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Designing and Testing a Model of Some Antecedents of Proactive Goal Processes with the Mediating Role of Proactive Motivational States *Article Type: Research Article*

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the fitness of the model of the effect some personality and organizational characteristics on proactive goal processes with mediating role of proactive motivational states (reason to, can do, energized to). The research method was correlational, and the statistical population included all of the employees of an oil company, from which 227 were selected by stratified random sampling method. The participants were asked to complete questionnaires of Self-efficacy (Rigotti et al), Job Motivation (Blais), psychological empowerment (Spreitzer), Positive Emotions (Watson et al), Goal Regulation (parker et al), Emotional Regulation (Gross & John), Learning Goal Orientation (Button et al), Transformational Leadership (Carless et al). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the research model. Also, to investigate the significance of the indirect effects of the research model, the bootstrapping method was Used. Statistical methods showed that the proposed model fits well. The direct effects of the model showed the significant effect of Learning Goal Orientation, emotional regulation and transformational leadership on proactive goal processes. In addition, the results indicated that indirect effect of Learning Goal Orientation, emotional regulation and transformational leadership on proactive goal processes through proactive motivational states were significant.

***Keywords**:* learning goal orientation, emotional regulation, transformation leadership, proactive motivational states, proactive goal processes

Increasing productivity is one of the most important goals of managing organizations. To increase productivity in organizations, several factors are needed, the most important of which is motivated human resources. Paying attention to motivational factors leads to the survival and effective functioning of people in the organization. In the texts related to the motivation, various theories have been proposed to explain the increase in job performance of employees. Given the importance of motivation in yielding numerous organizational outcomes, scholars in this field are led to research into the production of new generation of motivational theories that can respond to the new situations in organizations. Accordingly, a new theory and model of motivational system called 'proactive job behaviors' has recently emerged that on the one hand, it considers an active role for employees in the workplace motivation system, and on the other hand, it takes motivation beyond the simple concept that has been considered so far and considers it as a goal-oriented process. This theory focuses on how employees change job positions and job descriptions (Fers & Garst, 2007). In other words, proactive behavior is a future-looking and self-initiated behavior in an organization through which employees make changes in position (Introducing new work methods, impacting on organizational strategies) or changes in themselves (Learning new skills to adapt and prepare for future requirements and contingencies) (Grant et al, 2008). This definition emphasizes on two key points; Foresight (predictability) and change-orientation (taking situation under control). Proactive behavior is a concept beyond doing one's

tasks, that is, setting new goals for oneself and trying to solve problems that have not yet occurred. (Frese & Fay, 2001). In general, different models have emerged from the theory of proactive job behaviors that the most recent and important of which is named Goal-driven processes (Parker et al, 2010) that includes two important domains i.e., proactive goal generation and proactive goal striving.

Proactive goal generation means predicting the desired state or outcome in the future by the individual and designing different policies to achieve it. Proactive goal generation involves envisioning and planning, under one's own volition, the goal to bring about a new and different future by changing the self and/or the environment. Thus, proactive goal generation is self-initiated: The individual acts on his or her own volition rather than as the result of a specification or direction given by someone else. The degree of self-initiation varies from initiating one's own end (e.g., coming up with a new work goal) to accepting a specified end but initiating the means (e.g., introducing a new product as requested but in a way that uses one's initiative; Grant & Ashford, 2008). This self-initiation both signals and expresses psychological ownership of the change target (Wagner et al, 2003).

Proactive goal generation involves two main processes i.e., envisioning and planning. Envisioning involves seeing a problem or opportunity now or in the future. Envisioning a different future can be achieved through active effort. In other words, envisioning the future can be done through changing oneself, such as learning a new skill, making new connections, acquiring more information, or by changing environment, such as rethinking on work methods, influencing co-workers, or persuading a supervisor to change strategy. On the other hand, the planning process involves deciding and choosing the appropriate solutions

to achieve the desired future. In most cases, plans to achieve the envisioned future include both changes in person and environment. In this regard, research has shown that proactive goal generation is a strong predictor of motivation for creative work behavior (Montani et al, 2015).

Bindl and Parker (2009) identified enacting and reflecting as two key elements of proactive goal striving. Enacting is the overt action individuals engage in to achieve their proactive goal. In the case of an employee wishing to improve a process, enacting might involve persuading colleagues about the advantages of the strived-for change and finding new ways of moving forward in the face of obstacles. Reflecting is a further phase of proactive goal striving (Bindl & Parker, 2009; Frese & Fay, 2001). Reflecting consists of an individual's efforts to understand the success, failure, or consequences of his or her proactive behavior. These efforts ultimately serve as information that leads an individual to sustain or modify the proactive goals set by an individual or to modify his or her efforts to achieve those goals (Gollwitzer, 1990). Individuals tend to remain with an action if they believe they are satisfactorily progressing toward their goal (Carver & Scheier, 1998).

Two personality variables that affect the proactive goal processes are learning goal-orientation (Parker & Collins, 2010) and emotional regulation (Kanfer & Kantrowitz, 2002).

With a mastery goal (learning goal-orientation), individuals are oriented toward developing new skills, trying to understand their work, improving their level of competence, or achieving a sense of mastery based on self-referenced standards (Ames, 1992). In other words, goal orientation is defined as "a mental framework that helps people interpret and respond to progressive situations." (Van de Walle & Cummings, 1997). People with

learning goal-orientation value proactive behavior, see challenges as opportunities for growth, and choose higher goals for themselves. (Sujan et al, 1994).

Emotional regulation is another personality variable that affects proactive goal processes. Emotional regulation is defined as "the process of initiating, maintaining, modulating, or changing the occurrence, intensity, or duration of internal feeling states and emotion-related physiological processes, often in the service of accomplishing one's goals" (Veems & Pina, 2010). In fact, emotional regulation is not just the suppression of emotions, but also the processes of monitoring and changing one's emotional experiences. Emotional regulation refers to the regulation of emotional processes in the direction of adaptive function. Parker (2010) believes that learning goal-orientation and emotional regulation are predictive of proactive goal processes. Transformational leadership is one of the paradigms of leadership in social and organizational psychology. Bass proposed the theory of transformational leadership in 1985. In his view, transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and followers help raise each other's moral and motivational levels. In other words, transformational leadership is a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social organizations and encourages its followers to make positive and creative changes, in fact, leaders motivate staff to challenge the current situation. Transformational leadership falls into four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence: Includes the charismatic factor of transformational leadership, so that leaders act as strong moral and behavioral models for followers (Kurland, 2010). The result of this kind of leadership behavior is the trust and confidence of

the followers in each other's behaviors and decisions (Judeh, 2010). Intellectual stimulation: Transformational leaders use mental motivation to challenge followers' thoughts, ideas, and creativity. They motivate their followers to be creative and innovative in new ways by questioning assumptions, redefining issues, and ignoring past problems. (Judeh,2010). Inspirational Motivation: This factor describes leaders who increase followers' commitment and motivate them by engaging followers in shaping a vision for the future (Antonakis, 2010). Inspirational motivation envisions a clear picture of the future, a future that is optimistic and achievable (Judeh, 2010). Individual Consideration: Paying attention to the individual differences of the followers, connecting with each of them, stimulating them and delegating responsibility to them, are the main features of this dimension of the behavior of transformational leaders. These leaders consider the individual needs, abilities, and aspirations of each individual (Kurland, 2010), listen to them and nurture their potential talents (Judeh, 2010). Given the characteristics of transformational leaders, they support people who exhibit proactive job behaviors and are enthusiastic in seeking change.

Regarding proactive motivational states as mediating variables, it should be said that as Parker (2010) has described three different groups of proactive motivational states are that affect proactive goal processes, i.e., Can do, reason to and energized to. (Parker et al, 2010). Can do, includes self-efficacy and psychological empowerment. Self-efficacy or perception of one's ability to perform specific tasks is an important motivational variable (Lopez et al, 2013). People with high self-efficacy, perform their tasks more effectively, show more resilience to perform their tasks, and cope with change more effectively. Self-efficacy increases a person's desire to overcome obstacles.

Psychological empowerment is a motivational variable that reflects the active role of employees in the organization (Spreitzer, 1995). Psychological empowerment has four dimensions. Meaning: It is the value of a goal or destination that is measured in relation to one's own standards and ideals. Competence: refers to an employee's sense of competence to perform a task. Self-determination: reflects a person's sense of freedom in performing and arranging work-related activities, and lastly, impact: Indicates the degree of individual influence on organizational outcomes. According to research (Frese & Fay, 2001), cognitive empowerment leads to more personal innovation. Parker, et al (2001), found that cognitive empowerment in predicting proactive job work behavior offers nothing more than predicting self-efficacy and flexible role orientation and thus, more research is needed to determine the validity of cognitive empowerment.

The motivational state of reason to, refers to the theory of self-determination. In this regard, Vallerand (1997) proposed a hierarchical motivational model. According to Vallerand (1997), job motivation has three levels of internal motivation, external motivation and amotivation (the relative absence of motivation, intrinsic or extrinsic). In intrinsic motivation, a person does the behavior for the sake of that behavior and enjoys doing it. This type of motivation is mostly related to proactive behavior that focuses on tasks and outcomes such as a sense of excitement.

Another motivational state is emotional experiences. Emotional experiences that result from daily events and incidents, play an important role in work life (Barsade, 2002). Positive affect refers to a state in which a person is energetic, highly focused, and satisfied, and includes emotions such as being active, desirable, and exciting. A study by Fredrickson (2008)

showed that positive affect develops a person's range of attention, cognition, and action and it helps people to set goals and do proactive behavior and creative efforts.

In a nutshell, it can be predicted that both dimensions of proactive goals through envisioning and planning and then enacting and reflecting can contribute to innovation in work and ultimately lead to better performance. Owing to newness of this motivation model, it is necessary to conduct research on it in Iran to be applied in Iranian organizations. Therefore, the present study investigates the effects of some personality and organizational factors on proactive goal processes mediated by proactive motivational states. Figure 1 shows the proposed model of the present study.

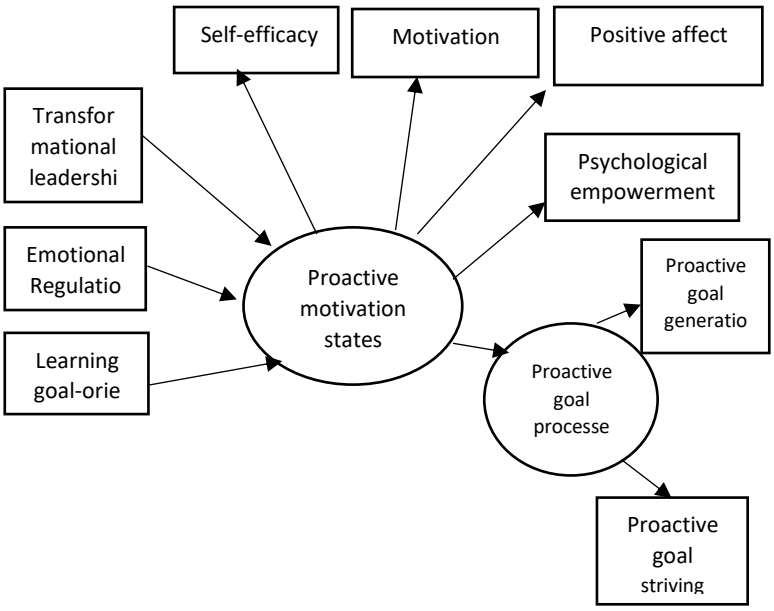

Figure 1. The proposed model of the present study

Method

Population, sample and sampling method

This research is descriptive in terms of implementation (nature and method), correlational and is from regression branch (structural equation modeling) and is applied in terms of purpose. The statistical population of the present study included all the employees of an oil company which 250 employees were selected by stratified random sampling method and questionnaires were distributed among them. After collecting the questionnaires and their initial analysis, some of them were not returned for the main analysis and statistical operations could not be performed on some others. The final sample consisted of 227 participants. The mean and standard deviation of age and work experience of participants were 38.37, 11.70 and 14.72, 11.65, respectively.

Instruments

Job self-efficacy questionnaire

Job self-efficacy was measured by Job self-efficacy questionnaire that was designed by Rigotti, et al (2008). This questionnaire has 6 items. The scoring method is done in a 6-point Likert scale from very low to very high (□□= .87). Its validity in 5 countries i.e., Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Britain and Spain were measured by Rigotti et al. through confirmatory factor analysis (2008). Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) ranged from .85 (in Belgium) to .90 (in the UK). In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained by Cronbach's alpha method and halving equal to .83 and .82.

Motivation Questionnaire

The Job Motivation Questionnaire was developed by Blais (1994). This questionnaire consists of 10 items. Participants expressed their agreement with each statement on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained by Cronbach's alpha method and bisection method to .87 and .82.

Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire

A questionnaire developed by Spritzer (1995) was used to assess psychological empowerment. This questionnaire consists of 3 items. Participants commented on a five-point Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). Hatcholder and Brockforce (2005) reported the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire by Cronbach's alpha method 0.88. In Iran, Ghafouri et al. (2008) calculated its reliability by Cronbach's alpha method of 0.85 and bisection method by 0.51. Also, these researchers obtained its validity by convergent validity method equal to 0.95. In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.73 and 0.68 by Cronbach's alpha and bisection method, respectively.

Positive affects Questionnaire

The positive affect questionnaire developed by Watson (1998) was used to measure positive emotions. This questionnaire consists of 10 items of positive affect. Participants answer questions on a 6-point scale from very high to very low. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method by Watson (1998) equal to 0.88. In Iran, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the questionnaire by Bakhshipour and Dejkam (2005) has been reported as favorable.

In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.83 and 0.75 by Cronbach's alpha and halving methods, respectively.

Goal Regulation Scale

The goal regulation questionnaire was designed by Parker et al (2012) which includes 4 subscales i.e., envisioning, planning, enacting and reflecting. 2 subscales of envisioning and planning was used for proactive goal generation and 2 subscales of enacting and reflecting was used for proactive goal striving. The enacting subscale consists of 4 questions, and the other 3 subscales each contain 3 questions, which Examples of questions are as follows; “thought about ways to improve services to customers (envisioning),” “gone through different scenarios in your head about how to best bring about a work change (planning),” “sought feedback from others regarding the effects of your change related actions (reflecting),” and “initiated better ways of doing your core tasks (enacting). Participants responded to the questions based on a 5-point Likert scale (ranged from never to a lot). Parker et al. (2012) obtained the reliability of the dimensions of the questionnaire between .86 and .91. Cronbach’s alpha in the present study was .92 and bisection was .80.

Learning Goal Orientation Scale

An 8-item questionnaire (Button et al, 1996) was used to assess the orientation of the learning goal. Each item is scored on a 6-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Button et al, obtained the reliability coefficient of the Learning Goal Orientation Questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha equal to .71 (1996). In this study, the reliability coefficient was calculated to be .89 for Cronbach's alpha and bisection.

Transformational Leadership Scale Questionnaire

In this study, the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire developed by Carless et al (2000) was used. The questionnaire measures seven dimensions of transformational leadership i.e., vision, staff development, supportive leadership, empowerment, innovative or lateral thinking, lead by example, and charismatic leadership. The reliability coefficient of this questionnaire in Tucker, et al (2010) study through Cronbach's alpha was 0.80. In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire through Cronbach's alpha was .95 and the bisection method was .93.

Emotional Regulation Questionnaire

Gross and John (2003) Emotional Regulation Questionnaire were used to measure the emotional regulation variable. The above scale consists of 10 items that have two subscales of Cognitive Reappraisal (6 items) and Expressive Suppression (4 items). The answers are based on the 7-point Likert scale \ from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The reliability coefficient of this questionnaire was reported by Gross and John (2003) through Cronbach's alpha Cognitive Reappraisal of .79 and for Expressive Suppression .73. Test-retest reliability after 3 months was reported for the whole scale of .69.

Results

The results of descriptive findings and internal correlation of research variables are presented in Table 1. The results show that the internal correlation of research variables is significant ($p<.01$).

Table 1

Descriptive Findings and Internal Correlation of Research Variables

S.d.	Mean	5	4	3	2	1	Variables
7.41	33.42					1	**Transformational leadership**
4.77	41.91				1	.19**	**Learning goal-orientation**
7.58	42.73			1	.24**	.31**	**Emotional Regulation**
17.50	126.01		1	.86**	.43**	.42**	**Proactive motivation states**
12.73	41.02	1	.50**	.39**	.69**	.34**	**Proactive goal generation**

**P<.01

The fit of the proposed model with the data based on fitness indices including Chi-Square as

absolute fitness index, Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Incremental fit index (IFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) are used in order to evaluate the proposed model. (reported in Table 2).

Table 2

Fitness Indicators of the Proposed Model and the Final Model

RMSEA	NFI	CFI	TLI	IFI	GFI	AGFI	X2/df	df	X2	**Indicator**
.15	.86	.86	.81	.86	.86	.77	6.29	26	163.607	Proposed model
.09	.95	.95	.92	.95	.93	.87	3.21	23	73.97	Final model

Before examining the structural coefficients, the fitness of the proposed model was examined. According to the values of fitness indicators, presented in Table 2, in the primal model, most of the indicators were lower than the desired level and the proposed model needed to be improved. In order to enhance the fitness of the model, the fit indices were improved by correlating the error of a path suggested by the correction indicators of the AMOS-22. The fit indices of the proposed model and the final model are shown in Table 2. As can be seen in the Table 2, the final model has a good fit.

The results in Figure 2 show that, all the direct relationships from learning goal orientation, emotional regulation and transformational leadership to proactive motivational states are significant (β = .35, p=.001), (β= .58, p=.001), (β=.23, p=.001). In addition, direct path of proactive motivational states to proactive goal processes, (β=.68, p=.001) was significant.

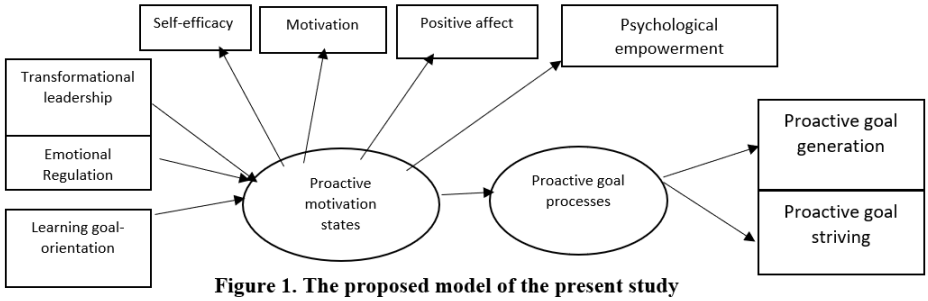

Figure 1. The proposed model of the present study

Finally, the Bootstrap method was used to determine the indirect effects of learning goal orientation, emotional regulation and transformational leadership on proactive goal processes through proactive motivational states. Bootstrapping is a nonparametric method based on multiple resampling. From each of these samples the indirect effect is computed and a sampling distribution can be empirically generated. Because the mean of the bootstrapped distribution will not exactly equal the indirect effect, a confidence interval can be determined. If zero is not included in the interval, the researcher can be confident that the indirect effect is different from zero. MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffmann, West, and Sheets (2002) found that bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals had the highest level of statistical power of all methods of testing for mediation. In the present study, the 95% confidence interval of the indirect effects was obtained with 5000 bootstraps resamples.

The indirect effect results of the mediation analysis were showed in Table 3.

Table 3

Results of the Indirect Effects of Variables

Upper bound	Lower bound	SE	path coefficients	**Intermediate path**
.0264	.7002	.0268	.3223	Transformational leadership → Proactive motivation states → Proactive goal processes
.3785	.3082	.3670	.4404	Learning goal-orientation → Proactive motivation states → Proactive goal processes
.5676		.960	.9535	Emotional Regulation ⟷ Proactive motivation states → Proactive goal processes

The bootstrap 95% confidence intervals show that the distances between the down bound and the upper bound of proactive motivational states do not cross zero. The absence of zero at these distances ensures the significance of indirect paths. Therefore, the indirect effect results of the mediation analysis in Table 3 confirmed that proactive motivational states exert a significant mediating role in the relation between learning goal orientation, emotional regulation and transformational leadership with proactive goal processes. According to Table 3, it is clear that the upper and lower limits, which show the confidence interval of indirect effects, are not zero in the mentioned confidence intervals, so all indirect relationships are significant.

Discussion

The present study was conducted to investigate the effects of personality and organizational variables on the proactive goal processes with mediating role of proactive motivational states. According to the theory of self-regulation, researchers suggest that setting a proactive goal probably involves a purposeful decision-making process on the basis of which one can determine the results of one's work. (Parker, Morrison and phelps, 1999). The present study showed that personality and organizational factors affect the proactive goal processes through the mediating role of proactive motivational states.

One of the personality factors affecting the proactive goal processes is the learning goal-orientation. The findings are consistent with the Parker's study (2010). Basically, people with a high learning goal orientation prefer to master new issues, are more sustainable in their progress, stand up to obstacles, and move purposefully toward their goals.

Among the other variables studied in the present study, emotional regulation as a personality variable affected the Proactive goal striving. Emotional regulation helps to manage negative situations and in fact increases a person's motivation to act. Less research has been done on emotion regulation and proactive goal processes. Parker states that emotion regulation can be a predictor of proactive goal processes.

One of the organizational factors influencing the proactive goal processes as mentioned is transformational leadership. The results are consistent with the findings of Bolshevik and Dan Hartag (2010). The study (Griffin, Parker & Mason, 2014) showed that transformational leadership predicts organizational commitment and consequently creates a proactive orientation in the organization. envisioning, which is one of the dimensions of goal production, is known as a key element for transformational leadership that moves in the direction of dynamism. envisioning shows the difference between the ideal position and the current position. It therefore creates a motivating force for proactive behavior. proactive motivational states also increase the influence of personality and organizational factors on the proactive goal processes. In this regard Strauss, Griffin, & Rafferty (2014) showed that employees with high self-efficacy express more proactive behaviors. It seems that one's belief in success in a particular field is of particular importance in the proactive goal production. Because being proactive requires a high level of potential psychological ability to take risks in the individual. Self-efficacy creates self-confidence in the person and as a result encourages the person to act when dealing with problems and to try to improve and change themselves and their environment, and achieves success through generating goal and striving for it. Psychological empowerment also has a positive effect on this

process by increasing personal initiative. Based on the results, psychological empowerment has an effect equal to self-efficacy on the components of the goal processes, and these results validate past research. As it is clear from the definitions, causation, due to creating a sense of excitement and independence and competence in the person to generating a goal and striving for it, creates a strong motivation in the person, which the research results show this fact. Positive emotions seem to be related to the motivating part of the motivational state. Thus, positive emotions facilitate behavioral tendencies so that people actively seek changes in current situations (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2009). High levels of positive emotion increase active behavior and initiative. Emotional experiences increase the setting of challenging goals (Ilies & Judge, 2005) and help individuals cope with a bleak future.

Limitations

First, the results were based on cross-sectional and data gathered via self –reports. This place well-known limits on inferences surrounding causality. Second, this study was conducted with a sample employed exclusively in the oil company; therefore, the recommendation for future research is a replication study with samples from a broad array of industries.

Suggestions

According to the mentioned results, the following practical suggestions are presented:

It seems that the managers of the oil company, by considering the proactive motivational process, can provide the necessary grounds for applying the new ideas of employees and encouraging them to freely present and test their innovative ideas,

ultimately becoming an organization with employees with proactive goals. This should be accompanied by the application of employees' new ideas and encouraging them to design such ideas as much as possible and to give them ample opportunity to freely test and implement these ideas. In order to further improve the formation of proactive goals in the oil company, it is suggested that the managers of this company, while identifying and solving problems of proactive motivation, encourage employees to participate and come up with ideas with dynamic goals. This action, at the same time, provides the ground for strengthening teamwork in the company as well as the conditions for knowledge sharing and innovation at different levels of the organization.

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