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Author(s): Ashish Kalra, Omar S. Itani, Sijie Sun

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“Turning role conflict into performance”: assessing the moderating role of self-monitoring, manager trust and manager identification

Ashish Kalra

University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio, USA

Omar S. Itani

Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon, and

Sijie Sun

University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Hilo, Hawaii, USA

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Abstract

Purpose – This study examines the contextual variables that can curb the negative effects of role conflict on job satisfaction and enhance the positive effect of job satisfaction on creativity and service performance. More specifically, adopting the job demands-resources theory, the authors explore the interactive effect of frontline employee (FLE) self-monitoring and FLE-manager trust on the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction. Extending this line of inquiry, the authors adopt social identity theory and analyze the moderating effect of FLE-manager identification on the relationship between job satisfaction and creativity and between job satisfaction and service performance.

Design/methodology/approach – Dyadic data utilizing 122 responses from FLEs and their managers were obtained from FLEs working with a major financial services firm in India. Structural equation modeling and PLS were used to assess the hypothesized relationships.

Findings – The negative relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction is reduced at higher levels of FLE self-monitoring and FLE-manager trust. Furthermore, FLE manager identification accentuates the effect of job satisfaction on creativity and service performance.

Practical implications – Organizations should invest in developing FLEs' personal and job-related resources to reduce the deleterious effects of role conflicts on FLEs' job outcomes. Specifically, managers should hire FLEs who are high in self-monitoring while enhancing FLE-manager trust and FLE-manager identification.

Originality/value – Role conflict is inevitable in a service job and can have serious negative downstream consequences. Hence, the study explores the important contextual factors that can help an organization develop policies to reduce the negative effects of role conflict.

Keywords Role conflict, Job satisfaction, Self-monitoring, FLE-manager trust, FLE-Manager identification, Creativity, Service performance

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The changing service exchange landscape, coupled with the recent shifts caused by the pandemic, has resulted in new dynamics in the service profession (e.g. Kalra *et al.*, 2021a; Voorhees *et al.*, 2020). Service firms face challenges that they have never faced before, such as an acute shortage of labor due to the “great resignation” and are eager to learn ways through which they can control such events. COVID-19 has further exacerbated conflicts within organizations (Shields, 2021). Such changes have also shaped the job roles of frontline employees (FLEs). FLEs must satisfy the needs of their managers, such as cross-selling and/or up-selling, while the customers they interact with might be interested in receiving

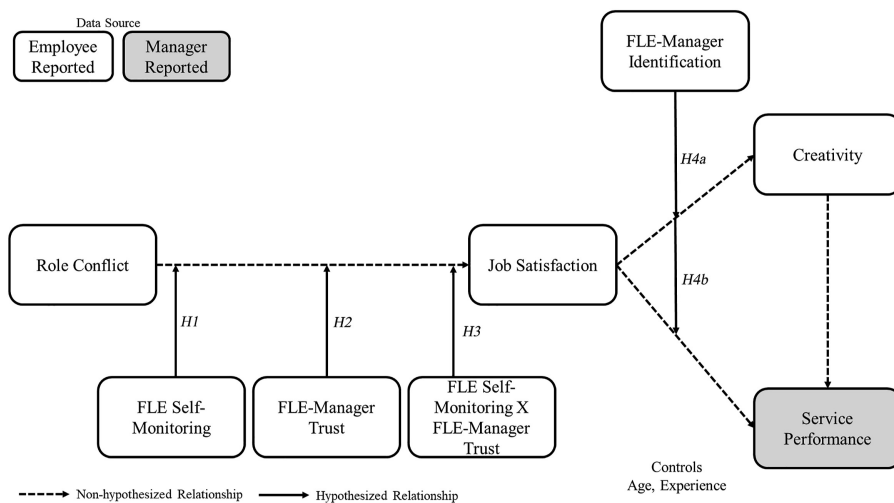


higher service quality than cross-sell/up-sell opportunities (e.g. Agnihotri *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, technology-enabled service encounters have further caused changes in FLEs' jobs, where human touch remains a point-of-service differentiation (Donthu *et al.*, 2021; Subramony *et al.*, 2021). Role conflict is especially prevalent in the FLE context, as FLEs are required to simultaneously balance the demands of managers and customers (Eddleston *et al.*, 2002; Schepers *et al.*, 2016). Hence, the reality of FLEs' job role involves the inevitable presence of such conflicting demands, termed "role conflict" (Bagozzi and Verbeke, 2020; Schepers *et al.*, 2016).

Role conflict is referred to as the conflicting demands that an individual faces in the workplace (Kahn *et al.*, 1964) and often results in negative work outcomes (Bagozzi and Verbeke, 2020; Rajabi *et al.*, 2021), particularly for FLEs (Eddleston *et al.*, 2002; Karatepe, 2006; Schepers *et al.*, 2016). Recent studies have shown that role conflict increases cognitive demands on employees (Gilbert *et al.*, 2022), which is even more important for FLEs because of the challenging and complex environment in which they work (Kalra *et al.*, 2021a; Sok *et al.*, 2022; Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, FLEs function as boundary spanners responsible for handling incompatible firm-versus-customer demands, as well as having conflicting roles to fill at work. Indeed, the negative effects of role conflict are more pronounced in the service context (Eddleston *et al.*, 2002). Role conflict has been shown to affect a wide spectrum of negative workplace outcomes, such as higher turnover intention (Deborah *et al.*, 2022), lower creativity (Coelho *et al.*, 2011) and lower job satisfaction (Karatepe, 2006), among others.

Despite the common understanding of the negative effects of role conflict on FLEs, there is still limited research in this area, and scholars have made calls to explore the ways in which firms can manage such effects (e.g. Gilbert *et al.*, 2022; Schepers *et al.*, 2016). For instance, researchers have argued that firms "could clearly benefit from a more in-depth understanding of the conditions that are conducive to turning role conflict into service improvement" (Schepers *et al.*, 2016, p. 798) and that it is "important to evaluate which resources are most prone to the impact of RC (role conflict) in a sales context" (Gilbert *et al.*, 2022, p. 335). Similarly, researchers have highlighted the importance of understanding the factors that can buffer the effects of negative workplace characteristics on FLEs' job outcomes (Subramony *et al.*, 2021). This is an important omission because, while role conflict is a reality of FLE jobs, understanding the ways through which we can reduce the negative impact of role conflict can provide significant advantages to managers. Thus, an exploration of factors that can accentuate the negative impact of role conflict and simultaneously exacerbate the impact of job satisfaction on work outcomes can expand our understanding of the domain while helping managers in the arena of policy design. We explored the contingent conditions of the relationships between role conflict, job satisfaction, creativity and service performance. Specifically, we answer the following research questions: (1) What are the roles of personal (FLE self-monitoring) and job resources (FLE-manager trust) in mitigating the negative effect of role conflict on job satisfaction? (2) How does FLE-manager identification affect the outcomes related to job satisfaction? The hypothesized model is illustrated in Figure 1.

With this backdrop, our study utilizes the job demands-resources (JDR) theory (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007, 2009) to explore the moderating impact of personal and job resources on the effect of role conflict on job satisfaction. The JDR theory posits that increased job demands lead to negative work outcomes, while some personal and job resources help attenuate the negative effects of job demands. More specifically, in this study, we suggest that two variables – FLE self-monitoring (personal resource) and FLE-manager trust (job resource) – may play a moderating role in the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction and may help reduce the effect of conflict on satisfaction. Self-monitoring is defined as one's ability to understand social and situational cues and modify, regulate and control subsequent self-presentation and expressive behaviors to manage status and self-image in social contexts (Snyder, 1974; Snyder and Gangestad, 1986).



The negative effects of role conflict

Figure 1.
Hypothesized model

Source(s): Figure created by author

FLE self-monitoring, considered important for FLEs to perform well in their jobs (Alnakhli *et al.*, 2020; Kudret *et al.*, 2019), is associated with an individual’s willingness to amend their social image to behave in agreement with their expected social roles (Kudret *et al.*, 2019). “FLE-manager trust” refers to the extent to which an employee has confidence in their manager’s reliability and integrity (Rich, 1997). Employee trust is a key factor that drives organizational effectiveness, efficiency and outcomes (Tzafrir *et al.*, 2004; Zeffane and Connell, 2003) and facilitates FLEs’ responses to the work environment.

Furthermore, adopting social identity theory (Tajfel, 1972), our study also explores the moderating effect of FLE-manager identification on the relationship between job satisfaction, creativity and service performance. FLE-manager identification is defined as “the extent to which the salesperson [or FLE] perceives a sense of oneness with the supervisor and is an important part of one’s own self-identity” (Mallin *et al.*, 2022, p. 245). FLE-manager identification is an aspect of FLEs’ self-concept that helps employees manage the demands posed by the job situations and acts as the critical factor that FLEs can rely on in driving their work behaviors (Zhang and Chen, 2013). FLE-manager identification reflects the emotional bond that an FLE has with their manager (Zhang and Chen, 2013) and is often considered a part of the powerful organizational support system for employees (Wayne *et al.*, 1997). FLE-manager identification is also an important part of FLEs’ social self-concept (Ahearn *et al.*, 2013) that promotes effective handling of FLEs’ workplace behaviors.

By attempting to gain empirical evidence of these relationships, we contribute to the scholarly work on service research in two ways. First, while the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction has received attention in past research, assessing the factors that can curb the negative effects of role conflict is a crucial step toward understanding the complex nature of the service profession. In spirit, adopting JDR theory, we postulate that personal resources such as self-monitoring and job resources such as FLE-manager trust, individually and interactively, can shut down the negative influence of role conflict. Self-monitoring has been frequently examined as an important variable in the sales and service literature (Alnakhli *et al.*, 2020; Kudret *et al.*, 2019; Merk and Michel, 2019). We unveil the moderating impact of an often-overlooked but theoretically imperative construct in the

relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction. In addition, we contribute to the understanding of the importance of FLE-manager trust in curbing the adverse effects of role conflict. Second, we explore the moderating role of FLE-manager identification in enhancing the effects of job satisfaction on creativity and service performance. We argue that FLE-manager identification is an important relational factor that can help accentuate the effects of job satisfaction. Overall, we integrate JDR theory and social identity theory and focus on assessing the factors that can help curb the negative effect of role conflict on job satisfaction while simultaneously assessing the factors that can enhance the effects of job satisfaction on creativity and service performance.

Theoretical framework

Job demands-resources (JDR) theory

The JDR theory contends that job demands and resources affect employees' work outcomes (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). Job demands are defined as "those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological cost" (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007, p. 312). For instance, an FLE might be under constant pressure to perform both hunting (such as cross-sell/up-sell) and farming (such as building relationships) activities, which can create a stressful environment. Job resources are defined as "physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or: functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, or stimulate personal growth, learning, and development" (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007, p. 312). For instance, manager support and trust can function as support systems that aid FLEs in maneuvering between job demands.

Resources also include "those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual" (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 516). As mentioned before, research has also proposed that besides job resources, there are other personal resources that offer critical support in managing job demands. Personal resources are defined as "aspects of the self that are generally linked to resiliency and refer to individuals' sense of their ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully" (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007, p. 124). JDR theory is prominent in the FLE literature and describes the role of job demands and resources within FLEs' job context (e.g. Allison *et al.*, 2016; Itani and Inyang, 2015; Panagopoulos *et al.*, 2018; Peasley *et al.*, 2020).

FLEs often operate in social settings, which affect their actions and job delivery. Specifically, the demanding nature of an FLE's job requires them to frequently assess the emotional context of each service encounter and adapt their emotions to effectively serve customers. Hence, the tendency to self-regulate emotions to enhance the quality of interactions with customers is an integral part of an FLE's role. Self-regulation represents idiographic processing practices and knowledge makeup shaped by social interactions (Boekaerts and Cascallar, 2006). Personal resources (i.e. self-monitoring) can help FLEs exercise control over the demands they experience at work (Lussier *et al.*, 2021) and regulate their reactions to accommodate social situations with incompatible requests. Similarly, a recent study has shown that self-monitoring is closely "associated with a tendency to modify one's behavior to fit the demands of the situation" (Kudret *et al.*, 2019, p. 199).

The FLE's relationship with the manager influences their motivation level (e.g. Agnihotri and Krush, 2015; Jung *et al.*, 2021). This relationship is captured by the trust between an FLE and manager. Leaders are known to supply essential resources to their subordinates (Lussier *et al.*, 2021; Rafferty and Griffin, 2006) and trust enhances the social exchange between the FLE and manager (Schwepker, 2019; Zhang and Chen, 2013). FLE-manager trust acts as a job

resource that helps FLEs conduct their duties as required (e.g. [Brashear et al., 2005](#); [Schwepker, 2019](#)). In spirit, an FLE's self-monitoring abilities and trust in their manager play a critical role in the effective management of their assigned responsibilities.

Applied to the current framework, FLEs rely on their personal and job resources to manage conflicting job demands and achieve higher outcomes, such as job satisfaction. Consistent with JDR research ([Bakker and Demerouti, 2007](#); [Xanthopoulou et al., 2007](#)), all role conflict affects an FLE's job satisfaction. In line with this theory, personal resources (i.e. self-monitoring) and job resources (i.e. FLE-manager trust) will support an FLE in adapting to the increase in job demands caused by role conflict, thus lessening its unfavorable impact on job satisfaction.

Social identity theory

In addition to employing JDR theory, we employ social identity theory to discover the accentuating impact of FLE-manager identification on job satisfaction, creativity and service performance relationships. According to social identity theory, an individual has two identities to which they can relate: personal identity and social identity. Personal identification is derived from social identity theory, which presupposes "the individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance" ([Tajfel, 1972](#), p. 292).

An individual's social identity refers to the meaning that the individual assigns to the social group. The notion of identification allows an individual to be strongly associated with a group and determines the extent to which the individual attributes the characteristics of the group to oneself. Traditionally, the concept of identification has expanded to include the organization (organizational identification), and scholars have begun to include identification with the manager as another important aspect of the FLE's social identity ([Ahearne et al., 2013](#); [Badrinarayanan et al., 2020](#); [Mallin et al., 2022](#)). FLE-manager identification denotes the degree to which an FLE identifies with the manager and considers the manager's esteem a part of oneself. Initially applied in the context of reciprocal relationships, researchers have argued that FLE-manager identification can exist without any expectation of reciprocity and is the focus of the current study. In this case, FLE-manager identification is a part of perceived personal identification and an extension of one's self-concept ([Mallin et al., 2022](#)). FLE-manager identification extends the definition of the self to include the values and goals of the manager as one's own pursuits. Some researchers have also argued that FLE-manager identification adds incremental value to existing literature, as fostering FLE-manager identification is more manageable and has longer-term consequences than any other form of identification (such as organizational identification) ([Ahearne et al., 2013](#)). FLE-manager identification enhances FLEs' motivation to do the job and achieve the desired goals. Moreover, FLE-manager identification enhances FLEs' pursuit of mutual goals. Applied to the current framework, we propose that FLE-manager identification helps to accentuate the effects of job satisfaction on creativity and service performance as it increases to a higher level.

Model development

The moderating role of self-monitoring in the role conflict and job satisfaction relationship

Service exchanges are emotionally rich encounters and pose challenging demands that require FLEs to constantly play multiple roles and regulate their behaviors for effective service delivery, which might affect their levels of satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an affective construct that measures the overall perceptions of an FLE's emotional state of being. When FLEs experience conflict in their day-to-day jobs, they are pressured to perform in incongruent situations that can lead to them becoming disillusioned and, hence, unsatisfied

(e.g. [Rodriguez-Escudero et al., 2010](#)). Often, FLEs use their personal resources to overcome these demands.

Self-monitoring is an important individual capability that emerges from research that argues that people differ in terms of how much they observe and regulate information from their social contexts. Self-monitoring reflects the tendency of individuals to perform better and enhance their outcomes ([Snyder, 1987](#)) as high self-monitors are more attentive to situational cues that act as guides for reacting to situations at work (e.g. [Yang et al., 2019](#)). Self-monitoring allows an additional understanding of the expressive behaviors of others and the capacity to adjust one's self-presentation ([Lennox and Wolfe, 1984](#)), which facilitates the link between thoughts and behaviors to allow one to present an anticipated self-image to others ([Snyder, 1974](#)). Self-monitoring provides competencies relevant to FLEs in their job ([Dubinsky and Hartley, 1986](#); [Kückelhaus et al., 2020](#); [Mikeska et al., 2015](#); [Panagopoulos and Ogilvie, 2015](#)), including understanding the expressive behaviors of others and possessing the aptitude to adapt to self-presentation requirements ([Alnakhli et al., 2020](#)).

Research has shown that high self-monitors behave according to the particular situations at hand and can change their behaviors to fit different situations ([Snyder, 1987](#)). In line with this notion, [Alnakhli et al. \(2020\)](#) found that self-monitoring supports FLEs in adapting their selling approaches and becoming more flexible in their interactions with customers. Individuals with high self-monitoring tendencies can react strongly to incongruent situations ([Snyder and Gangestad, 1982](#)) such as those that result from role conflict. Self-monitoring allows FLEs to modify their behaviors and self-presentation ([Lennox and Wolfe, 1984](#)), thus they are better able to mitigate the unfavorable effects of the demands that they experience at work. Furthermore, self-monitoring is positively associated with certain influence tactics such as assertiveness, building coalitions, exchanges, ingratiation, rationality and upward appeals ([Barbuto and Moss, 2006](#)). The demands experienced by FLEs due to role conflict require self-regulation and self-motivation mechanisms that provide resources to mitigate the demands and negative effects of such conflict. According to [Bandura \(1991\)](#), self-monitoring is a vital aspect of self-regulation and plays a key role in self-motivation and self-influence. Self-monitoring also equips FLEs with self-capabilities to adapt their behaviors and to initiate a process of corrective and constructive changes (e.g. [Bandura, 1991](#)), thus being able to take action and make changes to move toward preferred goals ([Panagopoulos and Ogilvie, 2015](#)). Additionally, employees with high self-monitoring perceive higher levels of job autonomy than employees with low self-monitoring ([Bizzi and Soda, 2011](#)). Therefore, they are more capable of working with multiple groups that operate differently and manage conflicting job requests. We claim that self-monitoring, as a stable personal resource, allows FLEs to remain focused on their job when facing contradictory demands, such as those faced in the presence of role conflict.

Research has shown that high self-monitors may be more resilient over time owing to their ability to act upon situational cues and to fit into different social circumstances ([Kudret et al., 2019](#)). Trait activation theory suggests that personality traits, such as self-monitoring, are mostly activated in the presence of contextual factors ([Tett and Burnett, 2003](#)) such as working with multiple groups who operate differently. This aligns with one of the JDR theories' propositions that personal resources are particularly impactful under highly stressful conditions ([Bakker et al., 2007](#)). Hence, we argue that FLEs with high self-monitoring capabilities manage their actions, foresee consequences, assess the suitability of thoughts based on results and modify their behaviors and thoughts when facing conflicting demands at work. Therefore, we hypothesize as follows:

- H1. FLE self-monitoring moderates the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction, such that FLE self-monitoring attenuates the negative relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction.

The moderating role of FLE-manager trust in the role conflict and job satisfaction relationship

The negative effects of role conflict

FLE-manager trust includes beliefs about the trustworthiness of the other party (Gillespie and Mann, 2004). It embraces an FLE's beliefs in the integrity and fairness of the manager (MacKenzie *et al.*, 2001; Schwepker and Schultz, 2013). While there can be different foci of FLE trust, such as trust in other team members or in firms, FLE-manager trust is one of the most essential social resources in a selling context (e.g. Flaherty and Pappas, 2000) because the FLE-sales manager's relationship is crucial in driving positive work outcomes and "is considered a critical skill for the success of the sales organization" (Mulki *et al.*, 2006, p. 19, see also Strutton *et al.*, 1993). Accordingly, trust has become a salient issue in the FLE-manager relationship because it is responsible for guiding the social exchanges that take place in the workplace (Agnihotri and Krush, 2015; Brashear *et al.*, 2005; Nienaber *et al.*, 2015; Schwepker, 2019). To this end, trust in the manager plays a significant role, as evidenced by its effect on FLEs' job behaviors (e.g. Agnihotri and Krush, 2015; Mulki *et al.*, 2006). In line with this notion, FLEs are more inclined to trust their managers when they experience fair treatment and different forms of integrity (Agnihotri and Krush, 2015; Flaherty and Pappas, 2000; Schwepker, 2019).

Sales managers form a major element of an FLE's job experience. Thus, it follows that FLEs are more satisfied when they have a fair and trustworthy sales manager (Rich, 1997). FLEs prefer trustworthy job relationships because of the positive effect of trust on work attitudes, behaviors and outcomes. For example, an FLE who trusts his or her manager is more likely to acquire guidance and monitoring from the manager when faced with conflicting requests from others at work. Brashear *et al.* (2003) found that FLE-manager trust increases an FLE's positive perceptions toward their job by construing it as more valuable and better than other jobs. Furthermore, trust in one's manager can increase in-role performance, organizational/individual-directed citizenship behaviors and commitment and decrease turnover intention (Brower *et al.*, 2009; Colquitt *et al.*, 2007; Connell *et al.*, 2003).

Scholars have proposed trust as a relational process that is a requirement for effective sales management (e.g. Agnihotri and Krush, 2015; Mulki *et al.*, 2006). The presence of trust between FLEs and their managers is a signal of quality relationships between the two parties. Sales managers provide FLEs with advice, direction, training and praise to increase effort and enhance performance (Rich, 1997). FLEs rely on their managers for guidance and support in managing different demands (e.g. Gabler *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the trust evidenced in the FLE-manager relationship facilitates the exchange of other job resources that the manager can provide to FLEs to use in managing conflicting demands and accomplishing daily sales tasks. Trust facilitates access to resources for employees with more personal interactions and mutual trust (Burke *et al.*, 2007). We argue that the presence of a trusted manager provides FLEs with valuable resources, such as experience, love and support to overcome any of the tasks assigned to FLEs without adequate resources.

Managers' dependability, fairness and integrity have an impact on FLE's attitudes and behaviors at work (Agnihotri and Krush, 2015; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Mulki *et al.*, 2006; Schwepker, 2019) and better communication takes place between parties (Mackenzie, 2010; Willemyns *et al.*, 2003). FLEs' reactions toward conflicting demands may be affected by the trust-based relationship they have with their managers. Trust in a relationship works as a substitute for control, as it can reduce the costs associated with exchanges (Bijlsma and van de Bunt, 2003).

Hence, we suggest that FLE-manager trust is a significant job resource that can support FLEs in overcoming the negative consequences of conflicting situations. Trust in one's manager improves perceptions of the manager's effectiveness (Gillespie and Mann, 2004) and is associated with the manager's ability to generate knowledge and efficiently use resources (Caldwell *et al.*, 2010; Lee *et al.*, 2010). Flaherty and Pappas (2000) argued that parties involved

in trusted relationships respond through greater commitment to the job they do. Further, [Agnihotri and Krush \(2015\)](#) proposed that an elevated level of trust leads to greater responsibility for moral well-being and yields greater compliance by the FLE.

Higher levels of FLE-manager trust induce greater understanding and commitment to the day-to-day job demands FLEs face, making them better prepared to internalize the challenging job requirements based on which they act. Therefore, higher trust levels result in behaviors that “guard the salespeople against letting the sales manager down” ([Agnihotri and Krush, 2015](#), p. 167), which induces effective handling of conflicting situations. Job resources such as FLE-manager trust can influence job satisfaction when FLEs are confronted with prominent role conflict demands (e.g. [Bakker et al., 2007](#); [Seers et al., 1983](#)). A trusted sales manager cooperates with FLEs and helps them reduce the challenges caused by conflicting demands at work. This trust is particularly effective in the presence of high job demands (e.g. [van Woerkom et al., 2016](#)) and results in a less negative impact of role conflict on job satisfaction. This aligns with the JDR theory that job resources are particularly impactful under highly stressful conditions ([Bakker et al., 2007](#)). Hence, we postulate the following hypothesis.

- H2. FLE-manager trust moderates the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction, such that FLE-manager trust attenuates the negative relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction.

The interactive effect of FLE-manager trust and self-monitoring in the role conflict and job satisfaction relationship

The discussion above shows that self-monitoring and FLE-manager trust exert moderating effects on the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction. While JDR theory does not provide references on the interaction effect of job resources and personal resources, scholars have explored the interactive effects of personal and job resources in driving work engagement, such as job satisfaction ([Xanthopoulou et al., 2009](#)). We extend this theory and anticipate the positive interactive effects of self-monitoring and FLE-manager trust. As discussed before, FLE-manager trust enhances FLEs’ job commitment ([Flaherty and Pappas, 2000](#)), which in turn helps them handle job situations more efficiently. FLE-manager trust is an important job resource that helps FLEs not only manage conflicting and demanding situations, but also induce stronger relationships among employees. Such improved working relations also help FLEs understand the appropriate behaviors needed to achieve the organizational goal of higher service performance. Thus, as high self-monitoring FLEs quickly adapt to different situations, this adaptation will be enhanced in an environment where they are valued and have better relationships with their managers.

The person-environment (PE) fit theory ([Kristof-Brown et al., 2005](#)) posits that PE fit exists when there is congruence between environmental supply (e.g. FLE-manager trust) and employee values that are related to employees’ personal resources (i.e. FLE self-monitoring) ([van den Broeck et al., 2010](#)). The match between the environment’s supplies and employees’ resources will contribute to employees’ optimal functioning ([Edwards and Shipp, 2007](#)) as this alignment helps shape employees’ views and use of available organizational supplies (e.g. [Roe and Ester, 1999](#)). This, in turn, will help FLEs attain their goals (e.g. [Schneider, 1987](#)) in managing role-conflict and job satisfaction relationships. Hence, FLEs who have higher trust in their managers will be in a better position to combine their personal resources to achieve the desired outcome. Stated differently, we argue that both resources together constitute compatible job characteristics that result in higher value alignment, higher need to achieve the desired outcomes from the task in hand, and hence, higher job satisfaction in the presence of role conflict. This also follows the contention that personality traits and job characteristics can have additive effects on work outcomes (e.g. [van den Berg and Feij, 2003](#)). Hence, we propose the following hypothesis.

H3. FLE-manager trust moderates the interaction effect of FLE self-monitoring on the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction, such that job satisfaction is highest among FLEs who are high self-monitors and have higher trust in managers.

The negative effects of role conflict

The moderating role of FLE-manager identification in job satisfaction-creativity and job satisfaction-service performance relationships

The concept of FLE-manager identification emanates from the concept of personal identification (Ashforth *et al.*, 2016), in which an individual describes themselves with respect to others in the social environment. In our context, we propose that FLE manager identification is a crucial factor that helps strengthen the positive impact of job satisfaction on creativity and service performance.

FLE creativity is defined as the creation of new ideas or solutions and the novelty of behaviors shown by FLEs while carrying out job activities (Kalra *et al.*, 2021b; Wang and Netemeyer, 2004). Similarly, in this study, service performance refers to a manager's evaluation of an FLE's ability to serve customer needs (Baker *et al.*, 2014). We argue that FLE manager identification accentuates the effect of job satisfaction on creativity and service performance.

Higher FLE-manager identification is associated with a higher understanding and sharing of common values and goals by the FLE with managers (Ahearne *et al.*, 2013; Aron *et al.*, 2004). This higher understanding of goals and values also results in a better adjustment to the work environment to achieve the common good. For instance, FLEs who have high FLE-manager identification work with the mindset of achieving the goals that will help the manager achieve their task outcomes. This theory is also in agreement with social identity theory, which claims that an individual who identifies with the source will be more willing to put in extra effort to achieve goals for the common good. This is true for FLEs who identify with their managers, as such identification helps to reshape FLEs' personal values and belief systems that are shaped to achieve better workplace behaviors. In line with this notion, researchers have also argued that FLE-manager identification leads to higher self-enhancement through the internalization process of the FLEs, leading to better adjustment to the work environment (Ashforth *et al.*, 2016; Badrinarayanan *et al.*, 2020).

FLEs with higher FLE-manager identification are more inclined to accept different organizational initiatives focused on developing skills (Fuchs, 2011). FLEs have all the necessary abilities to adjust to the work culture as it enhances FLEs' commitment to the organization and the manager (Zhu *et al.*, 2013). Nowlin *et al.* (2019) also argued that FLE-manager identification is role-based and directly influences the performance of FLEs in achieving the aspirations of their managers and the organization. FLE-manager identification is also related to higher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Mallin *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, Dutton *et al.* (1994) also showed that employees with higher identification tend to exert more effort to achieve a shared goal due to higher emotional attachment to the target (manager). Thus, FLE-manager identification incites FLEs to become loyal to their managers and alter their value systems to match those of their managers. Thus, FLE-manager identification reinforces the motivation of FLEs who are highly satisfied with their jobs. Highly satisfied FLEs will exert more effort to achieve task-related goals, and these efforts will be further enhanced for FLEs who experience higher identification with their managers.

FLEs experiencing job satisfaction are also interested in achieving organizational goals because of their higher inherent motivation to pursue such goals (Coelho *et al.*, 2011; Wilson and Frimpong, 2004). Because higher job satisfaction is related to higher confidence and more focus on customer-oriented behaviors, FLEs who are also experiencing FLE manager identification will be even more interested in achieving outcomes such as creativity and

service performance. This will happen because they are aware of the benefits that such outcomes can give to their identified target (i.e. the manager), in line with social identity theory. Hence, higher FLE-manager identification coupled with higher job satisfaction functions as a “super” tool to pursue objectives of the role of FLEs, which in our context implies depicting increased creative behaviors and service performance by better serving customers. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

- H4a.* FLE-manager identification positively moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and creativity, such that the relationship between job satisfaction and creativity is stronger at higher levels of FLE-manager identification.
- H4b.* FLE-manager identification positively moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and service performance, such that the relationship between job satisfaction and service performance is stronger at higher levels of FLE-manager identification.

Method

Sample and data collection

We selected the financial services sector as an appropriate sampling frame for our framework because of the high level of complexity involved in this industry (Chen *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, the need to offer highly customized services along with creative solutions is prominent in the financial services sector. We gathered data from a leading private sector financial services provider in India, which suits our context. The organization employs FLEs who sell new products, provide comprehensive service to their existing clients and are tasked with meeting prospective customers. With the support of senior management as part of the human resource development program, we collected the data in a two-step process. First, the FLEs answered a questionnaire sent to them. Second, after the responses from these employees were collected, the human resources department helped us distribute the survey to their managers, who then reported on the FLEs' service performance. Overall, the final dataset consisted of 122 matched FLE-manager responses. Sixty-two percent of the employees were male, with a reported average experience of 5.2 years.

Measures

In this study, all measures were adopted from prior studies and measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree,” 7 = “strongly agree”). *Role conflict*, *job satisfaction*, *self-monitoring*, *FLE-manager trust*, *FLE-manager identification* and *creativity* were based on responses from FLEs. *Role conflict* was measured using the four-item scale developed by Rizzo *et al.* (1970). While *job satisfaction* was measured using the four items from Churchill *et al.* (1974), *self-monitoring* was measured using a shortened five-item scale adapted from Lennox and Wolfe (1984) to fit the context and scope of this study. *FLE-manager trust* was measured using a three-item scale adopted from Agnihotri and Krush (2015). *FLE-manager identification* was measured using a five-item measure from Ahearne *et al.* (2013). *Creativity* was measured using five items, adapted from Wang and Netemeyer (2004). The FLEs also self-reported age, gender and years of experience. The measure of *service performance* was based on responses from managers who were contacted with the help of the senior management of the firm. Following past research on measuring performance from managers to reduce systematic bias (Ahearne *et al.*, 2008), we utilized a three-item measure of service performance from Baker *et al.* (2014). FLEs' age and years of experience were included in the model as covariates (e.g. Briggs *et al.*, 2018). The correlations and descriptive statistics of the constructs are presented in Table 1.

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Role Conflict (1)	4.53	1.47	(0.85)									
Job Satisfaction (2)	5.33	1.21	-0.26 ^{***}	(0.90)								
Creativity (3)	5.91	0.72	0.13	0.39 ^{**}	(0.79)							
Service Performance (4)	5.30	1.06	-0.14 ^{**}	0.54 ^{**}	0.34 ^{**}	(0.84)						
FLE-Self-Monitoring (5)	4.91	1.24	0.40 ^{**}	0.19 [*]	0.19 [*]	-0.01	(0.75)					
FLE-Manager Trust (6)	5.41	1.44	-0.20 ^{**}	0.62 ^{**}	0.23 [*]	0.49 ^{**}	0.21 [*]	(0.90)				
FLE-Manager Identification (7)	5.49	1.31	-0.25 ^{**}	0.80 ^{**}	0.30 ^{**}	0.65 ^{**}	0.10	0.81 ^{**}	(0.78)			
Age (8)	28.21	4.82	0.17	0.07	0.14	0.09	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.01		
Experience (9)	5.23	2.03	-0.05	0.03	0.12	0.15	-0.12	-0.10	-0.07	-0.07	0.58 ^{**}	-

Note(s): ^{*} $p < 0.01$; ^{**} $p < 0.05$. Values below the diagonal are correlation coefficients. Values on the diagonal represent AVE

Source(s): Table created by author

The negative effects of role conflict

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

Hypothesis testing

Measurement model

We evaluated the relationships in SmartPLS 3.0 (Chin *et al.*, 2003; Ringle *et al.*, 2015) to assess the psychometric properties of the constructs used in this study and to run the structural model. Partial least squares (PLS) is an appropriate technique when the sample size is small compared to the construct items used in the study and when making causal inferences from the model (Ringle *et al.*, 2015). PLS has been utilized in recent studies (e.g. Chen *et al.*, 2017; Kalra *et al.*, 2021a) and is an appropriate methodology, considering the exploratory nature of the current study. The reliability and validity of the constructs were evaluated by Cronbach's alpha, which exceeds the 0.70 cutoff of 0.80, composite reliability (CR), which exceeds the 0.80 cutoff (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and average variance extracted (AVE), which were more than the squared correlations of the constructs. We also checked the constructs' discriminant validity by evaluating the HTMT ratios. After deleting the items with high or low factor loadings, all ratios were well below the recommended cutoff of 0.9, providing additional evidence of the discriminant validity of the constructs used. All standardized loadings were equal to or greater than 0.65, providing evidence of convergent validity. See the Appendix for further details.

Common method bias

We tested for the presence of CMB using various methods. First, Harman's (1976) one-factor test was conducted. The analysis showed that more than one factor of eigenvalue 1 was generated in the dimension-reduction analysis, representing the absence of CMB. Second, we ensured anonymity of the participants to reduce the effect of CMB. We collected multisource data that were shown to reduce the presence of CMB in the analysis (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Third, following recent service researchers, we estimated the presence of CMB using the smallest positive correlation of items (0.01) after transforming the bivariate correlation to the z-value using Fisher's r-to-z method (Lindell and Whitney, 2001). The 95% confidence interval included zero (95% CI, -0.17-0.19), indicating that CMB was not a threat to our validity. Fourth, we also followed "partialling out marker variable approach" (Lindell and Whitney, 2001; Tehseen *et al.*, 2017). We used FLEs' perceived control of time as a marker variable in our study. We adopted a two-item measure of the perceived control of time Kemp *et al.* (2013). As discussed in Tehseen *et al.* (2017), we ran two models, one with the marker variable and the other without it, and we compared the adjusted R^2 of the endogenous constructs across these two models. Our results revealed that there was no significant change in R^2 for either of the dependent variables, thus supporting our rationale. Finally, as shown below, our findings of significant two-way and three-way interactions also support the conclusion that CMB was not a concern (Siemens *et al.*, 2010).

Structural model

The structural model was tested using SmartPLS with a bootstrapping procedure of 5,000 resamples to generate *t*-values and their significance levels following the recommendations provided by Kock (2015). Overall, the results support our hypothesized framework, as shown in Table 2.

We propose that FLEs' self-monitoring and FLE-manager trust would moderate the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction such that the relationship would be weaker at higher levels of FLE self-monitoring (H1) and FLE-manager trust (H2). In addition, we also hypothesized a three-way interaction between FLE self-monitoring, FLE-manager trust and role conflict, such that job satisfaction would be highest in the presence of role conflict when both FLE self-monitoring and FLE-manager trust are high (H3). Furthermore, we proposed multiple moderating effects of FLE-manager identification such that the

Relationships	Estimates	Support	The negative effects of role conflict
<i>Hypothesized relationships</i>			
H1: Role Conflict X FLE Self-Monitoring → Job Satisfaction	0.26**	✓	
H2: Role Conflict X FLE-Manager Trust → Job Satisfaction	0.41**	✓	
H3: Role Conflict X FLE-Manager Trust X FLE Self-Monitoring → Job Satisfaction	0.09**	✓	
H4a: Job Satisfaction X FLE-Manager Identification → Creativity	0.44**	✓	
H4b: Job Satisfaction X FLE-Manager Identification → Service Performance	0.31**	✓	
<i>Non-hypothesized relationships</i>			
Role Conflict → Job Satisfaction	-0.22**	-	
FLE Self-Monitoring → Job Satisfaction	0.18**	-	
FLE-Manager Trust → Job Satisfaction	0.54**	-	
Job Satisfaction → Creativity	0.38**	-	
Job Satisfaction → Service Performance	0.49**	-	
Creativity → Service Performance	0.14**	-	
<i>Controlled Paths</i>			
Age → Job Satisfaction	0.03	-	
Experience → Job Satisfaction	0.07	-	
Age → Creativity	0.08	-	
Experience → Creativity	0.06	-	
Age → Service Performance	-0.05	-	
Experience → Service Performance	0.15**	-	
Note(s): Significance Level (Single-tailed): ** $p < 0.05$			
Source(s): Table created by author			

Table 2.
Model results

relationship between job satisfaction and creativity (H4a) and between job satisfaction and service performance (H4b) would be strengthened at higher levels of FLE-manager identification.

To test our two-way interaction hypotheses proposed in the framework, we created product terms for all items of the independent variable and the moderator variable and then assessed the significance of this product term to provide empirical support for H1, H2, H3 and H4a-b (Kalra *et al.*, 2021a). We also found a significant interaction effect. As hypothesized, self-monitoring moderated the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.26$; $p < 0.05$), providing support for H1. Similarly, the interaction coefficient of role conflict and FLE-manager trust was significant ($\beta = 0.41$; $p < 0.05$), supporting H2. The effect of the interaction term of FLE-manager identification with job satisfaction on creativity was significant ($\beta = 0.44$; $p < 0.05$), supporting H4a. As proposed in H4b, the moderating effect of FLE-manager identification was significant on the relationship between job satisfaction and service performance ($\beta = 0.31$; $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, we tested the significance of H3 using Model 3 of the PROCESS analysis (Hayes, 2012). As hypothesized, the three-way interaction was also significant, supporting H3 ($\beta = 0.09$; $p < 0.05$).

To advance the understanding of the form of interactions postulated in the moderating hypotheses (H1, H2, H3 and H4), we depicted the interaction effects in Figures 2 and 3. As hypothesized, Figure 2a shows that self-monitors have higher job satisfaction in the presence of high role conflict. Similarly, FLEs reported higher job satisfaction when they had high trust in their managers, as shown in Figure 2b. The three-way interaction, shown in Figure 2c, shows that FLEs experience higher levels of job satisfaction despite the high role conflict among people who are high self-monitors and have higher FLE-manager trust.

As hypothesized, the graphs show that a high self-monitoring FLE can fully mitigate the negative effect of role conflict on job satisfaction. Surprisingly, self-monitoring had no effect

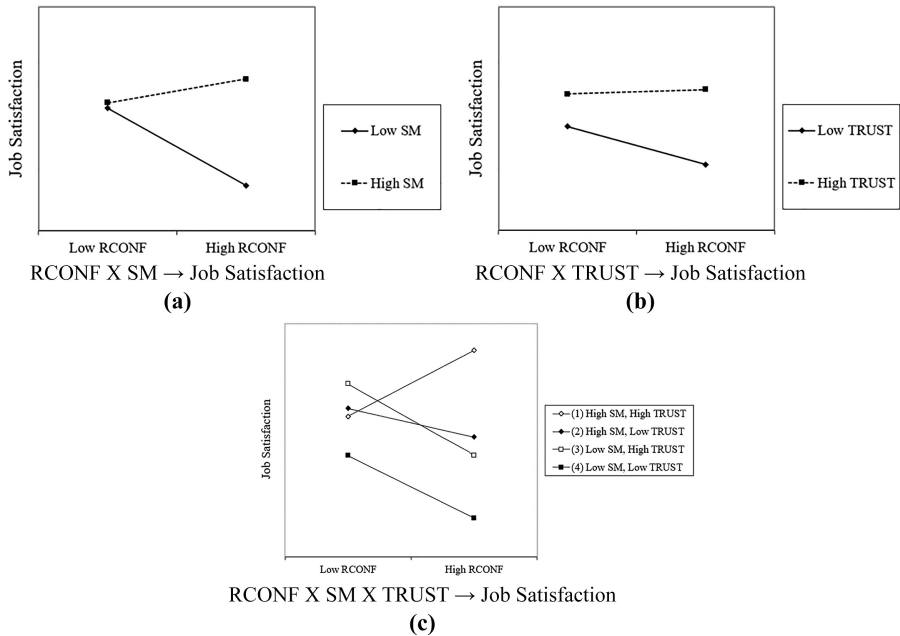


Figure 2.
Interaction effects for the effect of FLE self-monitoring and FLE-manager trust on role conflict → job satisfaction relationship

Note(s): *RCONF: Role conflict; SM: FLE Self-Monitoring; TRUST: FLE-manager trust

Source(s): Figure created by author

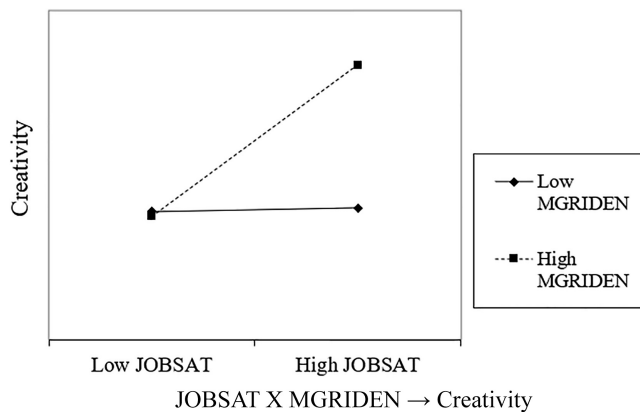
when FLEs experienced a low level of role conflict. We further extend these findings to say that self-monitoring matters in situations of high role conflict, with self-monitoring being needed to support day-to-day job functions. Similarly, FLEs report the highest job satisfaction when they have high trust in their managers, even if they experience high role conflict at work. When trust in the manager is low, an FLE experiences a negative impact of role conflict on job satisfaction. Similarly, Figures 3a and 3b show that FLEs can transform satisfaction into higher creativity (H4a) and service performance (H4b) when working with high FLE-manager identification. Finally, in terms of controlled paths, experience was positively related to service performance ($\beta = 0.15$; $p < 0.05$).

Discussion

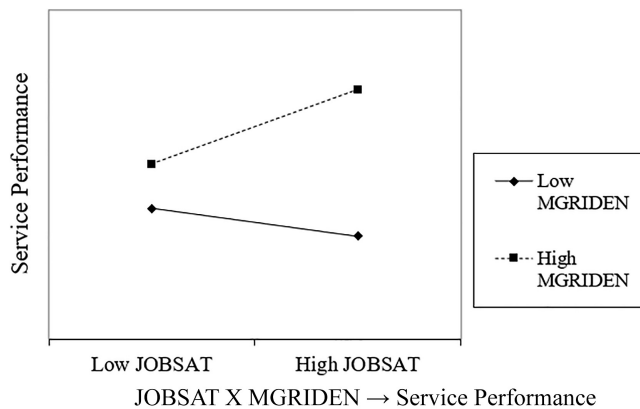
With the shifts caused by the pandemic, service organizations are facing unprecedented levels of unsatisfied FLEs, who are more prone to leave organizations. The effect of role conflict on job satisfaction is unequivocally supported. In response, scholars have embarked on the process of understanding what organizations should do to manage the conflict demands faced by FLEs. With this background and grounded in JDR theory, our study attempts to explore the buffering effect of FLE self-monitoring and FLE-manager trust, which can function as resources to curb the negative effect of role conflict on job satisfaction. Furthermore, our study explores the moderating role of FLE-manager identification on the effects of job satisfaction on creativity and service performance.

Using data from 122 FLE-manager dyads, our results also show that FLE self-monitoring abilities and FLE-manager trust buffer the negative effect of role conflict. As such, high self-monitors are better able to handle conflicting demands because they can internalize the

The negative effects of role conflict



(a)



(b)

Note(s): *JOBSAT: Job satisfaction; MGRIDEN: FLE-manager identification

Source(s): Figure created by author

Figure 3. Interaction effects for the effect of FLE-manager identification on job satisfaction → creativity relationship and on job satisfaction → service performance relationship

emotions arising in the exchange process, which helps them overcome job situations. In addition, FLE-manager trust motivates the sales force to remain committed to the task in accordance with expected roles and responsibilities. While role conflict is a problem that FLEs encounter, organizational and personal resources are effective in mitigating the effect of role conflict on FLEs' job satisfaction. Our results also revealed that personal and job resources interact to enhance job satisfaction by effectively addressing the effects of role conflict.

Furthermore, the findings of this study reveal that FLE-manager identification positively moderates the effect of job satisfaction on creativity and service performance, such that the effects of job satisfaction are strengthened on the outcomes at higher levels of FLE-manager identification. Overall, our findings add to prior research by leveraging JDR theory and social identity theory to determine job demands-work outcome relationships.

Implications

Theoretical implications

A review of the literature reveals that high role conflict results in unsatisfactory performance by FLEs, which involves huge financial costs to service organizations. Contemporary scholars have stressed the importance of analyzing the determinants of job satisfaction (e.g. [Darrat et al., 2017](#); [DeCarlo et al., 2021](#); [Guenzi et al., 2019](#); [Rajabi et al., 2021](#)). Hence, scholarly work exploring the factors that can reduce the effect of workplace stressors, such as role conflict, and the factors that can strengthen the effects of job satisfaction can offer meaningful directions for organizations to manage their employees. This study is an attempt in this regard and offers critical implications for theory and practice.

Grounded in the JDR theory, we show that the effect of role conflict on job satisfaction is reduced at higher levels of self-monitoring and FLE-manager trust. Therefore, from a resource management perspective, our results highlight the importance of building personal and job resources to curb the effects of stressors in the workplace. Furthermore, our study explored the multiplicative effects of personal and job resources on role conflict and job satisfaction relationships.

In the pursuit of expanding the JDR theory, several scholars have explored the important roles of personal and job resources in affecting workplace outcomes (e.g. [Allison et al., 2016](#); [Bakker and Demerouti, 2007](#); [Xanthopoulou et al., 2007, 2009](#)). We adopt and expand this notion and show that not only do personal and job resources individually influence the ways job stressors are handled, but they also have a multiplicative effect by enabling FLEs with all the required resources to handle conflict in the workplace. In this way, we also extend JDR theory by proposing the interaction between personal and job resources in impacting FLEs' job outcomes ([Xanthopoulou et al., 2009](#)).

We amalgamate social identity theory with JDR theory to highlight the importance of the role of FLE-manager identification. While the concept of identification and its effects on employee outcomes have received attention in the literature, scholars have recently begun to explore the effect of FLE-manager identification in driving FLEs' performance. In this regard, [Mallin et al. \(2022\)](#) proposed that there is a prominent need for studies to explore the role of FLE-manager identification in driving sales outcomes. We contribute to this literature stream by adopting social identity theory and assessing the moderating role of FLE-manager identification in driving the outcomes of job satisfaction. As our findings show, FLE manager identification strengthens the positive effect of job satisfaction on creativity and service performance. Our study goes a step further by proposing not only measures to enhance FLEs' job satisfaction but also ways through which job satisfaction can transcend improved workplace outcomes.

Managerial implications

The presence of role conflict leads to dissatisfied FLEs responsible for serving customers. This issue is crucial for FLEs because they directly deal with customers and have an impact on the financial well-being of service organizations. This study highlights the role of job satisfaction in FLEs' behaviors, as it was found to drive stronger creativity and service performance. One way that organizations can take is to eliminate factors that may cause role conflict. These factors could be lack of resources or other factors such as communication breakdown, vague definitions of job requirements and/or incompatible work demands. Moreover, organizations and their managers should provide negotiation, conflict resolution and communication training to their employees. This will help employees better communicate with their managers, voice any misunderstandings or conflicting demands and be accountable for resolving conflicts. At the same time, standard procedures should be provided to employees who should be instructed clearly about their role and job duties, as well as the organizational hierarchy that they should follow.

Role conflicts might still be experienced by FLEs, regardless of what is done by organizations and managers. Organizations need to work on finding personal and managerial resources that can be used by FLEs to mitigate the unfavorable impacts of role conflicts they experience. As shown in our study, two of these resources are self-monitoring and trust in one's manager, which helps FLEs manage conflicting requests. Self-monitoring can be enhanced by appropriate training and teaching. For instance, training FLEs with the skills required to understand the communication styles of the people they work with can be a starting point. An understanding of the existence of such communication styles can help FLEs remove communication bias and become ready to adapt their style to fit with that of others. This also strongly correlates with the training that guides FLEs on how to react to their social environments to guide their behaviors. Training also enhances self-monitoring planning, which requires FLEs to respond well to social actors, including their customers and colleagues. From the human resources perspective, recruitment should consider hiring FLEs who are high self-monitors with effective communication capabilities, impression management capabilities and perceived persuasive skills.

FLEs can better deal with role conflicts at work when trust with managers is evident. Managers need to work on building trust with FLEs, who see in their manager a person to depend on and refer to in case of conflicting requests, conflicts between groups, or the need for additional resources to finish a given task. Managers need to understand that trust evolves over time and requires the building of long-term relationships. To gain FLEs' trust, managers must start by offering trust and empowerment to FLEs. Managers need to create personal connections with their FLEs, be friendly and approachable, get to know them more and emphasize what they share. Managers should be transparent and avoid favoritism and bad-mouthing. They should listen to employees, encourage them and take mutual responsibility (Itani *et al.*, 2019). Trust in one's manager not only delivers resources to support FLEs in dealing with job demands, such as those caused by role conflict, but also creates a better organizational culture and enhances performance.

Analogously, organizations should develop policies that foster FLE-manager identification. In the process of identifying the importance of developing personal relationships between managers and FLEs, managers should display professional identity and convey values and goals to the frontlines, which can make an impact in getting closer to employees and expanding their self-concept. Thus, organizations should not only develop their hiring practices that highlight the importance of self-monitoring, but they should frame their hiring practices for managers to identify individuals who can serve as role models within the organization. Thus, building a psychological relationship with FLEs (Hughes, 2013; Mallin *et al.*, 2022) is an effective way to enhance this relationship and develop identification that can have a positive effect on creativity and service performance.

Limitations and directions for future research

Although our study offers significant contributions to theory and practice, it has several limitations that offer avenues for future scholars. *First*, while we examined our research model and associated relationships using multisource data, managers reported the final performance measure. The replication of our study with objective performance measures can strengthen the generalizability of our findings. Moreover, our study utilizes the service performance measure adopted by Ahearne *et al.* (2008). We urge future scholars to adopt other measures of service performance (see Homburg *et al.*, 2011) and replicate the findings of our study. Similarly, measuring managers' creativity can help strengthen our findings. A similar extension of the research design to include a triadic dataset to assess the novelty of ideas from the customer's perspective is an interesting avenue for future research.

Second, while we comprehensively apply the JDR theory to include relevant demands and resources, future research can extend our work by exploring other job and personal resources that can offer valuable insights to managers and academics. This extension will be important for understanding other personal and managerial resources that FLEs can tap into to curb the negative effects of role conflict. *Third*, our concept of FLE-manager trust and self-monitoring is unidimensional, which fits the context and purpose of the study. However, research has shown that self-monitoring is a multidimensional construct (Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka, 2007). Similarly, trust has different dimensions that can affect the relevance of the findings (e.g. Mangus *et al.*, 2020). Trust is a multi-component construct with several dimensions that vary in nature and importance according to the context, relationship, tasks, situations and people concerned (Hardy and McGrath, 1989). Future scholars should adopt the multidimensional view of personal and job resources considered in this study to assess the extension of our framework.

Fourth, although the adoption of self-monitoring as a positive personal resource is important and adds significant knowledge to our understanding, it is not always found to result in favorable consequences. For example, researchers have argued that self-monitoring can increase deception and faking behaviors (Kudret *et al.*, 2019; Levashina and Campion, 2007; Hogue *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, self-monitoring can decrease an individual's integrity ratings (Leugnerova *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, self-monitoring allows individuals to engage in misrepresentations of fit, intending to obtain desirable rewards (Kudret *et al.*, 2019). Employees with high self-monitoring are more inclined to create facades of conformity (Hewlin, 2009) and surface acting behaviors, which may have negative implications for employees (Kudret *et al.*, 2019; Scott *et al.*, 2012). Exploring the dual role of self-monitoring by extending the current framework to include other dependent variables offers significant additions to the literature.

Lastly, we collected our data from FLEs working in India, an emerging economy. Because of the extremely competitive Indian market, FLE-manager trust and self-monitoring abilities are truly relevant to overcoming the negative effects of role conflict. Replicating our study in other economies and contexts is a potentially fruitful avenue for future research. Similarly, analyzing the relationships proposed in our study in a non-financial setting can also be a fruitful avenue for future research.

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(The Appendix follows overleaf)

Items	Loading
<i>Role conflict (CR: 0.94; α: 0.91)</i>	
I receive an assignment without adequate resources	0.94
I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently	0.95
I work on unnecessary things*	–
I receive conflicting requests from two or more people	0.88
<i>Job satisfaction (CR: 0.96; α: 0.95)</i>	
My work gives me a sense of accomplishment	0.95
My job is fulfilling	0.95
My work is satisfying	0.94
I believe I am doing something worthwhile in my job*	–
<i>Creativity (CR: 0.94; α: 0.91)</i>	
I make sales presentations in innovative ways	0.89
I carry out tasks in ways that are resourceful	0.93
I come up with new ideas for satisfying customer needs	0.85
I like to experiment with different sales approaches*	–
I generate creative selling ideas	0.88
<i>FLE-Manager identification (CR: 0.94; α: 0.93)</i>	
When someone criticizes my supervisor, it feels like a personal insult	0.82
My supervisor's successes are my successes	0.91
When someone praises my supervisor, it feels like a personal compliment	0.93
I do identify and feel proud of my relationship with my supervisor	0.89
I am very interested in what others think about my supervisor	0.87
<i>FLE-Manager trust (CR: 0.96; α: 0.94)</i>	
I feel confident that my supervisor will always try to treat me fairly	0.93
My supervisor would never try to gain an advantage by deceiving workers	0.97
I have complete faith in the integrity of my supervisor	0.94
<i>FLE Self-monitoring (CR: 0.92; α: 0.89)</i>	
At parties and social gatherings, I attempt to do or say things that others will like	0.91
I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people	0.95
When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues	0.65
In different situations and with different people, I often act like different persons	0.92
I change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor*	–
<i>Service performance (CR: 0.92; α: 0.81)</i>	
This employee always makes sure that he/she can be reached whenever a customer needs something important	0.92
This employee provides high-level service/maintenance to all accounts*	–
This employee provides courteous service to customers	0.91
Note(s): * indicates the items were dropped due to low factor loading or high cross-loading	
Source(s): Table created by author	

Table A1.
Construct and
measurement item
analysis

Corresponding author

Ashish Kalra can be contacted at: akalra1@udayton.edu

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