

# Effects of In-role Behaviour Gap on Interpersonal Behaviours Focused on the Mediating Effect of Stress

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## Abstract

**Purpose** - This study is to identify the relationship between the gap of in-role behaviour (IRB) on employee's interpersonal behaviour with the different perspective considering this behaviour as a social action that employees show in their work life, away from the perspective of conventional research that treats IRB as task performance.

**Design/methodology/approach** - This study focus on the level of IRB gap that individuals have with their colleagues and its effect on the interpersonal behaviours such as helping and incivility instigation. The higher the level of difference, the more likely it would negatively affect their interpersonal behaviour through stress. The analysis was conducted on 250 employees of Korean companies through partial least squares structural equation modelling.

**Findings** - The analysis shows that IRB gaps have a negative effect on employee's fully helping, and partly instigated incivility, in mediating stress. Implications based on the results of the study were presented in the conclusion.

**Research implications or Originality** - The approaches and findings thus study showed are unique because most of existing studies have not tried to focus on the gap of in-role behaviour between employees and their colleagues. This study can give novels inspirations to other researchers in the related field.

**Keywords:** IRB Gap, Helping Behaviour, Incivility, Stress, PLS SEM

**JEL Classifications:** M10, L20

## I. Introduction

Depending on the association with the main task, the job behaviours that employees see in the workplace are divided into in-role behaviour (IRB) and extra-role behaviour (ERB). Of these two, ERB part has drawn more attention from researchers. The concept itself has been found more diverse. It began to be studied in the early stage represented by the positive and negative concepts such as organizational citizenship behaviour and counterproductive work behaviour (Marcus, Taylor, Hastings, Sturm & Weigelt, 2016; Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006), and each of these sub-dimensionals has been studied separately as the study continues or has been studied until now for behaviours that are not included in both. There are also actions such as workplace mistreatment (Yang, Caughlin, Gazica, Truxillo & Spector, 2014), whistle blowing (Culiberg & Mihelič, 2017), voice (Morrison, 2011), and unethical pro-or-

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organisational behaviour (Umphress & Bingham, 2011). ERB included much more diverse and interesting phenomena, so it was enough to attract researchers' interest, and as a result, a number of related factors were found.

On the contrary, IRB has been dealt only in terms of returning the investment of human resources. Hence, it has received a major interest in determining the leading factors to increase this performance, for example, increasing the effects of classical behavioural variables such as job satisfaction, job immersion, and organisational immersion on task behaviour (Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010; Riketta, 2002; Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton, 2001), self-efficacy, self-esteem, and psychological well-being (Judge & Bono, 2001; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). It is also true that the interest was less than that of ERB.

Research on movie ratings and movie box office success is a field where a lot of research has already been done, so it is hard to see that this area deserves to get new attention. However, the reason for conducting this study was that if some of the limitations seen in prior researches could be supplemented, it could provide new implications for film marketing. At previous studies, when exploring the relationship between movie ratings and movie box office, individual films were mainly used as a unit of analysis to explore the relationship between the two variables (Chon and Yi, 2019; Kim and Hong, 2011). Although this method is advantageous for ease of data collection and analysis, it is believed that the number of movie ratings and screens counts used are representative values, such as average, and that if the data's variance is relatively high, there may be a problem of poor explanation to reflecting the actual parameter. Considering that movie ratings can be generated after the movie is over, and that the number of screens continues to change depending on the box office performance or online word of mouth, it is thought that there may be a limit in previous studies to explain the various causal relationships between movie ratings and box office outcomes.

This study therefore considers IRB to be one of the actions that employees show during their work life, and looks at how it affects employees and not by the performance of the organisation. In particular, this study focuses on three things.

First, IRB gap is considered a prior variable. Existing studies related to IRB show that most of them have considered only the absolute level (e.g. Rich et al, 2010; Riketta, 2002; Judge et al., 2001; Judge & Bon, 2001). However, employees in an organisation do not consider only the absolute level of assessing their behaviour. Rather, in some cases, they refer to the relative level of activity of their peers as more important (Tesser, 1991). Based on these points, this study aims to identify the effect of relative IRB rather than absolute level of it. This approach can make an advantage that gives a fresh point of view on the IRB. Considering the absolute level of IRB, this behaviour is an indicator saying how an employee is well qualified for their job. However the relative level of IRB gives information about where the employee is ranked in their organisation according to their task performance levels. The key point is moved from the individual performance to the indicator of comparison.

Second, the employee's interpersonal behavioural variables, helping and incivility, are cited as the result of IRB gap. Studies on IRB, as mentioned earlier, have dealt with it mainly as a concept of recovery in terms of investment in human resources. However, this study approaches from a different perspective and determines that this task behaviour is also one of the employee's workplace behaviour and will have a significant impact on their social life. Helping and incivility are variables that represent the positive and negative areas of ERB in interpersonal relationships and are conceptually and empirically stable and familiar because they have already been addressed by numerous studies (Schilpzand, Pater & Erez, 2016; Organ

et al., 2006). Therefore, this study selects two dependent variables.

Third, to better grasp the relationship between IRB gap's impact on helping and incivility, stress is assumed as a key mediator. However, performing more tasks than usual causes individuals to consume more energy. This results to a negative impact on individual emotions, such as stress, and eventually on helping and incivility patterns. This study takes this into account and examines the effects of stress as a mediator.

## II. EFFECTS OF IRB GAP AND MEDIATING OF STRESS

How will the relative differences in IRB of employees affect their interpersonal behaviours? There may be a variety of reasons why the IRB gap is high that the employee performs more task behaviour than his or her colleagues. Things like a good performance assessment, a desire for promotion, a sense of responsibility or a favour to the organisation can be motivated if an employee voluntarily maintains high relative IRB. There are also opposite sides of course. There may also be cases in which individuals have excellent capabilities, lack of peer competence, or relatively large roles are assigned to the organisation's system. However, there are also times that they apply these equally in all cases even if these various reasons exist. It takes, in any case, extra energy to keep one's level of a high IRB than his or her peers.

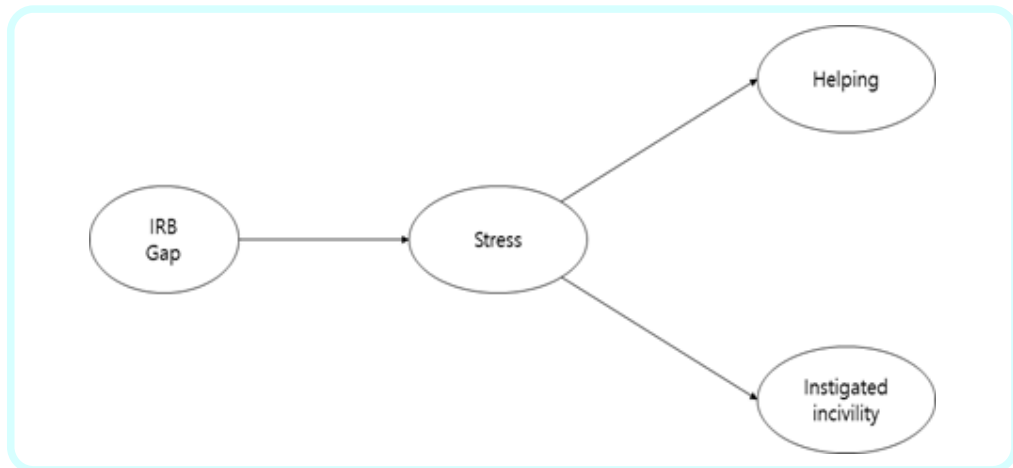
Individuals not only recognise themselves at an absolute level but also they recognise themselves through comparing with others (Festinger, 1954). Particularly, individuals belonging to an organisation tend to identify themselves through comparing with their peers who are in similar situations. And comparing with others affects individual's inner self in a variety of ways (Tesser, 1988, 1991). For example, consider two employees performing equally at high levels of task behaviour. In one case, not only the employee but also his or her associates perform a similar level of high task behaviour and, in the other case, high task behaviour alone. In both cases, to maintain a high level of task behaviour, the physical resources that employees administer can be viewed as similar. It will be as much as it corresponds to the absolute level of IRB. The mental resources, on the other hand, administered for this purpose can be completely different in two cases. It is easy to take the former case as a relatively natural thing because all of its colleagues also show a high level of IRB. Individuals can naturally feel the high level of IRB seen by colleagues because shared behaviour among members is likely to be the norm in an organisation (Kameda, Takezawa & Hastie, 2003; Kaplan & Hill, 1985; Isaac, 1978). In this case, employees can maintain a high level of IRB with relatively little mental resources consumed. On the other hand, colleagues do not work hard in the latter case, but the employees are the only ones working hard. The employee is likely to suffer from a strong cognitive mismatch in this situation. The level of IRB of an employee within his or her organisation is low, but he or she is the only one who maintains a high level of task behaviour. Compared with the former case, this situation becomes unnatural and is negatively affected inside.

Such high IRB gap can be stressful and implies a typical negative effect on employees. Stress is one of the most representative negative emotional states, a concept that is familiar and receiving a lot of attention. It refers to a negative state of tension throughout an individual's psychological state (Lazarus & Folman, 1984). If an employee is maintaining a high relative activity, he or she consumes a lot of energy, both physically and mentally, regardless of the type of performance motive. And this waste will cause stress to the employee. Furthermore,

stress is likely to affect employees' patterns of interpersonal behaviour against their colleagues. Emotional conditions formed by specific events in the workplace are known to have far-reaching effects across behavioural patterns of an employee (Carlson, Kacmar, Zivnuska, Ferguson & Whitten, 2011; Zhao, Wayne, Wayne, Glibkowski & Bravo 2007; Wegge, 2006; Mignonac & Herrbach, 2004). Consequently, this negative emotional state would lead employees to reduce positive interpersonal behaviour and increase negative interpersonal behaviour.

Based on the aforementioned points, this study establishes a research model as shown in Figure 1.

**Fig. 1.** Research Model



**H1:** IRB gap will have a negative effect on helping in mediating stress.

**H2:** IRB gap will have a positive effect on instigated incivility in mediating stress.

### III. METHODS

#### 3.1. Respondents

Samples were obtained through a survey. The survey was conducted by employees engaged in Korean companies, and the industrial sectors of the enterprises were selected as service and manufacturing sectors such as insurance, banking and medical services. The forms of the survey are all self-reporting. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed, but only 250 were selected for analysis, excluding surveys that failed to be retrieved, unsincerity surveys and non-response. For gender, men accounted for 53.2% and women 46.8%. People in their 30s account for the largest portion with 41.9%, whereas those in their 50s or older account for the smallest portion with 11.4%. College graduates account for 52.5% of the total, and 63.6% of the total number of years of service or less.

### 3.2. Measurements

*IRB gap.* Previous studies have used a variety of methods to measure IRB, and this study uses IRB measurement tools from Williams & Anderson (1991), which is one of the most widely used methods. This consists of seven questions asking the level of employee performance. Respondents were asked to respond to their own IRB levels and then to respond to their colleagues' IRB levels to measure the relative level of IRB. And the IRB gap value was obtained by subtracting the IRB level of colleagues from the IRB level of individual.

*Helping.* Measurement tools from Williams & Anderson (1991) were also used to measure individuals' helping behaviour. They measured OCB-I, OCB-O and IRB through a total of 21 questions in their study. OCB-I matches helping behaviour among the three dimensions. This study uses the questions used by them. A total of 21 questions were selected except IRB and OCB-O questions, and seven were used to measure helping.

*Instigated incivility.* For the measurement of instigated incivility, we used the questions by Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta & Magley (2013). The existing questions were translated and used and consisted of 12 questions. All of the previously proposed questions were about the experience of rudeness, but they were revised to ask if they had ever been rude.

*Stress.* The American Institute of Stress used a workplace stress scale to measure stress. Eight questions were used as some unnecessary questions were removed and modified.

*Control variables.* Demographic variables, such as gender, age and educational background, controlling the position and years of service were used. In addition, it controls the absolute IRB together. This allows the measurement of the relative IRB's pure influence with the absolute IRB level under control.

### 3.3. Analysing strategy

In this study, partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modelling is used to analyse the research model. Depending on how the coefficients are estimated, the structural equation model is divided into two categories. One is a covariance-based (CB) structural equation, and the other is a PLS structural equation. The two methods of estimation have their advantages, and the PLS structural equation has the advantage of being able to estimate parameters efficiently even for complex structural models with fewer assumptions required for the data under analysis compared with the CB structural equation. Particularly, the PLS structural equation has the advantage in exploring relationships between less known variables as this study (Wong, 2013). However, the PLS structural equation lacks a measure to determine the appropriateness of the analytical model compared with the CB structural equation (Sanchez, 2013).

Using these methodological characteristics appropriately, the analysis is carried out as follows: First, a valid factor analysis is carried out with the CB structural method to determine the appropriateness of the variables and the research model. This is to compensate for the lack of PLS structural equations, and the AMOS programme is used. Using the PLS structural equation, the hypothesis verification is then carried out. In fact, if the case is sufficient, both structural equations are known to have similar results. However, in this study, the PLS structural equation is used to pursue methodological diversity, and the programme uses R's "plpm" package. For reference, in the analysis of the PLS structural equation, the measurement model used the reflective measurement method in the same way as the method used in the CB structural equation.

### 3.4. Confirmatory factor analysis and validity test

To examine the suitability of the research model and the feasibility of the research variables, verification factor analysis was performed. Table 1 shows the results of a positive factor analysis. Questions were deleted, in the course of the analysis, that impeded the concentration of validity and the fit of the overall model for each variable. The deleted questions are three for absolute and IRB gap, four for stress, one for helping and five for incivility. As a result, all variables showed a conceptual confidence of more than 0.5 average variance extracted (AVE) value and 0.7 or higher, indicating that there was no problem with the intensive validity of the variables. Also, the fit of the model was also found to be suitable for verifying the hypothesis with excellent values.

**Table 1.** The Result of CFA

Variable	Standardised regression weight	SMC	AVE	Concept reliability
Absolute IRB	.754	.568	.741	.919
	.881	.776		
	.936	.876		
	.861	.743		
IRB gap	.669	.447	.534	.820
	.753	.567		
	.801	.642		
	.693	.481		
Stress	.737	.544	.649	.881
	.816	.666		
	.869	.755		
	.796	.634		
Helping	.790	.624	.579	.871
	.891	.793		
	.725	.525		
	.690	.476		
Incivility	.691	.477	.625	.921
	.787	.619		
	.674	.454		
	.803	.645		
	.838	.702		
	.829	.687		
	.848	.720		
	.740	.548		

Note: Model fit index: CMIN/DF = 1.527, RMR = .039, AGFI = .811, GFI = .852, CFI = .947, RMSEA = .048 (HI90 = .056)

### 3.5. Test for common method bias

In addition, a common method bias that may exist between variables was examined. As this study has obtained all the data through self-reporting-based surveys, problems with the same method may arise. On the basis of the suggestions of Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003), the prosecutor used the single-method-factor-approach method. In this method, if common method bias exists, one valid factor that penetrates the entire question can be found when the factor analysis is performed for the entire question. However, the principal component analysis showed that none of these factors existed. Based on this, it can be determined that common method bias is not serious. Table 2 shows the result of single-factor

verification through PCA and the analysis of factors including both the absolute IRB and IRB gap.

**Table 2.** The Result of PCA

Factor	Eigenvalue	Variance (%)	Accumulated variance (%)
1	8.98	32.07	32.07
2	3.99	14.24	46.32
3	2.66	9.50	55.83
4	2.14	7.66	63.49
5	1.20	4.28	67.77

Note: KMO value = .865, Bartlett test  $p < .001$ , PCA.

#### IV. RESULTS

Prior to this analysis, correlations between variables used in the study were identified. The discriminant validity of the study variables was examined by comparing the results of the correlation analysis with the AVE values previously measured. The variables in this study can be considered to be discriminative because the lowest value of AVE values is higher than the square of the highest value of the correlation numbers. Table 3 shows the results of the correlation analysis.

**Table 3.** The Result of Correlation Analysis

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gender	1.50	.501	1									
Age	2.11	.866	-.158*	1								
Education	2.70	.790	-.197**	-.042	1							
Tenure	3.11	1.30	.196**	.162*	-.013	1						
Position	1.89	.319	.125*	.568**	.040	.305**	1					
Absolute IRB	3.79	.729	.092	.072	-.055	.003	.015	1				
IRB gap	-.178	.544	-.031	.067	-.027	-.072	.063	.239**	1			
Stress	2.60	.849	.098	.065	-.047	.093	.101	-.295**	.046	1		
Helping	3.51	.71631	.010	.051	-.122	.004	.080	.461**	.138*	-.416**	1	
Incivility	1.80	.679	-.232**	.091	-.066	-.029	.108	-.350**	.109	.280**	-.319**	1

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

Analysis of PLS structural equation modelling was conducted for hypothesis testing. As mentioned previously, the analysis used the "plspm" package of the R programme. All measuring tools are set as reflective indicators. In addition, bootstrapping was performed to strictly examine the significance of each regression coefficient. The number of subsamples restore extracts was set at 5,000 times, and the confidence interval was set at 95%. This is because, instead

of rigidly assuming the normal distribution of data, the PLS structural equation modelling requires nonparametric procedures such as bootstrapping (Wong, 2013; Sanchez, 2013). Table 4 shows the path factor values as a result of the PLS analysis.

**Table 4.** The Result of PLS SEM Analysis

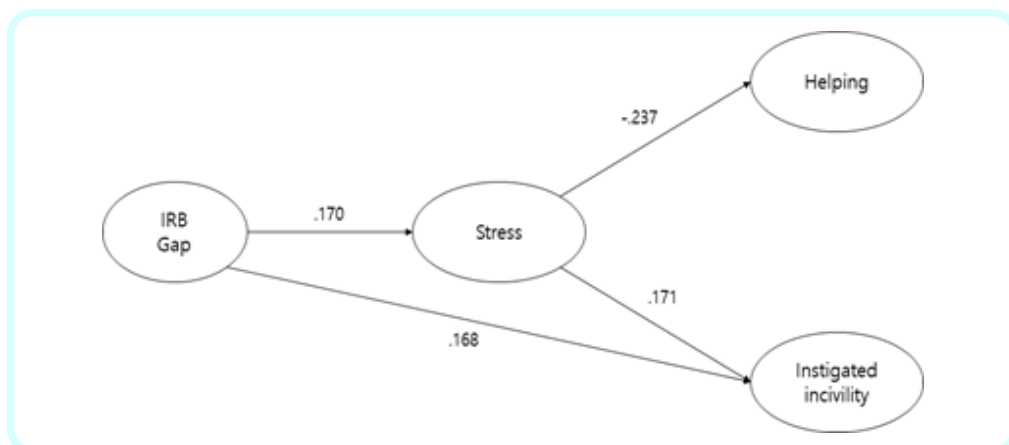
Relation of variables	Original	Mean bootstrap	SE	t_value (bootstrap)
IRB gap → Stress	.172	.170	0.068	2.529
IRB gap → Helping	-.032	.021	0.064	-.497
IRB gap → Incivility	.176	.169	0.075	2.338
Stress → Helping	-.232	-.237	0.054	-4.272
Stress → Incivility	.172	.171	0.063	2.682

Note: Goodness-of-fit = .479.

The analysis shows that IRB gap has a significant positive effect on the mediator stress ( $t$  value = 2.529,  $p < .05$ ). For the direct effects of IRB gap on the two dependent variables, helping did not have a significant impact but have shown to have a significant positive effect on incivility ( $t$  value = 2.228,  $p < .05$ ). The effects of stress on all dependent variables were significant such as helping ( $t$  value = -4.272,  $p < .01$ ) and incivility ( $t$  value = 2.682,  $p < .01$ ). Next, a Sobel test was performed to determine the significance of the indirect effects of the IRB gap on the dependent variables. The test results showed that the indirect effects on helping was significant at 95% confidence level, whereas the indirect effects on incivility value were significant at 90% confidence level.

The results of the aforementioned analysis are as follows. First, IRB gap has significant effects through the full medium of stress in helping. This supports Hypothesis 1. Next, IRB gap influences definition through partial mediating of stress on incivility. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is also supported. Figure 2 shows the analysis results.

**Fig. 2.** The Structural Relations of Research Variables





## V. CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1. Theoretical implications

This study was conducted to identify the effect of IRB on employee interpersonal behaviour. The IRB's relativity, to this end, was chosen as an independent variable to examine its impact on the typical non-task behaviours, helping and infrastructure. In addition, the mediating effects of stress in these relationships were analysed together. Based on this, the study has the following implications:

First, by looking at the effects of relative IRB, it contributes quantity and quality to IRB-related research. Studies related to existing IRB have mainly focused on finding antecedent factors or moderating factors that can improve employees' performance. They have also considered only the absolute level of IRB in dealing with it. This study examines the resultant effects of IRB and furthermore measures IRB to the relative level of IRB as the best known measurement tool for measuring IRB and is used for analysis. Indeed, the analysis found that IRB gaps significantly affect employees' interpersonal behaviour in the workplace. These results cast a new topic of IRB gap in existing studies that have only considered the absolute level of IRB.

Second, demonstrating the effect of IRB on ERB suggests relationships between the two behavioural categories that make up job behaviour. Although IRB and ERB have different characteristics, they are very closely related in that they are eventually part of the various behavioural patterns that employees show in the workplace. Nevertheless, existing studies have conducted only on each of these. Therefore, by taking the relativity of IRB as an independent variable, this study identified significant effects on the helping and incivility, which is a representative ERB. IRB helps the organisation's performance, but relatively excessive performance has side effects. These findings suggest a need to get a closer look at the relationship between IRB and ERB. Although the two actions appear to be completely different in concept, they are, in fact, only from the perspective of managers and are part of the options for employees to invest their own energy.

Third, stress was assumed as a mediator and its effect was identified. It is very important to find hidden intervening variables in the process in order to understand the relationship between variables in detail. Because there is little research yet, the relationship between IRB gap and interpersonal behaviours, which is the subject of this study, has no intervening variables revealed. Therefore, the researchers chose the most well-known and commonly used stress among individual psychological variables. As a result of the analysis, we were able to check the mediated effect of stress.

### 5.2. Practical implications

The result of study implies that the performance gap between organisation members can cause bad interpersonal relationships they have because a large gap of performance results less helping and more instigated incivility. To reduce the bad result, the two managerial ways can be recommended. First, managers can make a system to make the level of members' performances equal. Precisely equal of the performances is not possible, but reducing the deviation of performances is possible with the work system. Thus, it is recommended for managers to establish proper task allocation system and task evaluation system. Second, it is feasible

that managers can make the employees do not compare themselves to the other colleagues via job enlargement and job enrichment. More different tasks employees have, more difficult to compare each other.

### 5.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study has the following limitations. First, the possibility of common method bias cannot be completely ruled out. Because all survey data are collected based on self-reporting methods, any element of an individual may create the bias for the entire response. Although single-factor-method confirmed that common method bias is not severe, it is only post-verification to the extent and does not eliminate the bias fundamentally. Second, because the study data consist of cross-sectional data, there is a lack of understanding of causal relationships between variables. This affects not only causal identification but also the aforementioned common method bias. Third, not all possible variables are controlled. In spite of the significant result of this study, to get more concrete implications, researchers have to apply more control variables. For example, fairness of task allocation can be one of the effectful control variable, because if the level of task allocation fairness is low, stress can be derived from the biased tasks, not from the gap of task role behaviour. Complementing these limitations will require research based on longitudinal research setting.

Finally, in the direction of future research, the following can be presented. First, relativity of certain variables can be applied to more diverse organisational behaviour-related variables. This study introduced the relativity between individuals and colleagues in the IRB to discover new relationships that cannot be found with existing absolute figures. Individuals belonging to an organisation may consider the absolute level of their behaviour in assessing their behaviour but evaluate it through comparing with others. In that sense, the relative level between individuals and colleagues is broadly applicable across organisational behavioural variables. For example, the relative level of OCB, the relative level of rudeness, and the relative level of voice differ. In addition to the theoretical consideration of each variable, understanding employee behaviour would be broader if the variables were to identify the significance of their relative differences.

Second, more diverse variables and methodologies need to be considered. In this study, IRB based on self-reporting was used. However, previous studies show that there are many different ways to measure IRB (e.g. Rich et al., 2010; Riketta, 2002; Judge et al., 2001; Judge & Bono, 2001). For example, a person may use a level graded by a supervisor or colleague, rather than a self-report, or may use specified data, such as a workbook or task performance table. In the case of ERB, there are more possible alternatives. The easiest thing to think about is using other sub-dimensions of the OCB. This study uses sub-dimensions proposed by Williams & Anderson (1991); however, it may use five sub-dimensions initially proposed by Organ (1988) and may try the sub-dimensions of the collectivist culture proposed by Farh, Earley & Lin (1997). Also, we can use concepts such as counterproductive work behaviour and moral disengagement as a negative ERB. In addition, considering variables such as unethical pro-organisational behaviour (Uphress & Bingham, 2011), which has recently become an issue, various implications can be derived.

Third, various intervention variables should be found to better understand the relationship between IRB and ERB. Mediating or moderating variables play a very important role in understanding and ultimately managing the relationships between variables. It is expected that there

will be more diverse intervention variables although this study identified the mediating effects of stress. First, for mediators, positive emotional variables, such as psychological well-being or attitude variables such as organisational immersion and job satisfaction, can be considered, rather than negative emotional variables such as stress. Various variables, such as individual personality variables, job characteristics, or leadership, and furthermore, organisational culture, can have significant effects in moderating variables. There are also many other intervention variables to consider, and researchers expect to be able to explore and derive various effective intervention variables.

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