

# The Effect of Job Stress on Employee Proactive Behaviour: The Role of Job Remodeling

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## Abstract:

Proactive behavior is an important topic in the field of organizational behavior in recent years. This study examines the effects of challenge-obstructive stress on employee proactive behavior, with emphasis on the mediating role of job remodeling and the moderating role of leader-member exchange. The results show that challenging stressors positively affect employee proactive behavior, while impeding stressors negatively affect employee proactive behavior. Job remodeling partially mediated the relationship between challenging stress and proactive behavior, and partially mediated the relationship between obstructive stress and proactive behavior. Leader-member exchange attenuates the negative effects of obstructive stress on job remodeling. The above research provides a new explanation for "how to improve employees' proactive behavior under increasing work pressure" and has important theoretical and practical significance.

**Keywords:** Challenge-obstructive stress, Employee proactive behavior, Job remodeling, Leader-member exchange.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's turbulent and changeable external environment and increasingly fierce competition, work pressure is prevalent in organizations, which has an impact on employee behavior and enterprise development. As a core kinetic energy of individuals, proactive behavior is the most leveraged employee behavior, which not only affects the high-quality completion of employees' own work tasks<sup>[1]</sup>, but also plays a strong role in promoting the leapfrog development of the organization<sup>[2]</sup>. Therefore, it is still unclear what kind of influence the stress situation has on the proactive behavior of employees. It is necessary to conduct a certain empirical study on the relationship between the two, which is also the first problem to be solved in this paper. In addition, studies have shown that employees are more inclined to take the initiative to make changes when facing pressure, rather than passively adapt to the environment. In other words, stress can awaken individuals' desire and motivation to make changes<sup>[3]</sup>. Job remodeling is a process in which

employees improve themselves by setting goals and making positive changes so as to change their work motivation and thinking mode<sup>[4]</sup>. Some studies have shown that job remodeling is beneficial to enhance the individual's work pleasure and stimulate the individual's motivation to actively complete the work<sup>[5]</sup>, thus showing a higher degree of work engagement<sup>[6]</sup>. Then, can challenge-obstructive stress exert a certain influence on employees' proactive behavior through job remodeling? This is the second problem to be solved in this study. Finally, it is difficult for organizations to make detailed institutional requirements or behavioral regulations for employees' proactive behaviors to deal with environmental challenges, and the results mainly depend on the spontaneous generation of employees. But in a complex organizational environment, autonomy alone is not enough. In addition to their own factors, more organizational support and encouragement are needed. Furthermore, considering China's typical relationship-oriented social background<sup>[7]</sup>, a good leader-member exchange relationship (LMX) can help employees get richer and more complete support resources and trust, so that they can cope with more challenges and shoulder greater responsibilities<sup>[8]</sup>. So, does leader-member exchange play a moderating role in the relationship between two-dimensional stress and job remodeling? This is the third problem to be solved in this study. By solving the above three problems, it is helpful to clarify the internal influence mechanism of work stress on employees' proactive behavior, in order to provide reference for the future practice management model and theoretical discussion.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Theoretical Basis and Research Hypothesis

#### 2.1.1 Challenge-obstructive stress and employee proactive behavior

Cavanaugh et al.<sup>[9]</sup>, an American scholar, proposed a classification model of work pressure, which defined work pressure as challenging pressure and obstructive pressure according to the nature of "good" and "bad". Among them, time pressure, job responsibilities and high workload are all challenging pressures. Once such pressures are overcome, they have a positive effect on improving employees' working skills and achieving career success. On the other hand, obstructive pressure is regarded as "bad" pressure and an obstacle to the development of employees, mainly including organizational politics, ambiguous role, role conflict, etc. These pressures cannot benefit employees and are the kind of pressure that individuals try to avoid.

Employee proactive behavior is a comprehensive behavior, which mainly refers to that employees actively and creatively change and optimize their environment, including innovative behavior and voice behavior<sup>[10]</sup>. The meta-analysis of Podsakoff et al.<sup>[11]</sup> found that challenging pressure would reduce individuals' retreat behavior, while blocking pressure would improve

individuals' retreat behavior. Based on the pressure interaction theory<sup>[12]</sup>, employees will conduct primary and secondary evaluation of stressors according to the organizational situation and their own abilities. Primary evaluation is to judge whether stressors will cause danger and damage to themselves, while secondary evaluation emphasizes what individuals can do and how to better deal with such situations. When employees overcome the challenge and pressure, their subjective initiative is fully mobilized, and their initiative is more likely to occur, so that their own ability is constantly improved. However, employees will not benefit from overcoming obstructive stress, and will initially evaluate the situation as damage or threat, thus making negative predictions and adopting an emotion-oriented coping style. In this process, employees tend to follow routines and conventions, which makes it difficult to generate initiative at work. To sum up, the following hypotheses are obtained:

H1a: Challenging pressure has a positive effect on proactive behavior of employees

H1b: Obstructive stress has a negative effect on employee proactive behavior

#### 2.1.2 The mediating role of job remodeling

Job remodeling is regarded as a strategy to improve employees' sustainable ability to adapt to the dynamically changing demands of the work scene, as well as a useful strategy to deal with organizational changes and new situations<sup>[13]</sup>. If employees are able to reshape their work, they will certainly improve their personal abilities and thus better adapt to development trends. However, job reinvention doesn't happen for nothing. According to resource conservation theory, individuals' expectation of resource return in an organization will affect their motivation to deal with resources, and then change their attitudes and behaviors. People always actively acquire resources that are valuable to themselves<sup>[14]</sup>. Especially when overcoming challenging pressure brings personal and career growth to employees, they are more inclined to actively deal with resources and motivation, and adopt appropriate strategies to actively face them, so as to achieve job remodeling. This suggests that challenging work stress is positively affecting employees' job remodeling. For example, Lepine et al.<sup>[15]</sup> proposed that individuals would choose to find problem-solving strategies to actively cope with challenging pressure. On the contrary, organizational politics, role ambiguity, role conflict and other stressors will not only threaten employees' own resources, but also fail to bring expected returns when employees face obstructive pressure. As a result, employees respond conservatively, maintaining the status quo and not trying to invest resources in change. Pearsall et al.<sup>[16]</sup> found that blocking pressure would lead to individual problem avoidance strategies. Therefore, the following research hypothesis is obtained:

H2a: Challenging stress has a positive effect on employees' job remodeling

H2b: Obstructive stress has a negative effect on employees' job remodeling

Employee proactive behavior is characterized by self-orientation and future-orientation, and is

a behavior that actively promotes the positive change of the surrounding environment or individual itself, aiming at triggering organizational reform<sup>[17]</sup>. Wrzesniewski & Dutton<sup>[18]</sup> pointed out that individual job remodeling can realize a series of basic personal needs, such as self-control, creating a positive individual image and establishing connections with the surrounding environment, etc., and is also an important factor motivating individuals to conduct job remodeling. Combined with the self-determination theory<sup>[19]</sup>, people are always seeking opportunities for learning and self-growth, and their nature is positive and enterprising. There are three basic psychological needs of individuals in social environment: autonomy, competence and relationship. The process of satisfying these three needs is the process of achieving self-mastery, creating a positive personal image and establishing a connection with the surrounding environment. When employees conduct job remodeling and redesign work tasks from their own perspective, they can better grasp the needs of the post and meet their independent needs. Will help employees to constantly improve themselves, actively complete the work, and believe that they can better achieve the goal, to meet their competency needs; You can also connect with others to fulfill their relationship needs. When employees complete job remodeling, they also meet the above three basic psychological needs, which will enhance their intrinsic motivation and promote a series of behaviors such as positive work behaviors and healthy psychological activities<sup>[20]</sup>. Proactive behavior depends on the self-determination of employees, and the stronger the internal motivation, the greater the probability of proactive behavior<sup>[21]</sup>. Therefore, it can be inferred that employees can stimulate their proactive behaviors through job remodeling.

To sum up, challenging stress can prompt employees to adopt useful strategies for job remodeling to solve problems. Through job remodeling, individuals can show more work initiative and creativity<sup>[22]</sup>. On the other hand, obstructive stress inhibits job reengineering and tends to retain resources to follow a routine, thus reducing the likelihood of proactive behavior. Based on this, the following hypotheses are proposed in this paper:

H3a: Job remodeling plays a mediating role between challenging stressors and employee proactive behavior.

H3b: Job remodeling plays a mediating role between obstructive stressors and employee proactive behavior.

### 2.1.3 The moderating effect of leader-member exchange

Social information processing theory<sup>[23]</sup> believes that individuals will understand and interpret situational information released by the surrounding environment in an organization, which will affect their attitudes and behaviors in the organization. Stress situations exist in every organization as objective information sources, and how employees interpret them is influenced by social information sources, especially LMX. LMX reflects the quality of the relationship between

leaders and subordinates <sup>[8]</sup>, and is an important organizational situational factor that affects employees' judgment on whether to conduct job remodeling. Generally, LMX is divided into two categories. One is low-quality LMX employees, and the exchange is based on the employment contract, that is, the exchange is within the scope of the labor contract. High-quality LMX employees who, in addition to basic economic exchanges, build leader-member relationships based on trust, support, and mutual responsibility.

On the one hand, employees with high LMX will obtain information such as "leadership trust, organizational support and sufficient resources", which will stimulate employees' pressure-promotion mentality, enhance their sense of control over work, meet their needs for growth, and motivate employees to reshape their work. On the contrary, it is difficult for employees with low LMX to obtain beneficial information for their own development through the judgment of the surrounding situation, which will make employees feel isolated and helpless and further weaken their willingness to reshape their work. With high LMX employees, on the other hand, in the face of obstructive pressure source, you can still get enough resource "leadership trust, organizational support," information, such as the obstructive pressure source, which will reduce staff threat and damage of excessive attention, weaken the negative interpretation of the obstructive pressure source, the mindset of the employees create pressure - weakened, encourage employees to work to restore. On the contrary, low LMX employees not only do not feel the support from the social environment, but also face obstructive pressure, which will make employees more reluctant to pay and slow down work.

To sum up, LMX, as a kind of leadership support, will induce job remodeling behavior when employees receive positive support signals, no matter in the face of challenging stressors or obstructing stressors. On the contrary, when the LMX level is low, the positive effect of challenging stress on job remodeling will be weakened, and the negative effect of obstructive stress on job remodeling will be enhanced. As above, the following research hypothesis is obtained:

H4a: Leader-member exchange plays a moderating role between challenging stressors and job remodeling, that is, compared with employees with low leader-member exchange level, employees with high leader-member exchange level have a stronger positive effect of challenging stressors on job remodeling.

H4b: Leader-member exchange plays a moderating role between obstructive stressors and job remodeling, that is, compared with employees with low leader-member exchange level, employees with high leader-member exchange level will weaken the negative impact of obstructive stressors on job remodeling.

In summary, the model diagram shown in Fig 1 is proposed.

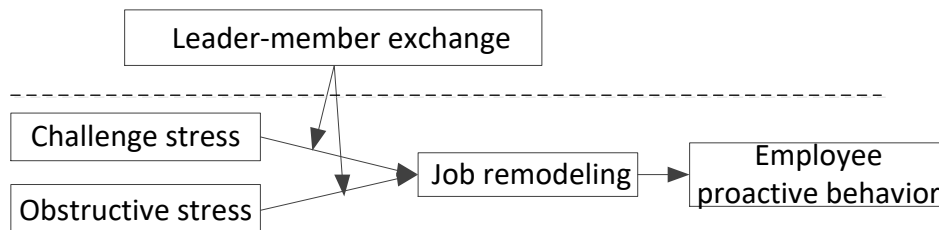


Fig 1: Research model diagram

## 2.2 Research Methods

### 2.2.1 Samples and data

The respondents were employees of state-owned, private and foreign-funded enterprises in Shanghai, Jiangsu, Anhui, Henan and other regions. In July 2020, enterprises that met the survey criteria were determined to collect data through online questionnaire collection due to the epidemic situation. From July to September 2020, the research team issued a total of 1100 electronic questionnaires, and received 987 subsequent questionnaires with a questionnaire recovery rate of 89.7%. After excluding 78 invalid questionnaires with short filling time and excessive missing values, outliers or duplicate values, 909 valid questionnaires were finally obtained with a questionnaire recovery rate of 92.1%. Through simple mathematical statistics on the final data samples, it can be seen that: in terms of age, the proportion of 25-30 years old is 53.8%, 31-40 years old is 27.2%, 41-50 years old is 11.5%, 51 years old and above is 7.6%; In terms of gender, males accounted for 51.5% and females accounted for 48.5%. In terms of educational background, 29.7% are junior college or below, 49.6% are bachelor's degree, 18.7% are master's degree and 2% are doctor's degree or above. In terms of working years, 19.4% have worked for 1 year or less, 34.4% have worked for 1-5 years, 22% have worked for 6-10 years, and 24.2% have worked for more than 11 years. It can be seen that the data sample coverage is wide and the sample data acquisition is comprehensive.

### 2.2.2 Variable measuring tool

All the studies adopted the measurement scale which is relatively mature in academic research, and likert 5-point scale was used to measure the five research variables including challenging stress, obstructive stress, employee proactive behavior, job remodeling and leader-member.

**Challenging stress:** The challenging stress dimension of the challenge-obstructive stress scale



prepared by Cavanaugh et al.<sup>[9]</sup> was adopted, including 6 measurement questions, with representative items such as "workload and task quantity undertaken by me". The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of the scale was 0.91.

Obstructive stress: The obstacle stress dimension of the challenge-obstacle stress scale prepared by Cavanaugh et al.<sup>[9]</sup> was adopted, including 5 measurement items, with representative items such as "the number of tedious procedures I need to go through to complete my work". The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of the scale was 0.902.

Employee proactive behavior: The scale prepared by Frese et al.<sup>[24]</sup> was adopted, including 7 measurement items, with representative items such as "I will take the initiative to solve problems". The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of the scale was 0.874.

Job remodeling: The extended job remodeling scale developed by Petrou et al.<sup>[25]</sup> was adopted, including two dimensions of increased resources and increased challenge requirements, with a total of 9 measurement items, representative items such as "I try to learn new things at work". The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of the scale was 0.891.

Leader-member exchange: The scale developed by Graen et al.<sup>[8]</sup> includes 7 questions, with representative items such as "leaders can understand the difficulties and needs I encounter in my work". The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of the scale is 0.892.

Control variable: Working years, gender, age and education level of employees were taken as control variables in this study.

## 2.3 Data Processing

### 2.3.1 Common method bias and confirmatory factor analysis

As the research data come from the same sample, it is necessary to test the common method bias for the main research variables in the sample data. Harman single-factor test was used for verification. The analysis results showed that the 34 items accounted for 69.90% of the total variation of all research variables, and the largest factor only accounted for 29.03%. This indicates that there is no serious homology bias in the data samples, which will not affect the reliability of the research results.

Further, AMOS was used for confirmatory factor analysis. The results are shown in Table I. The fitting indexes of the five factor structure model are the best ( $\chi^2/df=2.61<3$ ,  $GFI=0.92>0.9$ ,

RMSEA=0.043<0.08, CFI=0.954>0.9, NFI=0.929>0.9). The results showed that five latent variables, including challenging stress, obstructive stress, employee proactive behavior, job remodeling and leader-member exchange, had good discriminative validity. The results support the discriminant validity of the model proposed in this paper, and the study variables have good structural validity.

**TABLE I. Confirmatory factor analysis**

MODEL	X <sup>2</sup>	DF	X <sup>2</sup> /DF	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI	CFI	NFI
Five-factor model CS,HS,PB,JC,LMX	1315.014	498	2.641	0.043	0.0472	0.92	0.954	0.929
Four-factor model CS+HS,PB,JC,LMX	1767.991	502	3.522	0.053	0.0642	0.886	0.929	0.904
Three-factor model CS+HS,PB+JC,LMX	2979.959	505	5.901	0.789	0.0807	0.789	0.861	0.838
Two-factor model CS+HS+PB+JC,LMX	5873.015	507	11.584	0.108	0.1453	0.624	0.699	0.681
Single factor model CS+HS+PB+JC+LMX	6233.728	508	12.271	0.111	0.1468	0.616	0.679	0.661

Note: CS-Challenging pressure; HS-Blocking pressure; PB-Employee initiative behavior; JC-Job remodeling; LMX- Lead-member exchange

### 2.3.2 Descriptive statistical analysis

Before hypothesis testing, the relationship between challenging pressure, obstructive pressure, employee proactive behavior, job remodeling and leader-member exchange is preliminarized, and the results are shown in Table II. Challenging stress positively affected employee proactive behavior ( $\beta=0.133$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), and obstructive stress negatively affected employee proactive behavior ( $\beta=-0.118$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). There was a significant positive correlation between job remodeling and employee proactive behavior ( $\beta=0.515$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). These results provide preliminary support for the previous hypothesis.

**TABLE II. Descriptive statistical analysis**

VARIABLE	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sex	1.48 5	0.50 0	1							
Age	2.87 0	1.88 6	-0.013	1						



Education	1.93 0	0.74 8	-.121* *	-.336* *	1					
Years of working	2.74 0	1.47 7	-.114* *	.777** *	-.257* *	1				
Challenging pressure	3.18 2	0.84 5	-.132* *	-0.017	.181** *	-0.00 2	1			
Obstructive pressure	2.82 0	0.87 0	.136** *	0.023	-.178* *	0.005	-.990* *	1		
Job remodeling	3.61 6	0.68 2	-.124* *	0.020	.136** *	.101* *	.118** *	-.105* *	1	
Lead-memb er exchange	3.53 8	0.72 4	-0.021	-0.002	0.052	0.054	.071* *	-0.065	.682* *	1
Employee initiative behavior	3.42 4	0.76 1	-.088* *	0.051	.103** *	.086* *	.133** *	-.118* *	.515* *	.473* *

Note: N=909, \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

### 2.3.3 Hypothesis and model testing

In this study, SPSS 22.0 was used for in-depth testing of each research hypothesis with Baron level regression analysis and PROCESS program. In order to ensure the reliability of model estimation results, data were standardized before analysis.

Test of the impact of challenge-obstructive stress on employee proactive behavior. Firstly, employee proactive behavior was taken as the dependent variable, and the control variable was put into the regression equation to obtain model 1. Then, challenge-obstructive stress and job remodeling were added into the regression equation model 1 respectively to obtain model 2, model 3, model 4 and model 5. The results are shown in Table III. It can be seen from Model 2 that challenging stress positively moderates employee proactive behavior ( $\beta=0.097$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), assuming that H1a is supported. It can be seen from Model 4 that obstructive stress has a significant negative impact on employee proactive behavior ( $\beta=-0.081$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), assuming that H1b is supported.

Testing the mediating effect of job remodeling. The results are shown in Table III. Firstly, job remodeling is taken as the outcome variable, and control variables and challenge-obstructive stress are successively added. As shown in Model 7, challenging stress can promote employees' job remodeling behavior ( $\beta=0.067$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). In model 8, obstructive stress inhibited job remodeling ( $\beta=-0.054$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). The proposed hypothesis H2a and H2b are validated, supporting the further analysis of the mediation effect. In the model with employee initiative as the dependent

variable, it can be seen from Model 3 and model 5 that job remodeling has a significant positive impact on employee initiative ( $\beta=0.557$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta=0.558$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Having completed the first steps of the mediation effect test, we move on to models 3 and 5, where control variables and challenge-obstructive stress and job remodeling are added to both regression equations. Combined with the results of Model 2 and Model 3, the effect of challenging stress on employee proactive behavior decreased by 0.037, but it was still significant ( $\beta=0.097$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ;  $\beta=0.06$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), indicating that job remodeling partially mediated challenging stress and proactive behavior. Combined with Model 4 and Model 5, the effect value of obstructive stress on employee proactive behavior decreased by 0.03, but was still significant ( $\beta=-0.081$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ;  $\beta=-0.051$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), indicating that job remodeling partially mediates obstructive stress and employee proactive behavior. In summary, the proposed research hypothesis H3a and hypothesis H3b are supported by the data.

To further verify the robustness of the mediating effect of job remodeling on challenge-obstructive stress and employee initiative, the PROCESS program proposed by Preacher and Hayes was used in this study to conduct the Bootstrap test. 5000 repeated samples were sampled, and the results were shown in Table IV. The main effect of challenging stressors on employees' proactive behavior was significant, with 95% confidence interval [0.028, 0.169], excluding 0. The direct effect was significant, with 95% confidence interval [0.004, 0.131], excluding 0. The indirect effect of job remodeling on challenging stress and employee proactive behavior is significant, with 95% confidence interval [0.016, 0.094], excluding 0. This suggests that job remodeling partially mediates the relationship between challenging stress and employee proactive behavior. Similarly, job remodeling plays a partially mediating role in the relationship between obstructive stress and employee proactive behavior. So let's assume that H3a and H3b are true.

TABLE III. Mediation effect test results

VARIABLE	Employee proactive behavior					Job remodeling		
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
<b>Control variable</b>								
Sex	-0.093	-0.075	-0.017	-0.077	-0.018	-0.116*	-0.104*	-0.106*
Age	0.006	0.004	0.021	0.005	0.022	-0.029	-0.031	-0.03
Education	0.128** *	0.108*	0.041	0.112*	0.043	0.135** *	0.121** *	0.124** *
Years of working	0.051	0.051	0.002	0.051	0.002	0.089** *	0.089** *	0.089** *
<b>Independent</b>								

<b>variable</b>								
Challenging pressure		0.097*		0.06*			0.067*	
Obstructive pressure					-0.081*	-0.051*		-0.054*
<b>Mediating variable</b>								
Job remodeling			0.557**		0.558**			
R <sup>2</sup>	0.028	0.039	0.274	0.036	0.273	0.049	0.055	0.053
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.023	0.033	0.269	0.03	0.268	0.044	0.05	0.048
ΔR <sup>2</sup>		0.011	0.235	0.008	0.245		0.006	0.004
F	6.424	7.281*	56.634*	6.699*	56.344*	11.535*	10.536*	10.125*
	***	**	**	**	**	**	**	**

Note: N=909, \*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

**TABLE IV. Bootstrap analysis of mediation effects**

<b>Dependent variable</b>	<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>Category effect</b>	<b>Effect size</b>	<b>Boot Standard error</b>	<b>Boot LLCI</b>	<b>Boot ULCI</b>
Employee initiative behavior	Challenging stress	total effect	0.120	0.036	0.028	0.169
		direct effect	0.066	0.033	0.004	0.131
		indirect effect	0.054	0.020	0.016	0.094
	Obstructive stress	total effect	-0.103	0.035	-0.148	-0.011
		direct effect	-0.057	0.031	-0.120	-0.003
		indirect effect	-0.046	0.019	-0.084	-0.010

The moderating effect of leader-member exchange. Taking job remodeling as the outcome variable, model 10, Model 11, model 12 and Model 13 were obtained by adding challenge-obstructive stress, leader-member exchange, challenging stress and leader-member exchange, obstructive stress and leader-member exchange, respectively, on the basis of Model 9. The results are shown in Table V. It can be seen from Model 11 that leader-member exchange has a negative moderating effect between challenging stress and job remodeling ( $\beta=-0.456$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Instead of enhancing the positive effect of challenging stress on job remodeling, it weakens the relationship between the two, so hypothesis H4a has not been verified. It can be seen from Model 13 that the interaction term between leader-member exchange and obstructive stress has a significant positive effect on job remodeling ( $\beta=0.384$ ,  $P$

< 0.001), assuming that H4b is supported.

**TABLE V. Test results of moderating effect**

VARIABLE	Job remodeling				
	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13
<b>Control variable</b>					
Sex	-0.085*	-0.081**	-0.091***	-0.082**	-0.091***
Age	-0.081	-0.022	-0.013	-0.021	-0.012
Education	0.148***	0.102***	0.103***	0.104***	0.105***
Years of working	0.193***	0.099*	0.092*	0.099*	0.091*
<b>Independent variable</b>					
Challenging stress		0.042	0.387***		
Obstructive stress				-0.032	-0.348***
<b>Regulated variable</b>					
Leader-member exchange		0.666***	0.924***	0.667***	0.446***
<b>Interaction item</b>					
Challenging stress × leader-Member exchange			-0.456***		
Obstructive stress × leader-member exchange					0.384***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.049	0.493	0.501	0.492	0.499
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.044	0.489	0.497	0.489	0.495
ΔR <sup>2</sup>		0.444	0.452	0.443	0.045
F	11.535***	145.95***	129.267***	145.547***	128.084***

Note: N=909, \*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

### III. CONCLUSION

Based on the dualistic nature of stress, this study explores the impact of challenge-obstructive stress on employee proactive behavior by combining multiple theories, such as pressure interaction theory, self-determination theory and resource conservation theory. The research supports most of the hypotheses, and mainly draws the following conclusions: (1) challenging work stress can positively affect the proactive behavior of employees, while obstructing stress negatively affects the proactive behavior of employees; (2) Challenging stress promoted job remodeling, while hindering stress inhibited job remodeling; (3) Job remodeling played a mediating role in the relationship between challenge-obstructive stress and employee proactive behavior; (4) Leader-member exchange moderated the relationship between challenging stress and job remodeling, but leader-member exchange positively moderated the relationship between obstructive stress and job remodeling.

### 3.1 Theoretical and Practical Significance

Firstly, it expands the research on the influence of work stress on employee proactive behavior. Parker <sup>[26]</sup> believes that "why we should do it" and "whether we can do it or not" are the main factors affecting individual's proactive behavior. This study constructs a moderated mediation model, which is of great significance to explore the motivation of employee proactive behavior in stressful situations. Secondly, it reveals the effective path to motivate employees' proactive behavior in stressful situations. This study constructs an intermediary model with job remodeling as the intermediate mechanism, enriching relevant researches on job remodeling as a mediator variable. Finally, the boundary conditions of leader-member exchange affecting job remodeling under different job pressures are explored. The results not only enrich the boundary conditions of the effect of ambivalent stress on job remodeling in the Chinese context, but also enrich the relevant researches on leader-member exchange as a moderating variable.

This study provides some enlightenment on how to improve employee proactive behavior. First, challenging pressure has a boosting effect on proactive behavior of employees. The organization improves the career development path of posts and cultivates employees' correct understanding of pressure by managing digitalization, optimizing work design, increasing task operability and time urgency and other rewarding work requirements. Second, job remodeling can link the relationship between bi-directional stress and employee initiative. The organization should regularly carry out training activities matching the position, establish a supporting feedback mechanism, give employees the right and opportunity to self-management, encourage and guide employees to reshape their work in line with their own positioning; Thirdly, leader-member exchange moderates the relationship between bi-directional stress and job remodeling. Enterprises should take the initiative to establish a good leader-member exchange relationship, increase emotional communication with employees, strengthen the trust between employees and the organization, actively pay attention to the needs of subordinates, and give employees more support to cope with challenges, so as to accelerate the development of individuals and enterprises.

### 3.2 Research Limitations and Prospects

Although the conclusions of this study support most of the hypotheses previously proposed and there are some new findings, there are still deficiencies, which need to be further improved in subsequent studies. First of all, the cross-sectional study design was adopted in this study, and the cross-sectional data obtained could not reflect the dynamic process of dual pressure affecting employee proactive behavior, and it was difficult to accurately evaluate the causal

relationship between variables. In the future, more rigorous results could be obtained through longitudinal tracking research methods. Secondly, the single dimension of job remolding was selected as the mediating variable in this study. The core of this study is to explore the role of job remolding as a useful strategy to deal with organizational change and new situations. Future research can consider the sub-dimension of job remolding for more detailed discussion. In addition, when discussing the moderating effect of leader-member exchange relationship, its moderating effect does not reach the expected hypothesis effect. Subsequent studies can start from the dark side of leader-member exchange relationship to explore its influence on diversification in organizations.

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