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# “Is This My Job at All?”

## The Impact of Flexible Role Orientation in Predicting Extra-Role Behavior

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P. B. Srikanth and M. G. Jomon

As modern day organizations are becoming more competitive, a greater need exists to focus on employee expectations beyond the boundaries of the job (Katz and Kahn, 1966). Determinants of workplace performance are an area of interest for both individuals and the organization. Individual performance can be conceived either as in-role behavior or extra-role behavior (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

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Subsequently, interest in discretionary prosocial behavior increased leading to conceptualization of different concepts ranging from *organization citizenship behavior* (Organ, 1988) to *proactive behavior* (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Katz and Kahn (1966) point out that, in several situations, the functioning of an organization depends on supra-role behavior; i.e., those behaviors that cannot be conceived in advance or articulated in advance for a given job. These behaviors “lubricate” the social milieu of the organization but do not necessarily pertain to actual task performance (Bateman & Organ, 1983). Though such behaviors are critical for effective performance of the job, they cannot be anticipated in advance as they are beyond the expectation of formal role deliverables.

As organizations are characterized by rapid change, competition, and downsizing, employees are expected to move beyond the confines of

their job descriptions to engage in broader work roles (Parker, 2000). Despite the importance of performing wider scope of responsibilities, the antecedents of extra-role behaviors have not been well understood (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006). Previous research has examined motivation to engage in proactive behavior (Axtell, Holman, Unsworth, Wall, & Waterson, 2000; Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006; Morrison & Phelps, 1999) mostly using self-ratings of respondents. This article attempts to examine pro-social motivational predictors of proactive behaviors to replicate and extend previous studies using a different rating source; i.e., supervisors. The authors choose to focus on extra-role behavior because it emphasizes proactive as well as pro-social behaviors (Pearce & Gregersen, 1991). The literature review did not reveal any studies that have been made in the Indian information technology (IT) sector relating to extra-role behavior.

More specifically, the objectives of the study are

- (1) To learn the impact of flexible role orientation on extra-role behavior and
- (2) To examine the effect of role breadth self-efficacy in mediating the relationship between flexible role orientation and extra role-behavior

## Literature Review

### Flexible Role Orientation

Borrowing from the concept of role orientation (Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 1997) that is concerned with meanings given by people about their specific roles in the work environment, role orientation refers to the activities, events, and competencies relevant for successful performance in a given role. In other words, role orientation represents the psychological boundary for a role. The concept of role orientation is similar to Davis and Wacker's (1987: 433) description of roles compared to jobs, which they define as,

[i]n a narrow 'job description sense,' one's job is a particular task assignment that may change daily; in a broad 'role' sense, one's job is to help carry out the responsibilities assigned to the team,

to participate in team decisions, to cross-train, and to use one's judgment to contribute to the team's productivity, maintenance, and development.

Individuals with flexible role orientation define their roles broadly and take ownership of goals beyond their immediate responsibilities viewing them as "my job" rather than "not my job" (Parker et al., 1997). Role orientation focuses on the tasks, activities, problems, and competencies that are relevant to one's role that one should consider for effective performance in the role. Flexible role orientation (FRO) has been operationalized as having concern for *production ownership* and *importance of production ownership* (Parker et al., 1997). The first relates to a sense of ownership and accountability beyond the assigned technical or operational tasks. For example, an employee performing a certain task, e.g., working on a machine, considering his role as doing things strictly as according to job description would have a narrow production ownership. A narrow role orientation relates to someone who identifies his or her performance requirements as "adhering to what he or she has been told to do." In contrast, situations present in which the employee has a broader perspective of the

range of knowledge and skills required for effective performance on the job, such as displaying personal initiative to resolve problems in one's work area, or work with a cross-functional team to improve the product quality or working beyond the limits of job description. A proactive and broader role orientation is shown by someone who recognizes the importance of acquiring specific competencies required for successful performance such as having a customer focus, problem solving, and being an effective team player, etc. In this case, the employee works to prevent problems proactively, helps the team complete its work, shows high concern for quality, and proactively makes improvements in the process. Therefore, flexible role orientation, in a way, refers to the "psychological boundary" of the role extending beyond one's immediate technical goals (Parker et al., 2006).

### Role Breadth Self-Efficacy (RBSE)

RBSE is concerned with people feeling confident to execute a broader proactive role as opposed to conventionally defined technical requirements for the job (Parker, 1998). This concept is distinct from proactive personality (Bateman & Crant, 1993) and self efficacy (Bandura, 1977). While proactive personality is a personal disposition or a tendency to make an impact

on the environment and self efficacy is concerned with self evaluation concerning task capability, RBSE is shaped by organizational experiences. Thus, RBSE is a subjective evaluation about one's capability to carry out particular set of tasks.

RBSE describes a person's self-perceived ability to perform proactive, interpersonal, and integrative activities that extends beyond the technical core (Parker, 1998). Bandura (1989) suggests three mechanisms to develop self efficacy. First is through enactive mastery, which involves continuing to do what one is good at. Second, is through vicarious experience. Efficacy is enhanced by observing role models who deal with challenging situations, which raise the observer's judgment of his own capabilities. Third, is through verbal persuasion or providing accurate appraisal of an individual's performance. Information assimilated through experiences are weighted and integrated with personal factors (e.g., skill level and effort available), task characteristics (task demands and task novelty), and environmental factors (e.g., team interdependence) to appraise judgments of self-efficacy (Gist & Mitchell, 1992).

**Distinguishing Between In-Role and Extra-Role Behavior**

Research suggests that the boundary between in-role

behavior (IRB) and extra-role behavior (ERB) is ill-defined (Morrison, 1994). One critical difference between in-role and extra-role behavior is the extent to which superiors reward those behavior and reprimand when those behaviors are absent (Organ, 1988). In-role behavior can be viewed as formal role requirements expected from the role while extra-role behaviors are those that cannot be conceived in advance but are essential for smooth organizational functioning (Bateman & Organ, 1983). Extra-role behavior has been researched under various taxonomies such as prosocial behavior, organization citizenship behavior (OCB), and contextual performance. Organ and Ryan (1995) classified OCBs under five broad dimensions:

- Altruism – providing work related help to coworker;
- Courtesy – gestures taken to preempt workplace problems;
- Sportsmanship – willingness to tolerate personal inconvenience at workplace toward goal attainment without any complains;
- Civic virtue – active participation of employees in organizational affairs; and
- Generalized compliance – complying with rules and

regulations of the organization.

Research by William and Anderson (1991) and Organ and Ryan (1995) distinguish between IRB and ERB. Williams and Anderson (1991) classify OCB under two broad categories

- (1) OCBO – behaviors that are beneficial to the organization (e.g., participating in a company function by organizing it, notifying in advance when unable to report to work); and
- (2) OCBI – behaviors that are beneficial to coworkers and indirectly benefit the organization (e.g., helping others complete their work, taken care of others work during their absence).

Bateman and Organ (1983) identify some of the extra-role behaviors as providing help to a coworker to solve job-related issues, maintaining cleanliness of work area, using the resources of the organization with caution and care, and accepting temporary impositions without any complaints. Katz and Kahn (1966) mention that behaviors beyond role prescriptions can be termed as extra-role behavior. Because the organization mandates IRB (Pearce & Gregersen, 1991), the interest of the present research is to focus on factors influencing ERB that are more

socially desirable. Clearly, IRB focuses on official behaviors expected from the role while ERB focuses on behaviors required for effective functioning of department and organization at large.

## Hypothesis Development

### Flexible Role Orientation and RBSE

To achieve organizational goals, managers expect their employees to stretch beyond the limits of their narrowly defined tasks to adopt a more flexible approach and to be more proactive in dealing with emerging broader work roles; however, two crucial psychological processes are involved in achieving this. First, employees must view their roles in the larger context of the organization and align themselves to meet these expectations by being more flexible; in other words, having a flexible role orientation (Parker et al., 1997). Rather than viewing their jobs with a mentality of fixed rigidity, they need to develop a broader perspective, take ownership of wider problems, and be proactive. This calls for moving away from the “that’s not my job” mentality to a perspective viewing broader responsibilities and recognizing the merits of being proactive (Parker, 2000). Flexible role orientation (FRO) requires greater flexibility and broad role orientation to cope with challenging demands in the

workplace (Parker et al., 2006).

An important consequence of increased flexibility is that it provides opportunity for individuals to expand their established “jobs” and take on tasks of emergent “roles” (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Speier & Frese, 1997). Individuals with narrow role orientations are likely to perceive “this is not my job” or restrict themselves to “doing what has been told” rather than having a broader and proactive approach to view their work. Individuals with narrow role orientations are concerned only with immediate day-to-day tasks. Conversely, individuals with FRO are likely to anticipate problems, scan the environment, and be proactive at work (Parker et al., 1997). They need to be self directed and possess flexibility as prerequisites for RBSE (Parker, 1998). Similarly, another prerequisite for RBSE is the need for employees to integrate and manage activities across boundaries, which requires a broader range of knowledge and skills measured through perceived importance of production knowledge (Parker, 1998). Parker and Sprigg (1999) found significant positive association between low job control (high FRO) and RBSE. According to Parker (2000), FRO and RBSE are distinct attitudinal states and FRO is related to RBSE. Based upon these views, the authors hypothesize the following:

### Hypothesis 1:

Flexible role orientation will be positively related to role breadth self-efficacy such that higher levels of flexible role orientation will be related to greater role breadth self-efficacy compared to lower levels of flexible role orientation.

### Flexible Role Orientation and Extra-Role Behavior

Today’s organizations are characterized by greater functional interdependencies. Thus, a need exists to integrate activities across functions that require flexibility of employees’ responses rather than being programmed (Parker, 1998). Managers’ expectations from their subordinates is partly determined by the capabilities of those subordinates. For example, certain employees who are expert in solving problems may be expected to help fellow colleagues resolve issues or train them. Employees with broader role orientation are able to perform more things without much input or supervision from their superiors (Morgeson, Delaney-Klinger, & Hemingway, 2005). Non-prescribed behaviors that aid in achieving organizational goals are seen to be favorably viewed by supervisors (Orr, Mercer, & Sackett, 1989; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). Role orientation distinguishes between individuals with broad approaches toward their roles having greater autonomy

and narrow roles having limited exposure to their roles. Narrow role orientation, lacking initiatives in one's work area and restricting oneself to "doing what one is told," does result in fulfilling technical requirements of the job (Parker et al., 1997). "Doing what I am told" reflects a narrow role orientation while a broader role orientation includes realizing the importance of being self directed, taking initiatives to anticipate problems, and liaising with customers (Parker, 2000). Karasek and Theorell observe that responses such as, "That's not my department" and "It's not good to rock the boat around here," reflect a narrow role orientation originating from

learned responses to early job experiences in which taking initiative and using extra skill and judgment were severely penalized as overstepping the bounds of one's (unnecessarily restricted) authority (1990: 174).

On the other hand, FRO is concerned with employees feeling accountable for work beyond their operational activities and the extent to which employees recognize the importance of knowledge and skills required to complete work at the organizational level (Parker, 1997). Parker (2000) posits that individuals who define their role broadly (having flexible role

orientation) are also engaged in activities directed toward long-term goals of the organization compared to individuals who define their roles narrowly. Supervisors also value individuals who have a broader role orientation (Morgeson et al., 2005). This may be due to the fact that such individuals require less input and supervision thereby making the supervisor's role more effective. Parker (1994) showed that FRO predicts performance amongst individuals working in self-managing teams and forecasts supervisory ratings of performance (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1993; Orr, Sackett, & Mercer, 1989; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002).

Individuals with flexible role orientations are more likely to engage in proactive problem solving beyond their narrowly defined responsibilities (Parker et al., 2006). Importance of flexible role orientation was highlighted by Campbell, who explained the importance of flexible role orientation by arguing that "commitment to unit goals, a sense of responsibility for unit success," which is "closely tied to feelings of ownership of the unit, its goals, and its processes" (2000: 54). Flexible role orientation is concerned with a wider scope of responsibility or how far the "psychological boundary" of the role extends beyond its technical requirements (Parker et al., 2006). Past research shows that flexible role orientation helps to promote

idea generation (Howell & Boies, 2004) and suggestion making (Axtell et al., 2000). Past research shows that leaders value subordinates who engage in behaviors beyond the limits of their job descriptions. Greater role breadth has been recognized in supervisory ratings of job performance (Orr et al., 1989; Routindo & Sackett, 2002). Thus, extra-role behavior (ERB) is likely to occur from individuals who have flexible role orientation compared to individuals who have little or no flexibility in their role. Hence, the authors hypothesize the following:

#### **Hypothesis 2:**

Flexible role orientation will be positively related to extra-role behavior such that individuals with higher levels of flexible role orientation will have greater extra-role behavior compared to those with lower levels of flexible role orientation.

#### **RBSE and Extra-Role Behavior**

The concept of RBSE relates to individuals who are proactive and go beyond the "call of duty" to perform at work. Some of the activities include conducting performance evaluation of team members, liaising with customers and vendors to ensure timely delivery, and keeping the management updated about different metrics (Parker, 1998). A precondition of proactive

behavior is feelings of capability and competence in carrying out a wide variety of tasks (Parker, 1998). Hence, individuals are likely to engage in activities in which they are likely to feel competent and able to monitor and exercise control over their environment.

Self-efficacy relates to individual's judgments about personal mastery to carry out certain tasks (Bandura, 1989). Efficacy expectations determine personal initiative at work (Speier & Frese, 1997). In their study, Speier & Frese (1997) find that high-efficacy employees displayed workplace initiative even without much encouragement. Efficacy expectations also determine the extent of effort individuals expend and how long they will persist at times of challenges or stressful situations (Bandura, 1977). Past research shows that RBSE is related to contextual performance (Parker, 1998), proactive behavior (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2007), and performance (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). When individuals feel competent to perform a wide range of tasks, they are more likely to engage in those tasks compared to individuals who are not. Gist (1987: 473) remarks "in some circumstances, possibly because of fear or incapacity, individuals may not expose themselves to opportunities for enactive mastery." This view is consistent with social cognitive theory (Bandura,

1989), which suggests that perceptions of task mastery influences intentions of individuals to purpose those tasks. These individuals show initiative at work without being prompted to do so (Speier & Frese, 1997). The organizational environment influences the type and extent of performance mastery, verbal persuasion, and behavior modeling to which employees are exposed. Evaluation mechanisms operating in the organization influence the types of performance assessments that employees undergo, which, in turn, affects employees' judgments about their performance capabilities. An organization that has simplified jobs, few training opportunities, and negligible participative decision-making opportunities will be characterized by employees with low RBSE. They are unlikely to succeed in broader, proactive tasks having high interpersonal relationship requirements. Therefore, being unable to cope with the challenging demands of the job, individuals would perceive these tasks as being complex and that they lack the skills to carry them out. Moreover, by virtue of past experience, such employees would feel little control to vary their performance outcomes. Rather than focusing on passive aspects of job such as punctuality or attendance and compliance to procedures, RBSE focuses on

proactive behavior of employees (Parker, 1998).

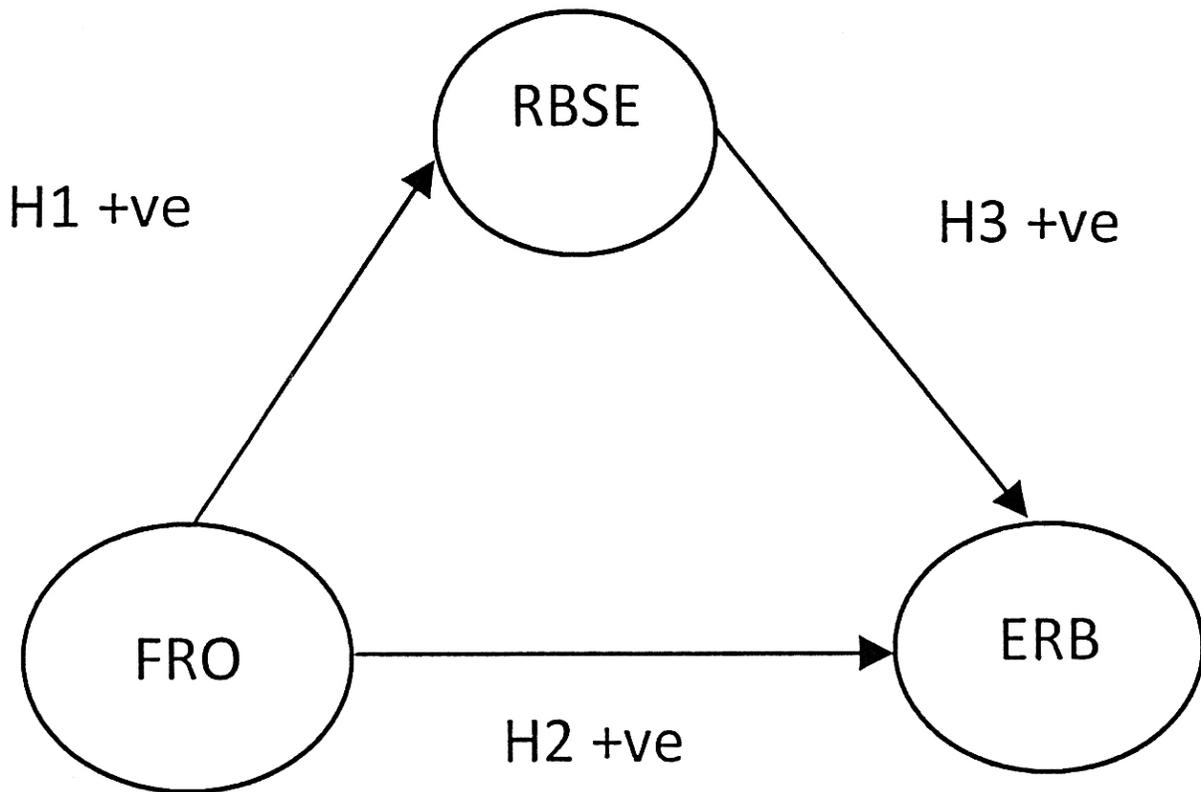
Managers are likely to view individuals who have greater RBSE as valuable for two reasons. First, employees need to take on broader roles for organizational success in a competitive and dynamic work environment (Parker, 1998). Second, when managers feel that employees are able to perform a wide range of activities, they need to provide less input and supervision. This makes the supervisor's job easier and more valued by the organization (Morgeson et al., 2005). From the individual's perspective, he or she is likely to perform activities relevant to the group when these activities make him or her feel efficacious (Bandura, 1989). RBSE is particularly important for proactive behavior (Parker et al., 2006). Therefore, the authors hypothesize,

### **Hypothesis 3:**

Role breadth self-efficacy is positively related to extra-role behavior such that individuals with higher levels of role breadth self-efficacy will have greater extra role-behavior.

For individuals to experience greater RBSE, they must have the opportunity to perform a wide range of activities beyond their immediate "job." Engaging in activities beyond the immediate job mandates allows individuals to gain

Figure 1  
Hypothesized Model



Note: H = Hypothesis

exposure to work contexts beyond their own. The success or failure of these ventures determines self-efficacy. Therefore, individuals with greater FRO are likely to experience greater RBSE (indicated through H1). A positive sign shows that increasing FRO is associated with an increase in RBSE. Similarly, employees who have a broader view of their roles and take ownership of their responsibilities beyond their jobs are more likely to engage in ERB (indicated through

H2). A positive sign shows that increasing FRO is associated with an increase in ERB. Feelings of self-efficacy have been known to indicate pursuance in any activity. Therefore, greater perceived competence in dealing with a wide range of activities (RBSE) is associated with an increase in behaviors beyond role expectations (ERB) (indicated through H3). A positive sign indicates that increase in RBSE is associated with an increase in ERB.

#### Mediating Role of RBSE

Thus far, this article suggests that FRO and RBSE will predict ERB. Figure 1 shows the hypothesized model. Given this, RBSE is related to both FRO and ERB. Morrison and Phelps (1999) find a higher level of self-efficacy is important to proactive behavior because individuals who are confident in their capabilities are more likely to engage in activities in which the chances of success are high. Individuals who are

more confident about their capabilities to carry out a broad range of activities are more likely to do more than what is expected from their jobs (Morgeson et al., 2005). Efficacy increases willingness to take action and role breadth self-efficacy is crucial for being proactive in solving problems (Parker et al., 2006). RBSE is strongly related to role proactivity (Griffin et al., 2007).

RBSE refers to employees' beliefs in carrying out a wide range of tasks by showing initiative, scanning the environment, and preventing problems (Bateman & Crant, 1993). As a consequence, RBSE can lead to gaining a broader expansion of activities through the process of role making (Graen, 1976) and take on emergent tasks required for broader "role," (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). RBSE also influences performance beyond what is mandated by the role such as taking the initiative to solve problems or helping others (Speier and Frese, 1997; Parker, 1998, 2000). Level of controllability of outcomes influences self-efficacy, with more controllable tasks boosting self-efficacy (Gist and Mitchell, 1992). In order to exercise role breadth, individuals must be able to perform the activities that constitute the enlarged role (Morgeson et al., 2005). If they are unable to perform the tasks successfully, it is unlikely that they would integrate them into their roles.

Though the impact of competence on role breadth has not been directly examined, individual self efficacy has been identified as an important factor for role breadth. For instance, Morrison and Phelps (1999) demonstrate that self-efficacy is positively related to taking charge (a type of extra-role behavior) in the workplace and Parker suggests that effective performance in broader roles "require[s] employees who are sufficiently confident in their abilities," (1998: 838). RBSE is important for proactive work behaviors (Parker, 1998; 2000). Hence, effective performance of ERB is unlikely to be demonstrated in the absence of RBSE. Based upon Hypothesis 3, RBSE will mediate the relationship between FRO and ERB in two ways. First, RBSE indicates the capability to carry out a wide range of activities involving interpersonal relationships. Therefore, those who can perform a wide range of activities are likely to experience broader and more flexible roles, which, in turn, their supervisors recognize. Second, greater role breadth self-efficacy also allows for greater opportunity to engage in activities beyond the traditional requirements mandated by the job. In summary, none of the studies have examined the mediating role of the pro-social motivational state in relation to the antecedents of ERB.

Therefore, the authors hypothesize that

**Hypothesis 4:**

Role breadth self-efficacy will fully mediate the relationship between flexible role orientation and extra-role behavior.

**Methodology and Procedure**

The researchers collected the data for the study using a questionnaire administered to participants of a leading information technology (IT) organization based in India. Participants belonged to different project teams housed in different locations but working for the same client. The researchers met the human resource (HR) department employees and briefed them about the purpose of the study and explained the procedure involved. Subsequently, the researchers sent e-mails to the employees who were requested to voluntarily participate in the study.

The objective of the study was clearly outlined to all participants who agreed to take part in the survey. The researchers assured anonymity of the responses was assured to all the participants. They collected data in two phases. First, they gathered data on demographics, FRO and RBSE from the employees. Second, supervisors supplied details on ERB. For this purpose, each questionnaire had a serial number known to the

respondents and the researchers only. In total, the researchers received 179 questionnaires of 193 surveys resulting in an 83 percent response rate. Of those, 19 contained incomplete data, leaving on 160 useable surveys. The mean age of the sample was 31.69 years with a standard deviation of 5.64. The mean job tenure was 7.89 years (S.D = 0.39). Women represented 45 percent of the sample and they tended to be younger than their male counterparts. About 70 percent of the respondents were married and 23 percent had post graduate degrees.

### Measures

The researchers measured role breadth self-efficacy (RBSE) using 10 items developed by Parker (1998). The survey asked employees to rate how confident they would feel on a scale of 1 (not confident at all) to 5 (very confident) in carrying out various activities. Sample activities included, "Representing your work area in meetings with senior management" and "Helping in setting targets/goals in your work area." The internal consistency (co-efficient alpha) for this measure was 0.85. The coefficient of alpha indicates reliability of the scale used and values greater than 0.70 indicate good internal consistency.

The researchers measured flexible role orientation (FRO) using the production

ownership scale developed and validated by Parker (2000) consisting of nine items. The survey asked employees to indicate the extent to which they feel personal concern to a wide range of problems that might occur at their workplace rather than "someone else's concern" using five point scale with 1 = to no extent through 5 = to a large extent. A higher score indicates ownership of a work unit's goals beyond their immediate technical requirements and therefore reflects "flexible role orientation" while a low score indicated "narrow role orientation." The three categories of problems were production goals (e.g., unfinished work pending), operational efficiencies (e.g., large amount of rework) and team cohesion and coordination (e.g., no coordination efforts). The coefficient of alpha for this scale was 0.78 indicating good internal consistency. Extra-role behavior (ERB) was assessed using the ten item scale developed by Pearce and Gregersen (1991). Supervisors were asked to rate their employees to the extent they engaged in extra-role behaviors on a scale of 1 (seldom) to 5 (very frequently). Sample items included, "Attends non required training or educational sessions on own time" and "Goes out of his or her way to help others with job-related problems." In the present study, the alpha coefficient was 0.92

indicating strong internal consistency. A detailed questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.

### Data Analysis and Results

The study used multiple regression analysis to test the hypothesis followed by bootstrapping method to measure the mediation effect. The researchers checked reliability of the scales using corrected item total correlation. They discarded all items showing item-total correlation less than 0.4 according to Brut-Banks criterion ( $p < 0.001$ ). Initially, to examine the internal structure and convergence validity of the FRO, RBSE and ERB, the researchers subjected to an exploratory factor analysis using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) criterion with Barlett test of Sphericity using principal axis factoring and "promax" rotation. Three factors were extracted for the solution that accounted for 57.34 percent of the variance, as shown in Table 1. The loadings approximated a simple structure, (i.e., most items loaded highly on only one factor and each factor had some items with high loadings while some with low loadings). All the variables, FRO, RBSE, and ERB loaded on single discrete factors. The three factors emerged with adjusted goodness-of-fit (GFI) of 0.93 and a root mean-square residual (RMSR) of 0.04.

**Table 1**  
**Pattern Matrix Factor Loadings of Items Using Principal Axis Factoring and Promax Rotation**

Pattern matrix is obtained through exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring and selecting “promax” rotation. Using the pattern matrix determines whether the study variables are loading distinctly on separate factors or are cross loading. From the pattern matrix, convergent and discriminant validity is checked. Convergent validity is found by examining the factor loadings (greater than 0.4). Cross loading would mean that the specific statement(s) is(are) accounting for explaining more than a single factor. In other words, such items suffer from discriminant validity. The authors found no cross loaded items.

Variables	F1	F2	F3
<b>FRO (Perceived importance of knowing)</b>			
Strength and weakness of (Company C’s) competitors	0.57		
Who will be a major competitor in the future	0.49		
(Company C’s) current market position	0.48		
What makes a leading product	0.49		
The ideas and plans (Company C) has for next five years	0.53		
What new orders are coming in, in addition to the production schedule	0.54		
The type of relationship Company C has with external suppliers	0.44		
What the end user of Company C’s products (i.e., customer) wants	0.45		
About production costs	0.66		
<b>RBSE (How confident would you feel)</b>			
Representing your work area in meetings with senior management		0.53	
Writing a proposal to spend money in your work area		0.51	
Analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution		0.48	
Making suggestions to management about ways to improve the working of your section		0.58	
Helping to set targets/goals in your work area		0.51	
Designing new procedures for your work area		0.67	
Contacting people outside the company (e.g., suppliers, customers) to discuss problems		0.75	
Presenting information to a group of colleagues		0.67	
Contributing to discussions about the company’s strategy		0.70	
Visiting people from other departments to suggest doing things differently		0.69	
<b>ERB (How frequently do you)</b>			
Attend non-required training or educational sessions on own time			0.83
Make helpful suggestions to improve the organization			0.68
Work before or after regular working hours in order to finish a task			0.76
Meet standards of work quality higher than the stated standards			0.46
Actively and constructively seek to get suggestions adopted by the organization			0.79
Orient new people even though it is not required			0.63
Make special attempts to gain more knowledge about job-related techniques and skills			0.47
Attend functions that are not required, but that help this organization			0.81
Go out of the way to help others with job-related problems			0.66
Look for additional responsibilities and/or tasks despite the fact that these increase the work load			0.79

Note: Loadings less than 0.4 are not shown

### Accounting for Common Method Variance

While self report surveys are relatively inexpensive and easy to administer, they pose a potential threat of common source bias that may have inflated the co-relations (Podsakoff, MacKinzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). As recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003), the researchers looked to identify any potential biases in the findings. Firstly, they stressed to participants that there were no correct or incorrect responses to the statements. Secondly, they used Harman's single factor test. In this test, all the items of the study variables are submitted together in the exploratory factor analysis stage and the number of factors extracted is constrained to 1 without any rotation. Cumulative variance of all the variables less than 50 percent indicates absence of common method variance. The researchers found little evidence of common method variance because more than one factor was necessary to explain the variance in the variables. Third, partial correlation was used through exploratory factor analysis among the study variables. We calculated a scale score for the first un-rotated factor and the factor's effect then controlled to determine whether relations among the variables remained stable. The results indicated that the relations remained relatively stable and statistically significant.

Table 2 represents the means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations among the study variables. On the average, respondents report experiencing a level of flexible role orientation of 2.98, role breadth self-efficacy of 3.41, extra-role behavior of 3.04 (on a five-point scale). Age is related to job tenure ( $r = 0.30, p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, job tenure is positively related to FRO ( $r = 0.51, p < 0.01$ ), probably due to the fact that, as the job tenure increases, expectations from the role become more evident (Morrison, 1994); however, job tenure is not to age and RBSE, consistent with the findings of Parker (1998). As expected, FRO is strongly related to RBSE ( $r = 0.53, p < 0.01$ ) and ERB ( $r = 0.46, p < 0.01$ ). These results are consistent with the findings of Parker (2000). Finally, FRO is positively related to ERB ( $r = 0.72, p < 0.01$ ).

Because the results of inter-correlations demonstrated significant relationships between FRO (independent variable IV) and ERB (dependent variable DV) and also between IV and RBSE (mediating variable M), the researchers tested for mediation because it is quite possible to find an indirect effect via M despite having a significant total effect between IV and DV (MacKinnon, Lockwood, West, & Sheets, 2002; Preacher & Hayes, 2004); however, whether the term mediation is applicable to

test the case of indirect effect is subject to debate and depends on the way mediation is defined. According to Baron and Kenny "a given variable may be said to function as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relation between the predictor and the criterion," (1986: 176), while others (Collins, Graham, & Fathery, 1998; MacKinnon et al., 2002) maintain that mediation effects are justified when an intervening variable transmits the effect of exogenous on the endogenous, thus, assuming no prior association between the exogenous and the endogenous variables (MacKinnon et al., 2002; Collins et al., 1998). For instance, MacKinnon et al. explained that "an intervening variable (mediator) transmits the effect of an independent variable to a dependent variable," (2002: 83). Similarly, Collins et al. (1988) posit that mediation is a like a chain reaction where some of the influences of IV are transmitted through M, which, in turn, causes a change in DV.

The researchers used multiple regression analysis to assess each variable of the proposed mediation model. To examine the effects of mediation, they used multiple mediation model testing was used that relies on non parametric bootstrapping procedure (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Unlike Barron and Kenny's (1986) method that assumes a normal distribution, a bootstrapping method is

**Table 2**  
**Descriptive Statistics: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations**

This table shows the mean, standard deviation and Pearson's correlation among the study variables.

Variable	Means	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Age	31.69	5.64	-					
Gender <sup>a</sup>	0.55	0.49	-0.62	-				
Job tenure <sup>b</sup>	0.79	0.28	0.30*	0.08	-			
FRO	25.22	5.94	0.13	0.06	0.51*			
RBSE	32.39	6.81	0.07	0.05	0.21	0.53**	-	
ERB	31.36	10.52	-0.02	0.04	0.26	0.46**	0.72**	-

Notes: *a* code 0 = female, 1 = male; *b* natural logarithm; FRO = Flexible role orientation, RBSE = Role breadth self-efficacy, ERB = Extra-role behavior, \**p* < 0.05, \*\**p* < 0.01, *n* = 160

applicable to samples that do not follow the normal curve (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). MacKinnon et al. (2002) caution against the assuming normality while determining significant mediation effects. Therefore, the researchers use bootstrapping because it makes no assumptions about the shape of the distribution (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Further, Barron and Kenny's (1986) method suffers from low statistical power especially in small sample sizes such as those involved in this study (MacKinnon et al., 2002). Barron and Kenny's method essentially mandates that the path from IV to M (regression co-efficient denoted by *a*) and from M to DV (regression co-efficient denoted by *b*) must be statistically significant, while either or both the paths could be insignificant due to low statistical power. The bootstrap method, therefore,

avoids Type II errors by testing whether the product of the two paths (i.e., difference between total effects of IV on DV not controlling for M, regression coefficient denoted by *c*, and the direct effect of IV on DV after controlling for M, regression coefficient denoted by *c'*; i.e.,  $c - c' = ab$ ) is significantly different from zero.

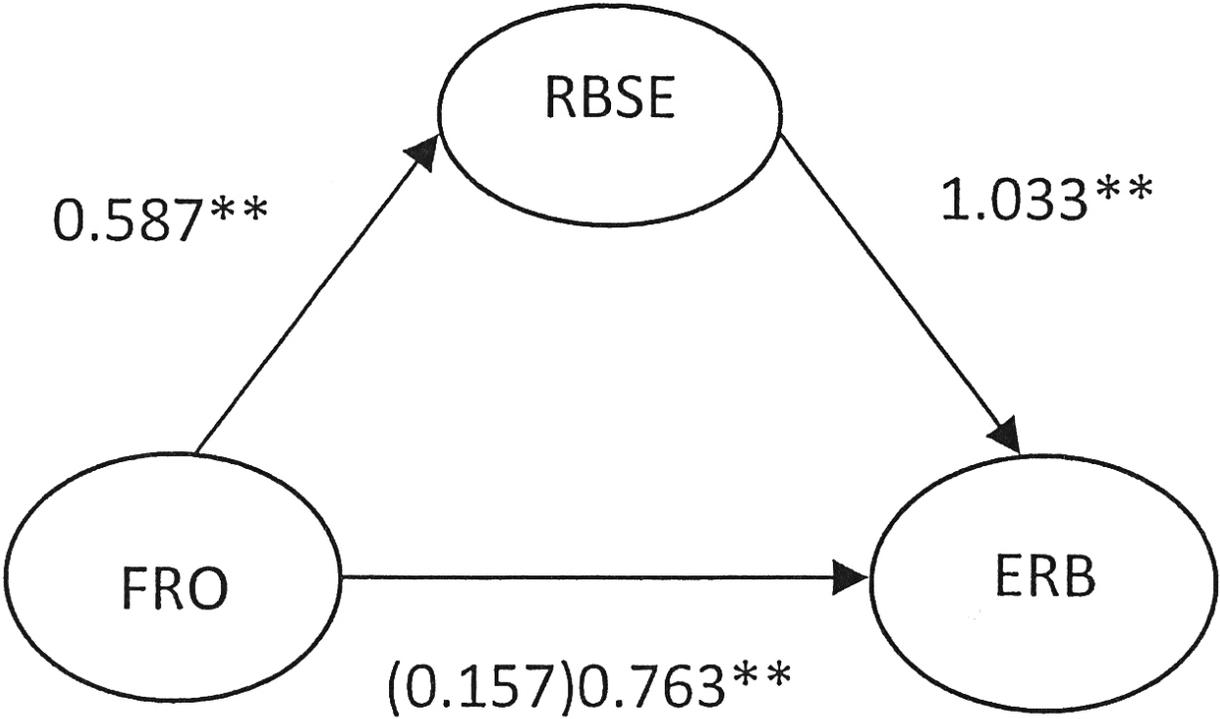
Bootstrapping performs repeated sampling from the data set and estimates the indirect effect through the mediators in each re-sampled data set. By repeating the process several times, an empirical approximation of the sampling distribution for the indirect effects due to each mediator and the total indirect effect of the set of mediators together is used to build the confidence intervals. The researchers carried out 5,000 bootstrap re-samples for each respondent was as

recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008).

Figure 2 indicates the regression weights for each of the relationships. First, the researchers find that flexible role orientation (as opposed to narrow role orientation) is positively related to RBSE ( $B = 0.587, t(158) = 7.585, p < 0.0001$ ) supporting H1. The results also show that FRO is positively associated with ERB ( $B = 0.763, t(158) = 6.057, p < 0.0001$ ) supporting H2. Finally, RBSE is also positively related to ERB ( $B = 1.033, t(158) = 10.268, p < 0.0001$ ) supporting H3. Because both path *a* and path *b* are significant, the researchers conducted mediation analysis using the bootstrapping method with bias-corrected confidence estimates (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). They obtained a 95 percent confidence interval of the

**Figure 2**  
**Results of Regression Analysis**

This figure shows the regression weights for each of the equation.



Note:  $**p < 0.01$

indirect effects with 5,000 bootstrap re-samples (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

Table 3 shows the results of direct and total effects of the variables. Examination of specific indirect effects indicated that relative magnitude of RBSE is significantly different from zero because the point estimate for RBSE (0.606) is within the 95 percent CI for RBSE, with a lower limit of 0.427 and an upper limit of 0.813 that did not contain zero.

Table 4 shows results of the mediation analysis. The results also indicate that the direct effects of FRO on ERB became insignificant ( $B = 0.156$ ,  $t(158) = 1.369$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) when controlling the RBSE, thus suggesting full mediation, therefore supporting H4.

## Discussion

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of FRO on ERB. Specifically, the researchers measured ERB through the supervisory ratings. In doing so, they measured the mediating effect of RBSE. The results show that FRO positively influenced ERB. Individuals with broader role orientation are more likely to engage in ERB because they

are more aware of the expectations from their role. The fact that individuals perceive flexibility in their role, implies that they are willing to do things that are beyond the purview of the defined scope of activities in the job description. Research shows that managers view individuals with higher levels of flexibility more favorably (Orr et al., 1989; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002), implying that managers working in today's organizations expect individuals perform more than what is expected in terms of their actual deliverables. By working under the same manager, this expectation gap could also be bridged.

This study shows that individuals with higher levels of FRO engaged are open to performing activities that are desired by the organization but may not essentially form a part of their prescribed duties. Further, the study measures the mediating effect of RBSE. The IT industry presents a breeding ground for employees to work across different teams especially. Quite often, the team of software developers needs to work with client and other team members who are separated geographically. Most often, they need to take

initiatives at work, coordinate with other teams, and communicate with clients while helping in trouble shooting—typically features expected from self-managing teams. FRO is known to predict performance in self-managing teams (Parker, 1994). They need to have a broader view of their roles, anticipate problems and work proactively. Further, these employees need to have greater RBSE to be able to perform work beyond their technical core (e.g., programming).

These results show that RBSE fully mediates the relationship between FRO and ERB. This is probably because individuals having greater confidence to deal with a wide range of activities are more likely do things that are not mandated by the role. These findings highlight that along with possessing a broader role orientation, RBSE is also necessary for individuals to engage in ERB. Because RBSE represents perceived competence in handling broader activities, individuals with higher levels of RBSE engage more in ERB compared to their counterparts with low RBSE.

**Table 3**  
**Results of Direct and Total Effects Based upon Preacher and Hayes (2004)**

<b>Paths</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>Standard error</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Significance (two tailed)</b>
FRO and RBSE (a path)	0.587	0.077	7.585	0.000
Direct effects of RBSE on ERB (b path)	1.033	0.101	10.268	0.000
Total effects of FRO on ERB (c path)	0.763	0.126	6.057	0.000
Direct effect of FRO on ERB (c' path)	0.157	0.114	1.369	0.173

Note: FRO = Flexible role orientation, RBSE = Role breadth self-efficacy, ERB = Extra-role behavior

**Table 4**  
**Mediation Result**

<b>Mediating variable</b>	<b>Effect of FRO on RBSE (a)</b>	<b>Effect of RBSE on ERB (b)</b>	<b>Indirect effect of RBSE (Bootstrap estimate) (ab)</b>	<b>95% confidence interval for the estimate (Lower limit to Upper limit)</b>
RBSE	0.587**	1.024**	0.606	0.427 to 0.813

Note: n = 160, \*\*p < 0.0001

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the authors did not consider individual differences such as autonomy orientation (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). It is possible that, by virtue of job design, sufficient autonomy is provided to employees but, if social experiences of these employees have not yielded favorable results, then they might not choose to exercise their autonomy. Gagne (2003) notes that based upon genetic and social experiences individuals vary in their

autonomy orientation rather than being regulated by their work environments. Future research can study the impact of autonomy orientation on FRO. While past studies (Orr et al., 1989; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002) show that helping behaviors not specified formally are related to favorable supervisory assessment, does supervisor expectation influence this? The authors leave this for future studies to answer. Despite having a flexible orientation and autonomy, individuals could avoid extra-role behavior for the simple reason that it is not

acknowledged or rewarded. So, future research can explore whether evaluation apprehension influences extra-role behavior. The cross sectional nature of the study limits in making any comments about causality among the study variables. The authors conducted the study in India and collected data only from a single organization and, hence, the findings cannot be generalized until confirmed through additional studies.

### **Implications**

The present study has both theoretical and practical

implications. From a theoretical perspective, knowing the role of RBSE for engagement in ERB is interesting. Having greater flexibility provides the discretion to perform activities but perceptions of individual capability influences whether they actually engage in ERB. Unless individuals are confident of their own capabilities to handle a broad range of responsibilities they might not succeed even if they have the opportunity. Unlike self-efficacy that deals with perceptions of capability to perform a particular task, RBSE deals with delivering under broader performance expectations (Parker, 1998). The present study, therefore, adds to the body of knowledge by showing that RBSE influences ERB, more specifically, RBSE fully mediates the relationship between FRO and ERB. In doing so, this study highlights the importance of RBSE in predicting ERB.

Practicing managers need to consider work design while defining jobs. Parker et al. (1997) contend that autonomy is a precondition for a given role orientation. Rigidly defined jobs with low levels of autonomy tend to develop narrow perspectives among the employees compared to jobs with high levels of autonomy. In their study, employees who experienced greater autonomy also report an increased sense of ownership for a wide range of problems and also identified a

broader range of knowledge and skills being important for successful performance. To develop proactive and broader role orientation requires increased job autonomy. Managers need to provide sufficient autonomy so that individuals can exercise their expertise in areas beyond their job description. This would mean re-considering whether to re-structure jobs and authority within the organization's social milieu. Further, since RBSE fully mediates the relationship between FRO and ERB, organizations could consider various means to develop RBSE such as job enlargement, autonomy, and increased decision making (Parker, 1998). Involving subordinates in decision making and allowing them to deal with larger responsibilities can enable them to appreciate wider aspects of their role and meet managers' expectations better.

### Conclusion

This study suggests that practicing HR managers need to consider developing RBSE to encourage ERB. Though flexibility in role is essential, unless employees are competent and confident about handling a wide range of responsibilities, it is quite unlikely that they would engage in ERB. While many behaviors expected from the role are not documented or mentioned explicitly, the need for employees to engage ERB

increases all the more. Supervisors who are able to manage the team with little input and guidance also view such behaviors favorably. This study, therefore, takes an important step in guiding HR managers in helping understand how RBSE helps in employees engaging in ERB, which, in turn, benefits the organization by increasing such pro-social behaviors.

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### Appendix A Questionnaire

Serial No.

You are kindly requested to fill the questionnaire based upon your behaviors under in most circumstances with most people within your organization. Please note that there are no correct or in-correct responses. Your responses will be treated as strictly confidential and the same will be used only for research purposes only.

Age: (years)      Job Tenure: (years)      Gender: M / F (please tick ✓)

How important are the following skills and knowledge for you to do your job effectively?  
Please rate the statements mentioned below on a scale of 1 (Least important) to 5 (Very important)

Sr	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	The strengths and weakness of (Company C's) competitors					
2	Who will be a major competitor in the future					
3	(Company C's) current market position					
4	What makes a leading product					
5	The ideas and plans (Company C) has for the next five years					
6	What new orders are coming in, in addition to the production schedule					
7	The type of relationship Company C has with external suppliers					
8	What the end user of Company C's products (i.e., the customer) wants					
9	About production costs					

How confident do you feel?

Please rate the statements mentioned below on a scale of 1 (Least confident) to 5 (Very confident)

Sr	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	Representing your work are in meetings with senior management					
2	Writing a proposal to spend money in your work area					
3	Analyzing a long term problem to find a solution					
4	Making suggestions to management about ways to improve the working of your section					
5	Helping to set goals and targets in your work area					
6	Designing new work procedures in your work area					
7	Contacting people outside the company (e.g., suppliers, customers) to discuss problems					
8	Presenting information to a group of colleagues					
9	Contributing to discussions about the company's strategy					
10	Visiting people from other departments to suggest doing things differently					

**Thank you very much for your kind co-operation!**

To be filled out by Supervisors

You are kindly requested to fill the questionnaire based upon the behaviors observed for you subordinate in most circumstances with most people within your organization. Please note that there are no correct or in-correct responses. Your responses will be treated as strictly confidential and the same will be used only for research purposes only.

Serial No.

How frequently does your subordinate?

Please rate the statements mentioned below on a scale of 1 (Least frequently) to 5 (Very frequently)

Sr	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	Attend non-required training or educational sessions on own time					
2	Make helpful suggestions to improve the organization					
3	Work before or after working hours in order to finish a task					
4	Meet standards of quality higher than the stated standards					
5	Actively and constructively seek to get his or her suggestions adopted by the organization					
6	Orient new people even though it is not required					
7	Make special attempts to gain more knowledge about job-related techniques and skills					
8	Attend functions that are not required, but that helps the organization					
9	Go out of his or her way to help others with job related problems					
10	Look for additional responsibilities and/or tasks despite the fact that it increases his or her work load					

**Thank you very much for your kind co-operation!**

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