

Offering or Seeking Help? Exploring the Effect of Harmony Motives on Social Integration

Yuanyuan Huo
University of Surrey
y.huo@surrey.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the mediating role of proactive helping in the relationship between harmony enhancement motive and social integration, as well as the mediating role of help seeking in the relationship between disintegration avoidance motive and social integration. We also investigate the moderating effect of initiative climate on our mediation model. We test our hypotheses using a three-wave data from 76 supervisors and 232 subordinates in China. The results show that our proposed moderated mediation model is supported. The implications of our findings for research, method, and practice are discussed.

Key words: harmony motives, help seeking, proactive helping, initiative climate

INTRODUCTION

Newcomers' socialization into the new organization and new team has been an important topic in organizational behavior research (Ellis et al., 2017). The successful transition of newcomers into insiders can enhance both organizational performance and employees' well-being (Allen et al., 1999; Nasr et al., 2019). Social integration, the extent to which team members are satisfied with their interpersonal relationship with other group members, are willing to stay in the team, and enjoy the cooperative interaction and communication within the team (Rico et al., 2007), has always been considered as one of the most important outcomes of newcomers' socialization process. Teams with highly social integrated members are likely to retain the newly hired employees and achieve great performance due to employees' smooth coordination (O'Reilly et al., 1989). For employees, successfully social integration into the groups enhances their satisfaction and morale, as well as increases their work efficiency (Gerben, 2002).

Previous research has recognized quite a few antecedents of newcomers' social integration, such as newcomers' personality, their relationship with coworkers and supervisors, as well as organizational socialization practices (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003). While social integration is strongly emphasized in Chinese culture, the role of Chinese culture in organizational socialization has not received sufficient attention. In this paper, we focus on harmony motives, an indigenous Chinese culture concept, and explore how harmony can influence newcomer's social integration.

Harmony has been emphasized as one of the central values in Chinese culture. Leung, Koch, and Lu (2002) developed a dualistic model of harmony with two distinct motives: harmony enhancement and disintegration avoidance. As dispositional traits that focus on interpersonal relationships, the two harmony motives are concerned with how people deal with

disagreement and different opinions with others (Wang et al., 2014). Harmony enhancement is affective in nature and represents a genuine concern for enhancing the harmonious relationship, while disintegration avoidance is instrumental in nature and sees harmony maintenance as a means for achieving other goals. While harmony enhancement represents an active approach aiming at strengthening relationships, disintegration avoidance refers to a passive approach to reduce behaviors that can weaken relationships (Leung et al., 2002). Thus, harmony enhancement motive represents a promotion-focused self-regulation, and disintegration-avoidance motive represents a prevention-focused self-regulation in predicting people's behaviors (Higgins & Pinelli, 2020).

Harmony motives, which are individual dispositional differences, plays an active role in explaining how people regulate their behaviors (Leung et al., 2015). Previous research has explored the effects of the two harmony motives on employees' motivation and behaviors from the regulatory focus perspective. Harmony motives have been found to influence psychological safety climate, creative efforts, radical and incremental creativity, etc. (e.g., Chen et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2014). In this paper, we propose that harmony enhancement and disintegration avoidance can enhance social integration through proactive help offering and help seeking, respectively. During the self-regulatory process, people's behavior is not only determined by their own dispositional tendency, but also the contextual situations (Mullins & Cummings, 1999). We use initiative climate as the moderator because a team climate which supports proactive and risk-taking behavior is critical for employees' proactive help offering and help seeking behaviors.

With a sample of 232 newcomers and their 76 supervisors in a five-star hotel in China, we test our model with three-wave data. Our research extends extant knowledge on harmony

motives and proactive socialization in the three ways. First, we contribute to newcomers' proactive socialization literature by exploring the role of a Chinese indigenous concept-harmony-motives and discussing the interest differentiating effect of the two types of harmony motives on proactive help offering and help seeking behaviors. Second, we extend the research on harmony motives by investigating how proactive help offering and help seeking play as the dual pathway in linking harmony motives and social integration. Finally, we introduce initiative climate plays a as a moderator in examining our mediating role of offering/seeking behaviors between harmony motives and social integration. Our findings also imply some interesting differences for harmony enhancement motives and disintegration avoidance motives.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Harmony Motives, Proactive Helping, and Help Seeking

According to Leung et al. (2011), harmony motives could be used to predict relationship-related outcomes. Both harmony enhancement and disintegration avoidance share the common goal of establishing peaceful and concordant interpersonal relationships, although they achieve the integration through different behaviors (Liu et al., 2018). The regulatory focus theory proposes that people regulate their behaviors under either a promotion-focus or a prevention-focus (Higgins & Pinelli, 2020). While promotion-focused people pay attention to seek opportunities to maximum their gains and achieve positive outcomes, prevention-focused people concentrate on preventing negative outcomes and avoiding losses (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). Based on the regulatory focus theory and the conceptualization of two different types of harmony motives, we consider that harmony enhancement, the desire to improve relationships and create a sense of harmony and cooperation within a group, represents a promotion-focused motive; and

disintegration avoidance, the desire to take actions to prevent the breakdown and maintain the cohesiveness of the group, represents a prevention-focused motive.

As a promotion-focused motive, newcomers who are high in harmony enhancement may be more likely to offer proactive helping to others. Proactive helping, thinking about the needs of others and offering help without being asked, could be perceived as threatening by the help recipients sometimes (Harari et al., 2022). One of the reasons is newcomers' proactive helping may imply that the recipients are unable to finish their work without help, so it could challenge the recipients' self-perception of their capability and status. Another possible reason is that newcomers' proactive helping may be attributed as a behavior from impression management motive (Landis et al., 2022). Providing help to others without being asked may also be perceived as a show off by the newcomers (Halbesleben et al., 2010). Newcomers with a high harmony enhancement motive are keen to demonstrating their dedication to solve the needs or difficulties faced by their teammates to achieve the best possible harmonious relationship, and offering help to colleagues is one of the best way to realize their harmony enhancement motivation. Their promotion-focused mindset encourages them to focus on the positive side of offering help and neglect their potential negative effects of proactive helping on themselves.

In contrary, disintegration avoidance motive is the desire to avoid social isolation or rejection (Leung et al., 2002). According to the self-regulatory focus theory, the prevention focus involved in disintegration avoidance makes people occupied by the thoughts of avoiding potential threats to harmonious interpersonal relationships with their teammates, and they are highly sensitive to the possible negative outcomes by help offering (Leung et al., 2015). Therefore, newcomers who have a strong disintegration avoidance motive may be more likely to seek help from others, rather than offering help proactively, because they are concerned about

the negative reaction of help offering and worry about being excluded or rejected by their teammates (Pettit et al., 2010). Seeking help could be a way for employees with a high disintegration avoidance to demonstrate that they are willing to take steps to address any problems or challenges they are facing. Their prevention-focused way of thinking indicates that they put a stronger emphasis on not making mistakes in their relationships with teammates (Lee, 1997). By proactively seeking help, these newcomers can better understand the norms and expectations of the group and avoid the negative consequences of social isolation. Based on the above arguments, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Harmony enhancement is positively related to help offering behavior.

H2: Disintegration avoidance is positively related to help seeking behavior.

Harmony Motives, Proactive Behaviors, and Social Integration

The harmony motive, including both harmony enhancement and disintegration avoidance, can enhance social integration because it promotes positive social interactions and helps to build and strengthen social bonds by trying to improve or maintain social harmony and relationships (Leung et al., 2002). When people have either a strong harmony enhancement or disintegration avoidance motive, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that are aimed at creating and maintaining positive social relationships and contributing to a sense of social cohesion and integration within a group. In addition, when employees feel that their relationships are harmonious, they are more likely to feel connected and engaged with their teammates, which can further enhance social integration. In this paper, we argue that both harmony enhancement and disintegration avoidance are positively associated with social integration. Harmony enhancement motive increases social integration through the mediating role of help offering; and disintegration avoidance motive increases social integration through the mediating role of help seeking.

Proactive help offering to others could improve newcomers' social integration for the following reasons. Firstly, proactive helping allows newcomers to build connections with others by demonstrating their willingness to support and assist other teammates. This can lead to increased feelings of trust, respect, and mutual dependence from the teammates (Mossholder et al., 2005), which can enhance the newcomers' insider status and are important components of their social integration within the team (Masterson & Stamper, 2003). Secondly, providing help to others can also promote a sense of belonging and connectedness for the newcomers, since it makes them feel like they are contributing to their team in a meaningful way (Nadler, 2017). This can lead to increased feelings of social inclusion and acceptance, which can be especially helpful for newcomers who are seeking to build or strengthen their social integration.

By seeking help from other teammates, newcomers can also increase their social integration. When asking for help, people are opening themselves up to others and demonstrating vulnerability (Bruk et al., 2018), which can lead to increased trust and intimacy in their relationships with other teammates (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008). In addition, for newcomers who may feel isolated and disconnect at the beginning of their organizational life, seeking help often requires them to communicate with others. Thus, help seeking might be a way for them to find support and build networks with others, which can facilitate social interaction and help them feel more connected to their teammates (Zheng et al., 2021). Finally, receiving help from others can make the newcomers get a better understanding of the group environment and feel supported and valued, which can improve their overall sense of belonging and integration to their team.

Combining the above arguments about the effects of proactive help offering and help seeking on social integration with our previous hypotheses 1 and 2, as well as the linkage

between the two types of harmony motives and social integration, we propose the following mediating hypotheses:

H3: Harmony enhancement has an indirect effect on social integration through help offering behavior.

H4: Disintegration avoidance has an indirect effect on social integration through help seeking behavior.

The Moderating Role of Initiative Climate

The interactional perspective of organizational psychology suggests that contextual factors always play an indispensable role in predicting behaviors by enhancing or reducing the effects of personal dispositions (James et al., 1978). Situational strength theory also proposes that the strength of the relationship between individual traits and behaviors is influenced by the relevant situational cues (Meyer et al., 2010). Based on the interactional perspective and situational strength theory, we could conclude that a situational variable which is relevant to proactive helping offering and help seeking behavior might moderate the effects of harmony motives. We introduce initiative climate, which “focuses on employee shared perceptions of the extent to which self-starting, change-oriented, long-term oriented and persistent behavior is encouraged and rewarded by management” (Raub & Liao, 2012, p. 653), as the moderator in the relationship between harmony enhancement motives and proactive help offering, as well as in the relationship between disintegration avoidance and help seeking.

When initiative climate is high, initiative and risk-taking behaviors are highly encouraged and supported within the group (Yu et al., 2018); while a low level of initiative climate indicates that employees are discouraged from taking initiatives or may be punished for such kind of behaviors. We hypothesize that initiative climate moderates the relationship between harmony

enhancement and proactive help offering in such a way that the relationship is weaker when the level of initiative climate is higher. According to situational strength theory, a high level of initiative climate means that proactive and risk-taking behaviors are expected and encouraged by the team (Baer & Frese, 2003), which constitutes a strong situational context that makes newcomers less concerned about the potential unfavorable consequences of their proactive help offering behavior (Keeler et al., 2019). Therefore, a high level of initiative climate reduces employees' individual differences in proactive help offering behaviors due to their different levels of harmony enhancement motives. Since newcomers with a low level of harmony enhancement motives also become less concerned about the negative reactions of proactive helping, the positive effect of harmony enhancement motives on proactive helping becomes weaker. We consider high initiative climate as a substitute for harmony enhancement motive in triggering newcomers' proactive help offering behavior.

We further propose that initiative climate moderates the relationship between disintegration avoidance and help seeking behavior in such a way that the relationship is stronger when the level of initiative climate is higher. Newcomers with a high disintegration avoidance seek help from others to avoid potential mistakes and maintain their relationships within the team (Liu et al., 2018). However, help seekers may also be worried about the potential risk of being perceived as incompetent or being rejected by others (Alvarez & van Leeuwen, 2015). A high level of initiative climate reduces this concern for those high in disintegration avoidance, and enhances the possibility that they will seek help to make themselves not excluded from the group. On the contrary, when the level of initiative climate is low, newcomers with a high disintegration avoidance may not seek help when they need because they do not want to afford the risk of being rejected or being considered as incapable in doing their jobs. Therefore, we

argue that a high initiative climate strengthens the positive relationship between disintegration avoidance and help seeking.

H5: Initiative climate moderates the positive relationship between harmony enhancement and help offering behavior, such that the relationship is stronger when the level of initiative climate is lower.

H6: Initiative climate moderates the positive relationship between disintegration avoidance and help seeking behavior, such that the relationship is stronger when the level of initiative climate is higher.

Combining the above moderating hypotheses of initiative climate with our previous mediating hypotheses of proactive help offering and help seeking, we are proposing moderated mediation hypotheses as follows:

H7: Initiative climate moderates the strength of the indirect effect between harmony enhancement and social integration via help offering behavior such that the indirect effect is stronger when the level of initiative climate is lower.

H8: Initiative climate moderates the strength of the indirect effect between disintegration avoidance and social integration via help seeking behavior such that the indirect effect is stronger when the level of initiative climate is higher.

 Insert Figure 1 about here

METHOD

Sample and Procedures

Employees working for a large hotel in China were recruited to participate in the present study. The employees worked in teams and there was one supervisor for each team. Team members interacted with each other in everyday job tasks, such as task collaboration and communication in meetings. Data were collected at three time points with 1 month in between to warrant sufficient time lag to separate the measurement of predictors and mediators from the outcome variables. Participants were allowed to complete the surveys during work time. All surveys were translated from English to Chinese, using Brislin's (1980) recommended translation-back-translation procedure.

At Time 1, the questionnaires were distributed to all 82 team leaders and all of their 430 subordinates. The subordinates reported their harmony motives and supervisors reported team initiative climate. Both supervisors and subordinates provided demographic information. 80 team leaders and 360 subordinates completed the survey. At Time 2, subordinates report their help offering behavior and help seeking behavior. 290 subordinates completed the survey. At Time 3, subordinates reported their social integration. As a result, 76 supervisors ($N = 76$; response rate = 92.68%) and 232 subordinates (response rate = 53.95%) completed our survey. Team size ranged from 2 to 8 members per team (Mean = 5). The average age of the supervisors was 27.35 years ($SD = 4.55$). 63.1% were women and 49.8% of them have a junior college degree. Average organizational tenure was 45.27 months ($SD = 30.65$). Among the subordinates, 68.90% were women. Average age was 25.91 years ($SD = 6.38$). 49.30% of them have a high school degree and 25.30% have a junior college degree. Average job tenure was 15.20 months ($SD = 17.39$). Average group tenure was 14.70 months ($SD = 16.73$).

Measures

Harmony Motives. The two harmony motives were measured using the scale developed by Leung, Brew, Zhang, and Zhang (2011). There are 13 items measuring harmony enhancement motives. Sample items are “In interpersonal interactions, you should be considerate of others’ difficulties and forgive them whenever possible”, and “Maintaining interpersonal harmony is an important goal in life”. There are 8 items measuring disintegration avoidance. Sample items are “Interacting harmoniously with people prevents them from giving you trouble in the future”, and “If a person does you favors, you must be tolerant with them in order to protect your own interests”. Employees were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha was .86 for harmony motives scale and .82 for disintegration avoidance scale.

Help offering behavior. We measured help offering behavior using the 3-item scale developed by Grant, Parker, and Collins (2009). It is called proactive help in their study. Sample items are “Make proactive efforts to find new ways to benefit coworkers” and “Try to find ways to do good for coworkers outside the boundaries of your job”. Employees were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .84.

Help seeking behavior. Help seeking behavior was measured using a 7-item scale developed by Anderson and Williams (1996). Sample items are “I often request coworkers’ help when I get behind in their duties” and “I frequently asks coworkers for needed information to complete a task”. Employees were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .90.

Initiative Climate. Initiative climate was measured using the 7-item scale developed by Frese, Teng, and Wijnen (1999). Sample items are “People in our company take initiatives immediately-more often than in other companies” and “whenever something goes wrong, people in our company search for a solution immediately”. The supervisors were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .88.

Social Integration. Social integration was measured using the 5-item scale developed by Morrison (1993). Sample items are “I feel comfortable with my coworkers” and “My coworkers seem to accept me as one of them”. Employees were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .78.

Control Variables. We controlled for employees’ demographic information, such as, age (years), gender (1= female, 2= male), education level (1= middle school, 2= high school, 3= junior college, 4= bachelor or above), job tenure (months) and group tenure (months). As the current study examines the team dynamics, we also controlled for the effect of team size.

Strategy of Data Analyses

The present data contained a hierarchical structure in which responses of individual-level variables were nested within teams. We also propose two multilevel moderation hypotheses (i.e., Hypotheses 3 and 4). Therefore, multilevel modeling was used to simultaneously estimate the hypothesized multilevel relationships using Mplus 7.0 (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014). To estimate the hypothesized model, we specified the harmony enhancement, disintegration avoidance, help offering behavior, help seeking behavior and social integration as level-1 variable. In addition, age, gender, education level, job tenure, and team tenure were included as

control variables with fixed effects on help offering behavior, help seeking behavior, and social integration. The covariances among random effects were also estimated (Bauer et al., 2006). At level-2 (i.e., team level), we specified the relationships of initiative climate with help offering behavior and help seeking behavior, the cross-level interaction effects of two harmony motives with initiative climate on help offering and help seeking behavior. Team size was included as level-2 control variables with fixed effects on help offering behavior, help seeking behavior, and social integration. To facilitate the interpretation of the findings, two harmony motives were grand mean centered and initiative climate was group-mean centered to obtain an unbiased estimate of the cross-level interaction effects (Enders & Tofighi, 2007; Hofmann & Gavin, 1998).

Results

Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted in Mplus 7.0 to examine whether our study variables (i.e., harmony enhancement, disintegration avoidance, help offering behavior, help seeking behavior, initiative climate, and social integration) captured distinctive constructs. Given the number of variables, we created three parcels of items for all of the variables with more than three items to simplify the model (Little et al., 2002). The results indicated that the hypothesized six-factor model provided a good fit to the data ($\chi^2(237) = 487.48$, $p < .001$; CFI = .94; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .05), better than the five-factor model that combines harmony enhancement and disintegration avoidance ($\chi^2(242) = 812.03$, $p < .001$; CFI = .85; TLI = .83; RMSEA = .07), the five-factor model that combines help offering behavior and help seeking behavior ($\chi^2(242) = 788.41$, $p < .001$; CFI = .86; TLI = .84; RMSEA = .07), and the single-factor model ($\chi^2(252) = 2776.49$, $p < .001$; CFI = .34; TLI = .28; RMSEA = .15).

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among studied variables are presented in Table 1. Help offering behavior was positively correlated with harmony enhancement motive ($r = .19, p < .05$), but not correlated with disintegration avoidance motive ($r = .05, p > .05$). In contrast, help seeking behavior was positively related to disintegration avoidance motive ($r = .22, p < .05$), but not correlated with harmony enhancement motive ($r = .07, p > .05$). Initiative climate was positively related to help offering behavior ($r = .15, p < .05$) but not help seeking behavior ($r = .08, p > .05$). Both help offering behavior ($r = .19, p < .05$) and help seeking behavior ($r = .14, p < .05$) are positively related to social integration. These findings provided preliminary support for the following hypotheses tests.

 Insert Table 1 about here

We propose that harmony enhancement motive is positively related to help offering behavior (hypothesis 1) and disintegration avoidance motive is positively related to help seeking behavior (hypothesis 2). The result supported these two hypotheses. Specifically, as shown in Table 2, the effect of harmony enhancement on help offering behavior was positive and significant ($\beta = .38, se = .13, p < .01$), and the effect of disintegration avoidance on help seeking behavior was also positive and significant ($\beta = .35, se = .10, p < .01$). Therefore, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are both supported.

 Insert Table 2 about here

We propose that harmony enhancement indirectly affects social integration via help offering behavior (hypothesis 3) and disintegration avoidance motive indirectly impacts social integration via help seeking behavior (hypothesis 4). To estimate the hypothesized indirect

relationships, we used a bootstrap procedure (Preacher et al., 2010). With 1000 times bootstrapping, results (see table 3) showed that there was a positive indirect relationship between harmony enhancement and social integration via help offering behavior (indirect effect = .08, $se = .04$, 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI = [.00, .15]), supporting hypothesis 3. However, the indirect effect between disintegration avoidance and social integration via help seeking behaviors was not significant (indirect effect = .01, $se = .02$, 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI = [-.04, .06]). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is supported and hypothesis 4 is not supported.

 Insert Table 3 about here

Hypothesis 5 predicted that initiative climate moderates the relationship between harmony enhancement and help offering behavior. The multilevel modeling results demonstrated a positive effect of initiative climate on the slope between harmony enhancement and help offering behavior ($r = -.39$, $se = .19$, $p < .01$). Following Cohen, West, and Aiken's (2014) recommendations, we plotted this interaction at conditional values of initiative climate (1 SD above and below the mean). As shown in Figure 2, when initiative climate was lower, the relationship between harmony enhancement and help offering behavior was stronger. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

 Insert Figure 2 about here

Hypothesis 6 predicted that initiative climate moderates the relationship between disintegration avoidance and help seeking behavior. The multilevel modeling results showed a marginal and positive effect of initiative on the slope between disintegration avoidance and help seeking behavior ($r = .23$, $se = .13$, $p < .10$). Following Cohen, West, and Aiken's (2014)

recommendations, we plotted this interaction at conditional values of initiative climate (1 SD above and below the mean). As shown in Figure 3, when initiative climate was higher, the relationship between disintegration avoidance and help seeking behavior was stronger.

Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was supported.

 Insert Figure 3 about here

To test Hypotheses 7 and 8, we estimated the indirect relationships of harmony motives with social integration via help offering behavior at higher (-1 SD) and lower levels (+1 SD) of initiative climate using Bauer et al.'s (2006) method. The results are reported in Table 3. Specifically, the indirect effect of harmony enhancement motive on social integration through help offering behavior was stronger when initiative climate was lower (Estimate = .14, se = .08, 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI = [.00, .28]) than when initiative climate was higher (Estimate = .02, se = .04, $p < .01$; 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI = [-.05, .09]). The indirect effect of disintegration avoidance motive on social integration through help seeking behavior was insignificant regardless of whether initiative climate is higher (Estimate = .02, se = .04, 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI = [-.05, .08]) or lower (Estimate = .01, se = .01, 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI = [-.02, .03]). Therefore, Hypothesis 7 was supported and hypothesis 8 was not supported.

DISCUSSION

There has been growing interest in exploring the mechanisms and conditions involved in the relationship between harmony motives and different outcomes (Chen et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2014). Our paper contributes to this line of research by examining the mediating role of proactive

help offering and help seeking behaviors in the relationship between different harmony motives and social integration. In line with our hypotheses, we found that harmony enhancement motive is positively related to proactive help offering, while disintegration avoidance is positively related to help seeking. The mediating role of proactive help offering in the relationship between harmony enhancement motive and social integration is support, but we could not find a significant effect between help seeking and social integration, therefore the mediating role of help seeking in the relationship between disintegration avoidance and social integration is not supported. Moreover, we found that initiative climate moderates the direct effect of harmony enhancement and proactive help offering, as well as the indirect effect of harmony enhancement and social integration through help offering.

Contrary to our expectation, newcomers' help seeking behavior does not enhance their social integration with the team. The reason might be that seeking help will be considered as a sign of weakness or incapability sometimes (Bohns & Flynn, 2010), leading to a negative social integration for the help seekers.

Theoretical Implications

Our research first contributes to proactive socialization literature by bringing the concept of harmony motives as a potential important antecedent of newcomers' proactive socialization behaviors and outcomes. Previous research on newcomers' socialization has accumulated a lot of knowledge on its antecedents, such as various organizational socialization tactics, newcomers' big five personality and proactive personality (Bauer et al., 2007), etc. Our exploration of harmony motives as a potential antecedent for proactive help offering and help seeking add another possible way of encouraging proactive behaviors. Since harmony motive is an indigenous Chinese management research concept, it offers special insights for proactive

socialization literature because Chinese culture has been considered as less proactive than the western culture (Villalobos et al., 2020). Our research indicates that some Chinese cultural values can be helpful in inducing people's proactive behavior.

Secondly, we contribute to literature on harmony motives by investigating the mediating role of proactive behaviors in linking harmony motives to social integration. The research on harmony motives is still at the beginning stage with a few of its psychology and behavioral outcomes being identified (Chen et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2014). Our research found that harmony enhancement motives enhance social integration through proactive help offering and disintegration avoidance motives enhance help seeking. Therefore, investigating how different types of harmony motives impact different proactive behaviors, and finally lead to different performance or relationship outcomes might be a meaningful direction for researchers in this area.

Finally, our research has implications for the interactional perspective and situational strength theory by discovering that initiative climate can substitute the role of harmony enhancement motives on proactive help offering, and it enhances the role of disintegration avoidance on proactive help seeking. Initiative climate works as a strong situational factor for help offering behavior by reducing the influence of individual difference on help offering. However, for proactive help seeking, it constitutes a context that activate people' disintegration avoidance and encourage them to seek more help from others. This implies that whether a situational context should be considered as a strong situation depends on what kind of personality traits we are focusing on.

Practical Implications

First, our findings have important implications for recruitment and selection practices.

Newcomers' high levels of harmony enhancement benefits their social integration through the mediating effect of proactive help offering. Thus, organizations may take applications' harmony enhancement motives into consideration if they expect a quick socialization for newcomers.

Although our hypothesis on the mediating effect of help seeking in the relationship between disintegration avoidance and social integration is not supported, we did find a positive relationship between disintegration avoidance and help seeking, as well as between help seeking and social integration. This implies that disintegration avoidance is at least not a negative thing for organizations, and it has positive impact. Therefore, organizations may try to recruit people with both high harmony enhancement and disintegration avoidance motives. Second, the mediating effect of proactive help offering suggest that organizations could use intervening mechanisms to encourage newcomers offer help to others, which can in turn improve social integration. Establishing a link between proactive help offering and organizational reward may be an effective way to enhance employees' help offering behavior.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our study suffers from several limitations. First, the common method bias may influence some of the results. Although we collected data in three waves and from different sources, common method variance could inflate the relationships among harmony motives, proactive help offering and help seeking, and social integration. However, we used several strategies to minimize this influence (Podsakoff et al., 2012). For example, to reduce social desirability bias to some extent, we ensured the confidentiality of employee answers. We also separated the questionnaires into different sections by using different instructional languages. These procedures should have

decreased the chances that respondents could find the potential connections among our study variables.

We only tested the mediating role of proactive help offering and help seeking, and did not extend our model to other types of proactive behaviors. Harmony motives may have interesting implications for a variety of proactive behaviors. One example is the relationship between different harmony motives and different types of voice behavior. Harmony enhancement motive may increase promotive voice since they are both promotion-focused, and disintegration avoidance may increase prohibitive voice since they are both prevention-focused (Liang et al., 2012). Future research may include more proactive behaviors in exploring the influence of different harmony motives.

A final limitation of our research is about the problem of cross-culture generalizability. All our participants are from China, which may limit the applicability of our findings to countries with different cultures. However, since the culture of the most-developed cities in China is becoming very international (Farh et al., 1997), we believe that our findings are applicable to a larger context. In addition, the construct of harmony motives is developed under the Chinese cultural context (Lim, 2009), which makes it appropriate to be tested with a Chinese sample. Nevertheless, we still agree that cultural values could influence people's motivations and behaviors. Thus, future studies with a different cultural background, especially in western countries, could help further examine the applicability of our newly developed model.

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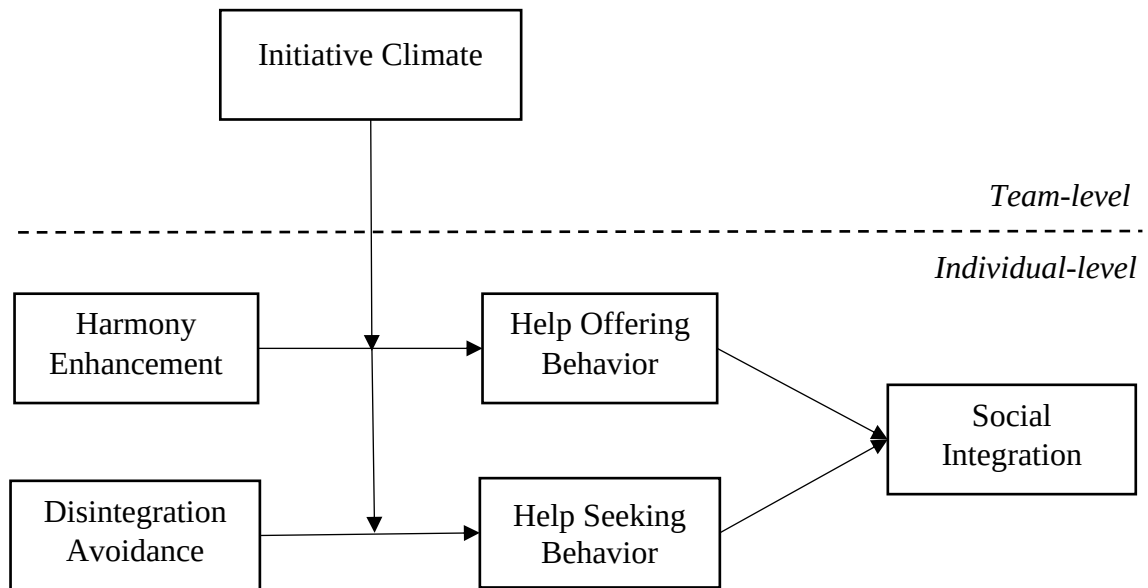
Figure 1. Hypothesized Model

Figure 2. The Moderating Effect of Initiative Climate on the Relationship between Harmony Enhancement and Help Offering

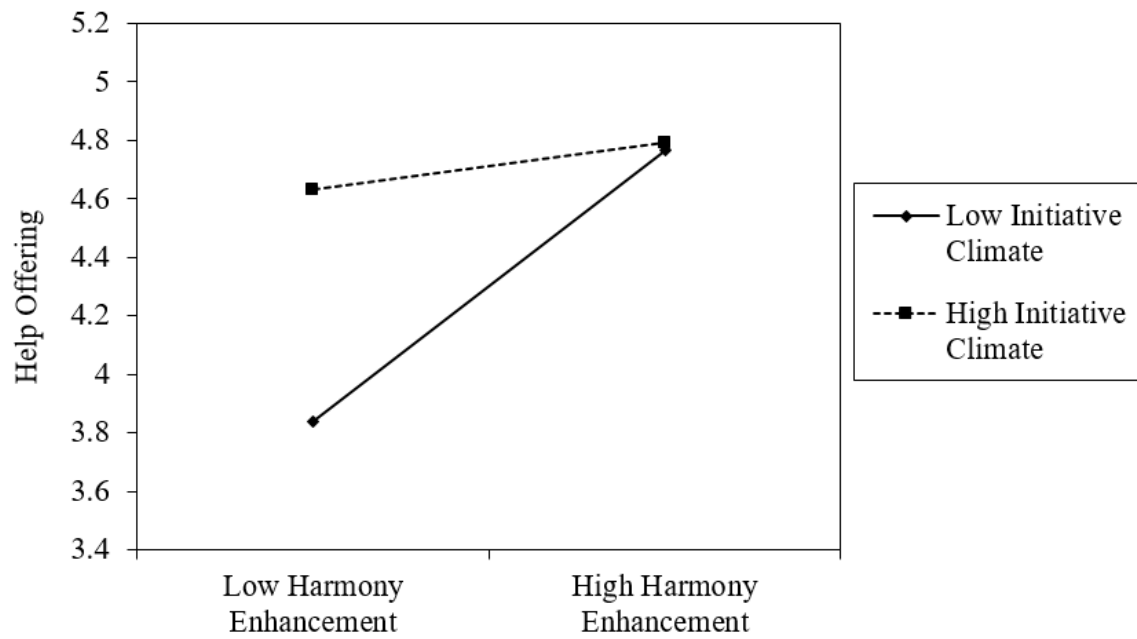


Figure 3. The Moderating Effect of Initiative Climate on the Relationship between Disintegration Avoidance and Help Seeking.

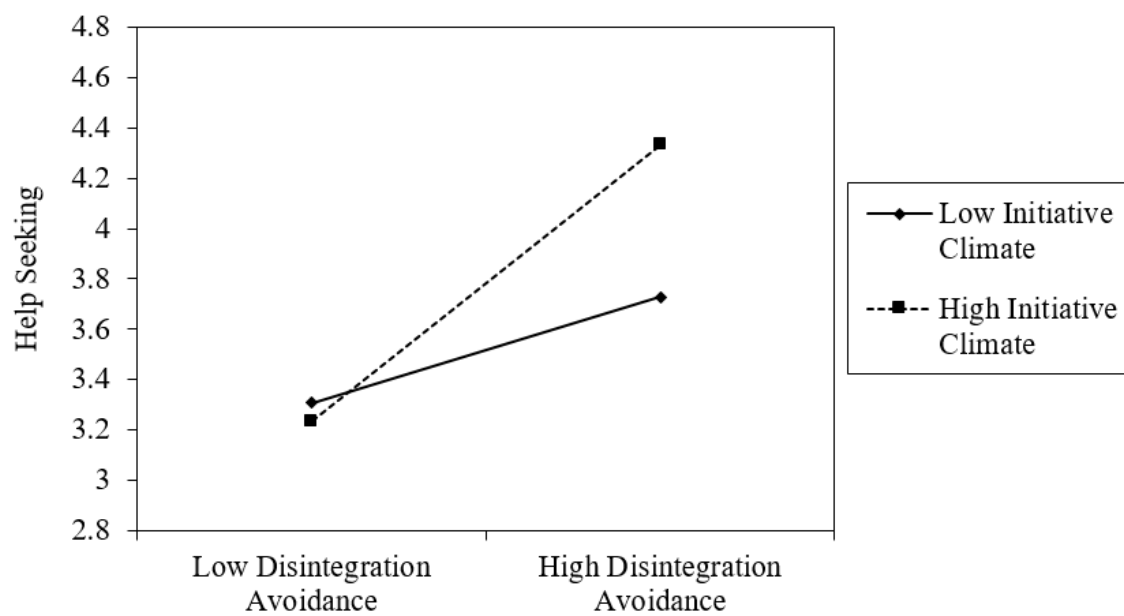


Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among Study Variables

Variables	Means	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Team size	3.05	1.19												
2. Age	25.91	6.38	-.13 ⁺											
3. Sex	1.32	.48	.18**	-.18**										
4. Education	12.19	2.84	.01	-.36**	.09									
5. Job tenure	15.20	17.39	.02	.37**	-.21**	-.13 ⁺								
6. Group tenure	14.70	16.73	.02	.37**	-.17*	-.12 ⁺	.87**							
7. Harmony enhancement	5.73	.72	-.13*	.18**	-.14*	-.06	.20**	.22**	(.86)					
8. Disintegration avoidance	4.30	1.08	.01	.07	.08	-.06	.02	.10	.45**	(.82)				
9. Initiative climate	5.92	.68	.13*	.22**	-.04	-.07	.06	.08	.09	.02	(.88)			
10. Help offering	4.67	1.17	-.07	.07	.02	.13*	.01	.05	.19**	.05	.15*	(.84)		
11. Help seeking	3.72	1.19	-.06	-.13 ⁺	.16*	.14*	-.12 ⁺	-.09	.07	.22**	.08	.36**	(.90)	
12. Social integration	5.40	.86	.01	.06	.11	.03	.07	.06	.02	.03	.08	.19**	.14*	(.78)

Note: N (individuals) = 232; N (teams) = 76. ⁺p < .10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001;

Table 2. Unstandardized Coefficients of the Multilevel Model for Testing Main, Mediation and Moderation Effects

Variables	Help Offering		Help Seeking		Social Integration	
	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>
Intercept	4.51***	.95	3.65***	.90	5.28***	.50
<i>Level 1 control variables</i>						
Age	.01	.01	-.02	.01	-.01	.01
Sex	.10	.15	.26	.17	.17	.11
Education	.03	.03	.02	.03	-.01	.02
Job tenure	-.01	.01	-.00	.01	.01	.01
Group tenure	.01	.01	-.01	.01	-.00	.01
Proactive personality	-.08	.13	.04	.13		
<i>Level 2 control variables</i>						
Team size	-.01	.01	-.02	.01	-.01	.01
<i>Level 1 independent variables</i>						
Harmony Enhancement	.38**	.13	-.03	.08	-.14	.11
Disintegration Avoidance	-.26 ⁺	.15	.35**	.10	.07	.09
Help Offering					.22*	.09
Help Seeking					.03	.07
<i>Cross-level Interactions</i>						
Initiative Climate	.30**	.11	.20 ⁺	.12		
Harmony Enhancement×Initiative Climate	-.39*	.19				
Disintegration Avoidance×Initiative Climate			.23 ⁺	.13		
Within Level Residual Variance	.62***	.09	.97***	.13	.57***	.12
Between Level Residual Variance	.25	.17	.30*	.15	.09	.08

Note: N (individuals) = 232; N (teams) = 76. ⁺p < .10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001; two-tailed. Unstandardized coefficients are reported.

Table 3. Results of Indirect Effect and Conditional Indirect Effect

Indirect Paths	Estimate	95%BC	Level of Initiative Climate	Estimate	95%BC
Harmony enhancement→ Help offering→ social integration	.08* (.04)	[.00, .15]	High	.02 (.04)	[-.05, .09]
			Low	.14* (.08)	[.00, .28]
Disintegration avoidance→ Help seeking→ social integration	.01 (.02)	[-.04, .06]	High	.02 (.04)	[-.05, .08]
			Low	.01 (.01)	[-.02, .03]

Note: N (individuals) = 232; N (teams) = 76. *p < 0.05.

