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## **Proactive Employee Behaviors and Organizational Development: The Role of Self-Efficacy as a Moderator**

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### **Abstract**

*Organizational development is the key to success depending highly on the behaviors of individuals working within. This study has tested the impact of two types of proactive behaviors i.e., proactive problem solving (PPS) and proactive idea implementation (PII) on organizational development. The self-efficacy of employees is taken as a moderator on the direct relationship of PPS and PII with organizational development (OD). Data is collected from managerial employees of manufacturing organizations in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and KPK region in Pakistan, through self-administered survey questionnaires. Results show that PPS and PII have a positive significant relationship with organizational development. Self-efficacy strongly moderates the direct relationships of PPS and PII with OD in such a way that the higher the levels of self-efficacy, the stronger will be the relationship of PII and PPS with OD. This research provides useful insights into the organizational development literature highlighting the importance of proactivity and self-efficacy resources of employees.*

**Keywords:** Organizational Development, Proactivity, Proactive Problem Solving, Proactive Idea Implementation, Self Efficacy

### **Introduction**

Organizational development studies hold a special place in the area of managerial sciences research. The evolution of developmental studies in organizations shows that organizations are constantly changing their behaviors. This development is highly dependent on the behaviors of the people working within those organizational systems. The systems thus are driven by people's behaviors, emotions, actions, and feelings. Employee proactive behaviors are self-motivating and self-initiating patterns translated into actions that lead towards futuristic goal achievement and progression. The purpose of such behaviors is to take control of the future environmental conditions and making them feasible for employees to fit in (Frese & Fay, 2001). These well-planned actions before time, derive constructive self-change (Parker, U. K. Bindl, & K. Strauss, 2010). Some groundbreaking theories like equity theory, expectancy theory of motivation, and goal-setting theory form the basis of such goal-driven behaviors of individuals. These pioneering organizational behavior models help understand the human psychology behind how goals can derive human behaviors. Hence, personal initiative is the key to individual development and progression. As we know that, organizations are people-driven entities, so these developmental behaviors of employees, aligned with organizational goals, directly impact the progression and development of organizations at a macro level (Locke & Latham, 1994; Locke & Latham, 2006).

Previous researches in the 2000s focused on varied subjective and objective concepts of proactivity resulting in different outcomes at different levels in organizations. According to Parker, Williams, and Turner (2006) there are two basic dimensions of proactive behaviors i.e. (i) proactive problem solving; and, (ii) proactive idea implementation. In proactive problem-solving behaviors, individuals are inclined towards solving their operational levels problems according to the authority assigned by the position in the organizational hierarchy. Similarly, proactive idea implementation behaviors derive individuals to use their creativity and innovative thinking ability to modify their work practices to bring efficiency and effectiveness in their work outcomes. A process-oriented model

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presented by Parker et al. (2010) shows the proactive motivation process and its antecedents. The model posits that individual personality differences along with contextual variants influence goal achievement processes. Self-efficacy resources of individuals enable them to anticipate futuristic outcomes, which influences their current pattern of behaviors. The locus of control involves either changing oneself or changing the situations ensuring person-organization fit (Parker et al., 2010).

The roots of organizational development studies can be found in the work of Kurt Lewin, Douglas McGregor, and Wilfred Bion. The concept evolved after World War II when individuals were suffering from post-war traumas had an organization-wide effect. Field theory presented by Kurt Lewin in 1942 elaborates that employee behaviors are a function of varied personality factors and their interaction with the environment he is working in [ $B = f(P, E)$ ]. Most recent research has progressed with the postmodernism and egalitarian view of organizational development. Complexity theory supports the concept of how individual behaviors impact organizational development. The theory posits that organizations are not static, they are highly adaptive entities, and which are unpredictable complex structures depending upon how individual and collective behaviors evolve within.

The strength model of self-control presented by Baumeister (2003) posits that individual behavioral transformation highly depends on the self-control resources one possesses. Higher the resources higher will be the individual self-control and vice versa. This supports the concept of this study. This study is using SE as a moderator on the direct relationship of PPS & OD and PII & OD. this concept is also supported by the dual systems model presented by Evans (2003) which elaborates that employee behaviors are controlled by controlled and automated systems. Sometimes the individual conscious and logical effort is required to shape behaviors and often one's automated response system is active in responding to situational needs.

The purpose of this paper to discuss how various types of proactive behaviors impact organizational development at a macro level. This study contributes to the OD literature such that various antecedents at the individual, group, and organizational levels have been studied. However, the impact of various types of proactive behaviors under the influence of self-efficacy resources has not been studied as of yet. This contributes to the theoretical knowledge base of the OD literature. A recent study conducted by (Strauss, Griffin, Parker, & Mason, 2015) emphasizes that increasing employee proactivity has long-term macro-level effects on organizational outcomes. Organizations should strive to increase employee proactive behaviors and should design such interventions which help individuals to enhance and sustain proactivity at the workplace. This study is conducted in a manufacturing organizational context. As the manufacturing sector holds a prime spot in economic development and sustainability, so the pressures to contribute positively and making organizations develop consequently are the principal focus. For this, people's behavior in organizations is the key driver.

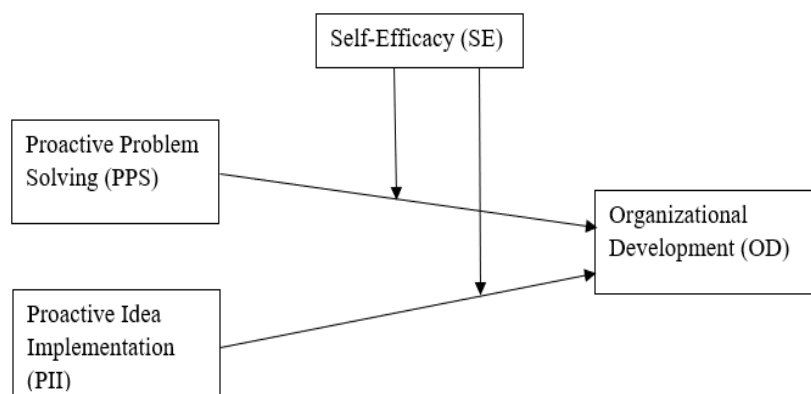


Figure 1: A proposed model of employee proactive behaviors and organizational development.

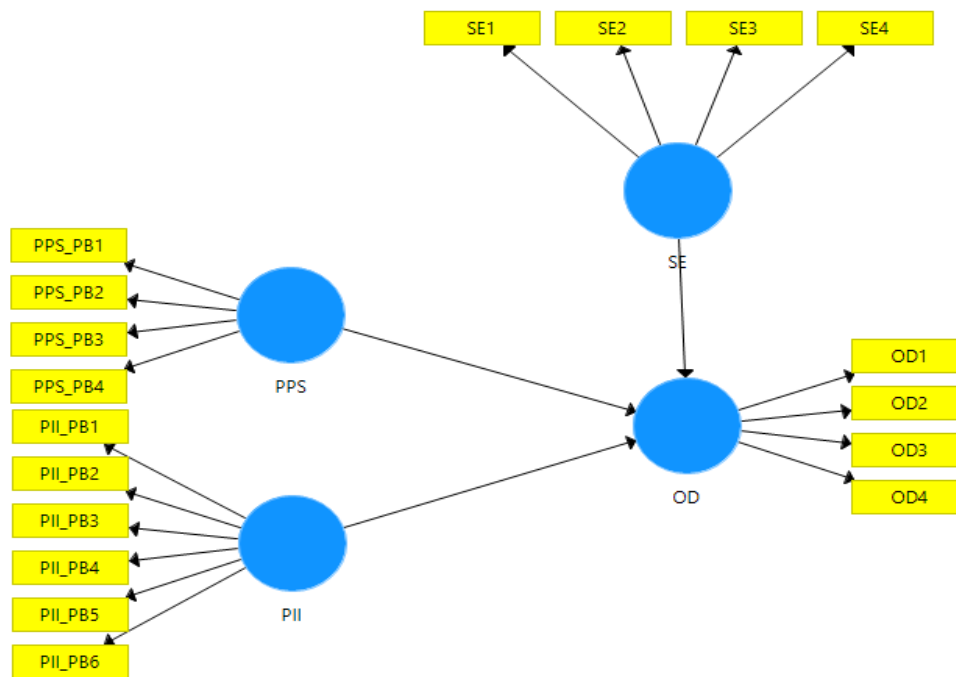


Figure 2: A proposed model of the study in Smart PLS.

**Research objectives**

Following are the research objectives of this study:

1. To understand the contribution of proactive problem-solving behaviors in organizational development
2. To understand the contribution of proactive idea implementation behaviors in organizational development
3. To understand the role of self-efficacy resources in achieving sustainable organizational development

**Literature review and hypothesis development**

Employee proactivity is an intentional transformation of employee behaviors with an inclination to seize upcoming opportunities and control future outcomes (Fay & Frese, 2001; Grant & Ashford, 2008; Parker et al., 2010). According to Parker et al., (2010) proactivity has three key attributes i.e., (i) futuristic approach; (ii) intent to change; and, (iii) self-driven. Proactive display of behaviors may include recommendations (Detert & Burris, 2007), by presenting unique policies, practices, and procedures (Fay & Frese, 2001). Equity theory, presented by an American psychologist, Adams (1963) attributed that employee performance depends on the perception of how much effort (input, like enthusiasm, hard work, skills, knowledge) one has to put in and what they have received (output, like compensation, recognition, reward, responsibility) in return.

There are two dimensions of a proactive personality i.e; (i) proactive idea implementation; and, (ii) proactive problem-solving. Change-related organizational citizenship, active job crafting, organizational change, and career development are identified as proactive behaviors (Parker et al., 2006). Proactivity is not just behavior it is a phenomenon involving expectancy, preparation, and determination to influence self or environment. Individuals need to shape their behaviors to cope up with the continuous changes in organizations, society, and technology (Fuller Jr & Marler, 2009; Parker et al., 2010; Yuan, Xu, & Li, 2018). Proactivity increases work performance (Choi, 2007; Fuller Jr & Marler, 2009; Grant, 2008; Grant & Ashford, 2008; S. K. Parker, U. K. Bindl, & K. Strauss, 2010) meaning of work (Akgunduz, Alkan, & Gök, 2018) helps to be a charismatic leader (Bateman & Crant, 1993) increase organizational knowledge, political knowledge, learning orientation and entrepreneurial cognitions (Fuller Jr & Marler, 2009).

**H1:** Proactive problem solving is positively related to organizational development.

**H2:** Proactive idea implementation is positively related to organizational development.

**Role of self-efficacy as a moderator**

Researchers believe that individuals make bounded choices in their life course. Individuals possess social, economic, and psychological resources. Depending upon the level of availability of these resources coping potential varies from individual to individual. Self-direction, personal autonomy, internal locus of control, mastery, self-efficacy, personal control, planful competence are major psychological factors that contribute towards defining the concept of agency in an individual’s life (Fabbre, 2017; Katz, 2019). Self-efficacy, similarly, focuses on the ability of an individual to take actions to generate specific future outcomes. Likewise, personal control is one’s belief that one can control their life outcomes (Galvin, Randel, Collins, & Johnson, 2018). Having self-efficacy, aspirations, expectations, and control on actions and emotions leads individuals towards better life outcomes, where health plays its crucial part as well (Bandura, 2010). Self-efficacy is another factor that varies from person to person along with cultural and situational variations. There is not enough literature that supports this phenomenon and needs to be explored concerning how SE can alter the relationship of PPS and PII with OD.

**H3:** Self-efficacy moderates the direct positive relationship between proactive problem solving and organizational development such that the relationship between proactive problem solving and organizational development is strengthened with high levels of self-efficacy.

**H4:** Self-efficacy moderates the direct positive relationship between proactive idea implementation and organizational development such that the relationship between proactive idea implementation and organizational development is strengthened with high levels of self-efficacy.

**Research methods**

**Participants and procedures**

The participants of the study included a homogenous sample of 300 managerial employees from manufacturing firms in Islamabad and the Rawalpindi region. Participants included both male and female employees. The sample was selected through a simple random sampling technique. The data were collected through a self-administered survey form. Non-respondents were sent gentle reminders to ensure maximum participation from the selected sample. To warrant confidentiality, respondents were asked to seal their responses in blank envelopes provided with the survey forms without any identifiable mark. A total of 280 responses were received back and the response rate of the current study is 93.33%. Smart PLS 3 is used as a data analysis tool.

Table 1

*Demographic profile of respondents*

S#	Demographics	Frequency (%)	
1	Gender	Male	70.1
		Female	29.9
2	Managerial level	Top management	5.6
		Middle management	53.4
		Lower management	41
3	Age (yrs.)	25-30	13.7
		31-35	12.6
		36-40	34.5
		41-45	17.2
		46 and above	22
4	Education	Less than bachelors	19.5
		Bachelors	29.4
		Masters	33.9
		Others	17.2
5	Income (Rs)	30,000 – 40,000	15.1
		41,000 – 50,000	18.6
		51,000 – 60,000	27.8
		61,000 – 70,000	20
		70,000 and above	18.5

\*n = 280

Table 1 above shows the demographic profile of the respondents. Results show that the sample included the majority of male respondents (70.1%) and 29.9% of the respondents were female employees. This may be because of predilection for hiring and promoting male employees in

organizations (Aftab & Khalid, 2019). The majority of the respondents were from the middle management level (53.4%) and belonged to the age bracket of 36-40 years (34.5%). 33.9% of respondents were Master’s Degree holders. It can be observed that the majority of the respondents were from the income level of 51,000 to 60,000 Rs.

**Study measures**

For measuring proactive behaviors scales developed by Fritz, Yankelevich, Zarubin, and Barger (2010) and scales by Seibert (1999) are used. Measures include “Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change and during the past few weeks, I attacked problems actively.” Organizational development will be measured through a 16-item, quality of work-life scale developed by Rastogi (2018). The scale includes; “I feel that I am always learning new things that help do my job better”. 5-point Likert scale is used for all the measures where 5 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree.

**Data analysis**

This study uses structural equation modeling for the analysis of the causal relationships hypothesized in the model (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2020). For data analysis Smart PLS 3 is used. Confirmatory Composite Analysis (CCA) is performed at the first step as suggested by (Joe F Hair Jr, Howard, & Nitzl, 2020). CCA is also called measurement model assessment. The second stage of analysis structural model assessment is performed (Sarstedt et al., 2020).

**Confirmatory Composite Analysis (CCA).** To assess the validity and reliability of the scales used in the study CCA is performed (Henseler et al., 2014). Table 2 below shows all the indicator loadings for study variables.

Table 2

*Indicator loadings*

	OD	PII	PPS
OD1	0.804		
OD2	0.765		
OD3	0.847		
OD4	0.740		
PII		0.694	
PII		0.737	
PII		0.649	
PII		0.673	
PII		0.798	
PII		0.781	
PPS			0.730
PPS			0.815
PPS			0.683
PPS			0.679

n = 280\*, OD = Organizational Development, PII = Proactive Idea Implementation, PPS = Proactive Problem Solving

Results in the table show that all the indicator loadings are well above the minimum threshold level of 0.5 (Joseph F Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016). The values of the indicator loadings range from 0.740 to 0.847 for the OD scale. For PII indicator loading values range from 0.649 to 0.798 for the scale of PII. For PPS indicator loadings range from 0.679 to 0.815. Figure 3 below shows the measurement model with path coefficients with directional relationships among variables.

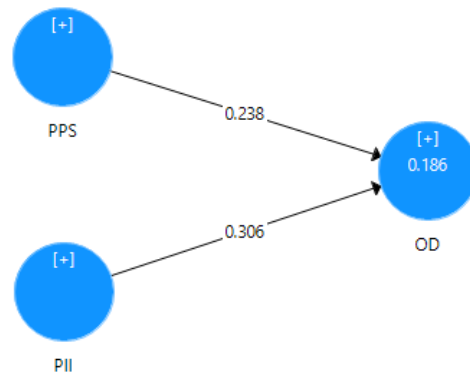


Figure 3: Measurement model with path coefficients

To determine internal consistency reliability Cronbach’s alpha (CA), Composite reliability (CR), and rho A is calculated. The results are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3

*Internal consistency measures*

Variables	CA	rho_A	CR
OD	0.799	0.814	0.869
PII	0.784	0.808	0.834
PPS	0.689	0.729	0.801

n = 280\*, OD = Organizational Development, PII = Proactive Idea Implementation, PPS = Proactive Problem Solving

Results show that all the measures of the study show high levels of internal consistency reliability. All the values are above the minimum threshold level of 0.70 (Joe F Hair Jr et al., 2020). The value of CA ranges from 0.689 to 0.799. The value of CR ranges from 0.801 to 0.869. The value of rho A ranges from 0.729 to 0.818.

Table 4 below shows the AVE values measured for conforming convergent validity of the scales used. The results presented show that all the values of AVE are above the minimum threshold level of 0.5 (Joe F Hair Jr et al., 2020). The value of AVE for OD is 0.624, for PII value of AVE is 0.761 and for PPS the value of AVE is 0.612.

Table 4

*The average value extracted (AVE)*

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
OD	0.624
PII	0.761
PPS	0.612

n = 280\*, OD = Organizational Development, PII = Proactive Idea Implementation, PPS = Proactive Problem Solving

To determine discriminant validity Fornell Larcker criterion and HTMT are calculated. Table 5 below shows the results for the Fornell Larcker criterion. Results show that all the diagonal values are higher than all the non-diagonal values of all other indicators.

Table 5

*Fornell Larcker criterion*

	OD	PII	PPS
OD	<b>0.790</b>		
PII	0.365	<b>0.679</b>	
PPS	0.313	0.245	<b>0.715</b>

n = 280\*, OD = Organizational Development, PII = Proactive Idea Implementation, PPS = Proactive Problem Solving

Similarly, the second criterion HTMT for determination of discriminant validity is used and the results in Table 6 below the threshold level of 0.90. this establishes the fact that all the constructs are unique and distinctively measure unique traits (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).

Table 6  
Hetro-Trait Mono-Trait (HTMT) criterion

	OD	PII	PPS
OD			
PII	0.398		
PPS	0.385	0.433	

n = 280\*, OD = Organizational Development, PII = Proactive Idea Implementation, PPS = Proactive Problem Solving

**Structural model assessment**

Structural model assessment is performed for path analysis and for that reason bootstrap with 3000 bootstrap samples is performed. VIF values estimated for all the indicators show that there is no multicollinearity issue as all the values are above the minimum threshold level of 5. Figure 4 below shows the structural model of the study.

The results of the structural model assessment are presented in Table 7 below. Results show that the direct relationship of PII an OD is significantly positive H1 ( $\beta = 0.306$ , t-value = 6.350, p = 0.000). The values of bias-corrected CI indicate the stability of path coefficients as they do not contain zero in between [0.202, 0.393]. For H2, results of the study indicate that PPS is significantly positively related with OD ( $\beta = 0.238$ , t-value = 4.198, p = 0.000). The values of bias-corrected CI indicate the stability of path coefficients as they do not contain zero in between [0.130, 0.342]. The results support the hypothesized relationships of the study.

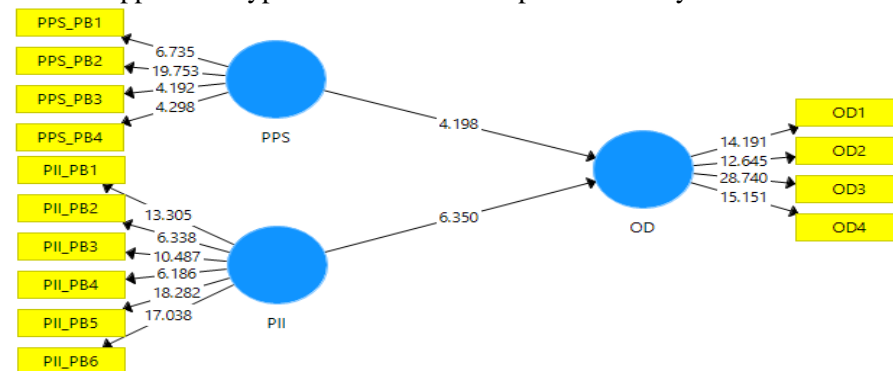


Figure 4: Structural model of the study

Table 7

Structural model path coefficients

Path	Path coefficients ( $\beta$ )	t - value	p-value	Bias corrected CI		Decision ( $p < 0.05$ )	Hypotheses	
				2.5%	97.5%		No.	Status
PII -> OD	0.306	6.350	0.000	0.202	0.393	Significant	H1	Accepted
PPS -> OD	0.238	4.198	0.000	0.130	0.342	Significant	H2	Accepted

n = 280\*, OD = Organizational Development, PII = Proactive Idea Implementation, PPS = Proactive Problem Solving

**Moderation analysis.** For analyzing the moderating effect of SE on direct relationships of PPS and PII bootstrapping procedure with 3000 bootstrap samples is estimated. Results of the analysis are presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Moderation Analysis using SE as a moderator

Paths	$\beta$	Simple effect	$f^2$	t - value	p-value	Bias corrected CI		Remarks ( $p < 0.05$ )	Hypotheses	
						2.5%	97.5%		No.	Status
PPS*SE -> OD	0.247	0.13	0.058	5.135	0.000	0.081	0.166	Significant	H3	Accepted
PII*SE -> OD	0.118	0.09	0.094	4.036	0.000	0.142	0.161	Significant	H4	Accepted

n = 280\*, OD = Organizational Development, PII = Proactive Idea Implementation, PPS = Proactive Problem Solving

The moderation results presented in table 8 above show that there are significant moderation effects on direct relationships of PPS and PII with OD ( $\beta = 0.247$  &  $0.118$  respectively). The simple effect of PPS on OD is 0.13 with an average level of SE. The size of the interaction term is  $(0.247+0.13) 0.377$ . This means that when SE increases by 1 SD the relationship of PPS and OD will be strengthened by 37.7%. On the other hand for lower levels of SE, the interaction term is  $(0.247-0.13) 0.117$ .

For the direct relationship of PII with OD, the simple effect is 0.09 with an average level of SE. The size of the interaction term is  $(0.118+0.09) 0.208$ . This means that when SE increases by 1 SD the relationship of PII and OD will be strengthened by 20.8%. On the other hand for lower levels of SE, the interaction term is  $(0.118-0.09) 0.028$ . Figure 5 below shows the moderation effect of SE on direct relationships of PPS and PII with OD.

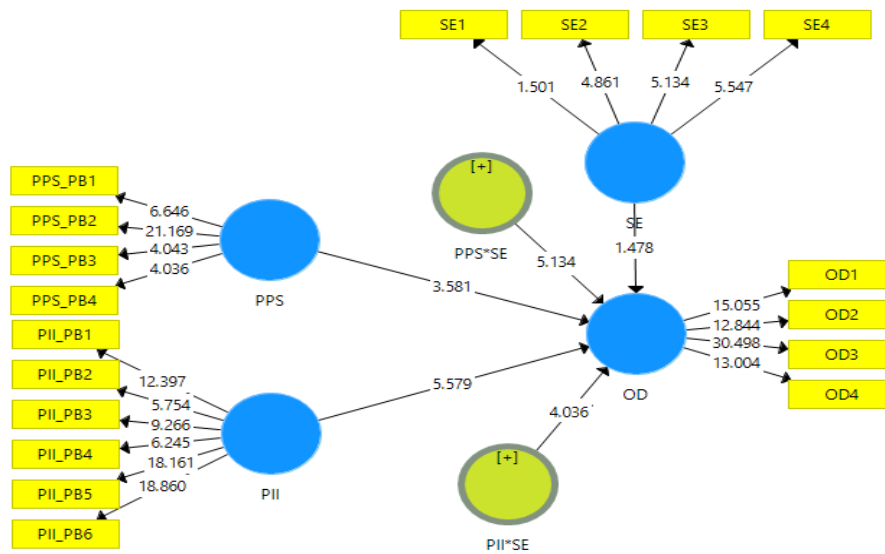


Figure 5: Moderation effects of SE

Figures 6 & 7 below show the interaction effects of PPS\*SE and PII\*SE respectively. The slope of the interaction shows that the direct relationships become stronger at a higher level of SE as the slope is steeper in both cases and at lower levels of SE the direct relationships become weaker as the slope is comparatively flatter.

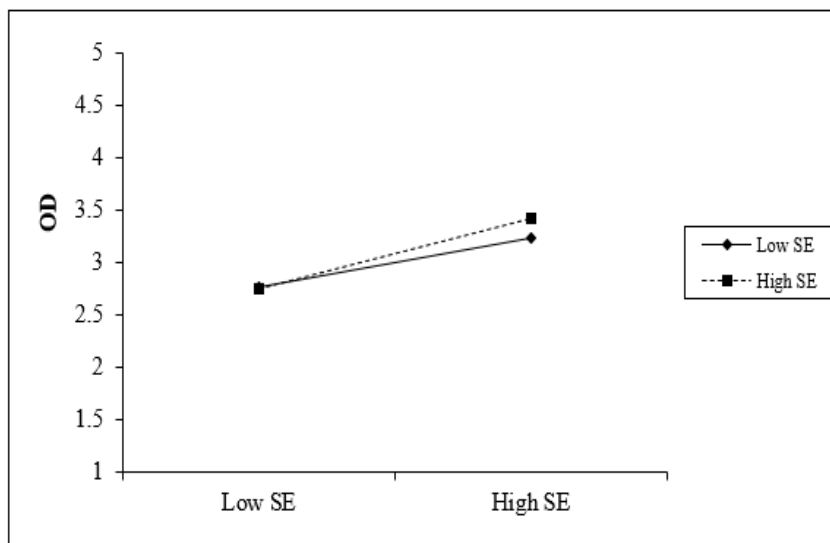


Figure 6: Slope of the interaction effect PPS\*SE



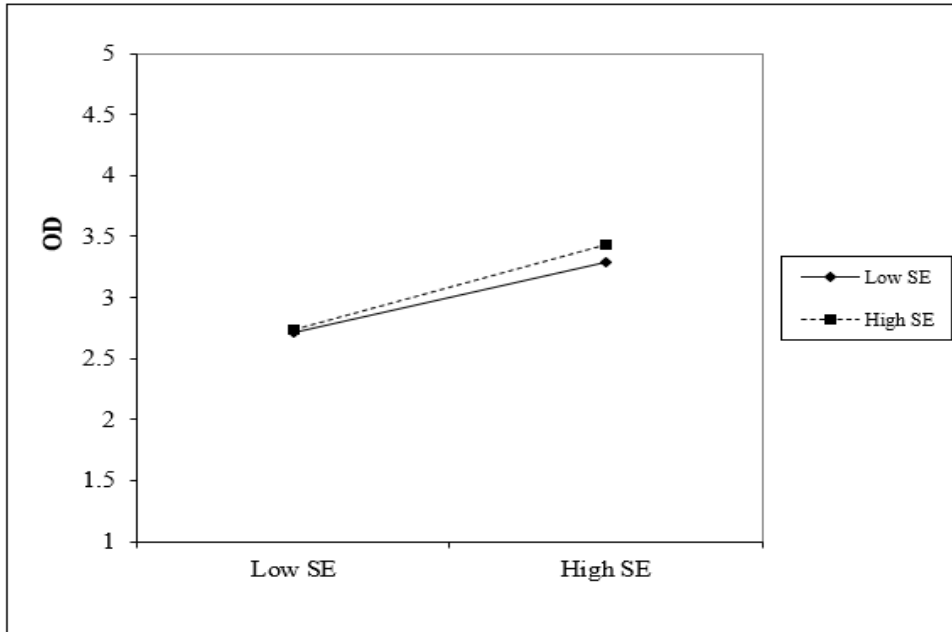


Figure 7: Slope of the interaction effect PII\*SE

The bootstrap results show a significant moderating effect of SE on the relation of PPS and OD ( $p = 0.000$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 5.135$ ). Bias corrected bootstrap CI is [0.081, 0.166], which shows the significance of the hypothesized relationship. Similarly, the bootstrap results show a significant moderating effect of SE on the relation of PII and OD ( $p = 0.000$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 4.036$ ). Bias corrected bootstrap CI is [0.142, 0.161], which shows the significance of the hypothesized relationship.

The effect size ( $f^2$ ) of the relationship of PPS with OD under the influence of SE is 0.058 which represents a large effect size (Joseph F Hair Jr et al. (2016)). This means that PPS explains 5.8% of OD in organizations. The effect size ( $f^2$ ) of the relationship of PII with OD under the influence of SE is 0.094 which represents a large effect size (Joseph F Hair Jr et al. (2016)). This means that PII explains 9.4% of OD in organizations.

**Blindfolding.** The blindfolding procedure helps to determine the predictive ability of the model (Geisser (1974); Stone (1974)). The construct cross validity redundancy is presented in Table 9 below. The value of  $Q^2$  is 0.102, which is well above zero. This means that the hypothesized model has a medium level of predictive ability of hypothesized relationships (Hair et al. (2019)). Figure 8 shows the predictive relevance of all the constructs.

Table 9

*Construct cross-validated redundancy*

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$	Remarks
OD	1120	1005.45	0.102	Medium
PII	1680	1680		
PII*SE	280	280		
PPS	1120	1120		
PPS*SE	280	280		
SE	1120	1120		

n = 280\*, OD = Organizational Development, PII = Proactive Idea Implementation, PPS = Proactive Problem Solving

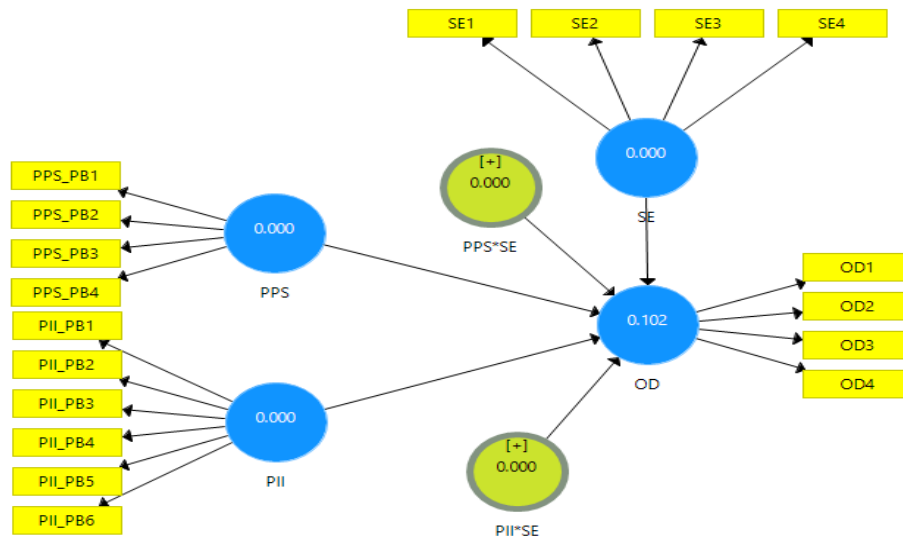


Figure 8: Blindfolding

**Discussion**

The findings of the study present some interesting insights into the relationship between employee proactive behaviors and organizational development. Research says that employee behaviors are the key source that shape organizations (Ramlall, 2008). The macro-level organizational impacts of individual-level micro behaviors in the organization are the most complex relationships to be studied. As human behaviors evolve along with the changing environments and their surroundings, this makes the organizations prone to learning and development. So, organizational development is highly dependent on how individuals behave, learn and develop themselves during routine organizational life.

Research proves that employee proactive behaviors are beneficial for organizational development (Erdogan & Bauer, 2005). There are two types of employee proactive behaviors i.e., proactive problem solving (PPS) and proactive idea implementation (PII). This research study hypothesized that PPS and PII have a direct positive relationship with organizational development (OD) (H1 & H2). Previous research findings support the results of this study (Fuller Jr & Marler, 2009; Parker et al., 2010; Yuan et al., 2018). Individuals oftentimes involve themselves in proactive behaviors due to several contextual and personal factors. The demographic characteristics of an individual are an important factor in varying levels of proactivity and their impact on organizational development. Individuals who want to progress their careers strive to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness on the job. For this, they try to handle the situations in such a manner that they try to solve their operational problems proactively. To make the future feasible they exert efforts to make their ‘today’ productive. Similarly, they use their creative and innovative skills to bring change in their surrounding environments, making sure that they have made enough contribution towards their future progression by making efforts today (Parker et al., 2010).

Research proves that employees cannot be proactive for longer periods. For them to be strong enough they must have enough self-efficacy resources. This research study hypothesized that SE moderated the direct relationship of PPS with OD and PII with OD. Results of this study prove that these hypothesized relationships are significant and SE plays its part in strengthening the hypothesized relationships. Self-efficacy is an individual’s resource that intrinsically motivates and derives one’s actions towards sustained performance (Bakker & van Woerkom, 2017; Çetin & Aşkun, 2018; Umrani et al., 2019). Various research studies have confirmed that SE acts as a strong moderator. As industries are in constant need to change themselves, individuals are required more than ever to continually improve and sustain performance levels. The necessity to have self-efficacy resources and conservation of such resources to be used for performance improvement is inevitable. So, the role of proactive behaviors in continual organizational development supported by employee self-efficacy resource provides future value for the organizations at large.

### Implications of the study

This study provides new insights into theoretical knowledge of proactive behaviors, organizational development, and self-efficacy. Various research studies have deliberated the relationships between proactive employee behaviors and organizational level outcomes. However, no study exists which has studied the impact of different types of proactivity behaviors on organizational development. The role of proactive problem solving and proactive idea implementation has been highlighted in this study which adds to the body of knowledge for proactive behaviors research. The results of the study are consistent with the assumptions of goal setting theory and the current Pakistani context of the study also affirms the theoretical base.

### Limitations and future directions

Although this study highlights the important areas of possible research, however, there still are certain limitations that future researchers may take as an opportunity to conduct future research. Common method bias may be an issue as data were collected at one point in time. Mixed method research may be used to extend the theoretical base. Time-lagged studies can also be used for data collection. The impact of demographic variables can also be tested along with self-efficacy as factors like gender may have a significant impact on the proactivity of an individual. Moreover, work environment factors are also an important influencer that can have an impact on levels of proactive behaviors of individuals.

### Conclusion

This study aimed to find out the impacts of proactive problem solving and proactive idea implementation behaviors on organizational development focusing on the role of self-efficacy as a moderating variable. The results of the study highlight that proactive problem solving and proactive idea implementation behaviors have a direct positive significant relationship with organizational development. Moreover, self-efficacy acts as a strong moderator on the direct relationship between proactive behaviors and organizational development. It is thus anticipated that scholars will advance research on proactive behaviors that is both intellectually stimulating and contributes towards knowledge advancement.

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