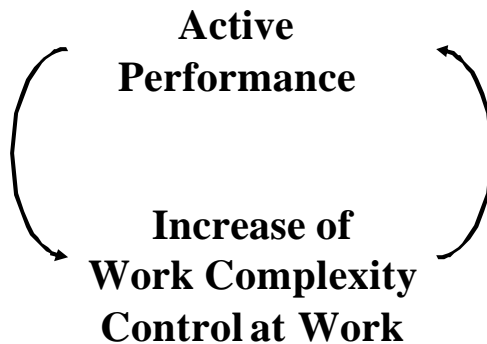
- Retrospective initiative and prompts
- Overcoming barriers: Situational interview – performance measure within interview
- Initiative in continuing education - now
- Overall rating by interviewer (includes behavior during interview)

Fay, D., & Frese, M. (2001). The concept of personal initiative: An overview of validity studies. *Human Performance*, 14(1), 97-124.

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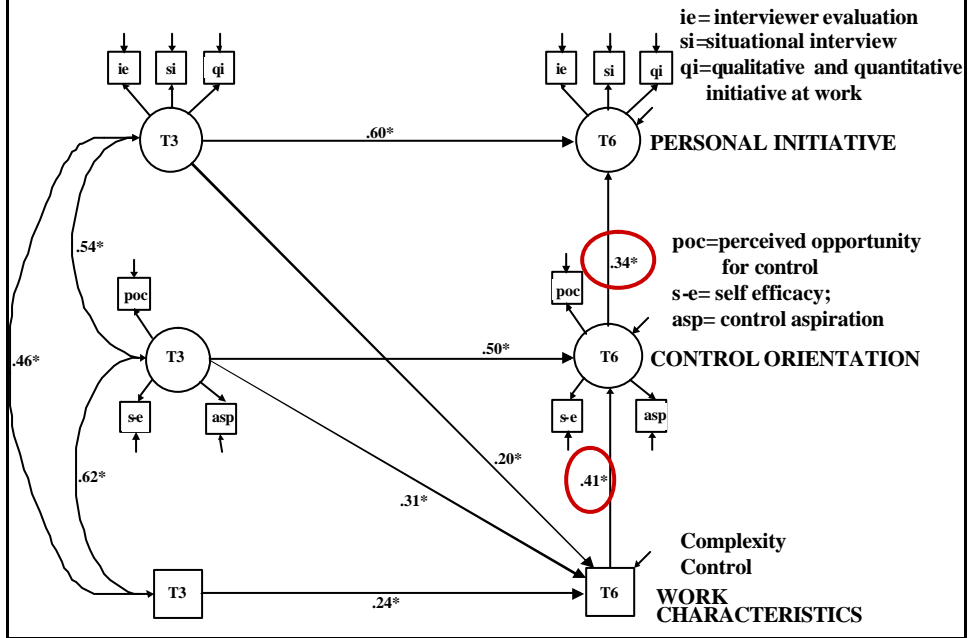
## Circular Process: Reciprocal Determinism



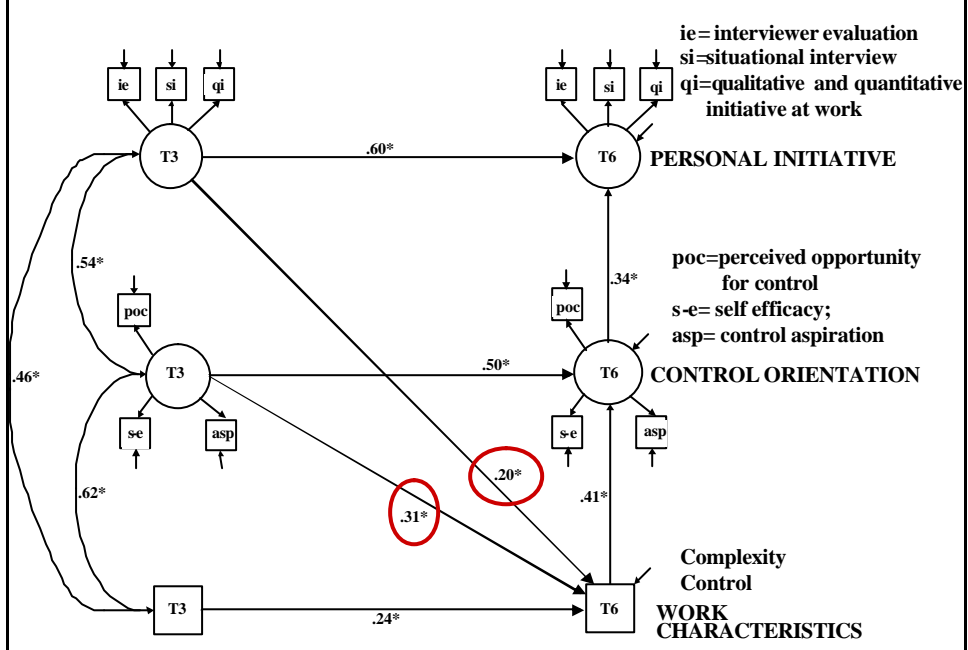
Frese, M., Garst, H., & Fay, D. (2007). Making Things Happen: Reciprocal Relationships between Work Characteristics and Personal Initiative (PI) in a Four-Wave Longitudinal Structural Equation Model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1084-1102.

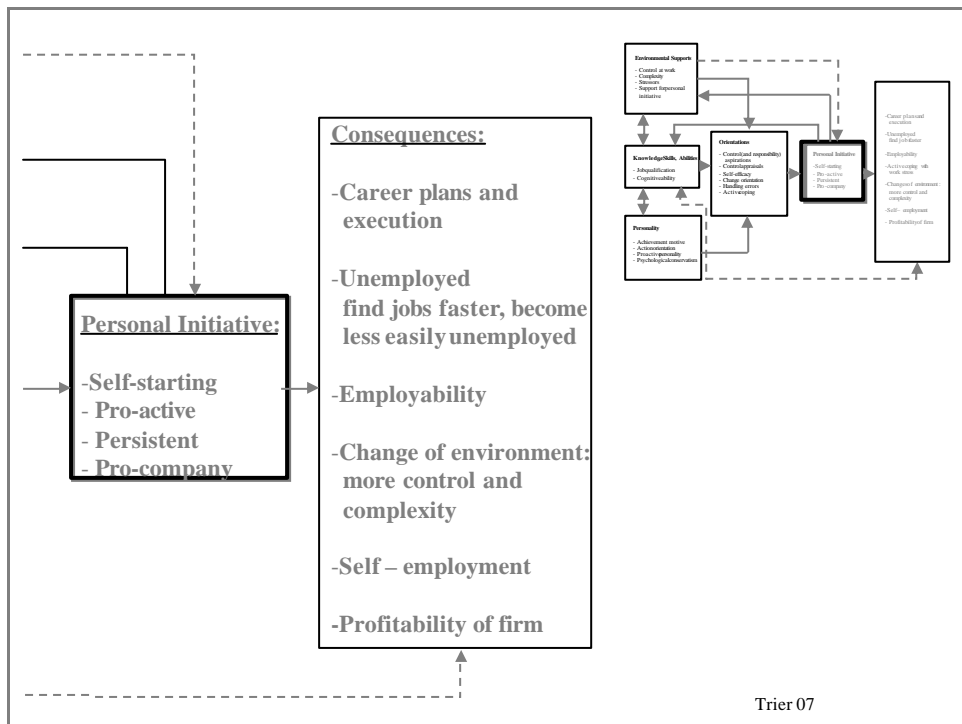


Antecedents and Consequences of Personal Initiative, Frese et al., JAP, 2007



Antecedents and Consequences of Personal Initiative, Frese et al., JAP, 2007





## Company Level: Climate for Initiative Items

- People in our company actively attack problems.
- Whenever something goes wrong, people in our company search for a solution immediately.
- Whenever there is a chance to get actively involved, people in our company take it.
- People in our company take initiative immediately – more often than in other companies.
- People in our company use opportunities quickly in order to attain goals.

# Climate for Initiative and Return on Assets of Medium-Sized Firms

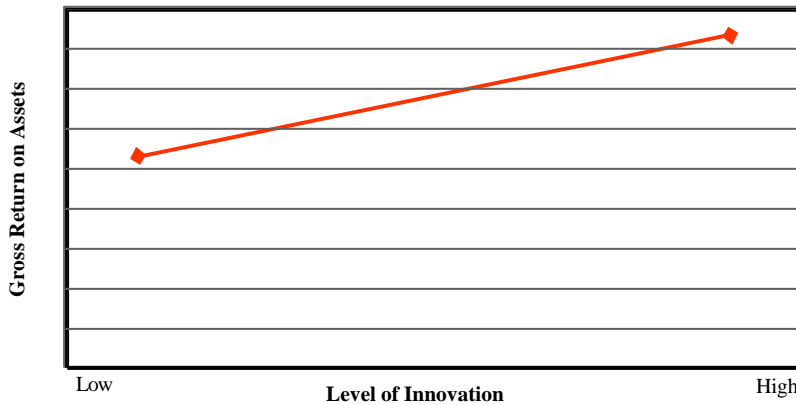
Holding constant Process Innovativeness, Size, and Industry codes, prior Return on Assets → predicting future Return on Assets:

$$\Delta R \quad .30^{**}$$

Baer, M. & Frese, M. (2003) Innovation is not enough: Climates for initiative and psychological safety, process innovations, and firm performance; *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24, 45-68

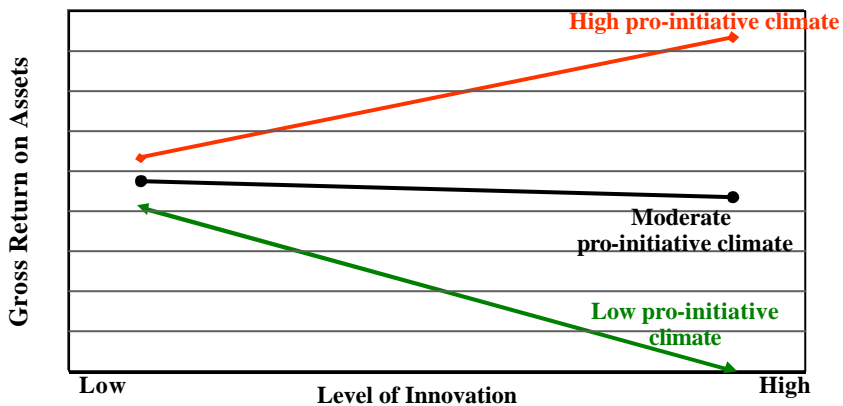
## Definitions of Process Innovations

- 1. Business Process Reengineering (BPR)** Redesign and slim down operations and production processes to eliminate unnecessary procedures. Characteristics: customer orientation, process-related teamwork, and the transition from highly specialized workers to teams (Hammer & Champy, 1993).
- 2. Supply-Chain Partnering** An informational network with other relevant companies for the purpose of overlapping company improvement in customer orientation and resource utilization (Handfield & Nichols, 1998).
- 3. Learning Culture** A continuously changing company with the goal of facilitating constant learning to its employees (Pedler, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1991).
- 4. Just in time production** Material and information flow to attain a customer demand-oriented delivery service. Characteristics: integrated information processing, manufacturing segmentation, production-synchronized supply, and reduction of storage costs (Womack, Jones & Roos, 1990).



Prof. Dr. M. Frese 13

### Pro-Initiative Climate Moderating the Relationship between Levels of Process Innovation and Economic Performance of Company



Baer & Frese (2003) Innovation is not enough: Climates for initiative and psychological safety, process innovations, and firm performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24, 45-68

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## **Training Studies on Personal Initiative**

### **Studies done on:**

- **Unemployed**
- **Employees**
- **Firm owners**

**6 studies**

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# Training Study on Active Career Self-Management

**Active goals, information collection, planning, and feedback seeking were developed with regard to career.**

**→ Effects were better pay, higher speed in job transitions and higher career satisfaction**

Raabe, B., Frese, M., & Beehr, T. A. (2007). Action regulation theory and careers: Antecedents and consequences of career self-management behaviors. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 70, 297-311.

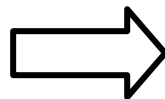
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## Training Model for Business Owners

### TRAINING

#### Psychological Success Factors:

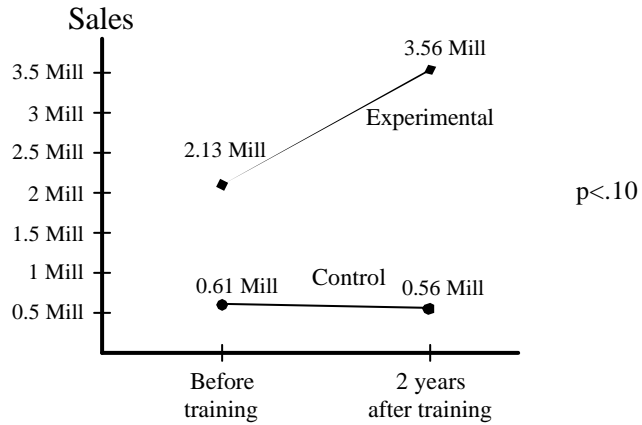
Active Planning  
Active goal setting  
Personal Initiative  
Innovation  
Time Management



SUCCESS

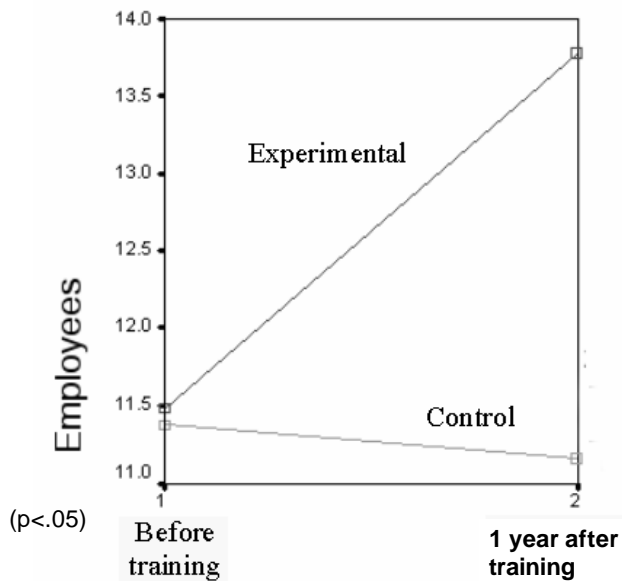
Frese, M., Glaub, M., Gramberg, K., Hass, L., Friedrich, C., & Solomon, G. (2007). *Training business owners in personal initiative: Two studies in South Africa and Germany*. Giessen: Univ of Giessen, technical report.

## Training Study in South Africa



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## Training Study in Germany



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## New Research Opportunities

- better measures of active performance (personal initiative) – maybe also go away from the tedious interview measures that we have used – best situational judgment test (Bledow)

Bledow, R., & Frese, M. (in prep.). A situational judgment test of personal initiative: Towards understanding construct based situational judgment tests. *Univ. of Giessen*.



## **Research Opportunities – 2 –**

- Combination: Active performance and lack of knowledge, skills or ability:
  - maybe leads to problems because actions are not well-considered and executed
  - however, may have long range positive learning effects, because active individuals do more, get more feedback, and, therefore, have steeper learning curve
- Be active in an area where it is not required, e.g., be active in the technical field, but should have been more active in customer orientation – again, possibly steeper learning curve

## **Research Opportunities – 3 –**

- The opposite of active performance – reactively doing the tasks, may be strain reducing or active performance strain inducing; however, active performance more efficient (less effort per unit of work) (Hacker, 1992); on the other hand, wisdom often implies to “let go”
- Active performance may lead to negative effects on peers and direct supervisors; thus, there may be negative effects in the short term
- Employees may go too far in their active performance, e.g., in customer orientation (which may lead to losses for the company)

## **Research Opportunities – 4 –**

- Self-starting should not be taken as absolute; e.g. Sprenger, 1998 has argued that individuals can always change their circumstances whenever they want to – thus, the effects of circumstances is negated
- Which circumstances most important?
- Which interactions of motivation and skills/knowledge?
- Active performance in teams: How much individual active approaches can a group take (or how many team members should show a high degree of personal initiative)
- Of course, active performance needs to complement the traditional concept of performance – so how much variance of high outcomes are due to active performance, to task performance and to adaptive performance?

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**All three count: Task performance,  
adaptive performance and personal  
initiative**

- Proficiency
- Adaptability
- Proactivity = active performance

Griffin, M. A., Neal, A., & Parker, S. K. (2007). A new model of work role performance: Positive behavior in uncertain and interdependent contexts. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 327-347.

**TABLE 1 a**  
Recent frameworks addressing aspects of the performance domain

<u>Whole performance domain</u>	
Campbell, et al. (1993)	Job-specific task proficiency Non-job-specific task proficiency Written & oral communication proficiency Demonstrating effort Maintaining personal discipline Facilitating peer and team performance Supervision & leadership Management & administration
Borman & Motowidlo (1993)	Task performance Contextual performance
Welbourne, et al. (1998)	Job role behavior Career role behavior Innovator role behavior Team role behavior Organization role behavior
Johnson (2003)	Task performance - Job-specific task proficiency - Non-job-specific task proficiency - Written & oral communication proficiency - Management & administration - Supervision - Conscientious initiative Citizenship performance - Conscientious initiative - Personal support - Organizational support Adaptive performance - Dealing with uncertain work situations

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**TABLE 1 b**  
Recent frameworks addressing aspects of the performance domain

<u>Citizenship performance</u>	
Borman, et al. (2001)	Conscientious initiative Personal support Organizational support
Podsakoff et al. (2000)	Helping behavior Sportsmanship Organizational loyalty Organizational compliance Individual initiative Civic virtue Self development
<u>Adaptivity</u>	
Pulakos et al. (2000)	Handling emergencies or crisis situations Handling work stress Solving problems creatively Dealing with uncertain work situations Learning tasks, technologies and procedures Demonstrating interpersonal adaptability Demonstrating cultural adaptability Demonstrating physical adaptability
<u>Proactivity</u>	
Frese and Fay (2001)	Personal initiative
Crant (2000)	General proactive behaviour Context-specific proactive behavior
Parker et al (2006)	Proactive work behaviour - proactive problem solving - proactive idea implementation
Morrison & Phelps (1999)	Taking charge

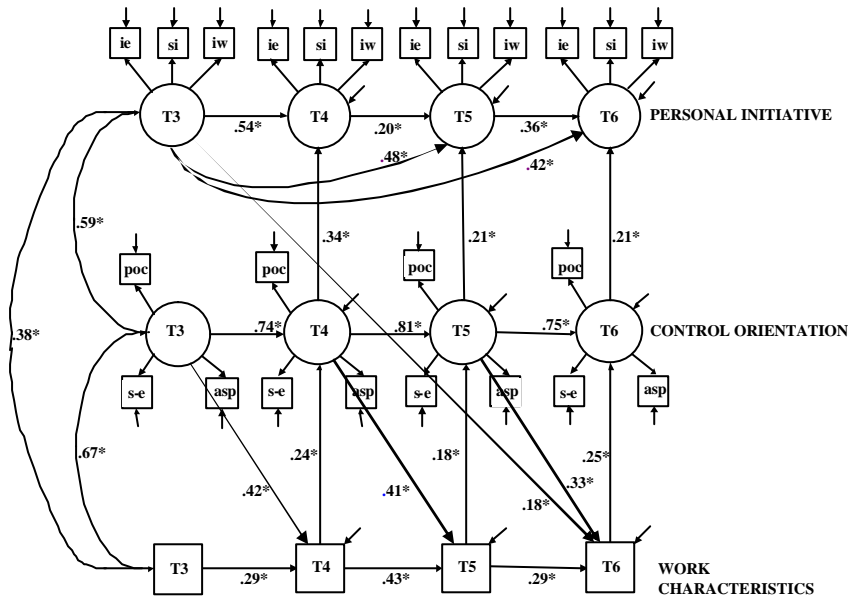
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**TABLE 2**  
**Model of Positive Work Role Behaviors**

Individual work role behaviors	Proficiency Fulfills the prescribed or predictable requirements of the role	Adaptivity Copes with, responds to, and supports change	Proactivity Initiates change, is self-starting and future-directed
<b>Individual task behaviors</b> Behavior contributes to individual effectiveness	<b>Individual task proficiency</b> e.g., ensures core tasks are completed properly	<b>Individual task adaptivity</b> e.g., adjusts to new equipment, processes, or procedures in core tasks	<b>Individual task proactivity</b> e.g., initiates better way of doing core tasks
<b>Team member behaviors</b> Behavior contributes to team effectiveness rather than individual effectiveness	<b>Team member proficiency</b> e.g., coordinates work with team members	<b>Team member adaptivity</b> e.g., responds constructively to team changes (e.g., new members)	<b>Team member proactivity</b> e.g., develops new methods to help the team perform better
<b>Organization member behaviors</b> Behavior contributes to organization effectiveness rather than individual and team effectiveness	<b>Organization member proficiency</b> e.g., talks about the organization in positive ways	<b>Organization member adaptivity</b> e.g., copes with changes in the way the organization operates	<b>Organization member proactivity</b> e.g., makes suggestion to improve the overall efficiency of the organization

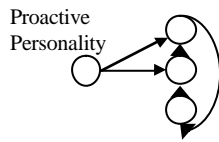
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## Antecedents and Consequences of Personal Initiative

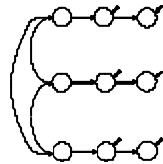


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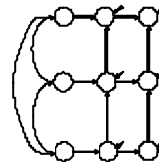
## FIGURE 1 a Structural Models



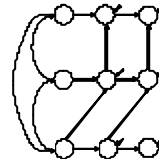
Theoretical Model



Baseline Stability Model



I-A Fully synchronous Socialization Model

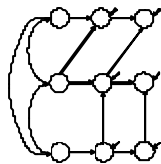


I-B Mixed synchronous-Lagged Socialization Model

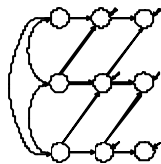
<sup>a</sup> On top, there is personal initiative, in the middle control orientation, and at the bottom work characteristics; in the Theoretical Model, Proactive Personality is shown on the left. In each model from left to right: T4 to T6, T = time of wave.

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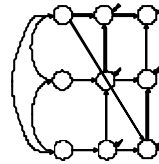
## FIGURE 1 a Structural Models -1-



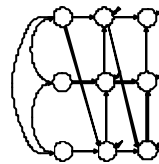
I-C Mixed Lagged-Synchronous Socialization Model



I-D Fully Lagged Socialization Model



II-A-2 Socialization Plus Change in Work Characteristics Model (T4-T6 lag: 3 years)



II-A-1 Socialization Plus Change in Work Characteristics Model (T4-T5 lag: 1 year; T5-T6 lag: 2 years)

<sup>a</sup> On top, there is personal initiative, in the middle control orientation, and at the bottom work characteristics; in the Theoretical Model, Proactive Personality is shown on the left. In each model from left to right: T4 to T6, T = time of wave.

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## **Positive Functions of Pre-Planning**

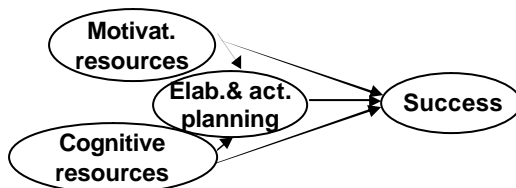
- Bridge between goal and action: get started  
(Implementation intention)
- Amplifies persistence and mobilizes extra effort
- Clear focus on what is important (reduces goal diversion)
- Reduces work load while acting; increases work load before acting
- Prepares the owner to act when things go wrong
- Reduces uncertainty
- Better use of scarce resources
- Better learning because better idea of what counts before starting to act (mental model better)
- Quicker recognition of errors and mistakes

## **Pre-Planning and Proactivity**

- Preplanning implies:
  - Back-up plan
  - Long time range
  - Important parameters to plan out, but not everything
  - Proactively structure the situation
  - Better feedback, because explicit model what to look for

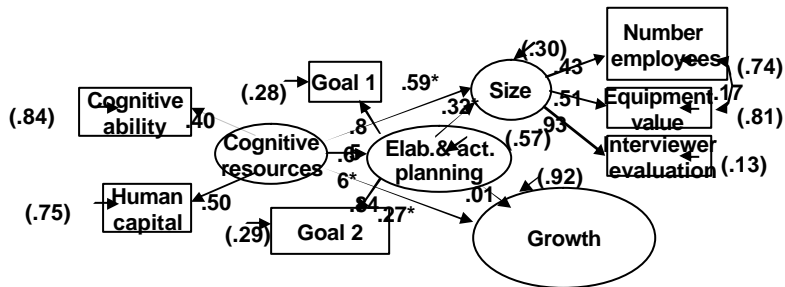
## Pre-Planning and Personal Initiative

- Have the same opposite negative pole: Reactive approach
- For small business in a highly unstructured situation → more preplanning necessary than at the work place, as the studies with employees
- Pre-planning implies most aspects of proactivity
- Overcoming barriers is easier with pre-planning, because of back-up plans
- Personal Initiative goes beyond pre-planning as it implies self-starting and overcoming barriers



(a) Theoretical mediational model for resources, strategies, and entrepreneurial success





(c) Model for cognitive resources;  
 Model fit:  $\chi^2(15)=25.43, p<.05$ ; RMSEA=.044, CFI=.99; GFI=.98

Trier 07

**“There are three types of people in the world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened.” (Mary Kay Ash, 1995, p. 151).**

Trier 07

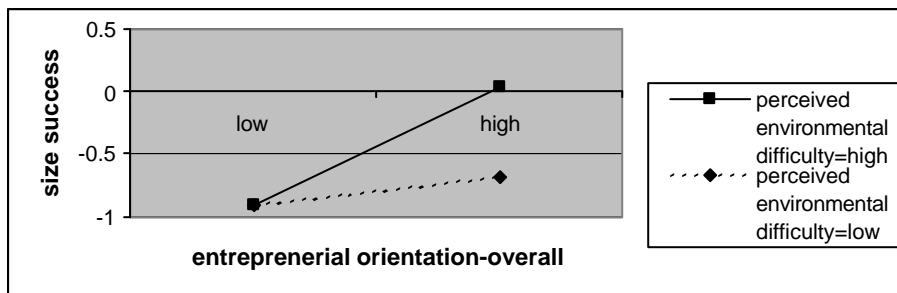
# Entrepreneurial Orientation and Success

(Controls, e.g. age enterprise, line of business)

	Interviewer	Economic
Zambia	.40*	-.05
Uganda	.58*	.22*

Trier 07

## Contingency Viewpoint



Frese, M., Brantjes, A., Hoorn, R. (2001) Psychological success factors of small scale businesses in Namibia: The roles of strategy process, entrepreneurial orientation and the environment. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 259-282

Trier 07