

Eine Positive Psychologie der Arbeit

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Outline

- Proactive behavior as Positive Psychology
- Theoretical issues
- Measurement
- Outcomes of active behavior at work: wellbeing, positive mental health, achievement, optimal functioning, positive cycles
- Changing active behavior – training effects

Work is Fundamental to Humans

- Tool use
- Systematic tool use with some division of labor
- Tool use for useful products (societal usefulness)
- Tools are means to achieve productive goals in some form – in this sense theories are tools
- Active approach to work: active tool use and active tool development
- Wrong theory of some Greek philosopher who thought of work mainly as toil without thought – in contrast, only through systematic, thoughtful, and dynamic tool use can we develop humanity

Requirement for a Positive Psychology of Work and Organization

- Should be functional for doing work well
- Should emphasize the personal development that appears because of work
- Should emphasize the contributing role of work for societal development
- Should emphasize the positive function of work for mental health

Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior Concepts

- Intrinsic motivation (Ceci and Ryan)
- Positive Psychological Capital (Luthans)
- Engagement as the opposite of Burnout (Schaufeli, Bakker)
- Personality enhancement of work (Hacker)
- Personal initiative (Frese)

Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior Concepts – Intrinsic Motivation (Ceci and Ryan)

- Intrinsic motivation is motivation as part of certain tasks
- This motivation is reduced when external reinforcer such as money is introduced (Deci, E.L., Koestner, R. & Ryan, R.M. (1999). A meta-analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 627-668.)
- Intrinsic motivation works via autonomy and feedback
- Problem: It does not work well in the area of organizations because most work is paid/reinforced by money (Eisenberger, R., Pierce, W.D. & Cameron, J. (1999). Effects of reward on intrinsic motivation – negative, neutral, and positive: Comment on Deci, Koestner, and Ryan (1999). *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 677-691)

Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior

Concepts – Positive Psychological Capital (Luthans)

- Consists of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy
- These are useful concepts. However, not integrated to the work situation – look more like personality concepts that predict how we deal with work. They come out of nowhere. Are they not related to work at all?
- Empirically, hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy cross-sectionally related to job satisfaction and performance (question of what comes first is important – are people more hopeful, optimistic, self-efficacious, and resilient when they are satisfied and perform well?)
- Why is there no active approach to work? Why is activity at work unrelated to how people' hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy develop?

Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior Concepts – Engagement as the opposite of Burnout (Schaufeli, Bakker)

- Engagement consists of vigor, dedication, and absorption
- Engagement is negatively related to Burnout (although not as strongly as originally conceived)
- Engagement is related to work characteristics and to work outcomes, such as job satisfaction and performance (longitudinal studies)
- And engagement is intimately tied to work – it is something that develops as part of work activity – highly useful concept

Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior Concepts – Personality Enhancement of Work, Persönlichkeitsförderlichkeit der Arbeit (Hacker)

- Persönlichkeitsförderlichkeit der Arbeit: Entwicklung der individuellen Möglichkeiten des Handelns
- Voraussetzungen: Hohe Handlungsspielraum (Freiheitsgrade) der Arbeit und hohe Herausforderung (Komplexität) der Arbeit, so dass Weiterentwicklung der Fähigkeiten durch schöpferische Verrichtungen, positive Bewertung der Arbeit durch die Gesellschaft, soziale Kooperation in der Arbeit

Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior Concepts – Personal Initiative, Proactive Behavior at Work (Frese, Parker, Grant, Morrison, Crant)

In the following concentrate on personal initiative

Active Behavior (= Personal Initiative)

- Self-starting
- Pro-active (future oriented)
- Persistent (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

Meaning of Self-Starting

- Being different from the “normal” or obvious approaches (contextual approach)
- Doing the obvious → PI 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 personal initiative

Meaning of Pro-Active

- Scanning for opportunities and problems in the future
- Preparing one-self at the present time for dealing with problems and exploiting opportunities

Meaning of Persistence (Overcoming Barriers)

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

Why is Active Behavior an Important Topic of Positive Psychology?

- Aristotle already talked about an active approach to life as being part of well-being (**Eudaimonia**) because it leads to **positive outcomes** in terms of wellbeing and achievement
- Because it is likely to lead to **optimal functioning**
- Similarly Johoda: positive mental health: **active orientation**
- Most important: **Positive cycles** – because active behavior changes the environment, we produce environments that produce positive effects in terms of becoming more active

Discuss these five topics:

- **positive outcomes: wellbeing**
- **active orientation and positive mental health**
- **positive outcomes: achievement**
- **optimal functioning**
- **positive cycles**

Many studies done in this area. I use two groups of studies here: Studies on personal initiative in normal employees (most important study in East Germany – longitudinal study)

And: most active – entrepreneurs – often in developing countries

Short description of operationalization of concepts

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Personal Initiative: Measure – All 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)
- Comparison between interview and questionnaire measure

Personal Initiative: Questionnaire

- (1) I actively attack problems.
- (2) Whenever something goes wrong, I search for a solution immediately.
- (3) Whenever there is a chance to get actively involved, I take it.
- (4) I take initiative immediately even when others don't.
- (5) I use opportunities quickly in order to attain my goals.
- (6) Usually I do more than I am asked to do.
- (7) I am particularly good at realizing ideas.

Frese, M., Fay, D., Hilburger, T., Leng, K., Tag, A. (1997). The concept of personal initiative: Operationalization, reliability and validity in two German samples. *Journal of Organizational and Occupational Psychology*, 70, 139-161.

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Five topics:

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Personal Initiative and Positive Well-Being, Positive Mood, Negative Mood

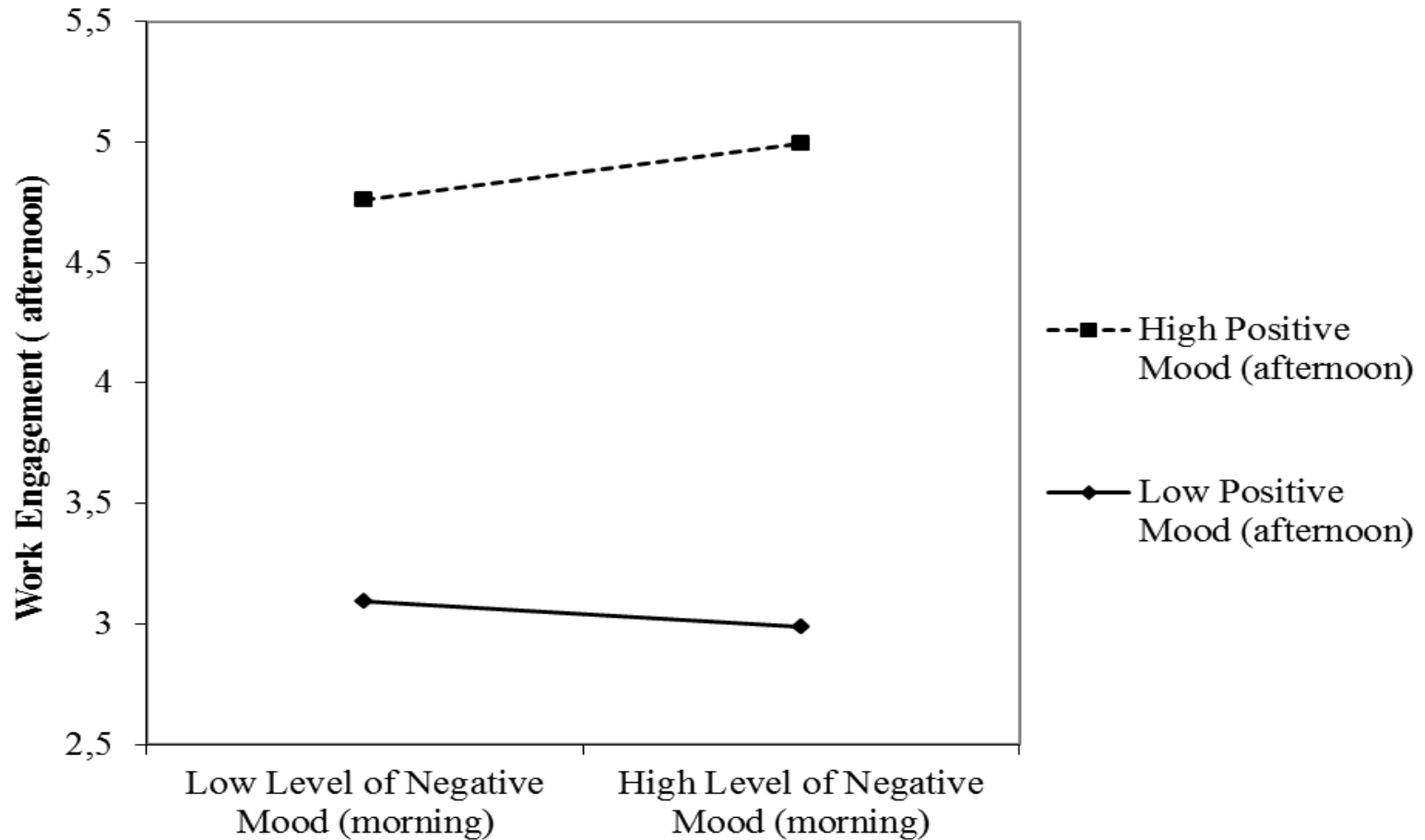
- Relationship between personal initiative and job satisfaction: Meta-analysis: Correlation between personal initiative and job satisfaction $r=.16$ (Tornau & Frese, 2011)
 - issue of constraints at work and initiative as a result of dissatisfaction

Personal Initiative and Active Mental Health

- Personal initiative (questionnaire) and depression: $r = -.34$
- Personal initiative (questionnaire) and negative affectivity: $r = -.22$
- NO good data at this moment – because a positive and active form of mental health scale needs to be used

Positive and Negative Mood, Affective Shift and Engagement

a)



Five topics:

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Personal Initiative and Achievement/Performance

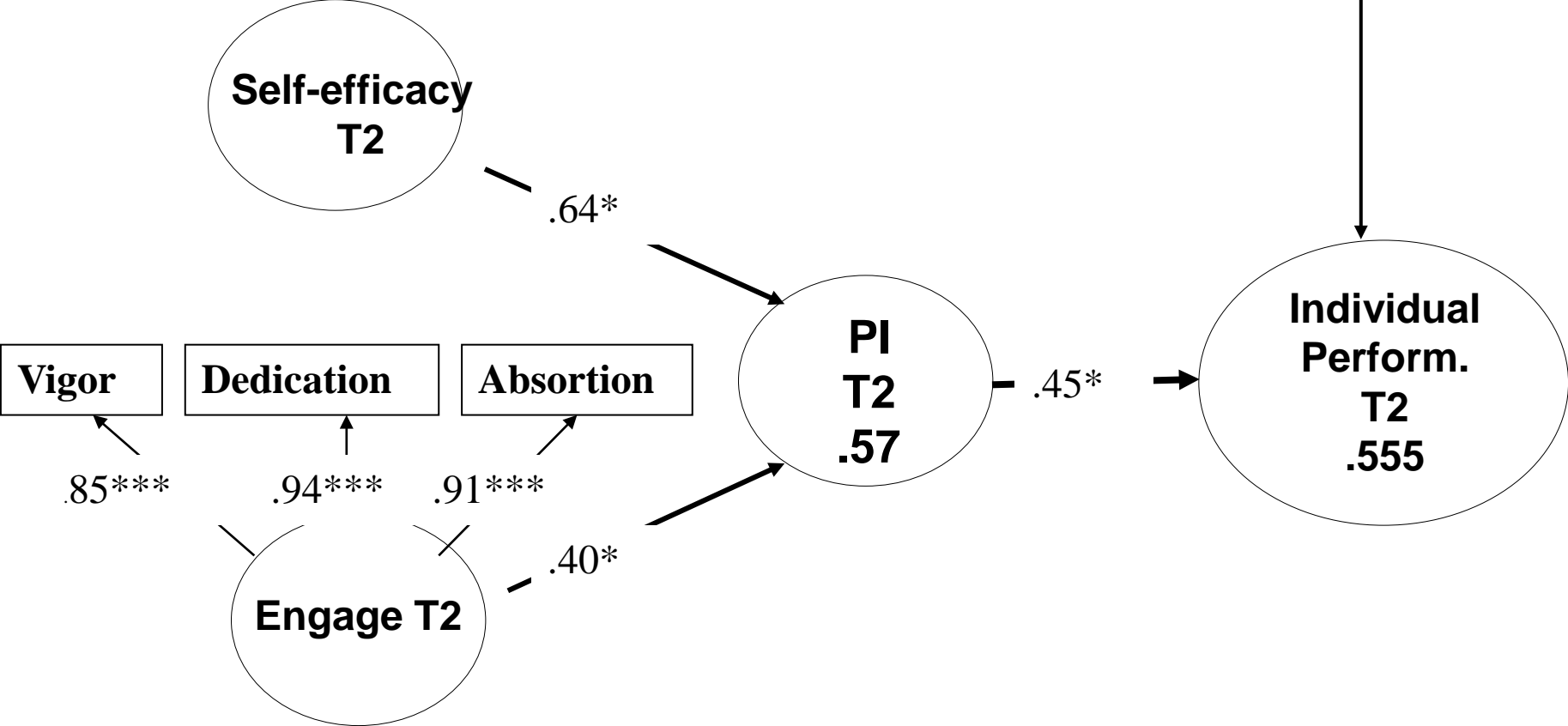
- Relationship between personal initiative and performance at work: Meta-analysis: $k=16$, $N=2914$: Correlation between personal initiative and perceived performance $r=.31$, also clear relationship with objective performance: $r=.17$ (Tornau & Frese, 2011)
- Personal initiative and work engagement
- Ugandan entrepreneurs (Koop, deReu & Frese, 2000):

Zum Vergleich

- 1) Viagra und besseres Funktionieren der Sexualität bei Männern: .38
- 2) Schlaftabletten und Verringerung von Insomnia: .30
- 3) Ausmaß der Zerstörung von Gehirnmasse und Verschlechterung des Lernens (Untersuchungen an Affen): .17
- 4) Blei im Blut und in den Zähnen von Kindern und Verringerung des Intelligenzquotienten dieser Kinder: .12

Personal Initiative and Work Engagement

Lisbona, A., Palací, F. J., Salanova, M., & Frese, M. (2009).
The effects of work engagement and self-efficacy on personal
initiative and performance. *submitted for publication.*





Relationship Between Personal Initiative and Entrepreneurial Success in Uganda (Correlations)

r with Success

Initiative

.42**

Replicated several times,
e.g., in East Germany, Malaysia

This means: Of those entrepreneurs who are high on personal initiative: **41% have highly successful firms**
Those who are low **21% have highly successful firms**

Koop, S., De Reu, T., & Frese, M. (2000). Sociodemographic factors, entrepreneurial orientation, personal initiative, and environmental problems in Uganda. In M. Frese (Ed.), *Success and failure of microbusiness owners in Africa: A psychological approach* (pp. 55-76). Westport, Ct.: Quorum.

Rose, R. C., Kumar, B., & Yen, L. L. (2006). The dynamics of entrepreneurs' success factors in influencing venture growth. *Journal of Asia Entrepreneurship and Sustainability*,

www.asiaentrepreneurshipjournal.com, 2(2).

Change Situation:

Traditionally: Resistance to change

**Positive Psychology: Initiative to
participate in change**

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.

Definitions of Process Innovations

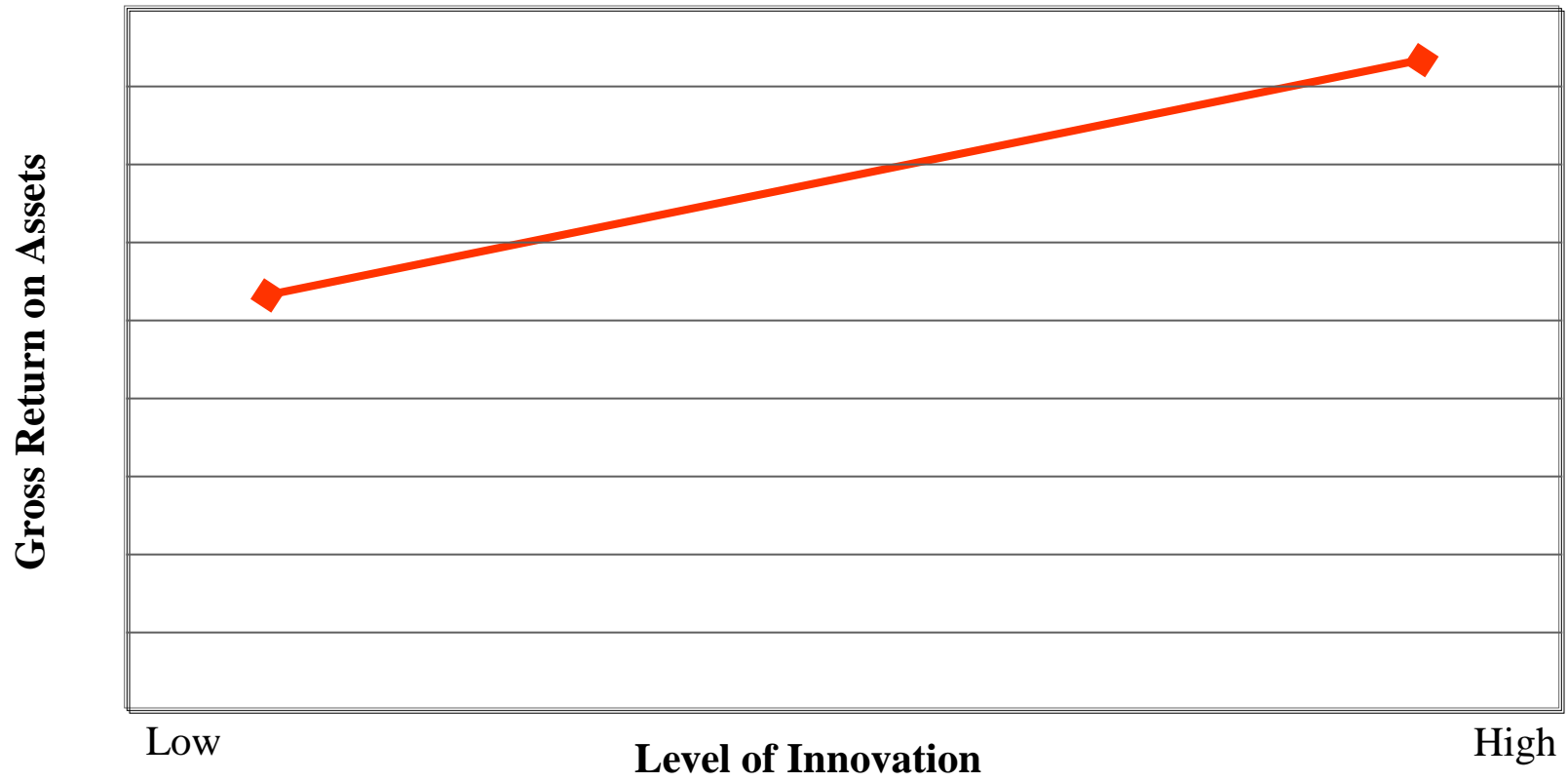
- 1. Business Process Reengineering (BPR)**

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**

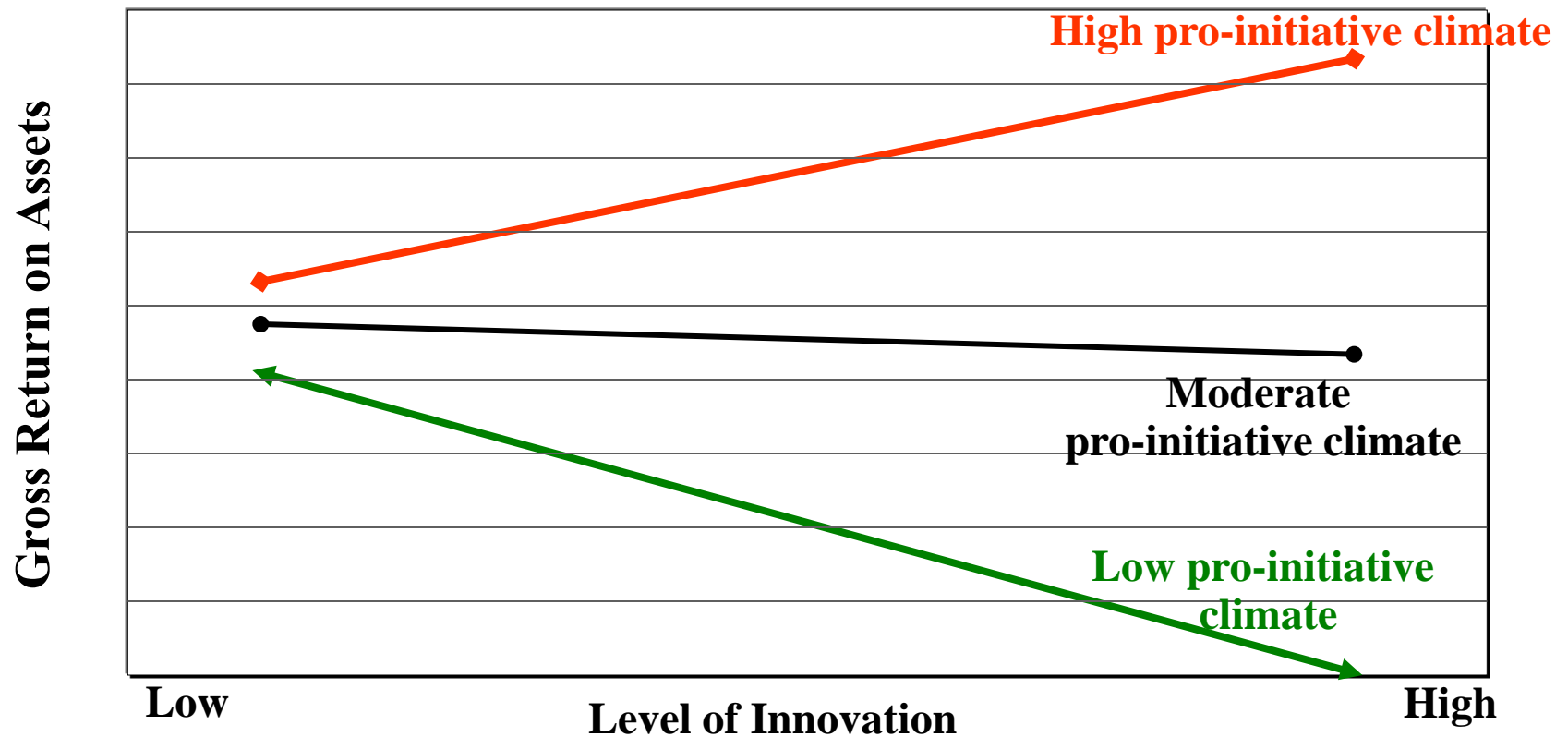
An informational network with other relevant companies for the purpose of overlapping company improvement in customer orientation and resource utilization (Handfield & Nichols, 1998).
- 3. Learning Culture**

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).



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

Five topics:

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Personal Initiative and Optimal Functioning in Difficult Situations

High personal initiative leads to:

- **Better career plans and better execution**
- **If unemployed they find jobs faster and they become less easily unemployed**
- **Higher employability as seen by others**
- **More innovativeness**
- **Higher propensity to become self – employed**
- **All achievement parameters**

Five topics:

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Personal Initiative and Reciprocal Determinism: The Issue of the Positive Cycle

Central for our Theory: Changing the environment

High personal initiative leads to higher performance

Higher performance leads to higher personal initiative

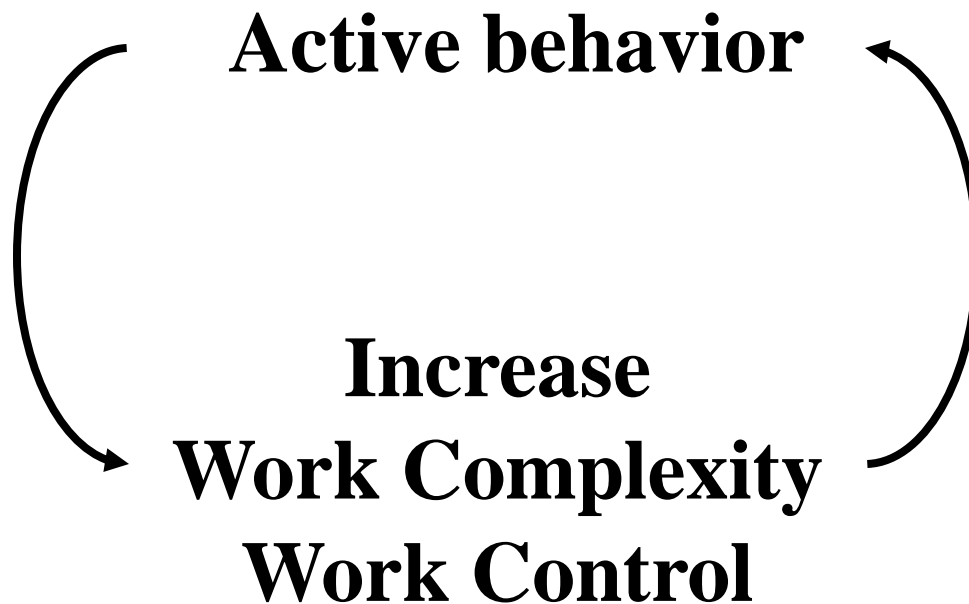
**High personal initiative leads to higher well-being and
positive affectivity**

**Higher well-being and positive affectivity leads to
higher personal initiative**

High personal initiative leads to better career plans

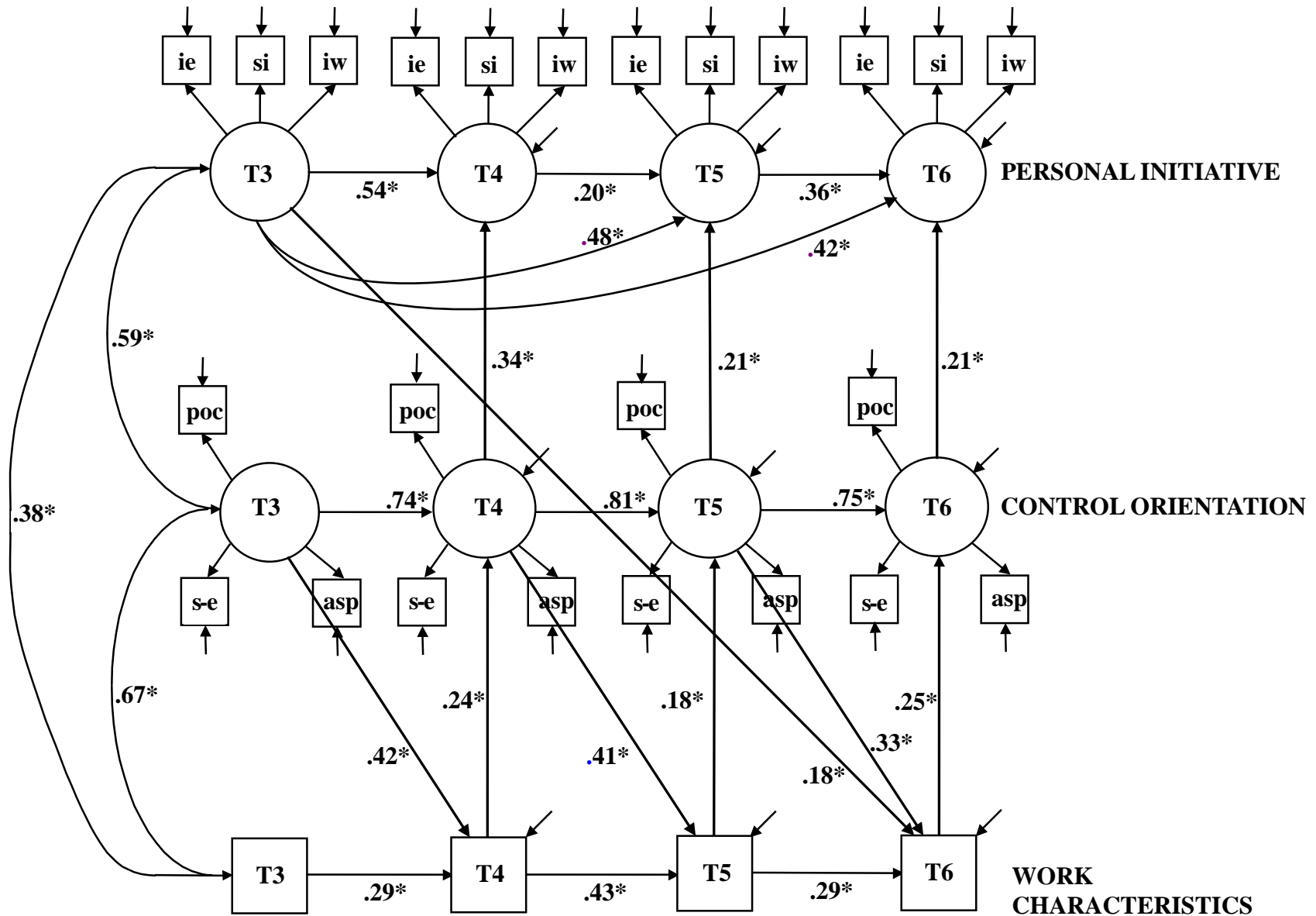
Higher career plans lead to higher personal initiative

Positive Cycle: Reciprocal Determinism

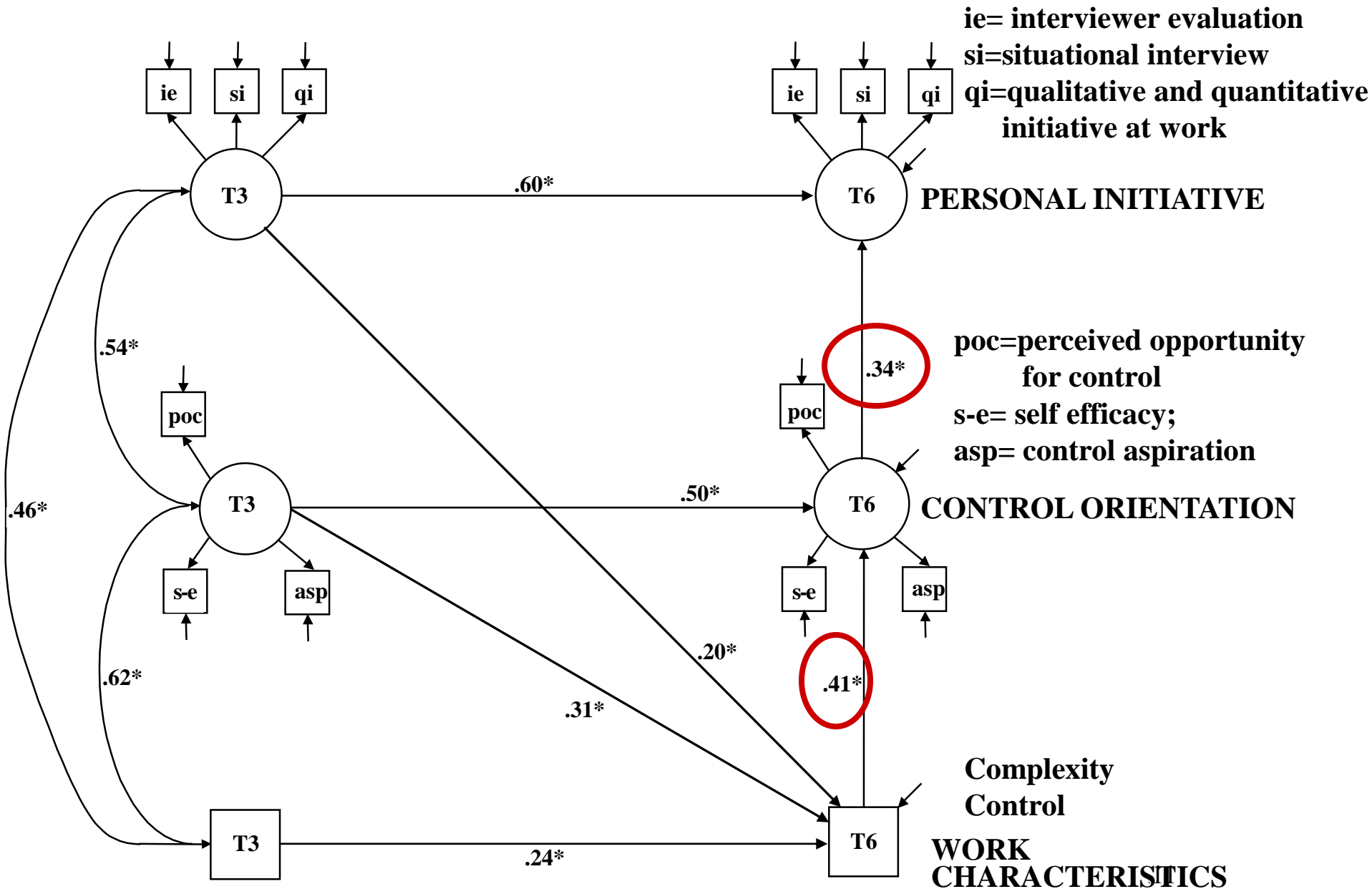


Frese, M., Garst, H., & Fay, D. Frese, M., Garst, H., & Fay, D. (2007). Making Things Happen: Reciprocal Relationships between Work Characteristics and Personal Initiative (PI) in a Four-Wave Longitudinal Structural Equation Model. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*, 1084-1102.

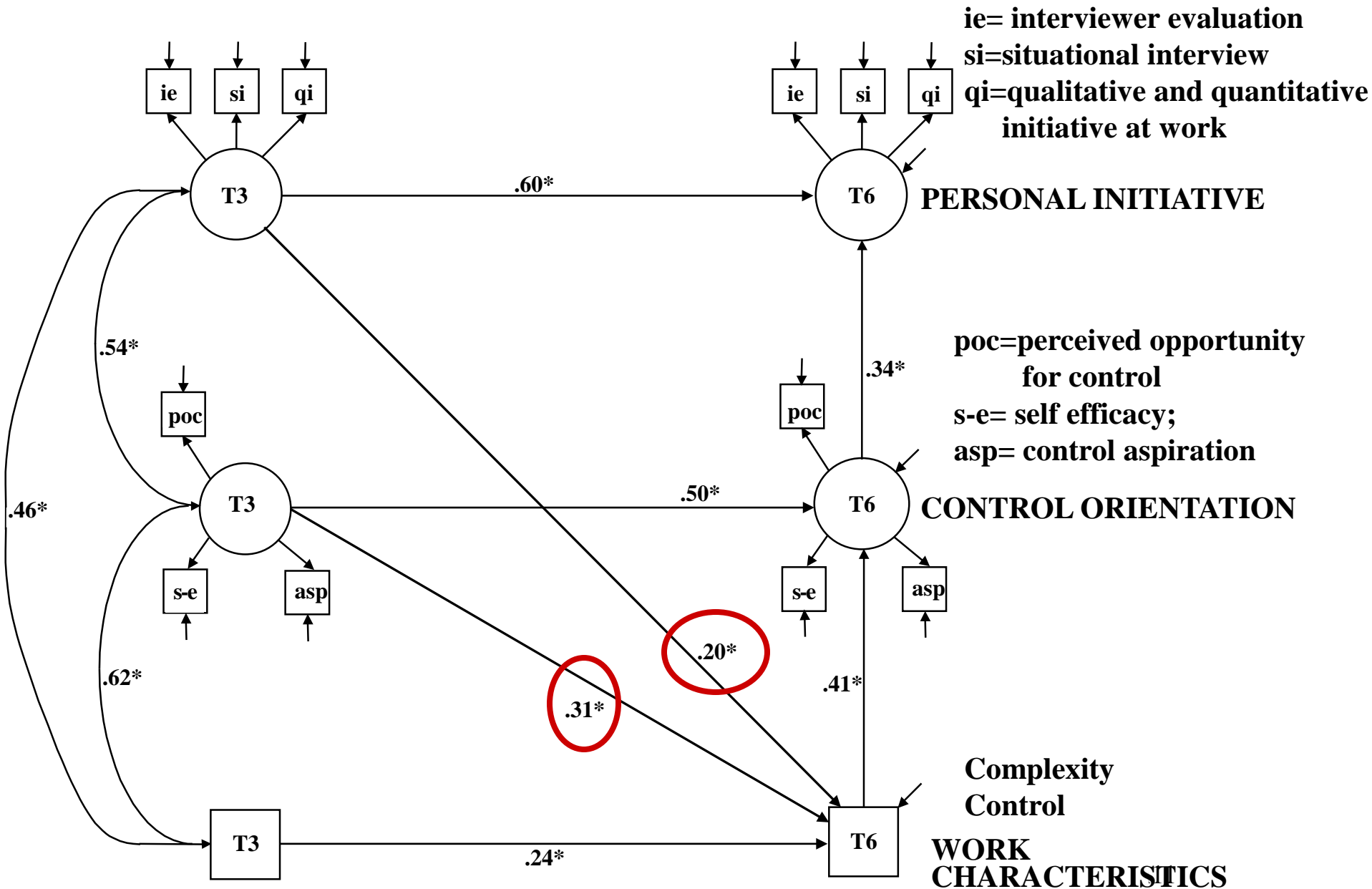
Antecedents and Consequences of Personal Initiative (Frese et al., 2007)



Antecedents and Consequences of Personal Initiative



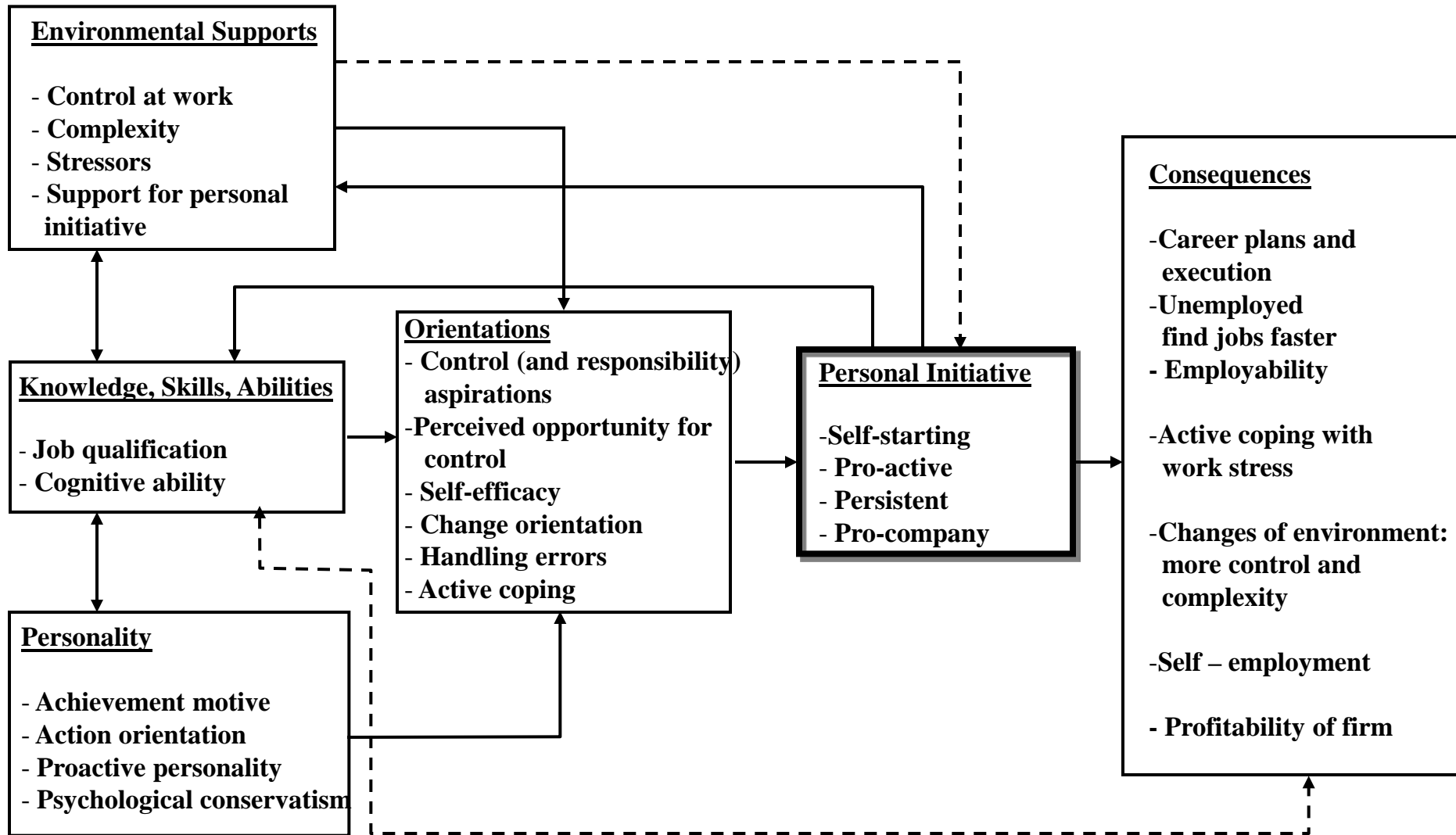
Antecedents and Consequences of Personal Initiative



Positive Cycle



Binnewies, C., Sonnentag, S., & Mojza, E. J. (2009). Daily performance at work: Feeling recovered in the morning as a predictor of day-level performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30, 67-93.



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

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Training Studies on Personal Initiative

Studies done on:

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

8 studies

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.

Teaching Initiative (3 days)

- **Business (personal) project and planning/goal setting**
- **Vision**
- **Check each situation for how you can structure it (strategic focus)**
- **Love it, leave it, or change it**
- **Take responsibility for everything you do**
- **Think of how you can do things differently**
- **Proactively think of opportunities and problems and prepare today**
- **You can do it (self-efficacy)**
- **(Ellis - ABCDE) Don't allow negative emotions to dominate you, you should regulate them**

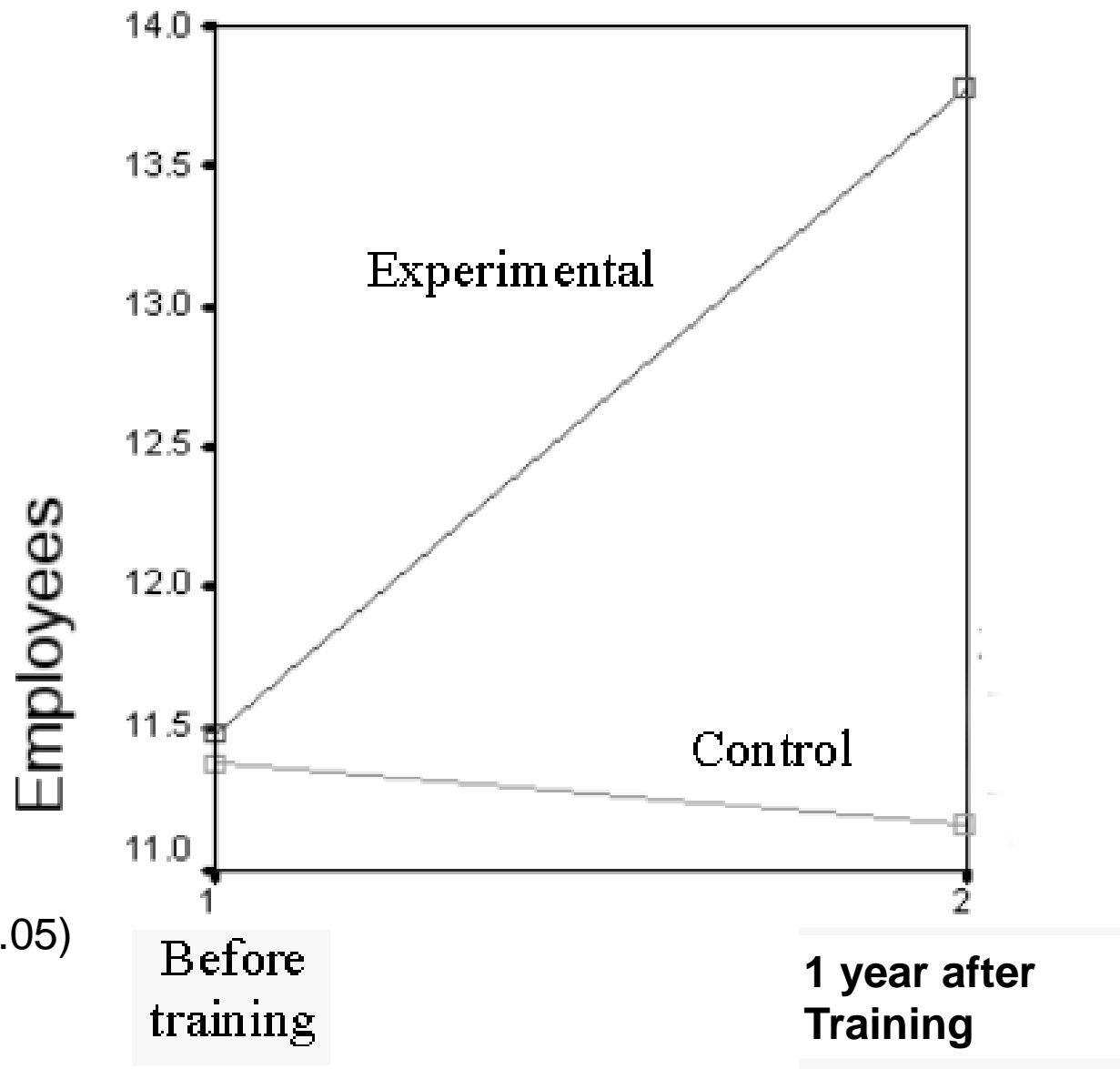
Randomization: Intervention and Waitlist Control Group with a 1 year waiting period; Dependent variables were success variables of increasing sales and increasing number of employees

Also: Was personal initiative increase the mediator of the relationship between intervention and higher success?

Study Results:

- 1) Increase of sales level from 2.66 Mill Shilling to 3.39 Mill. Shilling for intervention group**
- 2) Increase of number of employees from 7.9 to 10.7 employees after a year**
- 3) The success of the control group actually decreased because of the difficult environment in this year**
- 4) Personal Initiative was, indeed, the mediator between the intervention and the success of the business owners**

Training Study in Germany



Summary

- Personal Initiative is one part of positive psychology applied to work
- Personal initiative and positive functioning
- Personal Initiative: Positive Cycles: change of the job conditions (job crafting and job change)
- Training Personal Initiative leads to positive effects

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

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.

Frese, M. (2009). Towards a psychology of entrepreneurship: An action theory perspective. *Foundations and Trends in Entrepreneurship*, 5, 435–494.

Why are People Active?

- An ontological given (orientation reflex, curiosity, mastery motive)
- Active approach leads to:
 - better handling of errors
 - active approach leads to better action oriented mental model
 - better knowledge of situation (exploration)
 - development of self-determined goals and tasks
 - 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 approaching tasks