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Proactive Personality and Cross-Cultural Adjustment: The Mediating Role of Adjustment Self-Efficacy

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ABSTRACT

Combining proactive literature, the social learning/cognitive theory, and cross-cultural adjustment literature, we examined the sojourners' experience from a positive perspective. Using a three-wave prospective design and a sample of 135 international students, we found that proactive personality was positively related to adjustment self-efficacy, which in turn positively related to academic and social adjustment. Meanwhile, adjustment self-efficacy mediated the link between proactive personality and adjustment. Implications, limitations, and future research are discussed.

Keywords: adjustment self-efficacy, cross-cultural adjustment, proactive personality

With the increase of globalization, interactions among people across nations increase as well. People who transfer from one country to another temporarily are referred to as sojourners, such as missionaries, international students, and expatriates (Church, 1982). In the past few decades, the number of sojourners has grown significantly. Taking international students enrolled in colleges and universities located in the

United States as an example, the number of these students has increased steadily each year since 1979 (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2018). Consequently, the total number of enrolled international students in the United States recently reached 1,094,792 (IIE, 2018). Many scholars have noticed this substantial increase and have conducted research on sojourners' cross-cultural adjustment (Berry, 2005; Gelfand et al., 2017; Maertz et al., 2016; Molinsky, 2013; Takeuchi et al., 2019; Zimmermann & Neyer, 2013). Research has shown that sojourner adjustment links to a list of key outcome variables (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). For example, Zhu et al. (2016) found that sojourner's adjustment trajectory predicts their Month 9 career instrumentality and job promotion 1.5 years further.

Regardless of this promising progress, there is still some room to develop in the cross-cultural adjustment literature. For example, scholars mainly view sojourners' adjustment from a stress perspective (D. A. Harrison et al., 2004; Takeuchi, 2010). Per this viewpoint, living abroad is a stressful experience and sojourners have to handle so many stressors accompanying this relocation journey, such as separating from their home and family, learning and using a new language, interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and meeting the performance expectations of the local organization (Hua et al., 2018). Poor adjustment among sojourners results in ineffective performance, psychological despair, financial cost to the organization, and early turnover (McNulty & Brewster, 2017; Takeuchi et al., 2005; Van Vianen et al., 2004).

There is a call in this literature to develop more studies using new perspectives to underline the sojourner's adjustment process (Takeuchi, 2010). This call to develop more studies concurs with the recent trend in psychology and organizational behavior literature. That is, researchers should focus more on the positive traits, capacities, and emotions of human beings, which is valuable to the individual and organization as a whole (Fredrickson, 2001; Luthans, 2002; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Some scholars have answered this call by studying the cross-cultural adjustment from a positive perspective. For instance, Ren et al. (2014) found that sojourners, instead of reacting to stressors, could take the proactive tactics (i.e., information seeking, relationship building, and positive framing) to shape their experiences overseas. Following this line of research, we adopt a positive perspective and examine the role of a positive personality trait—proactive personality—in cross-cultural adjustment.

Adjusting successfully in a novel country is not a chance process; sojourners' traits and characteristics are strongly associated with their experience abroad (Hua et al., 2018; Shaffer et al., 2006; Shu et al., 2017). Scholars have found that broad personality constructs, such as the Big Five personality dimensions (i.e., extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness) and more specific traits, such as cultural intelligence and goal orientation, all have unique contributions to sojourner adjustment outcomes (Caligiuri, 2000; Chao et al., 2017; Gong & Fan, 2006; Earley & Ang, 2003). Prior cross-cultural literature has mentioned the importance of being proactive when relocating abroad (Cao et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2010; Ward & Fischer, 2008); however, few studies have tested the trait of a proactive personality in the cross-cultural field (Hua et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2014).

Proactive personality refers to “a stable disposition to take personal initiative in a broad range of activities and situations” (Seibert et al., 2001, p. 847). Much research

has been done to exhibit the effectiveness of proactive personality in predicting career success (Seibert et al., 1999), newcomers' performance (Li et al., 2011), team engagement, and voice behavior (Lam et al., 2018). Proactive personality is perhaps the most relevant and needed trait of sojourners. Facing the challenges of being uprooted, sojourners should not stay in their comfort zone waiting for good things to come to them, but rather take the initiative to stretch themselves, while reaching out to seek support and resources from locals for better adjustment (Hua et al., 2019). Proactive personality captures the individual variance in taking actions to make things happen rather than watch things happen (Parker et al., 2010). Thus, we take the initiative to underline the role of proactive personality on sojourners' cross-cultural adjustment in this study.

The other call in the cross-cultural field is to specify the mediating effect of personality traits on adjustment outcomes (Gong & Fan, 2006; Hua et al., 2018). The mediating mechanism helps us better understand how personality traits work on outcome variables. There is a consensus among scholars that proactive personality may influence outcomes through proximal cognitive-motivational constructs, such as self-efficacy (Brown et al., 2006; Parker et al., 2010; Parker et al., 2006).

Self-efficacy, a key concept deeply rooted in the social learning/cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997), refers to a "belief in one's capability to mobilize the cognitive resources, motivation, and courses of action needed to meet task demands" (Wood & Bandura, 1989, p. 408). Some scholars define self-efficacy as a stable trait (e.g., Earley & Lituchy, 1991; Judge et al., 2000). Following this definition, in the cross-cultural literature, for example, Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005) found that self-efficacy works as an individual factor predicting sojourner cross-cultural adjustment. Some scholars define self-efficacy as a domain-specific construct (Schaubroeck & Merritt, 1997; Schaubroeck et al., 2001), which is changeable over time. Domain-specific self-efficacy refers to "individuals' beliefs and confidence that they have the ability to perform the general functions demanded by the situation" (Perrewe & Spector, 2002). Following this definition, in the cross-cultural literature, for example, Fan (2004) found that Realistic Orientation Programs for new Employee Stress (ROPES) could boost international students' adjustment self-efficacy. Fan and Wanous (2008) developed ROPES in helping sojourners' organizational and cultural adjustment. It is a cross-cultural training program developed to make sojourners aware of entry stressors in the host country and equip them with various coping strategies to handle the stressors. Compared with participants in traditional orientation programs, participants in ROPES reported lower pre-entry expectations, less stress, and higher levels of adjustment over time (Fan & Wanous, 2008).

In this current study, we focus on the adjustment self-efficacy, which targets directly to the sojourners' belief and confidence that they can perform well in the host country. Specifically, using a three-wave lagged sample, we hypothesize that proactive personality should link to increased adjustment self-efficacy, which links to better cross-cultural adjustment. Meanwhile, adjustment self-efficacy should mediate the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment. We present our model in Figure 1.

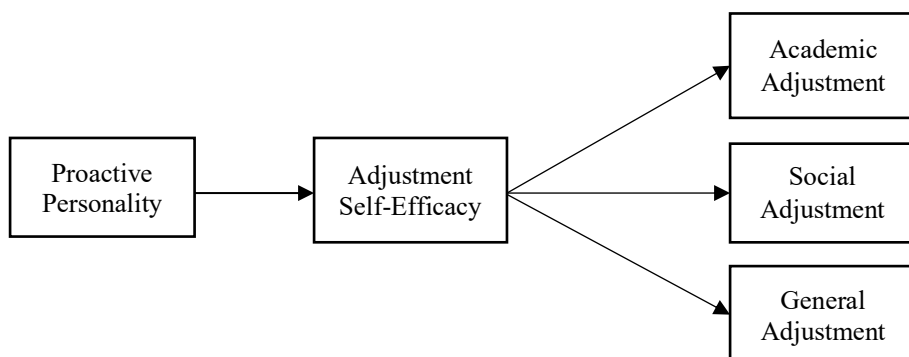


Figure 1: Proposed Model for the Relationships Among Proactive Personality, Adjustment Self-efficacy, and Cross-cultural Adjustment

This study makes two contributions to the cross-cultural domain. First, in contrast with a traditional stressor–stress paradigm (D. A. Harrison et al., 2004), we view the adjustment process from a positive perspective; hence, are able to underscore the self-starting nature of sojourners. Instead of reacting to demands in the new cultural environment, sojourners could actively acquire knowledge, help, and resources to strengthen themselves in these areas. It is also necessary for sojourners to take the initiative to connect to the new environment for a better outcome. By including proactive personality into cross-cultural adjustment literature, we are able to answer the question of which positive personality trait could predict better adjustment. Second, combining proactive literature, the social learning/cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997) and cross-cultural adjustment literature, we answer the call to explore the mediation mechanism of how distal personality trait relates to outcomes. Using a three-wave prospective design (i.e., proactive personality at Time 1, adjustment self-efficacy at Time 2, and cross-cultural adjustment at Time 3), we are able to examine the mediating role of adjustment self-efficacy between proactive personality and adjustment outcomes.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Proactive Personality and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Traditional theories emphasize the environmental influence on individuals and assume that individuals can only passively react to their existing conditions; however, an increasing number of scholars have noticed that individuals can shape their experience and influence the environment as well (Ren et al., 2014). Bateman and Crant (1993) coined the term “proactive personality” to capture the individuals’ dispositional difference in initiating positive change in their environment and/or themselves regardless of the environmental restrictions. Bateman and Crant (1993) also created the proactive personality scale, and empirically distinguished the concept

of proactive personality from other personality concepts, such as the Big Five personality, locus of control, need for achievement, need for dominance, personal achievements, and transformational leadership. Subsequently, a stream of research has been done to exhibit the effectiveness of proactive personality. For example, based on the interactionist perspective (Griffin et al., 2000; Jones, 1983; Reichers, 1987), which views newcomers as proactive agents as opposed to passive reactors to the new surroundings, Li et al. (2011) empirically examined the interactive relationship between proactive personality and organization socialization efforts on newcomer behaviors. Specifically, they found that supervisor and coworker developmental feedback worked jointly with newcomer proactive personality on newcomer task performance and helping behaviors.

Despite these findings, proactive personality lacks testing in the cross-cultural adjustment context, and it is a relevant construct in this domain. Sojourners face both organizational and cultural socialization simultaneously (Fan & Wanous, 2008). The outcome of sojourners' socialization is cross-cultural adjustment, which refers to psychological comfort with every aspect of a new country (Black et al., 1991). The cross-cultural adjustment could be further classified into three dimensions: work/academic, social, and general adjustment (Black & Stephens, 1989). Work adjustment refers to the psychological comfort with a new job, work standards, and expectations; social adjustment refers to the psychological comfort with social interactions and communication with host country citizens; and general adjustment refers to the psychological comfort with various aspects of the novel environment, such as food, weather, and transportation (Black, 1988).

The majority of cross-cultural adjustment research views sojourners' adjustment as a demanding process during which sojourners react stressfully to the challenges emerging from the new circumstance (D. A. Harrison et al., 2004). More recently, scholars have started to use a new perspective to view sojourners' adjustment (Hua et al., 2019; Takeuchi, 2010). For instance, adopting a positive perspective by viewing sojourners as proactive agents, Ren and her colleagues (2014) found that sojourners could take the initiative to seek information, build new ties, and frame the environment in positive ways to have successful adjustment abroad. Even though Ren et al. (2014) did not include and test the role of proactive personality in their model, they listed it as a future research direction. Therefore, this current study tries to answer the question of whether proactive personality contributes to sojourners' adjustment.

Proactive personality is a relatively stable personal concept characterized by being self-initiated, change-oriented, and future-oriented (Frese & Fay, 2001). People with high proactive personality tend to look for new ways to make constructive changes, identify opportunities, and take initiatives to make things happen (Crant, 2000). In contrast, people low in proactive personality tend to be passive followers, unable to identify opportunities around them, and reluctant to challenge the status quo (Crant, 2000). Consequently, sojourners with high proactive personality would actively do something in the new environment to adjust successfully. For example, proactive sojourners would find various opportunities to learn and practice English. They may ask around for help when having questions or confusion in their work and daily lives. These sojourners may also take the initiative to build new connections so that they can get access to the resources and support needed for better adjustment. In

contrast, people with low proactive personality may not make the effort to reach out and connect with others, so they have slower language development, know fewer people, and have fewer resources and support in the local community—none of which is beneficial to their adjustment abroad. Thus, we expect a positive relationship between proactive personality and the three dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment.

Proactive Personality and Adjustment Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura (1977), performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal are the four major sources of self-efficacy. Following Bandura's (1977) model, we argue that proactive personality could boost adjustment self-efficacy via each of the four sources. Proactive individuals tend to set a high goal beyond the external requirement for the purpose of personal development and work persistently toward their goals regardless of barriers (Frese & Fay, 2001). Hence, proactive sojourners seize the opportunity to develop themselves, and even though they may face obstacles in the new cultural environment, they consistently work to make progress. Based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), all these experiences provide sojourners with valuable lessons to learn and reflect which connect to increased adjustment self-efficacy.

Further, proactive individuals are likely to build strong social networks, which are beneficial to their job performance (Thompson, 2005). Thus, proactive sojourners may have strong connections with local people compared with others (Ren et al., 2014). Those sojourners with strong connections may have more chances to learn from others' experience and find out how to live in the new culture. They may also get encouragement and emotional comfort from local nationals so that they may realize that international experience is not that fearful, and they could handle it successfully (Farh et al., 2010). Above all, proactive sojourners would have increased confidence in their ability to function well in a new culture. Thus, we hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1: Proactive personality will positively relate to adjustment self-efficacy.

Adjustment Self-Efficacy and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

In the cross-cultural literature, scholars tend to treat self-efficacy as a generally stable personal factor predicting adjustment outcomes (Black et al., 1991; Shaffer et al., 1999). Nevertheless, the positive relationship between self-efficacy and cross-cultural adjustment has been well established (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; J. K. Harrison et al., 1996). There are also some scholars treating self-efficacy as a domain-specific construct. For instance, Gong and Fan (2006) found that academic self-efficacy is positively related to sojourners' academic adjustment, and social self-efficacy is positively related to sojourners' social adjustment. With increased self-efficacy, sojourners have reduced stress and increased psychological comfort (Hou et al., 2018). In this study, we focus specifically on adjustment self-efficacy and argue that with strong adjustment self-efficacy, sojourners continue trying to adjust even when facing setbacks in the foreign country. On the contrary, sojourners with low

adjustment self-efficacy give up easily when getting negative feedback or facing obstacles abroad, which produces poor adjustment. Accordingly, we hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 2: Adjustment self-efficacy will positively relate to (a) academic adjustment, (b) social adjustment, and (c) general adjustment.

The Mediating Role of Adjustment Self-Efficacy

According to social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is a fundamental motivational construct that regulates the cognitive processes of human beings (Bandura, 1986). Frese and Fay (2001) proposed that people are motivated to be proactive when they have a sense of control over their actions. The sense of control over one's action is referred to as self-efficacy, meaning people have the belief that they can take actions effectively (Bandura, 1997). With this belief, people tend to eventually carry out tasks more successfully (Brown et al., 2006). Parker and his colleagues (2010) proposed a proactive motivation model, which displays that distal individual antecedents, such as proactive personality, influence the proactive motivational states, such as self-efficacy, and generate changes in oneself and/or the work environment for a different future. Empirically, Parker et al. (2006) found that proactive personality is significantly related to proactive work behavior through role breadth self-efficacy. Brown and his colleagues (2006) hypothesized and found that peoples' proactive personality is positively related to their job search self-efficacy, which in turn is related to job search success. Job search efficacy mediated the relationship between proactive personality and job search success. Therefore, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3: Adjustment self-efficacy will mediate the relationship between proactive personality and (a) academic adjustment, (b) social adjustment, and (c) general adjustment.

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

Participants were new international students enrolled at a large public university in the Southeastern region of the United States. We collected data after approval from the university's Institutional Review Board, distributing three self-report surveys over one year. We invited students to participate in this study and complete the Time 1 survey (pencil and paper) during the new international student orientation session. In the Time 1 survey, there was one question asking for participants' contact information (i.e., email address) so that we could send follow-up surveys. Six months later, students who had completed the Time 1 survey received an email with a survey link and were invited to complete the Time 2 online survey. After another 6 months, students who had completed the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys received an email with a survey link and were invited to complete the Time 3 online survey. The email address was used to match the responses of participants. It took 20 minutes, 10 minutes, and

5 minutes for participants to complete the Time 1 survey, Time 2 survey, and Time 3 surveys, respectively.

The 1-year period was long enough to capture the students' cross-cultural adjustment process. Each participant received a small gift (\$5 in value) for completing the Time 1 survey, \$5 for completing the Time 2 survey, and \$10 for completing the Time 3 survey.

One hundred and thirty-five participants completed the Time 1 survey, which measured demographic information and proactive personality. In the Time 1 sample, 71 participants (53%) were male, and the average age was 24 years old ($SD = 3$). More than half of the students (63%) were from China, 15% were from India, and the remaining students were from 18 other countries, such as South Korea, Turkey, and Nepal. Approximately 66% had no previous international experience at all, 13% had fewer than 6 months previous international experience, 7% have 6–12 months of previous international experience, and 13% have more than 1 year of previous international experience.

Of those who completed the Time 1 survey, 81 participants (60%) completed the Time 2 survey measuring adjustment self-efficacy. Of those who completed both Time 1 and Time 2 survey, 69 participants (88%) completed the Time 3 survey measuring three dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment. Since several participants had missing data for some items in the survey, we conducted the Little's missing completely at random (MCAR) test (Little, 1988). The results showed that data were missing completely at random (MCAR): $\chi^2(194) = 198.57, p = .40$. Therefore, full information maximum likelihood estimation was used in Mplus 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015) to handle missing data in the mediation model—that is, to estimate the model under a missing data theory using all available data. To examine the extent of nonresponse bias, we conducted a series of variance analyses using a dummy-coded variable (1 = participants who only completed the Time 1 survey, 2 = participants who completed the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys, but did not complete the Time 3 survey, and 3 = participants who completed all three surveys). The tests results showed that the three groups did not significantly differ in gender ($\chi^2[2] = 3.82, p = .15$), age ($F[2, 130] = 0.26, p = .77$), previous international experience ($F[2, 131] = 0.49, p = .61$), or proactive personality ($F[2, 132] = 0.85, p = .43$).

Measures

Proactive Personality

We used a 10-item proactive personality scale (Bateman & Crant, 1993) to measure proactive personality. Sample items were “I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life” and “No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.” Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*). The Cronbach's alpha reliability was .79 in the current study.

Adjustment Self-Efficacy

We used the five-item measure developed by Fan (2004). Sample items were “I do not think I will have any problems making a good adjustment here” and “My past experiences and accomplishments help me to feel confident that I will be able to do well here.” Items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach’s alpha reliability was .86.

Cross-Cultural Adjustment

We used the cross-cultural adjustment measure created by Black and Stephens (1989) and modified by Gong and Fan (2006) to measure sojourners’ adjustment. Sample items were “How well adjusted are you to working with American classmates?” (academic adjustment), “How well adjusted are you to the weather here?” (general adjustment), and “How well adjusted are you to the interpersonal relationships with Americans?” (social adjustment). Items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not well adjusted*; 7 = *very well adjusted*). The Cronbach’s alpha reliabilities were .92, .83, and .92 for academic, general, and social adjustment, respectively.

Control Variables

We controlled for gender, age, and previous international experience as prior literature has shown that these variables may have potential effects on adjustment outcome variables (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005).

RESULTS

We present the descriptive statistics of all variables in Table 1. As shown, proactive personality was positively correlated with adjustment self-efficacy ($r = .40, p < .01$). In addition, adjustment self-efficacy was positively correlated with academic and social adjustment ($r = .29$ and $.28$, respectively, $ps < .05$). Gender was not significantly correlated with any other variables in the model and was not included in the following analysis.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Alpha Reliabilities

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Gender ^a (Time 1)	0.53	0.50								
Age (Time 1)	24.06	2.78	.00							
Previous international experience (Time 1)	1.94	1.49	-.06	.28**						
Proactive personality (Time 1)	3.63	0.43	-.03	.08	.19*	.79				
Adjustment self-efficacy (Time 2)	5.74	0.74	.12	.09	.16	.40**	.86			

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Academic adjustment (Time 3)	5.56	0.95	.04	.04	-.09	-.06	.29*	.92		
Social adjustment (Time 3)	4.77	1.20	.02	.04	-.02	-.02	.28*	.64**	.92	
General adjustment (Time 3)	4.90	1.25	-.04	-.03	-.05	-.21	.13	.53**	.43**	0.83

Note. Numbers on the diagonal of the correlation matrix are alpha coefficients. T1 = Month 1; T2 = Month 6; T3 = Month 12. *0 = female; 1 = male. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

We used Mplus 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015) to test the hypothesized mediation model. We ran path analysis due to the low ratio of sample size to the number of parameters (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). The mediation model fit was reasonably good: $\chi^2(9) = 8.48, p = .49, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.01, RMSEA = .00$ with 95% CI [.00, .12], SRMR = .07. We presented the standardized regression weights in Fig. 2. As shown in Fig. 2, proactive personality positively related to adjustment self-efficacy ($\beta = .41, p < .01$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Adjustment self-efficacy positively related to academic adjustment ($\beta = .28, p < .05$) and social adjustment ($\beta = .28, p < .05$), provide support for Hypotheses 2a and 2b. However, adjustment self-efficacy was not significantly related to general adjustment ($\beta = .12, p = .40$). Therefore, Hypothesis 2c was not supported.

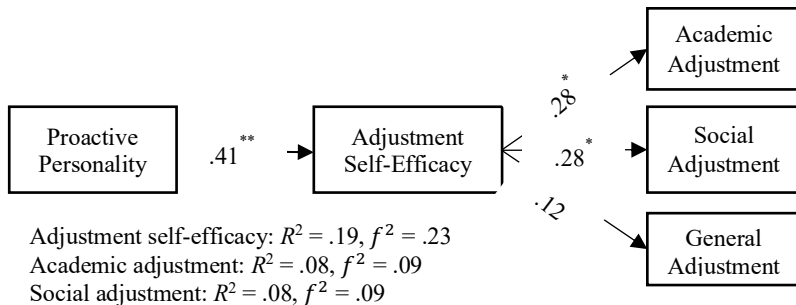


Figure 2: Mediation Model with Regression Weights

Note. Controlling for age and previous international experience. Standardized coefficients are reported. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. The effect size f^2 for multiple regressions are calculated (Cohen, 1988). An f^2 of .02 to be a small effect, .15 a medium effect, and .35 a large effect (Cohen, 1988).

To test the mediation effect (Hypotheses 3a–3c), we used a bootstrapping approach in Mplus 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015), and with 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (CIs) obtained using 5,000 bootstrap samples (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The results showed that adjustment self-efficacy mediated the relationship between proactive personality and academic adjustment (.11, 95% CI [.02, .23]) and social adjustment (.11, 95% CI [.02, .24]), supporting Hypotheses 3a

and 3b. However, adjustment self-efficacy did not mediate the relationship between individual adaptability and general adjustment (.05, 95% CI [-.06, .18]). As such, Hypothesis 3c was not supported.

We also tested an alternative, partial mediation model, in which we added three direct links between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment. The partial mediation model was not significantly different from the original, full mediation model: $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 5.74, p = .13$. The coefficient pattern was the same as the original model. Therefore, we retained the hypothesized full mediation model as the final model.

DISCUSSION

Based on social learning/cognitive theory, this study proposed and tested a framework to explain how proactive personality works on cross-cultural adjustment. Using the three-wave prospective design, we found that proactive personality (Time 1) positively related to adjustment self-efficacy (Time 2), which in turn positively related to academic and social adjustment (Time 3). Furthermore, adjustment self-efficacy (Time 2) fully mediated the relationship between proactive personality (Time 1) and academic and social adjustment (Time 3).

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the cross-cultural adjustment literature in several ways. First, we viewed the sojourners' experience from a positive perspective. Prior research in this area has mainly adopted a stress perspective to view the adjustment experience—that is, sojourners face many stressors and have to react to one another (Takeuchi, 2010). By adopting a positive perspective, we are able to underline that sojourners can shape their experience abroad and increase their well-being. The process of cross-cultural adjustment could be positive and beneficial to sojourners. This study suggests that positive perspective may offer some valuable insights into cross-cultural adjustment. This is consistent with the current trend in psychology and organizational behavior to focus more on positive psychology (Fredrickson, 2001; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Meanwhile, we established the relevance of a positive trait—proactive personality—in the cross-cultural adjustment area. To adjust well, sojourners should possess the quality of taking initiative. Proactive sojourners think and behave differently from those who do not, therefore having a significant difference in adjustment outcomes. This study showed that sojourners should not wait to be told what to do but actively shape themselves and/or the environment to have a better outcome. By including and empirically testing proactive personality, we answered the call by Ren and her colleagues (2014) to examine the role of proactive personality in cross-cultural adjustment. Our findings suggested that proactive personality should be considered as a relevant predictor in cross-cultural literature.

Furthermore, deeply rooted in the social learning/cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997), we found that adjustment self-efficacy works as a mediator between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment. Sojourners with high

proactive personality tend to focus on the long-term goal and do not give up easily regardless of the situation. High proactive individuals have steeper learning curves and stronger tendencies to develop themselves persistently (Frese & Fay, 2001). All the negative and positive experiences may help these high proactive sojourners increase their self-efficacy and thereby have a better life in the new culture. This finding is consistent with Parker et al. (2010) that individuals' proactivity may influence their motivation states and consequently different outcomes. By including adjustment self-efficacy as a mediator, we are able to explain how proactive personality works on cross-cultural adjustment. One interesting finding was that adjustment self-efficacy was not significantly related to general adjustment. The possible explanation is that items in adjustment self-efficacy tapped into academic and social domains, not the general domain.

Managerial Implications

Practically, our findings suggest that proactive personality is critical to individual success abroad. To adjust well, sojourners should have the trait of proactive personality. Therefore, when selecting people for an overseas task, having proactive personality may be included as a part of the screening test. Alternatively, training that targets to increase an individual's proactive personality should be provided. In addition, adjustment self-efficacy is vital to a sojourner's adjustment. Therefore, it is helpful to build up a sojourner's self-efficacy for better adjustment. This is crucial, as good adjustment is beneficial to a sojourner's career (Zhu et al., 2016), the sojourner's family, home country organization, and local community as a whole (Takeuchi, 2010).

Our results provide important implications for higher educational professionals, such as school administrators and professors. Studying abroad can be a stressful experience for international students and they need support and directions from educational professionals. Since the educational professionals interact with students mostly on a daily basis, they have great potential to influence international students. The international students who lack proactive personality are by nature less capable of adjusting to the culture. Therefore, it would be very helpful if educational professionals could encourage them to be more active. With encouragement, international students may be more willing to take initiative, which benefits their adjustment self-efficacy. Based on our study, adjustment self-efficacy is positively related to international students' academic and social adjustment. Having self-efficacy allows these international students to adjust well not only in their academic study domain, but also in their social life domain.

Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

Regardless of the contributions, several study limitations should be kept in mind when interpreting our findings. First, we did not measure proactive behaviors in this study. It would be very interesting to include both proactive personality and proactive behavior in the model to examine the relationship between the two (Ren et al., 2014). Second, we do not measure the sources of efficacy. Therefore, it is hard to know

which source having proactive personality relates most to or which source has the most impact on a sojourner's efficacy. It may be beneficial to include sources of efficacy in future research. Third, given the current student sample, our findings may not generalize to other sojourner groups, such as expatriates. Nevertheless, both international students and expatriates need to learn and use a new language, meet work expectations, and plug into the new community (Gong & Fan, 2006). Thus, future studies may replicate our study using different samples. Fourth, we do not measure all variables at each time point, neglecting the stability effects (effects of past levels on the outcomes) in model estimation. Consequently, future studies may measure all the variables at each time point and test the predictive role of proactive personality more rigorously. Lastly, the effect sizes of adjustment self-efficacy on academic and social adjustment were small ($f^2 = .09$). The small effect sizes might be due to the longitudinal design in the current study. Specifically, the effects of adjustment self-efficacy on academic and social adjustment may decline over time. Therefore, future longitudinal research with shorter time intervals can be conducted, revealing the differences in effect size coefficients underlying these relationships. Furthermore, other potential mediators, which might have larger magnitudes of impacts on adjustment outcomes, should be considered in future study. For example, specifying mediating mechanisms could increase our understanding of how proactive personality works in cross-cultural adjustment.

CONCLUSION

From a positive perspective, this study tested the predictive role of proactive personality on cross-cultural adjustment. Combining proactive personality literature, social learning/cognitive theory, and cross-cultural literature, we found the mediation mechanism to explain how proactive personality works on adjustment. Living abroad could be a positive experience for sojourners, especially proactive ones, to build up their adjustment self-efficacy and thereby improve their life in a foreign country.

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