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Consideration of future consequence and task performance: The moderating effects of support

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# Consideration of future consequence and task performance

CFC and task performance

## The moderating effects of support

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of an employee's consideration of future consequences (CFCs) in predicting employee task performance and its situational contexts (i.e. organizational support and supervisor support) based on trait activation theory.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Using a cross-sectional field study design, data were collected from 189 employees and their immediate supervisors in South Korea.

**Findings** – Hierarchical multiple regression analyses showed that employees' CFC has a positive effect on their task performance. Furthermore, this study investigated whether this relationship would be varied by relevant situational factors. Consistent with the hypotheses, the relevance of CFC to employees' task performance would be stronger when they perceive low levels of organizational support based on trait activation theory.

**Practical implications** – The findings suggest the importance of employees' CFC on task performance. Also, organizations should pay more attention to the way of compensating for employees with low levels of CFC by fostering supportive environment.

**Originality/value** – Although researchers have been examined long-term perspectives in the business field, a few studies have examined its effect at the individual level. This paper identified not only the main effect of CFC on employee task performance but also the moderating role of organizational support on the aforementioned relationship.

**Keywords** Personality, Resources, Organizational support

**Paper type** Research paper

In today's fluctuating and uncertain environment, a long-term perspective is crucial to both organizations and individuals to survive and to achieve organizational effectiveness (Shrivastava, 1995). A series of empirical studies demonstrated the positive effects of a long-term perspective on organizational performance and innovation (e.g. Wang and Bansal, 2012), leadership effectiveness (e.g. Zhang *et al.*, 2014), and individual attitudes and behaviors (Joireman and King, 2016). Given the extensive effects on different levels, surprisingly, little is known about the impact of a long-term perspective on employees' performance at the individual level. Therefore, scholars have called for research examining the consequences of individual differences in the perspective of time on job performance (Strathman *et al.*, 1994).

Scholars noted that an individual's long-term perspective regarding current work activities influences choice of behaviors (Joireman, Kamdar, Daniels, and Duell, 2006). For example, an individual's future-oriented perspective influences the quality and quantity of job performance (Graso and Probst, 2012) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Joireman, Daniels, George-Falvy, and Kamdar, 2006). Despite the importance of an individual's future-oriented perspective for work behaviors (e.g. Parker and Collins, 2010), studies examining the effects of this future orientation are lacking in the business field



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(Shipp *et al.*, 2009). Lately, management scholars have begun paying increasing attention to the predictive power of a long-term perspective, which is generally constructed as a consideration of future consequences (CFCs) (Strathman *et al.*, 1994). CFC is defined as the extent to which individuals consider the potential distant outcomes of their current behaviors and are influenced by potential outcomes (Strathman *et al.*, 1994). Employees high in CFC are more likely to set high performance goals at work and value opportunities for growth and development, which are grounds for enhanced task performance (Joireman *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, CFC can be regarded as a valuable personal resource likely to be beneficial in increasing task performance. Thus, this study intends to focus on the positive relationship between CFC and the task performance of focal employees.

Although an individual's future perspective could be a critical factor influencing individual outcomes, the effects of CFC may vary depending on the situational context. Among several plausible situational factors, we focus on distinct sources of work-related support at different levels. Specifically, we propose organizational support and supervisor support as important situational variables, as the organization and supervisor may significantly impact employees' attitudes, behaviors, and job-related performance in the workplace (Masterson *et al.*, 2000). According to trait activation theory (Tett and Burnett, 2003), the impact of individual traits is likely to change when the situational context provides relevant cues. For example, previous research noted that employees with high conscientiousness exhibited deviant work behaviors only when the situation was perceived negatively (Colbert *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, based on trait activation theory, it can be predicted that different sources of support may act as relevant situational cues of the relationship between CFC and task performance. Specifically, this research follows discrepancy-arousal perspective (Capella and Greene, 1982, 1984) in identifying supportive conditions under which employees may or may not decide to deploy attributes related to CFC. Since work-related support from the organization and supervisor can be understood as an important resource, we argue that employees who receive low levels of support from their organizations and/or supervisors perceive a discrepancy between the support they need to complete their tasks and the support they actually have. Thus, it makes their trait of CFC more likely to be activated to compensate for the insufficient support. Although CFC may affect individual task performance, a bigger picture could emerge when examining the interaction effect of CFC and relevant situational cues by applying trait activation theory.

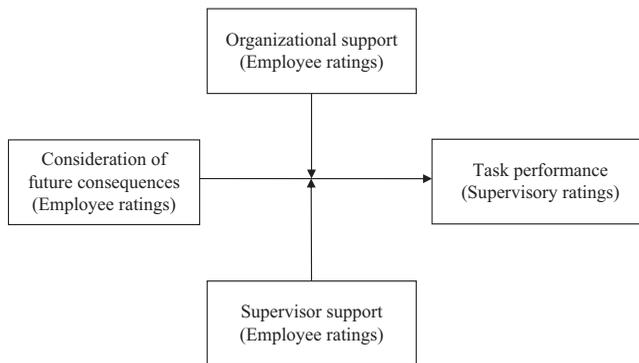
In summary, the current study offers two primary goals. First, this study examines the positive relationship between CFC and focal employees' task performance. Second, we investigate how relevant situational factors may influence the relationship between individual differences in CFC and task performance. Specifically, as important situational conditions, we explore two sources of work-related support (i.e. organizational support and supervisor support) and attempt to investigate how the interaction of CFC and these contextual cues may influence on task performance based on trait activation theory. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the current study.

## Theoretical background and hypotheses development

### *CFCs and task performance*

Individual differences in the perspective of time are an important predictor of how individuals' behaviors are influenced by their general preoccupation with the future or future events (Strathman *et al.*, 1994). Within the broad area of the perspective of time, several constructs such as CFC, the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory, and the Temporal Focus Scale have been developed. Among these variables, CFC is mostly used as a measure to assess individual differences in the future time perspective, showing consistent results in the business field (Joireman and King, 2016).

CFC is a motivational construct pertaining to the extent to which individuals consider the immediate and future consequences of their current behavior (Strathman *et al.*, 1994).



**Figure 1.**  
Hypothesized  
conceptual model

Researchers noted that CFC often positively influences job-related performance regarding inter-temporal choice (e.g. Joireman, Daniels, George-Falvy, and Kamdar, 2006). According to construal level theory, temporal time distance influences mental representations or construals when remembering the past or anticipating the future (Trope and Liberman, 2010). Individuals high in CFC are more likely to focus on the value of the future consequences of their current behavior and perceive events in the distant future as closer in time than individuals low in CFC. This is because they are more likely to view possible consequences in more concrete and detailed terms using low-level construal (Trope and Liberman, 2010), resulting in increased resource utilization by future-oriented individuals (Nowack *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, since individuals scoring high in CFC are likely to sacrifice their immediate happiness or well-being to achieve future outcomes (Strathman *et al.*, 1994), they may decide to engage in constructive behaviors even if it requires immediate costs such as time and effort (Zhang *et al.*, 2014). Thus, we assume that CFC is appropriate as a key individual difference to predict the task performance of focal employees, because it entails the process of intra-personal struggle between long-term and immediate consequences of individuals' resource usage and clarifies why some individuals sacrifice immediate benefits for future outcomes (e.g. Strathman *et al.*, 1994).

CFC can be viewed as a valuable personal characteristic that enables employees to set high performance goals. Halbesleben and Wheeler (2015) argued that individuals high in CFC are likely to value investing in future outcomes. In comparison, individuals with high rather than low levels of CFC tend to invest more time and cognitive effort in improving their task performance (e.g. Nowack *et al.*, 2013). Scholars associated CFC with conscientiousness, proactive personality, and self-regulatory capacity, which are key personality traits to increase task performance (e.g. Joireman *et al.*, 2008; Strathman *et al.*, 1994). Moreover, future-oriented individuals tend to invest more personal input, resulting in greater job performance (Nowack *et al.*, 2013). Thus, we assume that employees with high CFC tend to expend more effort and exhibit high persistence, as they have positive implications for future benefits and possess high motivation, which is likely to enhance their task performance. Thus, we would expect the following:

*H1.* CFC is positively related to individual task performance.

#### *Trait activation and situational cues*

Trait activation theory is based on the person-situation interactionist model of job performance (Tett and Burnett, 2003). This perspective helps us understand when situational specificity affects the relationship between individual differences and behaviors. They questioned the inconsistent relationship between personality traits and job

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performance, proposing evidence of situational specificity. According to trait activation theory, the linkage between personality traits and job-related performance is dependent on the situational relevance expression arising from the organizational, social, and task levels (Tett and Burnett, 2003). The activation of personal traits is more likely to be elicited through trait-relevant situational cues, while the relationship between personality traits and performance is likely weakened in powerful reward situations by eliminating the effects of personality. As Tett *et al.* (2013) argued, trait activation theory is useful in understanding “the relative importance of different types of situational variables in trait-outcome relations” (p. 95). To understand trait-relevant situational factors, scholars examined various sources of support as relevant situational cues (e.g. Colbert *et al.*, 2004). Hochwarter *et al.* (2006) empirically determined that employees with high social skills demonstrate high job performance when perceiving lower organizational support. Kamdar and Van Dyne (2007) investigated the joint effects of personality (conscientiousness and agreeableness) and two situations (leader-member exchange and team-member exchange) to predict individual performance.

Although employees with high CFC may demonstrate high task performance, the effect of CFC on task performance is likely dependent on the situational context. Joireman and King (2016) noted the value of studies exploring the varying effect of CFC as a function of the situation. Previous research examined external conditions – external sources of support including physical, financial, and social – as moderators of the relationship between CFC and decision making (Demarque *et al.*, 2013). Since organizational support and supervisor support represent two important sources of variables in the workplace (e.g. Masterson *et al.*, 2000), based on trait activation theory, we assume these variables as relevant situational cues that may influence the relationship between CFC and task performance.

#### *The moderating effects of work-related support*

Organizational research has noted the critical role of support as important resources to enhance employee attitudes and job-related performance (Halbesleben, 2006). In particular, since work-related support provides necessary resources to demonstrate high in-role and extra-role performance in workplace, scholars have identified work-related support as important situational conditions (e.g. Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Duke *et al.* (2009) found the buffering role of organizational support in the relationship between emotional labor and outcomes. Previous research showed how supervisor support mitigates the negative impact of family-work conflict on life satisfaction and depression (Li *et al.*, 2015). Thus, among multiple sources of support, we select two sources of work-related support such as organizational support and supervisor support since these work sources of support are more relevant to job-related performance than non-work sources of support (Halbesleben, 2006; Masterson *et al.*, 2000).

As a key organizational factor, organizational support refers to “general beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being” (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986, p. 501). Previous studies identified positive relationships between organizational support and attitudes, work behaviors, and job-related performance (e.g. Riggle *et al.*, 2009), and negative relationships for absenteeism and withdrawal behavior (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Eisenberger *et al.* (1986) suggested that high support from the organization induces employees’ constructive behaviors for the organization or increased task performance based on the norm of reciprocity. Moreover, as the organization is regarded as a key provider, not only of socio-emotional needs but also in terms of equipment, technology, and physical assistance at the workplace (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), employees may change their attitudes or behaviors depending on the level of organizational support (Kraimer *et al.*, 2001). Thus, we predict that organizational support may moderate the relationship between CFC and task performance, as the situation provides the necessary support or resources to ensure high task performance.

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In addition to organization-related situational factors, supervisors provide valuable support or resources to employees that influence the relationship between CFC and task performance. Supervisor support is defined as the degree to which employees perceive that superiors care about their well-being, value their contributions, and are generally supportive (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002). Prior studies indicated that supervisory support fosters employees' attitudes and job behaviors such as affective commitment (Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003), job satisfaction (Masterson *et al.*, 2000), psychological stress (Baker *et al.*, 1996), and in-role and extra-role performance (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). A high level of supervisor support is characterized by the indicator of the quality of exchange relationships between employees and supervisors (Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003). When supervisors demonstrate concern for their employees' well-being and help them with career development, subordinates perceive a close and trustworthy social exchange relationship, which may foster a positive environment. Moreover, considering the leader's discretionary power over employees' access and the resources allocated to them (Wilson *et al.*, 2010), it is likely that employees regard supervisor support as a critical environmental cue that may influence the level of valuable resources needed to perform their tasks (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

Applying trait activation theory, employees in a highly supportive environment do not need to seek further support. Thus, they may decide not to activate the CFC trait. On the other hand, employees working in a workplace characterized by a low level of support experience a lack of support; thus, they may activate the CFC trait to increase task performance. Specifically, this study applies discrepancy-arousal as a specific case of trait activation and suggests that incongruity between what is required from and provided by the environment activates individuals to expend their own attributes to accomplish their anticipated outcomes (Capella and Greene, 1982, 1984). When individuals perceive a lack of sufficient resources or support from the environment, which can be described as a low level of support from organization or supervisor, they are likely to consider the situation as having deficient conditions. In this deficient environment, individuals are more likely to experience increased incongruence (e.g. Stamper and Johlke, 2003). Since a low level of organizational support implies that organizations do not provide sufficient resources such as funding, technology, and physical assistance to ensure high task performance (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986), employees are likely to use their personal CFC trait to maintain the level of task performance. On the other hand, when individuals perceive adequate support from the work environment, a characteristic of high organizational support, they are likely to experience a positive work environment. As such, considering organizational support in terms of resource allocation, a high level of organizational support may be regarded as a powerful reward contingency through sufficient resources, and they may not feel it necessary to activate the CFC trait.

Similarly, viewing the supervisor as a key social exchange partner (Shanock and Eisenberger, 2006), supervisor support is regarded as an important trait-relevant situation in the activation of employees' CFC on task performance. Since employees working with a high level of supervisor support are more likely to receive affective and resource-based support that ensures greater task performance (Kim *et al.*, 2015), employees may not feel it necessary to activate the CFC trait to increase task performance. On the other hand, a low level of supervisor support can be understood as a powerful trait-relevant cue. Since employees with low supervisor support may not expect the necessary support from their leaders, based on trait activation theory, they need to activate the CFC trait to promote task performance. Moreover, discrepancy-arousal theory argues that when employees experience a lack of support expected from the environment such as a supervisor, they are more likely to deploy specific traits – CFC in this research – to accomplish task success. Previous studies investigated the critical cue of support in the relationship between personality and

job-related performance (e.g. Jawahar and Carr, 2007). Substantiating trait activation theory, Jawahar and Carr (2007) showed that a high level of organizational support compensated for a low level of conscientiousness in influencing contextual performance. Kim *et al.* (2010) found that proactive employees exhibited the highest employee creativity when job creativity requirement and supervisor support for creativity were both high. Sturges *et al.* (2010) demonstrated that organizational support and LMX moderate the relationship between both gender and locus of control and career self-management behavior in line with trait activation theory. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

- H2. Organizational support moderates the relationship between CFC and task performance such that the positive relationship is stronger when organizational support is low rather than when it is high.
- H3. Supervisor support moderates the relationship between CFC and task performance such that the positive relationship is stronger when supervisor support is low than when it is high.

## Method

### *Sample and procedure*

To test the hypothesized model of this study, we collected data from students enrolled in an executive MBA program at a university in South Korea. Each survey package included a managerial survey and employee survey. Participants were given a cover letter outlining the study, a questionnaire, and a stamped and pre-addressed return envelope. A researcher-assigned identification number was encoded on each questionnaire to match each employee's responses with his/her immediate supervisor's evaluation. As one supervisor completed a questionnaire for only one subordinate, observations were not nested. All participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and returned the completed questionnaires in the given envelopes directly to the researchers.

From 210 dyadic samples, 201 supervisor-employee dyads were returned for a response rate of 95.7 percent. However, some questionnaires could not be used for the analyses, because some survey packets did not include a managerial or employee survey. Thus, a total of 189 pairs were used for the final analyses. Of these, 73 percent were male with an average age of 35.29 years ( $SD = 5.39$ ). On average, they had worked in their organization for 6.23 years ( $SD = 5.18$ ), and their average tenure working with the supervisor was 2.74 years ( $SD = 2.55$ ). Almost 90 percent of them held a bachelor's or higher degree. Of the supervisors, 89.4 percent were male, average age was 43.72 years ( $SD = 4.80$ ), and average organizational tenure was 13.13 years ( $SD = 6.66$ ). The industry sectors included in our sample were mainly the manufacturing, telecommunication, and finance industries. More than half the participants were office workers (51.9 percent).

### *Measures*

All measures used in this study were translated from English language questionnaire to Korean by using the conventional method of back translation (Brislin, 1980). The translation procedure was done by several academics who were not involved in the study. The focal employees were asked to provide information on their own CFC, their perceptions of organizational support and supervisor support, while the immediate supervisors were asked to rate the focal employee's task performance. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

*CFC.* We assessed CFC using 12-item Strathman *et al.*'s (1994) measure. A sample item is, "I consider how things might be in the future, and try to influence those things with my day to day behavior" ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ).

*Work-related support.* We measured organizational support with the six-item shorter version of the survey of perceptions of organizational support developed by Eisenberger *et al.* (1986). Sample items include “Help is available from my organization when I have a problem” ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ). We assessed supervisor support using six-item developed by Abbey *et al.* (1985). A sample item is, “My supervisor gives me useful information and advice when I wanted it” ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ).

*Task performance.* Each supervisor appraised his/her employee’s task performance. Task performance was assessed using seven-item scale measurement of Williams and Anderson (1991). A sample item is, “The subordinate performs tasks that are expected of him/her” ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ).

*Control variables.* To be consistent with the extant literature (e.g. Hochwarter *et al.*, 2006), we controlled demographic variables such as gender, age, education, organizational tenure, industry type, and job type. Age and organizational tenure were measured in years. Gender was measured as a dichotomous variable coded 1 for male and 2 for female. Education also measured as a dichotomous variable which is coded as 1 = high school, 2 = junior school, 3 = undergraduate degree, 4 = graduate degree, and 5 = etc. Industry type and job type were measured as dummy variables coded 0 = manufacturing and 1 = non-manufacturing and 0 = administrative and 1 = non-administrative, separately. Furthermore, since previous research has noted the close link between CFC and proactive personality (Strauss *et al.*, 2012), we included proactive personality as a control variable in order to rule out the possible noise. We assessed proactive personality using the ten-item scale from Bateman and Crant (1993). Sample items included “I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others’ opposition” ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ).

## Results

The means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations among study variables are presented in Table I.

We conducted hierarchical regression analyses by entering the control and study variables into different steps of the equation to test *H1-H3*. We proposed the positive relationship between employee’s CFC and task performance. As indicated in Table II, the result of hierarchical regression analysis shows that CFC was significantly and positively related to employee’s task performance, supporting *H1* ( $\beta = 0.20, p \leq 0.01$ ).

The results of moderating effects are shown in Table II, and Figure 2 is plotted using Aiken and West’s (1991) procedure. *H2* proposed that organizational support would moderate the relationship between employee’s CFC and task performance, such that it would be stronger when organizational support is low rather than when it is high. As shown in Model 6 of Table II, the interaction term between CFC and organizational support was statistically significant ( $\beta = -0.15, p \leq 0.05$ ). Furthermore, we conducted simple slope tests to find out whether the results support *H2*. The simple slope tests showed that CFC was positively related to task performance ( $b = 0.26, t = 2.91, p \leq 0.01$ ) only when organizational support was low but was not related when organizational support was high ( $b = 0.03, t = 0.35, p = 0.72$ ), supporting *H2* (see Figure 2).

*H3* proposed that the relationship between CFC and task performance would be moderated by supervisor support such that it would be stronger when supervisor support is low. From Model 6 in Table II, the interaction term between CFC and supervisor support was insignificant ( $\beta = -0.05, p = 0.57$ ). Thus, *H3* was not supported.

## Discussion

Although the importance of a long-term perspective is increasing in the current business environment, few studies have examined the effect of a long-term perspective at the individual level (Graso and Probst, 2012). To advance our understanding of CFC, this study takes trait

**Table I.**  
Means, SD, and  
inter-correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Gender <sup>a</sup>	35.29	5.39	-0.41***										
2. Age <sup>a</sup>	3.02	0.65	-0.07	0.05									
3. Education <sup>a</sup>	6.23	5.18	-0.10	0.56***	0.03								
4. Organizational tenure <sup>a</sup>	0.45	0.50	0.03	-0.02	-0.06	-0.01							
5. Industry type <sup>a</sup>	0.48	0.50	-0.16*	0.08	-0.04	-0.01	0.02						
6. Job type <sup>a</sup>	4.76	0.81	-0.18*	0.10	0.16*	0.08	0.02	0.10					
7. Proactive personality <sup>a</sup>	5.12	0.77	-0.13	0.09	0.07	0.04	0.02	-0.07	0.25***	(0.89)			
8. CFC <sup>a</sup>	4.76	0.97	-0.09	0.08	-0.02	0.04	0.10	0.17*	0.31***	0.20**	(0.90)		
9. Organizational support <sup>a</sup>	5.61	0.99	-0.07	0.01	0.09	0.02	0.09	0.09	0.22**	0.27***	0.33***	(0.92)	
10. Supervisor support <sup>a</sup>	5.69	0.67	-0.12	-0.02	0.14	-0.02	-0.03	0.01	0.14	0.22**	0.13	0.16*	(0.88)
11. Task performance <sup>b</sup>													

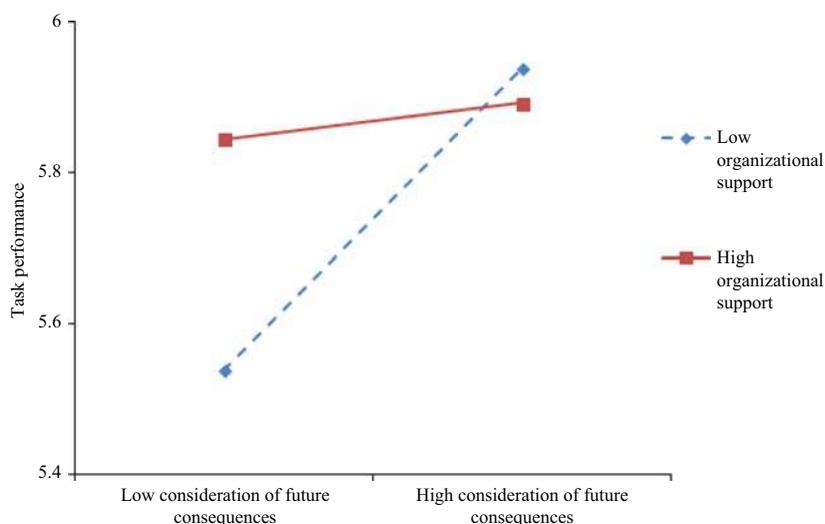
**Notes:** *n* = 189. Reliabilities are on the diagonal in parentheses. Gender was coded as 1 = men and 2 = women. Age and organizational tenure were measured in years. Education was coded as 1 = high school, 2 = junior school, 3 = undergraduate degree, 4 = graduate degree, and 5 = etc. Industry type was dummy coded as 0 = manufacturing and 1 = non-manufacturing. Job type was dummy coded as 0 = administrative and 1 = non-administrative.<sup>a</sup> These variables were measured from focal employees; <sup>b</sup> managerial rating. \**p* ≤ 0.05; \*\**p* ≤ 0.01; \*\*\**p* ≤ 0.001 (two-tailed)

## CFC and task performance

	Task performance					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<i>Step 1: control variables</i>						
Gender	-0.13	-0.11	-0.11	-0.09	-0.10	-0.09
Age	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.08	-0.08	-0.07
Education	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.09
Organizational tenure	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.00	0.00
Industry type	-0.03	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03
Job type	-0.01	0.02	0.00	-0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Proactive personality	0.11	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.03
<i>Step 2: main effect of CFC</i>						
CFC		0.20**	0.17*	0.17*	0.17*	0.17*
<i>Step 3: moderator variable</i>						
Organizational support			0.06	0.10	0.06	0.10
Supervisor support			0.08	0.05	0.04	0.03
<i>Step 4: moderating effect of organizational support and supervisor support</i>						
CFC × organizational support				-0.17*		-0.15*
CFC × supervisor support					-0.09	-0.05
Overall $F$	1.27	2.00*	1.81*	2.13*	1.77	1.98*
$R^2$	0.05	0.08	0.09	0.12	0.10	0.12
Change in $F$		6.81**	1.08	4.94*	1.34	2.63
Change in $R^2$		0.04	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.03

**Notes:**  $n = 189$ . <sup>a</sup>Entries are standardized regression coefficients. \* $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\* $p \leq 0.01$  (two-tailed)

**Table II.**  
Multiple hierarchical regression results on task performance<sup>a</sup>



**Figure 2.**  
The moderating effect of organizational support on the relationship between consideration of future consequences and task performance

activation theory to examine the relationship between individual differences in CFC and task performance and situational contexts. The results of this study demonstrated the positive effect of CFC on task performance, and that the impacts of CFC on employees' task performance may depend on contextual cues. Our findings indicated that employees activated the CFC trait to perform their tasks when they perceived a low level of organizational support.

*Theoretical implications*

Theoretically, our research contributes to the existing literature in the following ways. First, our findings contribute to the existing CFC literature by demonstrating its main effects and related interaction effects on employees' task performance in the workplace. Recently, researchers have increased attention on the long-term perspective. For example, Zhang *et al.* (2014) examined the effect of CFC on transformational leadership and leader effectiveness in the context of the perceived dynamic work environment. Other studies highlight the relation between a future perspective and individuals' general and career decision self-efficacy (Jung *et al.*, 2015) and its important causal role in increasing employees' work-related promotion focus (Baltes *et al.*, 2014). Recent studies suggest that the long-term perspective is generally and in a work context subject to individuals' perceptions of external context, and may have relevant consequences for the effectiveness of both employees and organizations. Despite its relevance and importance in predicting constructive behaviors in the workplace, studies examining the future perspective of individuals as a predictor of task performance are lacking. Most studies on CFC focus on predicting OCB (Joireman, Daniels, George-Falvy, and Kamdar, 2006; Joireman, Kamdar, Daniels, and Duell, 2006). Extending previous findings (e.g. Joireman, Daniels, George-Falvy, and Kamdar, 2006), we determined the critical predictive effect of CFC on employees' task performance based on the importance of future consequences. This is consistent with the findings of Graso and Probst (2012), which confirm the critical effect of CFC. As such, CFC leads individuals to sacrifice their immediate interests, and thereby promotes greater job performance. Future research can extend this temporal distance effect by exploring whether the effects of CFC increase employees' proactive behaviors. Since future-oriented cognition is considered an essential factor of proactive behavior (Parker and Collins, 2010), employees' CFC likely stimulates focal employees to conduct more voice behaviors.

In addition, based on our findings, CFC can be perceived in terms of personal resources. Recent studies suggest that personal characteristics serve as resources functional in accomplishing work goals (Ragsdale and Beehr, 2016). In their research, Perry *et al.* (2010) found that conscientiousness functions as a personal resource that enables employees to perform task activities by setting high performance goals. Halbesleben *et al.* (2014) noted as key personal resources agreeableness, conscientiousness, self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control, and core self-evaluation. Scholars have also positively correlated individual differences in CFC with the personal traits of self-control, self-efficacy, and conscientiousness (Joireman and King, 2016). Thus, we assume that employees with high CFC are likely to have more personal resources than those with low CFC. Furthermore, previous empirical studies and meta-analyses consistently confirmed that employees with high conscientiousness are likely to demonstrate high task performance through demonstrating more initiative in solving problems, sustained commitment, persistence, and goal setting (Barrick and Mount, 1991; Judge and Ilies, 2002). Consistent with their findings, this study predicts that employees with high CFC are likely to have more personal resources than those with low CFC, and thus invest more effort and persistence in achieving their tasks. Since they have positive implications for future benefits, they are likely to increase their task performance. In future research, it would be worthwhile investigating the direct effect of CFC on other types of job-related performance.

Second, this study contributes to trait activation theory by exploring CFC as a dispositional factor. According to trait activation theory (Tett and Burnett, 2003), the effects of individual characteristics on employees' behaviors and performance can be influenced by relevant situational cues. Tett *et al.* (2013) argued the meaningfulness of trait activation theory in advancing understanding of different types of situational cues

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in personality trait-performance relations. Building on previous research (e.g. Jawahar and Carr, 2007), this study provides additional support to trait activation theory by explaining the effects of personal traits, namely CFC. Our research examined how the personality trait of CFC interacts with the situational cues of organizational and supervisor support to predict employees' task performance. Our research demonstrated that employees might not activate the personal trait of CFC to perform tasks when the organization fosters a positive environment by providing adequate support. In addition, this study applies discrepancy-arousal as a specific case of trait activation by examining the interaction effects of CFC and different sources of support on task performance. Discrepancy-arousal theory suggests that discrepancies from expectancies produce various changes in arousal. This study found that organizational support represents one key situational factor. Hochwarter *et al.* (2006) found that social skills and organizational support have interactive effects on job performance, focusing on the role of social support based on the conservation of resources theory and discrepancy-arousal perspective. In line with these findings, this study demonstrated that when expected or needed resources to attain task goals are lacking, indicating a low level of organizational support, this situation is considered as the discrepancy condition; thus, the CFC trait is likely to be activated to accomplish work performance. Extending our findings, it would be interesting to apply the discrepancy-arousal theory to investigate other plausible situational factors such as job resources in future research.

Finally, this study adds to the body of research examining different sources of support in workplaces – in particular, organizational support and supervisor support as moderators in the relationship between CFC and task performance. Our findings demonstrate that employees have different perceptions of the effect of different sources of work-related support. Previous studies investigated the moderating roles of different types of support on outcomes (e.g. Kim *et al.*, 2015). For example, Kim *et al.* (2015) found that the negative relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge sharing was moderated by support from the organization and coworkers. Their results indicated that the negative effect of abusive supervision on knowledge sharing was attenuated when high organizational support was present. However, the moderating effect of coworker support was not significant. Aligned to previous studies, this study explored organizational and supervisor support as moderators. Our results show the significant moderating effect of organizational support in the relationship between CFC and task performance. However, contrary to our hypothesis, we identified the non-significant effect of supervisor support in the relationship between CFC and task performance. Our findings show that not all sources of work-related support are critical; however, organizational support is a key situational factor that influences the effect of CFC on task performance.

There might be plausible reasons for the non-significant moderating effect of supervisor support in the relationship between CFC and task performance. The moderating effect of supervisor support might be weaker than that of organizational support, because of a different degree of benefits or value between organizational and supervisor support (Dawley *et al.*, 2008). Dawley *et al.* (2008) confirmed organizational support as a stronger predictor of employee outcomes than supervisor support. The literature on organizational support theory suggests that organizations have a responsibility to foster intrinsic and extrinsic job conditions, although supervisors mainly focus on intrinsic conditions (Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003). For example, human resources practices such as rewards, pay, promotions, job security, and training are strongly related to organizational support (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Furthermore, a meta-analysis showed that three types of perceived favorable treatment received by employees (i.e. fairness, supervisor support, organizational rewards and favorable job conditions) enhance the perception of organizational support, which leads to

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favorable outcomes such as job satisfaction, affective commitment, performance, and reduced withdrawal behavior (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). In future research, it may be meaningful to explore other sources of support such as coworker support as moderators in the relationship between CFC and various outcomes including task performance.

#### *Managerial implications*

This study also provides practical implications. First, organizations can increase employees' task performance by attempting to consider the individual's temporal dimensions underlying job-related behaviors. Although individual's long-term perspective is an essential factor for enhancing individual task performance, organizations tend to overlook the sustainability issue and emphasize the immediate benefits due to today's uncertain and competitive environment. In line with previous findings (e.g. Graso and Probst, 2012), our results showed the importance of employees' CFC on individual task performance. Thus, organizations and managers should consider searching for employees who are high in CFC in order to motivate these employees to engage in higher task performance. Second, organizations should pay more attention to how employees with low levels of CFC are compensated. As our results demonstrated, a supportive work environment is an important condition that enables employees to engage in positive task performance. Although employees have low levels of CFC, this study showed that task performance might not suffer when they are provided with a favorable work environment with sufficient resources. Thus, organizations and managers should develop supportive work relationships to increase task performance.

#### *Limitations and future research*

This study is not without limitations. First, we are unable to infer causality due to our cross-sectional nature of the data. Future research might attempt to test the ideas developed in this study with longitudinal designs to provide further explanation of these relationships. Second, we used self-report data in measuring our independent and moderating variables, thus a common method bias might be a concern. The survey design intended to minimize the effects of potential common method bias by separating responses for outcome and predictor variables (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) argued that collecting data through different sources relieves potential problems arising from self-reported data. Thus, we collected our data from two sources, namely employees and their supervisors. While employees rated their CFC, organizational support, and supervisor support, supervisors rated the task performance of their subordinates. Furthermore, common method bias is less likely to be a reason for significant findings on interaction effects. Finally, other potential factors including moderating and mediating variables possibly influence the relationship between CFC and task performance. For example, leaders' behavior styles, coworker relationships, and task characteristics may alter our observed findings. Since this relationship can vary depending on an employee's perceived dynamic work environment, future research should investigate various situational contexts that could influence the relationship between CFC and task performance. In addition, it would be beneficial to replicate our research in different work settings using a cross-cultural sample, for example.

Despite some limitations, this study attempted to advance understanding of the individual-level relationships between CFC and task performance based on trait activation theory. Moreover, this study suggested that the significant effects of CFC on task performance are influenced by relevant situations; that is, the activation of CFC is determined by the level of organizational support. We hope that this study will help other researchers understand the importance of the CFC trait as a key predictor of task performance, even when the situation is unfavorable.

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