

Integrating Non-Work Domain Control in the Psychological Empowerment of Women Teachers

Anita Sarkar^a and Manjari Singh^b

^aXLRI School of Business & Human Resources, Jamshedpur, India. anitasarkar@xlri.ac.in

^bIndian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India. manjari@iimahd.ernet.in

Abstract

In the field of management, individual empowerment or psychological empowerment is rooted in Conger & Kanungo's (1988) work where empowerment is beyond the process of delegation and the authors consider empowerment as a motivational construct. Thomas & Velthouse's (1990) cognitive model of empowerment supported this theory of motivational construct. Spreitzer (1995) further refined this construct and developed the measures for the four workplace related cognitions, i.e., meaning, competence, self determination, and impact. These four dimensions have been widely used in the literature (Dee, Henkin, & Duemer, 2003). Singh and Sarkar (2009) found that self-determination at job level and that at organizational level are two separate dimensions of empowerment. These studies have clearly established that individual empowerment is a multi-dimensional construct. These cognitions combine additively to form a single unitary construct of empowerment; lack of any single dimension will decrease but not eliminate the overall degree of empowerment experienced. However current literature on psychological empowerment has concentrated on empowerment coming from employees' work domain and there is little empirical research that examines empowerment coming from non-work domain aspects. We found only one notable exception in Schulz, Israel, Zimmerman & Checkoway's (1993) study. The current changing dynamics of workforce, characterized by more participation of women has necessitated that empowerment be studied in an integrated way.

Spillover theory (Staines, 1980) and compensation theory (Champoux, 1978) integrate the work and family domains. The new Work/Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000) asserts that work and family are two different domains and they influence each other. The Boundary Theory (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000) further developed the notion of border crossers who might be a central or a peripheral participant in the two domains. Based on these theories, one can assert that the powerfulness that individual senses from within or empowerment cannot just reside in only one domain, rather it comes from both the domains. Hence empowerment construct cannot be considered complete by taking the powerfulness coming from work domain only. "Non-work domain control" as an additional dimension of empowerment helps to address this research gap by taking into account the power coming from employee's non-work domain. In Indian context, women's role in their family is considered very important. In many families, working women are supposed to balance their career or even make sacrifices in their career aspirations to suit the family needs (Dhawan, 2005). Occupational segregation is also prominent and more women are in stereotypical women's jobs like teaching, nursing, etc. (ILO, 1997).

These jobs also emphasize the nurturing nature that the society wants to see in women. In this scenario non-work domain should be an integral part of their psychological empowerment.

For initial scale development, we interacted with thirty-seven women primary school teachers in the state of Gujarat in India. The discussions were in-depth and lasted for one hour to one and half hour over a period of four months. Detailed field notes were taken for each meeting. We specifically focused on various aspects of non-work domain that gives them sense of powerfulness. Based on these interviews we found three key themes regarding the power coming from non-work domain: (i) the sense of belief to control major events of one's life, (ii) influencing the life of significant others in the non-work domain, and (iii) the ability to carry out major decisions in life. These themes were consistent with those found in empowerment studies of women in the field of sociology regarding the importance of control over household work (Tandley, 2005), financial decision (Kishore, 2000), and emotions and self reliance (Jejeebhoy, 1995).

Based on the detailed field notes taken from the teachers we identified the relevant items which can measure the non-work domain control dimension. We also tried to incorporate the relevant literature (particularly Schulz et al., 1993) which might help to capture powerfulness coming from non-work domain. Three experts in this field were involved to validate these items. The five items of the scale were developed after been refined for face validity. These items were to be measured on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree. Questionnaires were administered in stages 2 & 3 of this study to primary school teachers with minimum one year of teaching experience. In the stage 2, the questionnaire having the above discussed five items was administered to a group of 288 teachers from 46 schools in Gujarat, India. The Cronbach α was much above the cut-off value of 0.70 and showed acceptable inter-item correlation among the five items taken for this study. We tested for uni-dimensionality of the scale in this pilot study through exploratory factor analysis using SPSS 17. The extraction method used was principal component analysis with eigen value of 1. The component matrix showed that all the five items loaded on a single component. These results support the uni-dimensionality of the construct.

After the pilot study we carried out the main study with a larger dataset of 401 women primary school teachers from 54 schools from the states of West Bengal and Gujarat in India. Correlation results showed that all the five items were significantly correlated with each other at $p \leq 0.001$. *Confirmatory Factor Analysis* was done to verify the factor structure of the set of observed variables taken for the non-work domain control dimension. This was done using structural equation modeling, using graphical feature of AMOS 16. It tests the hypothesis that a relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent construct exists. Model in the main study showed acceptable fit. The loadings of five items on the latent construct were significant at $p \leq 0.001$. Confirmatory factor analysis confirms that the non-work domain control is a uni-dimensional five item scale. We examined the convergent validity of the scale by calculating Cronbach α , Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of non-work domain control as latent variable. We also found in the measurement model each indicator's estimated pattern coefficient on its posited underlying construct factor is significant, as suggested by Anderson & Gerbing (1988) for ensuring convergent validity.

In order to examine whether scale items are affected by demographic and other factors, we took the following five classifying variables for the teachers: age, educational qualification, marital status, salary, and class size. One-way ANOVA was used to test the effect of differences in the above variables on each items of the non-work domain control scale.

In the multi-dimensional construct of empowerment, non-work domain control is an additional dimension that moves beyond the focus on perceptual cognition and incorporates experiential behavioral aspects as well. Non-work domain control along with the other dimensions of empowerment provides a complete notion of empowerment. In order to assess this, we tested the second order measurement model of empowerment taking meaning, competence, impact, self determination at job level, self-determination at organization level, and non-work domain control as first order latent constructs. We tested whether non-work domain control is an additional dimension of empowerment and is distinct from its other dimensions (meaning, competence, impact, and self determination at job level and organization level) with the help of structural equation modeling using graphical feature of AMOS 16. Non-work domain control as an additional and distinct dimension was fully supported.

In the context of organizational development and employee motivation, two key work-related outcomes are the innovative behavior of the employees and their job involvement. The teacher's role involves less monitoring and more scope for innovative behavior (especially in the classroom) and so it is a good context for studying these outcomes. While the dimensions of psychological empowerments were based on self report, innovative behavior and job involvement of the teacher were assessed by 2-3 colleagues for each teacher. More details regarding the scales given here can be seen in Singh & Sarkar (2009). *Inter-rater agreement* (IRA) of colleagues' responses was tested and *discriminant validity* of the constructs were examined. We found that there is more innovative behaviour and job involvement when employees' perceive greater meaning in their work, higher self-determination at job level, and better control in non-work domain. These results further established the importance of non-work domain control in work context.

Empirically the study justifies the argument put forth by Work/Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000) and Boundary Theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) on the need for looking at employees' life holistically by integrating both on and off the job aspects. Given that empowerment is important for individual's innovative behavior and job involvement in the workplace, the study clearly indicates that organisations cannot ignore the non-work domain issues of employees. Family friendly policies, flexi-timing, and crèche services for employees that help them maintain balance between work and non-work life should be encouraged for enhancing employees' empowerment. Teachers mentioned during discussions that overall congenial environment with supportive superiors and peers also help them to deal with the two demanding domains with self assurance. This scale is of particular relevance in a country like India where women's role as homemaker is considered very important.

Reference

- Anderson, J.C., & Gerbing, D.W. 1988. Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(3): 411-423.
- Ashforth, B.E., Kreiner, G.E., & Fugate, M. 2000. All in a day's work: boundaries and micro role transitions. *The Academy of Management Review*, 25(3): 471-491.
- Champoux, J. 1978. A reexamination of the compensatory and spillover models. *Sociology of Work and Occupations*, 5(4): 402-422.
- Clark, C.S. 2000. Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53(6): 747-770.
- Conger, J.A., & Kanungo, R.N. 1988. The empowerment process: integrating theory and practice. *Academy of Management Review*, 13(3): 471-482.

- Dee, J.R., Henkin, A.B., & Duemer, L. 2003. Structural antecedents and psychological correlates of teacher empowerment. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 41(3): 257-277.
- Dhawan, N. 2005. Women's role expectations and identity development in India. *Psychology & Developing Societies*, 17(1), 81-92.
- ILO Press Release. 1997. Women's progress in workforce improving worldwide, but occupational segregation still rife, Reference No. ILO/97/35.
- Jejeebhoy, S. 1995. Women's education, autonomy, and reproductive behaviour: experience from four developing countries. *International Studies in Demography*. IUSSP. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kishore, S. 2000. Empowerment of women in Egypt and links to the survival and health of their infants. In Harriet Presser and Gita Sen (Eds.), *Women's empowerment and demographic processes: Moving beyond Cairo*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schulz, A.J., Israel, B.A., Zimmerman, M.A., & Checkoway, B. 1993. *Empowerment as a multi level construct: Perceived control at the individual, organizational and community levels*. Working Paper No. 495, The University of Michigan.
- Scott, S.G., & Bruce, R.A. 1994. Determinants of innovative behavior: A path model of individual innovation in the workplace. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37(3): 580-607.
- Singh, M. & Sarkar, A. 2009. *Empowerment of employees: Using multi-rater perspective*. Paper No. 13224 presented at the Annual Meeting 2009 of the Academy of Management, Anaheim.
- Spreitzer, G.M. 1995. Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5): 1442-1465.
- Staines, G.L. 1980. Spillover versus compensation: A review of the literature on the relationship between work and nonwork. *Human Relations*, 33(2): 111-129.
- Tandley, O.S. 2005. *Empowerment of women: A systematic analysis*, India Development Foundation (IDF) Discussion Paper: 1-18.
- Thomas, K.W., & Velthouse, B.A. 1990. Cognitive elements of empowerment: An interpretive model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(4): 666-681.