Employee Relations

The International Journal

Volume 40 Number 1 2018

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Employee Relations
Vol. 40 No. 1, 2018
p. 1
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Gender inequalities in job quality during the recession

Pilar Ficapal-Cusí
Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain

Angel Díaz-Chao
Department of Applied Economics, Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, Spain

Milagros Sainz-Ibáñez
Internet Interdisciplinary Institute, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain, and
Joan Torrent-Sellens
Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to empirically analyse gender differences in job quality during the first years of the economic crisis in Spain.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper uses microdata from the Quality of Working Life Survey. A representative sample of 5,381 and 4,925 Spanish employees (men and women) in 2008 and 2010, and a two-stage structural equation modelling (SEM) are empirically tested.

Findings – The study revealed three main results. First, the improvement in job quality was more favourable to men than it was to women. Second, the gender differences in the explanation of job quality increased considerably in favour of men. Third, this increase in gender-related job inequality in favour of men is explained by a worsening of 4 of the 5 explanatory dimensions thereof: intrinsic job quality; work organisation and workplace relationships; working conditions, work intensity and health and safety at work; and extrinsic rewards. Only inequality in the work-life balance dimension remained stable.

Research limitations/implications – The availability of more detailed microdata for other countries and new statistical methods for analysing causal relationships, particularly SEM-PLS, would allow new approaches to be taken.

Social implications – Public policy measures required to fight against gender inequalities are discussed.

Originality/value – The paper contributes to enrich the understanding of the multidimensional and gender-related determinants of job quality and, in particular, of studying the effects of the first years of the economic crisis.

Keywords Gender, Employee relations, Workplace, Women workers, Job satisfaction

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Recent studies acknowledge that job quality alludes to the level of objective and subjective well-being that workers express, feel and have in their jobs (Davoine et al., 2008; Drobnic and Guillen, 2011; Gallie et al., 2012; Guillen and Dahl, 2009; Kalleberg et al., 2007; Kalleberg, 2009). It is understood as an umbrella concept that links some core working life dimensions with worker well-being (Hauff and Kirchner, 2014). Such well-being is not limited to job characteristics; it has also effects on firms, on issues outside work (e.g. work-life balance) and on the workers’ future prospects. This standpoint that interprets job quality from the worker’s well-being perspective suggests a clearly multidimensional delimitation (European Commission, 2008), provided that it involves very broad working life explanatory foundations and consequences that go beyond what happens in the workplace. In this regard, literature has interpreted job quality as “an overall state of satisfaction that includes
objective aspects of material well-being, satisfactory relationships with the physical and social environment, and objectively perceived health; and subjective aspects of physical, psychological and social wellbeing” (Díaz-Chao et al., 2016, p. 618). This definition integrates both a multidimensional (including jobs, workers and firms) and an interdisciplinary (micro and macroeconomic, psychological and sociological) approach (Brown et al., 2012; Findlay et al., 2013). Thus, job quality provides and promotes sustainable work and economic growth in a reinforced competitive environment (Gallie, 2007; Green, 2006).

The onset and deepening of the economic crisis has done nothing but increase the tension between job quantity and quality (Erhel et al., 2012; Leschke et al., 2012). In this context, most recent research has noted the emergence of new problems associated with the labour structural change (Osterman, 2013; Gallie, 2017), such as the existence of growing inequalities in job quality (Green et al., 2013), especially the rise of gender inequalities (Leschke and Watt, 2014), and the different effects of gender-related equality policies depending on the socioeconomic position of women (Mandel, 2012).

Broadly speaking, gender equality is achieved when men and women enjoy the same rights and opportunities in every aspect of society, and when everyone’s behaviours, aspirations and needs are equally valued and promoted, regardless of gender (Eurofound, 2013). Within this context, the literature shows that gender equality is linked to the attainment of higher rates of female employment and fewer gender-based salary gaps (Fortin, 2005), with a more equitable division of household chores (Fuwa, 2004) and less gender segregation in terms of education (Charles and Bradley, 2002). Low recognition of women’s work reinforces gender inequalities through the emergence of various types of discrimination (Cloutier et al., 2009), such as women’s unequal access to better wages (Johansson et al., 2005; Mandel and Semyonov, 2005), promotion possibilities (Raley et al., 2006), or uneven distribution of domestic and professional work (Tremblay, 2012). Even in the most egalitarian societies, where there is less contrast in the attributes of jobs available to men and women, women do not have the same opportunities to participate and progress as their male counterparts (Mühlau, 2011).

Linking gender disparities with some individual indicators of job quality, the literature has begun to make significant contributions, especially when the effects of the recent economic crisis have begun to be analysed (Mustosmäki et al., 2016). According to various job quality indicators, like training, promotion opportunities, working conditions, wages, and job autonomy or participation, notable gender gaps have been found (Gallie, 2013a; Mandel, 2012). Nevertheless, these previous studies have several limitations. First, many of the studies are restricted both to aggregate and cross-sectional data, or rather short time perspective due to a lack of available data, and thus provide limited possibilities to make conclusions about job quality trends before and during the recession. Second, most existing research only analyses some partial indicators of job quality, and there is little evidence about the multidimensional effects of job quality from a gender perspective. In this regard, the main contribution of the present research revolves around the use of a multi-dimensional and micro-level approach during the first years of the last economic crisis. This way, we have been able to examine some gender gaps in the evolution of a whole set of explanatory dimensions of job quality during this concrete period of time.

With the aim of providing new empirical evidence on gender inequalities in job quality, this paper analyses Spanish workers’ perception of the quality of their jobs during the first period of the economic crisis (2008-2010). More specifically, we aim at identifying the main gender disparities in explaining job quality and analyse their trends during the first years of the economic crisis. For the analysis, we have used the microdata from the Spanish Quality of Working Life Survey (2010 was the last year for which data were available). This source of information provides very comprehensive data on the perceptions of working men and women, taking into consideration the multiple dimensions of their job and family situation. As a result of a broad set of explanatory dimensions that go beyond the workplace quality
analysis, we took a multidimensional perspective (Martel and Dupuis, 2006; Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2013). Thus, we defined and built a composite indicator (with 5 dimensions and 31 subjective and objective indicators) to identify the determinants of job quality and analyse how these explanatory dimensions have evolved across gender.

The analysis of gender-related job quality in Spain is relevant for several reasons. In recent years, the Spanish labour market has deteriorated ostensibly as a result of the economic crisis. That is, there has been a rapid rise in unemployment, which currently stands about 20 per cent of the working-age population, and more than 800,000 jobs have been destroyed (Díaz-Chao et al., 2016). In addition, there has been a marked deterioration in working conditions, which particularly manifest themselves as wage cuts, work precariousness, and poorer work organisation and promotion conditions (Economic and Social Council, 2017). However, the economic crisis has also led to lower work intensity, more opportunities to achieve work-life balance and an increase in social relations within firms. Also, the economic crisis has had severe negative influences on several indicators of women’s professional progression: employment, wages, availability of public care services and access to economic and managerial power (Castaño, 2015). Thus, since the onset of the economic crisis and despite the drastic reduction in employment (more acute among men than among women), there is relatively little research tackling these gender differences and how they relate to multidimensionality of job quality at times of recession (Eurofound, 2013; European Commission, 2015).

**Literature review and hypotheses**

The fact that men obtain better jobs than women from formal employment is well documented in the literature: men’s employment is more stable, their salaries are higher and they have more opportunities for advancement and access to lucrative jobs (Blau et al., 2006; Petit and Hook, 2009; Stier, 2012). Going beyond wages, recent research has added a wide variety of job-related characteristics (e.g. job discretion, autonomy, flexibility, skills, physical and emotional conditions, working conditions, job security, industrial relations or work-life balance) in explaining job quality (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2013). Using this conceptual framework, new research has focussed on the existence of a broad range of gender disparities in job quality before and during the economic crisis (Erhel et al., 2012; Leschke et al., 2012; Eurofound, 2013).

**Gender and job quality during the economic boom**

A first relevant conclusion obtained by research on this topic has been that, although gender differences decreased during the economic boom, they continue to systematically favour men. In a seminal work, Burchell et al. (2007) collected comparative data in 31 European countries and found gender inequalities in the majority of aspects related to working conditions. This study highlights inequalities in terms of occupation, activity sector, number of hours worked, wages, health risks in the workplace, unequal division of home care responsibilities, a shift towards part-time jobs for women and fewer possibilities to work the expected hours, for getting promotion or for attaining managerial positions. Using the same data, Smith et al. (2008) also observed that women had a higher probability of occupying jobs involving monotonous and straightforward tasks, whereas problem-solving and learning were characteristics of jobs mainly occupied by men. These circumstances reinforce the gap in the development of opportunities, with men having a higher propensity to have more job autonomy. When considering the occupational category, higher levels of autonomy are found among men working in white collar jobs.

In the same line, and in a comparative analysis for 26 European countries, Mühlau (2011) found significant advantages for men with regard to training, promotion opportunities, work complexity, autonomy and participation, co-worker support and hours worked outside normal
working hours. In contrast, men perceived health risks in the workplace more intensely than women did. Similarly, women exercised less discretion when doing their job and had a lower propensity to influence an organisation’s decisions. In addition, Stier and Yaish (2014) using data from 31 countries confirmed that during the economic boom, the gender gap in job quality dimensions (such as work content, job security and time autonomy) narrowed. Nevertheless, men continued to enjoy significant advantages in achievement, time autonomy and emotional conditions (such as stress or arriving home exhausted).

On the other hand, the literature conducted before the economic crisis also shows that the intersection of gender and occupational position had a significant effect on the explanation of job quality (Green et al., 2013). Female-dominated occupations (such as primary school teaching or nursing) were characterised by lower wages and fewer promotion opportunities than male-dominated occupations (such as engineering or computer science) (Levanon et al., 2009; Padavic and Reskin, 2002). Similarly, women tended to have less access to managerial positions and had a higher presence in part-time jobs. These part time jobs were usually associated with poor job quality, although the results in terms of job satisfaction are inconclusive (Burchell et al., 2007; Gallie et al., 2016).

Stier and Yaish (2014) have also confirmed gender-related occupational segregation. By occupational category, white-collar workers (men and women) had higher job quality than blue-collar workers. Among white-collar workers, no significant gender differences in job security or job content were observed. In contrast, emotional conditions were favourable to men. Among blue-collar workers, women reported lower levels of job security and job content quality. In a long run research carried out in Finland, Mustosmäki et al. (2016) highlight clear gender disparities in explaining job quality by occupational class. Regarding white-collar workers, and as opposed to 1977, in 2013 upper white-collar women have attained the same level of job quality as their male counterparts. However, the gender gap in job quality persists tightly between the blue and lower white-collar men and women. According to previous research on the persistence of gender gap in job quality in Scandinavian countries (Gallie, 2003, 2007), blue and lower white-collar men have better opportunities than their female counterparts for professional development and influence on their work and job training.

Beyond the European context, Cloutier et al. (2009) showed a narrowing of the gender gap in job quality in Quebec (Canada). This reduction of gender differences was particularly significant among childless employees and people with higher educational levels. However, significant differences in terms of income, skills and working hours for some employees, especially women with low educational levels, persisted. The results of a subsequent study comparing Quebec and the UK (Cloutier, 2012) confirmed this narrowing of the gender gap in both territories during the years of the economic boom.

This expectation of maintaining gender-related job inequalities despite economic boom constitutes the starting point of our research and as such is summarised in the first hypothesis:

**H1.** Although gender disparities narrowed during the economic boom in Spain, they continue to systematically favour men.

**Gender inequalities in job quality during the recession**

Within the context of gender inequalities in job quality during the economic crisis, literature suggests that the recession could have further widened some gender disparities (Eurofound, 2013; European Commission, 2015). In a multidimensional comparison across 27 European countries between years 2005 and 2010, Erbel et al. (2012) observed a slight deterioration in the job quality composite indicator, which was slightly more pronounced for women. Despite women experience better working conditions in terms of working time and higher work-life balance, they are more affected by involuntary non-standard (part time and fixed term)
employment and, on average, receive lower wages than men. Comparing the gender results of a multidimensional job quality indicator across 27 European countries in 2010, Leschke et al. (2012) and Leschke and Watt (2014) obtained similar evidence. As a result of the deterioration in wages and standard forms of employment, women have a lower overall job quality than men. Interestingly, the working conditions and job security (such as work intensity, physical working conditions and autonomy at work) and job security (subjective perception of likelihood of losing the job in the next 6 months), and work-life balance (workers who say that their working hours fit in well, or very well, with family/social commitments) and working time (share of employees working more than 48 hours a week and the average of the percentage ok workers on shift work, week-end work, evening work and night work) are favourable to women.

In a study of the Irish labour market, Russell et al. (2014) obtained also important new evidence about gender differences in job quality during the recession. First, since the start of the recession, there has been a degree of convergence between genders in part-time work (before it was much more common among women than among men). This phenomenon has been interpreted as a downgrading of working conditions rather than gender equalisation. Second, men expressed greater fear of job loss than women did. Third, during the recession, the gender gap in wages widened especially for female employees in the public sector. Fourth, greater gender inequality was observed in job control. Last, work pressure increased considerably for women although initially it was much lower for them. Unfortunately, the potential effects of occupations, and particularly how they are organised in each country, make it difficult to compare results across countries and draw practical conclusions (Stier and Yaish, 2014).

Recent research conducted in Spain shows that job quality improved during the first years of the economic recession (Anton et al., 2015; Díaz-Chao et al., 2016). Despite this improvement, the fall in wages and the substantial increase in non-standard forms of employment would have driven gender inequalities. On the other hand, working conditions and job security, and work-life balance and working time would have been maintained in similar terms that before the recession (Leschke and Watt, 2014). However, some specific research based on large samples of Spanish workers also highlights the deterioration of women’s working conditions and work organisation during the recession (Castaño, 2015; García-Mainar et al., 2016). This literature has shown that women tend to congregate in the worst paid and precarious jobs, with involuntary part-time and in lower categories. In light of the arguments outlined above, it is expected that:

\[ H2. \text{ Gender inequalities in the job quality increase during the recession, basically as a result of a deterioration in extrinsic rewards, work organisation and working conditions.} \]

Data and methods
Understanding the factors determining gender-related job quality raises two particular difficulties. First, the approach to the concept requires a multidimensional perspective, given that it is not usually captured in a single variable. In fact, performing partial analyses of various dimensions of the variable is the most common approach observed in the revised literature. However, this type of partial analysis has the disadvantage of not taking a full snapshot of the explanatory determinants (Leschke and Watt, 2014), which leads to the second difficulty: the use of an econometric modelling. In other words, job quality can be interpreted as a latent, non-observable construct that requires the application of econometric techniques enabling the use of this type of not directly measurable variables. In the empirical literature, structural equation modelling (SEM) analyses with latent variables have been frequently used in the literature to overcome this challenge (Diaz-Chao et al., 2016).
Sample and descriptive statistics

The first step that needs to be taken to establish a structural equation model that explains gender-related job quality in Spain is to construct its indicators (Handel, 2005; Olsen et al., 2010). We used microdata from the Quality of Working Life Survey (ECVT, as abbreviated in Spanish) for 2008 (first year of economic crisis) and 2010 (the latest available data). Data were collected in the final quarters of 2008 and 2010 by means of computer-assisted telephone interviews. The ECVT is a statistical operation conducted by the Government of Spain’s Ministry of Employment and Social Security (2010) for the Spanish territory as a whole. The ECVT provides objective and subjective data about each employee’s work situation and family environment, occupation or job characteristics, labour mobility, job satisfaction, work organisation, collective bargaining, labour relations, working hours, rewards, training, job security and work-life balance.

Our study includes 5,381 and 4,925 employees (wage earners) in 2008 and 2010 (3,079 men and 2,302 women, and 2,719 men and 2,206 women, respectively) as computed in the ECVT. Table I shows the results for employees’ socio-demographic and occupational gender-related characteristics.

Model and measures

In order to conduct of the aforementioned multidimensional approach to job quality, the following five dimensions were measured (Díaz-Chao et al., 2016): intrinsic job quality; work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees (thousands of employees)</td>
<td>3,079</td>
<td>2,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of total employees</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (average in years)</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory secondary</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower vocational and technical training</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper vocational and technical training</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary general</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education: medium degree</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education: superior degree</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional situation (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector worker</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector worker</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract type (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working time (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *All figures refer to weighted data. Valid percentages

Source: Compiled by the authors (2008, 2010)
organisation and workplace relationships; working conditions, work intensity, and health and safety at work; extrinsic rewards; and work-life balance. According to empirical literature (Erhel et al., 2012; European Commission, 2008; Leschke and Watt, 2014), these five dimensions incorporate the 31 indicators of the data source used in the present research.

We used a two-stage reflective explanatory model contrasted with microdata from a validated instrument (Requena-Santos, 2000). The two-stage empirical estimation methodology was applied as follows: in the first stage, the causal relationships among 31 indicators and the 5 latent dimensions describing gender-related job quality were tested and, in the second stage, the causal relationships among the indicators constructed for those 5 dimensions (based on the coefficients from the first stage) and the latent construct of gender-related job quality were tested. Finally, after applying the coefficients obtained from the second stage, a gender-related job quality index was constructed comparing 2008 to 2010 (mean values for the total and the separate five dimensions).

This methodology involved the design and econometric testing of 36 empirical models: 30 models for the first stage (five for men, five for women and five for all data in 2008 and 2010) and six for the second stage (one for men, one for women and one for all data in 2008 and 2010). Figure 1 shows the empirical model, the 31 explanatory variables and the five dimensions (to identify the variables and dimensions see Tables II, III and IV):

**Results**

*First stage SEM estimation*

Tables II and III show the results (standardized coefficients and measurement errors) of the first stage of estimating (SEM with measurement errors) the determinants of gender-related job quality. First, it should be noted that all the variables specified in the model were statistically significant (minimum at 90 per cent confidence level). Second, the goodness-of-fit measurements for the 30 proposed models were highly satisfactory. Thus, the indices NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI and CFI had very high values, approaching the optimal value of 1. The RMSEA values were less than 0.065, thus corroborating the validity of the estimated models (see Table II).

As a starting point, a comparison between men and women of the standardized coefficients obtained for 2008 show important gender-related differences. In the intrinsic job quality dimension, the coefficients of satisfaction with personal development and education for the attainment of a given job are higher for women. In contrast, in the work organisation and workplace relationships dimension, the coefficients obtained indicate greater effects on job quality for men, particularly in the variables related to the level of monotony or routine, stress, teamwork, opportunities for promotion and decision-making. This behaviour, which is more favourable to men, is reproduced when considering the working conditions, work intensity, and health and safety at work dimension. In this respect, worthy of note are the differences obtained in the coefficients of the perception of risks in the workplace, health and safety at work, commuting time, and workspace conditions. In their perceptions of working conditions, men are more satisfied than women. In contrast, women show a higher satisfaction with the working day and leave entitlements than their male counterparts.

In the extrinsic rewards dimension, a pattern of results that is more favourable to men is repeated, particularly in the coefficients obtained for satisfaction with flexible working hours, wage, and job stability. Only satisfaction with firm-paid training is slightly more favourable to women. Lastly, in the work-life balance dimension, the results are mixed. The direct effects on job quality are more positive for women with regard to satisfaction with time devoted to children and time for personal life outside work, whereas satisfaction with personal life and partner’s involvement in household chores are more favourable to men.
The unequal intra-gender starting point in 2008 and the differentiated explanatory dynamic between genders from 2008 to 2010 determine an explanatory itinerary of job quality in Spain that is clearly differentiated between men and women (see Table III). A comparison between men and women of the results for 2010 suggests very important differences that, to a large extent, determine once again a higher effect on job quality in the coefficients for men. In the intrinsic job quality dimension, the coefficient of satisfaction with motivation is partially compensated by a dynamic that is more favourable to men in the coefficients of satisfaction with personal development, education for the job and overall satisfaction with the job. In the work organisation and workplace relationships dimension, the coefficients obtained clearly indicate higher effects on job quality for men in 2010, particularly in the variables related to satisfaction with promotion opportunities, autonomy, decision-making and level of stress. In this dimension, only the coefficient concerning relationships between workers and directors presents a behaviour that is slightly more favourable to women.

Figure 1. Two-stage model of the direct effects on gender-characteristics job quality in Spain

Source: Compiled by the authors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension/variable</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Intrinsic job quality (IJQ)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Worker's overall satisfaction (OVERSAT)</td>
<td>0.850***</td>
<td>0.708***</td>
<td>0.848***</td>
<td>0.767***</td>
<td>0.849***</td>
<td>0.734***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Satisfaction with motivation level (MOTIV)</td>
<td>0.807***</td>
<td>1.862***</td>
<td>0.816***</td>
<td>1.900***</td>
<td>0.812***</td>
<td>1.876***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Satisfaction with personal development (PERDEV)</td>
<td>0.763***</td>
<td>1.540***</td>
<td>0.803***</td>
<td>1.510***</td>
<td>0.781***</td>
<td>1.532***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Satisfaction with education for the job (JOBEDUC)</td>
<td>0.308***</td>
<td>0.922***</td>
<td>0.357***</td>
<td>10.873***</td>
<td>0.299***</td>
<td>10.368***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Work organisation and workplace relationships (WOWR)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Satisfaction with autonomy (AUTON)</td>
<td>0.483***</td>
<td>3.820***</td>
<td>0.505***</td>
<td>3.576***</td>
<td>0.495***</td>
<td>3.574***</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Satisfaction with superiors' assessment (SUPASS)</td>
<td>0.768***</td>
<td>1.999***</td>
<td>0.787***</td>
<td>1.917***</td>
<td>0.777***</td>
<td>2.566***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Satisfaction with decision-making (DECMAK)</td>
<td>0.586***</td>
<td>4.813***</td>
<td>0.563***</td>
<td>4.801***</td>
<td>0.573***</td>
<td>4.549***</td>
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<td>8. Level of teamwork (TEAMW)</td>
<td>0.107***</td>
<td>0.139***</td>
<td>0.068***</td>
<td>0.145***</td>
<td>0.084***</td>
<td>0.144***</td>
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<td>9. Satisfaction with opportunities for promotion (PROMOP)</td>
<td>0.448***</td>
<td>7.688***</td>
<td>0.409***</td>
<td>8.851***</td>
<td>0.423***</td>
<td>7.757***</td>
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<td>10. Degree of stress (STRESS)</td>
<td>−0.120***</td>
<td>8.966***</td>
<td>−0.186***</td>
<td>8.835***</td>
<td>−0.137***</td>
<td>9.165***</td>
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<td>11. Level of monotony or routine in tasks (MONOT)</td>
<td>−0.281***</td>
<td>8.866***</td>
<td>−0.349***</td>
<td>9.066***</td>
<td>−0.313***</td>
<td>8.811***</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Relationships among workers (RELWORKERS)</td>
<td>0.680***</td>
<td>2.774***</td>
<td>0.669***</td>
<td>2.882***</td>
<td>0.672***</td>
<td>2.874***</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Relationships workers with directors (RBWORDIR)</td>
<td>0.407***</td>
<td>2.314***</td>
<td>0.416***</td>
<td>2.390***</td>
<td>0.410***</td>
<td>2.363***</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>III. Working conditions, work intensity, health and safety at work (WCWIHS)</strong></td>
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<td>14. Level of workspace conditions (WSPACE)</td>
<td>−0.031***</td>
<td>109.531***</td>
<td>−0.059***</td>
<td>246.932***</td>
<td>−0.042***</td>
<td>753.945***</td>
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<td>15. Level of lighting conditions (LIGHTCON)</td>
<td>−0.087***</td>
<td>0.087***</td>
<td>−0.074***</td>
<td>0.081***</td>
<td>−0.081***</td>
<td>0.083***</td>
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<td>16. Commuting time (COMMUT)</td>
<td>−0.031***</td>
<td>110.772***</td>
<td>−0.072***</td>
<td>248.829***</td>
<td>−0.063***</td>
<td>761.558***</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Weekly working hours (WWORKH)</td>
<td>0.329***</td>
<td>3.988***</td>
<td>0.309***</td>
<td>4.846***</td>
<td>0.519***</td>
<td>4.351***</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Satisfaction with leave entitlements (LEAVEENT)</td>
<td>−0.122***</td>
<td>10.313***</td>
<td>−0.091***</td>
<td>8.934***</td>
<td>−0.112***</td>
<td>9.312***</td>
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<td>19. Satisfaction with working day (WORKDAY)</td>
<td>−0.178***</td>
<td>47.213***</td>
<td>−0.131***</td>
<td>66.021***</td>
<td>−0.154***</td>
<td>54.244***</td>
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<td>20. Health and safety at work (HEALTHSAF)</td>
<td>0.766***</td>
<td>2.155***</td>
<td>0.711***</td>
<td>2.914***</td>
<td>0.736***</td>
<td>2.782***</td>
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<td>21. Perception of risks in the workplace (RISKPER)</td>
<td>0.840***</td>
<td>1.500***</td>
<td>0.556***</td>
<td>3.619***</td>
<td>0.625***</td>
<td>3.281***</td>
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<td><strong>IV. Extrinsic rewards (EXRW)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Satisfaction with wage (WAGE)</td>
<td>0.666***</td>
<td>2.922***</td>
<td>0.631***</td>
<td>3.503***</td>
<td>0.651***</td>
<td>2.963***</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Satisfaction with social benefits (SOCBENEF)</td>
<td>0.467***</td>
<td>7.763***</td>
<td>0.454***</td>
<td>7.551***</td>
<td>0.461***</td>
<td>7.547***</td>
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<td>24. Satisfaction with flexible working hours (FLEXWH)</td>
<td>0.350***</td>
<td>9.175***</td>
<td>0.298***</td>
<td>10.624***</td>
<td>0.319***</td>
<td>9.839***</td>
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<td>25. Satisfaction with job stability (JOBSTAB)</td>
<td>0.440***</td>
<td>5.276***</td>
<td>0.407***</td>
<td>6.035***</td>
<td>0.415***</td>
<td>5.659***</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Worker's years of experience (WOREXP)</td>
<td>0.138***</td>
<td>116.583***</td>
<td>0.153***</td>
<td>89.907***</td>
<td>0.149***</td>
<td>105.941***</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Satisfaction with firm training (FIRMTRAIN)</td>
<td>0.658***</td>
<td>5.480***</td>
<td>0.690***</td>
<td>5.782***</td>
<td>0.667***</td>
<td>5.714***</td>
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<td>V. Work-life balance (WLB)</td>
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<td>28. Satisfaction personal life (PERLIFE)</td>
<td>−0.096***</td>
<td>2.749***</td>
<td>−0.147***</td>
<td>3.521***</td>
<td>−0.121***</td>
<td>3.091***</td>
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<td>29. Satisfaction time devoted to children (DEVCHILD)</td>
<td>0.777***</td>
<td>4.323***</td>
<td>0.708***</td>
<td>3.991***</td>
<td>0.786***</td>
<td>4.188***</td>
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<td>30. Satisfaction partner’s involvement in chores (PARTINV)</td>
<td>0.932***</td>
<td>1.581***</td>
<td>0.901***</td>
<td>2.290***</td>
<td>0.919***</td>
<td>1.888***</td>
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<td>31. Satisfaction time personal life outside work (LIFEOWORK)</td>
<td>0.788***</td>
<td>4.638***</td>
<td>0.806***</td>
<td>4.174***</td>
<td>0.795***</td>
<td>4.447***</td>
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Goodness-of-fit indices

<table>
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<th>Women Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>All Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>Errors</th>
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<tr>
<td>IQ men: NFI: 0.996; RFI: 0.988; IFI: 0.997; TLI: 0.983; CFI: 0.997; RMSEA: 0.048</td>
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<tr>
<td>WOWR men: NFI: 0.968; RFI: 0.924; IFI: 0.971; TLI: 0.931; CFI: 0.971; RMSEA: 0.051</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCWIHS men: NFI: 0.980; RFI: 0.967; IFI: 0.982; TLI: 0.970; CFI: 0.982; RMSEA: 0.053</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXRW men: NFI: 0.979; RFI: 0.937; IFI: 0.982; TLI: 0.937; CFI: 0.982; RMSEA: 0.043</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLB men: NFI: 0.996; RFI: 0.987; IFI: 0.996; TLI: 0.989; CFI: 0.996; RMSEA: 0.064</td>
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<td>IJQ women: NFI: 0.998; RFI: 0.991; IFI: 0.999; TLI: 0.993; CFI: 0.999; RMSEA: 0.032</td>
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<td>WOWR women: NFI: 0.961; RFI: 0.967; IFI: 0.965; TLI: 0.917; CFI: 0.965; RMSEA: 0.057</td>
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<td>WCWIHS women: NFI: 0.995; RFI: 0.990; IFI: 0.997; TLI: 0.996; CFI: 0.997; RMSEA: 0.017</td>
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<td>EXRW women: NFI: 0.965; RFI: 0.852; IFI: 0.968; TLI: 0.866; CFI: 0.968; RMSEA: 0.062</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLB women: NFI: 0.999; RFI: 0.999; IFI: 0.999; TLI: 0.997; CFI: 0.998; RMSEA: 0.005</td>
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<tr>
<td>IJQ total: NFI: 0.998; RFI: 0.998; IFI: 0.998; TLI: 0.990; CFI: 0.998; RMSEA: 0.039</td>
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<td>WOWR total: NFI: 0.957; RFI: 0.908; IFI: 0.905; TLI: 0.956; CFI: 0.906; RMSEA: 0.069</td>
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<td>WCWIHS total: NFI: 0.976; RFI: 0.962; IFI: 0.977; TLI: 0.946; CFI: 0.977; RMSEA: 0.057</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXRW total: NFI: 0.976; RFI: 0.911; IFI: 0.976; TLI: 0.917; CFI: 0.976; RMSEA: 0.049</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLB total: NFI: 0.999; RFI: 0.999; IFI: 0.999; TLI: 0.997; CFI: 0.999; RMSEA: 0.020</td>
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</table>

**Notes:** Regression analysis: structural equation modelling (SEM). Estimated coefficients: direct effects. p-value: *significant at 90% confidence level, **significant at 95% confidence level, ***significant at 99% confidence level.

**Source:** Compiled by the authors.
<table>
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<th>Errors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Intrinsic job quality (IJQ)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Worker’s overall satisfaction (OVERSAT)</td>
<td>0.778***</td>
<td>1.149***</td>
<td>1.743***</td>
<td>0.775***</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Satisfaction with motivation level (MOTIV)</td>
<td>0.821***</td>
<td>1.654***</td>
<td>1.743***</td>
<td>0.775***</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Satisfaction with personal development (PERDEV)</td>
<td>0.700***</td>
<td>1.368***</td>
<td>1.753***</td>
<td>0.782***</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Satisfaction with education for the job (JOBEDUC)</td>
<td>0.300***</td>
<td>8.301***</td>
<td>9.231***</td>
<td>0.296***</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Work organisation and workplace relationships (WOWR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Satisfaction with autonomy (AUTON)</td>
<td>0.548***</td>
<td>3.193***</td>
<td>3.653***</td>
<td>0.527***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Satisfaction with superiors’ assessment (SUPASS)</td>
<td>0.802***</td>
<td>1.658***</td>
<td>1.605***</td>
<td>0.803***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Satisfaction with decision-making (DECMAK)</td>
<td>0.567***</td>
<td>4.425***</td>
<td>4.720***</td>
<td>0.550***</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Level of teamwork (TEAMW)</td>
<td>0.045***</td>
<td>6.542***</td>
<td>7.866***</td>
<td>0.549***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Satisfaction with opportunities for promotion (PROMOP)</td>
<td>0.541***</td>
<td>0.475***</td>
<td>7.866***</td>
<td>0.549***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Degree of stress (STRESS)</td>
<td>-0.135***</td>
<td>8.504***</td>
<td>8.381***</td>
<td>-0.149***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Level of monotony or routine in tasks (MONOT)</td>
<td>-0.211***</td>
<td>8.804***</td>
<td>8.806***</td>
<td>-0.217***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Relationships among workers (RELWORKERS)</td>
<td>0.669***</td>
<td>2.495***</td>
<td>2.568***</td>
<td>0.683***</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Relationships workers with directors (RBWORDIR)</td>
<td>0.414***</td>
<td>2.373***</td>
<td>2.375***</td>
<td>0.425***</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. Working conditions, work intensity, health and safety at work (WCWHS)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Level of workspace conditions (WSPACE)</td>
<td>-1.288***</td>
<td>-0.743***</td>
<td>-0.743***</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Level of lighting conditions (LIGHTCON)</td>
<td>0.578***</td>
<td>3.422***</td>
<td>3.420***</td>
<td>0.525***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Commuting time (COMMUT)</td>
<td>-0.064***</td>
<td>0.092***</td>
<td>0.073***</td>
<td>-0.068***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Weekly working hours (WWORKH)</td>
<td>-0.111***</td>
<td>0.873***</td>
<td>0.873***</td>
<td>0.873***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Satisfaction with leave entitlements (LEAVEENT)</td>
<td>0.563***</td>
<td>3.449***</td>
<td>4.254***</td>
<td>0.493***</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Satisfaction with working day (WORKDAY)</td>
<td>0.521***</td>
<td>8.306***</td>
<td>8.619***</td>
<td>0.545***</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Health and safety at work (HEALTHSAF)</td>
<td>-0.211***</td>
<td>6.505***</td>
<td>9.486***</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Perception of risks in the workplace (RISKPER)</td>
<td>-0.177***</td>
<td>2.281***</td>
<td>2.281***</td>
<td>-0.211***</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Extrinsic rewards (EXRW)</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Satisfaction with wage (WAGE)</td>
<td>0.665***</td>
<td>2.880***</td>
<td>2.775***</td>
<td>0.681***</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Satisfaction with social benefits (SOCBENEF)</td>
<td>0.511***</td>
<td>7.294***</td>
<td>7.667***</td>
<td>0.499***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Satisfaction with flexible working hours (FLEXWH)</td>
<td>0.392***</td>
<td>7.592***</td>
<td>9.224***</td>
<td>0.379***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Satisfaction with job stability (JOBSTAB)</td>
<td>0.473***</td>
<td>4.519***</td>
<td>5.205***</td>
<td>0.467***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Worker’s years of experience (WOREXP)</td>
<td>0.159***</td>
<td>110.586***</td>
<td>97.473***</td>
<td>0.129***</td>
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(continued)
Table III: Gender inequalities

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<tr>
<td>27. Satisfaction with firm training (FIRMTRAIN)</td>
<td>0.624***</td>
<td>0.637***</td>
<td>0.663***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Satisfaction personal life (PERLIFE)</td>
<td>-0.102***</td>
<td>0.108***</td>
<td>-0.104***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Satisfaction time devoted to children (DEVCHILD)</td>
<td>0.827***</td>
<td>0.844***</td>
<td>0.834***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Satisfaction partner's involvement in chores (PARTINV)</td>
<td>0.945***</td>
<td>0.965***</td>
<td>0.954***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Satisfaction time personal life outside work (LIFEOWORK)</td>
<td>0.854***</td>
<td>0.875***</td>
<td>0.863***</td>
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Goodness-of-fit-indices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goodness-of-fit-indices</th>
<th>IJQ men: NFI: 0.999; RFI: 0.998; IFI: 0.999; TLI: 0.999; CFI: 0.999; RMSEA: 0.005</th>
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<tr>
<td>WOWR men: NFI: 0.975; RFI: 0.940; IFI: 0.978; TLI: 0.949; CFI: 0.978; RMSEA: 0.046</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCWIHS men: NFI: 0.959; RFI: 0.917; IFI: 0.966; TLI: 0.931; CFI: 0.966; RMSEA: 0.041</td>
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<td>EXRW men: NFI: 0.989; RFI: 0.960; IFI: 0.992; TLI: 0.971; CFI: 0.992; RMSEA: 0.030</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLB men: NFI: 0.999; RFI: 0.998; IFI: 0.999; TLI: 0.999; CFI: 0.999; RMSEA: 0.016</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJQ women: NFI: 0.995; RFI: 0.997; IFI: 0.996; TLI: 0.980; CFI: 0.996; RMSEA: 0.051</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOWR women: NFI: 0.979; RFI: 0.951; IFI: 0.981; TLI: 0.956; CFI: 0.981; RMSEA: 0.041</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCWIHS women: NFI: 0.968; RFI: 0.939; IFI: 0.977; TLI: 0.955; CFI: 0.977; RMSEA: 0.035</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXRW women: NFI: 0.984; RFI: 0.945; IFI: 0.989; TLI: 0.962; CFI: 0.989; RMSEA: 0.031</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB women: NFI: 0.999; RFI: 0.996; IFI: 0.999; TLI: 0.997; CFI: 0.999; RMSEA: 0.032</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJQ total: NFI: 0.999; RFI: 0.993; IFI: 0.999; TLI: 0.965; CFI: 0.999; RMSEA: 0.025</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOWR total: NFI: 0.979; RFI: 0.951; IFI: 0.981; TLI: 0.956; CFI: 0.981; RMSEA: 0.041</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCWIHS total: NFI: 0.965; RFI: 0.910; IFI: 0.969; TLI: 0.917; CFI: 0.968; RMSEA: 0.046</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXRW total: NFI: 0.983; RFI: 0.910; IFI: 0.984; TLI: 0.917; CFI: 0.984; RMSEA: 0.048</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB total: NFI: 0.999; RFI: 0.997; IFI: 0.999; TLI: 0.998; CFI: 0.999; RMSEA: 0.027</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *Regression analysis: structural equation modelling (SEM). Estimated coefficients: direct effects. p-value: *significant at 90% confidence level, **significant at 95% confidence level, ***significant at 99% confidence level.

Source: Compiled by the authors
This pattern of results, which overall is more favourable to men, is repeated in the working conditions, work intensity and health and safety at work dimension. In this respect, worthy of note are the differences in the coefficients of the perception of risks in the workplace, satisfaction with leave entitlements, working day, and lighting and workspace conditions. In this dimension, only the coefficient of health and safety at work presents a behaviour that is slightly more favourable to women. In the extrinsic rewards dimension, a pattern of results that is more favourable to men is repeated, particularly in the coefficients obtained for satisfaction with flexible working hours, job stability, social benefits and experience in the job. In this dimension, only satisfaction with wage is slightly more favourable to women. Finally, and in contrast to the other dimensions, the results of the coefficients related to the work-life balance dimension shows direct effects on job quality favouring women, due to the better behaviour of satisfaction with personal life outside work, partner’s involvement in household chores, and time devoted to children.

Second stage SEM estimation

Table IV shows the results of the second stage of estimating the determinants (direct effects) of gender-related job quality. It should be noted that all the variables specified in the model were statistically significant (all at 99 per cent confidence level). Also, the goodness-of-fit measurements for the six proposed models were highly satisfactory (see Table IV).

The standardized coefficients obtained for the indicators of the five dimensions in 2008 and in 2010 highlight important gender differences in the explanation of job quality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension/variable</th>
<th>Men Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Women Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>All Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job quality (JQ) 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Intrinsic job quality (IJQ)</td>
<td>0.936***</td>
<td>2.502***</td>
<td>0.931***</td>
<td>3.317***</td>
<td>0.932***</td>
<td>3.109***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Work organisation and workplace relationships (WOWR)</td>
<td>0.817***</td>
<td>11.297***</td>
<td>0.831***</td>
<td>10.652***</td>
<td>0.829***</td>
<td>7.862***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Working conditions, work intensity, health and safety at work (WCWIHS)</td>
<td>0.511***</td>
<td>10.903***</td>
<td>0.432***</td>
<td>11.675***</td>
<td>0.481***</td>
<td>11.098***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extrinsic rewards (EXRW)</td>
<td>0.577***</td>
<td>16.829***</td>
<td>0.571***</td>
<td>18.229***</td>
<td>0.576***</td>
<td>17.655***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Work-life balance (WLB)</td>
<td>-0.160***</td>
<td>57.148***</td>
<td>-0.200***</td>
<td>57.097***</td>
<td>-0.170***</td>
<td>57.280***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job quality (JQ) 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Intrinsic job quality (IJQ)</td>
<td>0.886***</td>
<td>4.234***</td>
<td>0.843***</td>
<td>5.981***</td>
<td>0.871***</td>
<td>4.862***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Work organisation and workplace relationships (WOWR)</td>
<td>0.850***</td>
<td>10.302***</td>
<td>0.872***</td>
<td>7.965***</td>
<td>0.857***</td>
<td>9.383***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Working conditions, work intensity, health and safety at work (WCWIHS)</td>
<td>0.622***</td>
<td>10.149***</td>
<td>0.550***</td>
<td>9.788***</td>
<td>0.572***</td>
<td>10.366***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extrinsic rewards (EXRW)</td>
<td>0.615***</td>
<td>17.520***</td>
<td>0.617***</td>
<td>13.668***</td>
<td>0.615***</td>
<td>16.699***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Work-life balance (WLB)</td>
<td>-0.161***</td>
<td>79.675***</td>
<td>-0.191***</td>
<td>82.031***</td>
<td>-0.172***</td>
<td>79.675***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goodness-of-fit-indices

| JQ 2008 men: NFI: 0.989; RFI: 0.947; IFI: 0.990; TLI: 0.948; CFI: 0.990; RMSEA: 0.074 |
| JQ 2008 women: NFI: 0.989; RFI: 0.947; IFI: 0.990; TLI: 0.951; CFI: 0.990; RMSEA: 0.068 |
| JQ 2008 total: NFI: 0.989; RFI: 0.947; IFI: 0.990; TLI: 0.948; CFI: 0.990; RMSEA: 0.074 |
| JQ 2010 men: NFI: 0.987; RFI: 0.939; IFI: 0.988; TLI: 0.939; CFI: 0.988; RMSEA: 0.075 |
| JQ 2010 women: NFI: 0.987; RFI: 0.939; IFI: 0.988; TLI: 0.939; CFI: 0.988; RMSEA: 0.073 |
| JQ 2010 total: NFI: 0.987; RFI: 0.939; IFI: 0.988; TLI: 0.939; CFI: 0.988; RMSEA: 0.074 |

Notes: *Regression analysis: structural equation modelling (SEM). Estimated coefficients: direct effects. p-value: *significant at 90% confidence level, **significant at 95% confidence level, ***significant at 99% confidence level

Source: Compiled by the authors (2008, 2010)
First, it is important to draw attention to a starting point that was clearly unfavourable to women. For 2008, the coefficients obtained for 4 of the 5 job quality dimensions were favourable to men: working conditions, work intensity and health and safety at work; work-life balance; extrinsic rewards, and intrinsic job quality. Only work organisation and workplace relationships present a direct effect on job quality that is favourable to women.

Second, it is worth noting that the evolution of the explanatory coefficients in the job quality dimensions during the first years of the recession (between 2008 and 2010) was generally favourable to both women and men. The coefficients of 4 of the 5 explanatory dimensions evolved positively for women: working conditions, work intensity, and health and safety at work; extrinsic rewards; work organisation and workplace relationships, and work-life balance. For 2010, only the intrinsic job quality dimension presents lower explanatory coefficients than those for 2008. Moreover, this dynamic is similar for both men and women. The coefficients of 3 of the 5 explanatory dimensions evolved positively for men: working conditions, work intensity, and health and safety at work; extrinsic rewards, and work organisation and workplace relationships. The work-life balance dimension maintained practically the same coefficients as those in 2008 and the intrinsic job quality evolved unfavourably, as it did for women.

Third and lastly, it should be noted that, as a result of the clearly unequal starting point in 2008 and a similar evolution during the first years of the recession (from 2008 to 2010), the explanatory effect on job quality of the five dimensions thereof continued to be clearly biased in favour of men in 2010. The coefficients of 3 of the 5 explanatory dimensions of job quality continued to be favourable to men: working conditions, work intensity and health and safety at work; intrinsic job quality, and work-life balance. The extrinsic rewards dimension maintained practically the same differences as those found in 2008. Only the work organisation and workplace relationships dimension evolved favourably for women during the first years of the recession.

**Gender-related job quality composite index**

Finally, a gender-related job quality composite index was constructed and its mean values shown, comparing 2008 to 2010 (see Table V). The mean value of this composite indicator was $M = 44.8$ points in 2008 ($M = 43.9$ for women and $M = 45.9$ for men) and $M = 54.5$ points in 2010 ($M = 51.3$ for women and $M = 56.1$ for men). The means obtained for the general indicator highlight the fact that the improvement in job quality during the first years of the recession can be mainly explained by the working conditions, work intensity, and health and safety at work dimension for both male and female workers.

These aggregate results are the outcome of a dynamic that was clearly more favourable to men than it was to women. None of the 5 explanatory dimensions of job quality during the first years of the recession evolved more positively for women. The results obtained suggest that, at the start of the crisis (2008), 4 of the 5 explanatory dimensions of job quality were favourable to men. Only intrinsic job quality presented mean values favourable to women. The results obtained for 2010 suggest that, during the first years of the recession (from 2008 to 2010), the gender gap increased. All the explanatory dimensions of job quality were either favourable to men or remained equal for both genders.

In short, gender inequality in job quality increased during the first years of the recession. In line with predictions related to $H1$, although inequality already existed at the start of the crisis (two points difference in the composite indicator of job quality in favour of men), this inequality increased during the first years of the recession and had more than doubled by 2010 (4.8 points difference in the composite indicator of job quality in favour of men). The results show that 4 of the 5 explanatory dimensions of job quality were responsible for this increase in gender inequality: intrinsic job quality (from 0.6 points difference in
## Gender characteristics in job quality composite indicator in Spain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean 2008</th>
<th>SD 2008</th>
<th>Mean 2010</th>
<th>SD 2010</th>
<th>Mean All 2008</th>
<th>SD All 2008</th>
<th>Mean 2010</th>
<th>SD 2010</th>
<th>Mean All 2010</th>
<th>SD All 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean and SD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Work organisation and workplace relationships</td>
<td>20.62</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>19.37</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>19.72</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>23.06</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>21.58</td>
<td>5.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Working conditions, work intensity, health and safety at work</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>14.31</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extrinsic rewards</td>
<td>15.62</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>14.68</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>15.35</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>23.06</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>21.58</td>
<td>5.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job quality composite indicator</td>
<td>45.87</td>
<td>11.75</td>
<td>43.85</td>
<td>11.91</td>
<td>44.81</td>
<td>11.82</td>
<td>56.11</td>
<td>12.41</td>
<td>51.32</td>
<td>11.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mean differences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women/men 2008</th>
<th>Women/men 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Intrinsic job quality</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Work organisation and workplace relationships</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Working conditions, work intensity, health and safety at work</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extrinsic rewards</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>-2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Work-life balance</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job quality composite indicator</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
<td>-4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Compiled by the authors (2008, 2010)
2008 to 0.0 points difference in 2010); work organisation and workplace relationships (from −1.2 points difference in 2008 to −1.5 points difference in 2010); working conditions, work intensity, and health and safety at work (from −1.0 points difference in 2008 to −1.4 points difference in 2010), and extrinsic rewards (from −0.9 points difference in 2008 to −2.3 points difference in 2010). These results are aligned with expectations of H2. However, the inequality in the work-life balance dimension remained stable over time (−0.3 points difference in 2008 and −0.3 points difference in 2010).

Conclusion and discussion
The main contribution of this study is that it is based on disaggregated microdata obtained from large samples of Spanish working men and women. The multidimensional nature of gender gap in job quality goes beyond the analysis of psychological variables and incorporates social and economic variables (Martel and Dupuis, 2006; Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011; Gallie, 2013a). Similarly, while most of the data obtained refer to subjective indicators of Spanish workers’ opinions of the quality of their jobs, several objective indicators (such as wages, weekly working hours or physical working conditions) are also incorporated. This analytical strategy is consistent with the literature reviewed in this study (Anton et al., 2015; Hauff and Kirchner, 2014; Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2012).

In addition to these strengths, this study provides four main results. First, despite the economic crisis, job quality in Spain has considerably improved over the analysis period. Thus, the mean value of the composite indicator for it was $M = 44.8$ points in 2008 and $M = 54.5$ points in 2010. Second and in line with expectations, over time the improvement in job quality during the first years of the recession was more favourable to men than it was to women. Third and according to predictions, the gender differences in the explanation of job quality during the first years of the recession increased considerably in favour of men. Fourth and last corroborating our assumptions, this increase in gender difference in job quality in favour of men is explained by a worsening of 4 of the 5 considered explanatory dimensions thereof: intrinsic job quality; work organisation and workplace relationships; working conditions, work intensity and health and safety at work; and extrinsic rewards. Interestingly, only inequality in the work-life balance dimension remained stable between 2008 and 2010.

In connection with the improvement in job quality during the economic crisis, the results are quite consistent with those obtained by other European studies (Morley, 2010; Pot, 2011). Particularly noteworthy are the results of recent studies on a set of European countries between 2005 and 2010 (Green and Mostafa, 2012; Green et al., 2013). In the case of Spain, those studies suggests a slight increase in job quality between 2005 and 2010, linked to a decrease in work intensity, and clear improvements in physical and social environments and working time quality. In another study for a wide range of European countries (Esser and Olsen, 2012), the results for job quality put Spain in an intermediate position in terms of worker autonomy and job security. However, that study also indicates the importance of the economic cycle and the unemployment rate to perceptions of job security. Along similar lines, Leschke and Watt (2014) put job quality in Spain close to the mean average of the 27 European Union countries (at the time their study was conducted), with a stabilisation of results between 2005 and 2010. Indeed, and in line with the results from the considered microdata, recent empirical literature confirms the need for a multidimensional approach as a result of a broad set of explanatory dimensions that go beyond workplace quality analysis (Leschke et al., 2012).

Regarding the research on gender differences in the explanation of job quality, the results obtained are consistent with the available evidence. European literature has shown that the recession could have widened some gender inequalities (Eurofound, 2013; European Commission, 2015). As a result of a deterioration in wages, the involuntary increase in
non-standard forms of employment (part time and fixed term), work pressure and subjective insecurity, women have a lower job quality than men (Erhel et al., 2012; Leschke and Watt, 2014; Russell et al., 2014). In Spain, the general European trend would have been exacerbated by a substantial deterioration in wages and general working conditions and work organisation, which have particularly affected women (Castaño, 2015; Economic and Social Council, 2017; Leschke and Watt, 2014).

In terms of public policy on employment and gender equality, our study results suggest two important conclusions (Osterman and Chimienti, 2012). First, the importance of paying much greater attention to the working environment and social relation dimensions in public policies on gender-related employment. It is not simply a debate between job quantity and quality (Green and Mostafa, 2012). To overcome the economic crisis, the results obtained reveal that social relations, health and safety at work, working conditions, work organisation, extrinsic rewards, and work-life balance are increasingly becoming the cornerstones on which to build jobs where working men and women are sufficiently trained, innovative, autonomous, committed and satisfied. Indeed, the Spanish economy should strengthen these foundations of job quality in order to transform its extensive economic growth model and to improve social well-being. In this context and as suggested by Karamessini’s and Rubery’s (2013) work, further research on the relationship between austerity policies and the gender gap in employment seems to be particularly interesting for future research. The present research has not in-depth addressed this issue, given that our data did not allow it. Future research should therefore analyse which dimensions of job quality have been mostly affected by austerity policies and how they have different effects on men’s and women’s professional life.

Second, and in line with the latest research, public policy on gender equality should also address new problems associated with the accelerated changes at work (Gallie, 2017). In particular: the different job quality problems between highly skilled and less skilled working men and women (Gallie, 2013b); the link between the gender gap and occupations (Green et al., 2013; Stier and Yaish, 2014; Ruuskanen et al., 2016); the need to consider the different institutional regimes and organised labour in order to overcome gender-related job inequalities (Cloutier, 2012; Holman, 2013); and the need to explore differentiated approaches to reconciling work and family, in order to prevent that gender-related equality policies penalise highly skilled women while benefiting the less skilled (Mandel, 2012; Mustosmäki et al., 2016).

Beyond conclusions for public policy, the present research also offers a set of practical implications for firms and organisations. In this sense, the need for firms in Spain to incorporate strategies and practices to reduce the gender gap seems to be particularly indispensable. The experience with different economic crises suggests a significant deterioration in women’s job quality. However, it also emphasises that the recovery of this job quality must be based on a multi-dimensional approach that covers the whole of its explanatory dimensions, not only those regarding wages or conciliation. Taking advantage of the economic recovery, firms should guarantee higher-quality jobs sensitive to gender differences that incorporate specific dimensions (such as working conditions, work organisation or workplace relationships) to reduce existing gender gaps.

This study has a number of limitations, particularly in relation to the indicators and dimensions used in the analysis. Nevertheless, the availability of the microdata survey on a representative sample of working men and women in Spain for 2008 and 2010 revealed the highly suggestive idea of establishing multidimensional and gender-related determinants of job quality and, in particular, of studying the effects of the first years of the economic crisis (Findlay et al., 2013). In this respect, and bearing in mind the importance of this type of analysis to the material and non-material outcomes of work, the availability of: more detailed data for other countries and further specifications related to working men and
women, especially in connection with current knowledge-based occupations; other sources of data on gender-related job quality, chiefly to capture job tasks; and new statistical methods for analysing causal relationships, particularly SEM-PLS, would allow new approaches to be taken and major improvements to be made. The preliminary nature of this study therefore suggests the need for future research on the issue of gender inequalities in job quality.

References


Economic and Social Council (2017), La participación laboral de las mujeres en España [The Labour Participation of Women in Spain], Spanish Economic and Social Council, Madrid.


Further reading


Corresponding author
Joan Torrent-Sellens can be contacted at: jtorrent@uoc.edu
Who commits? Who engages?
John Sutherland
Scottish Centre for Employment Research,
Department of Human Resource Management, Strathclyde Business School,
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK

Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to address two questions: who commits? And who engages? For example, does an individual’s likelihood of committing/engaging vary with his/her age; or with the level of his/her qualifications; or with his/her occupation? Of what consequences are the characteristics of the workplace at which the individual is employed?
Design/methodology/approach – The investigation uses the Skills and Employment Surveys Series Data set to construct the indicators of commitment and engagement. Using an ordered-logit model and an OLS model, these indicators are analysed to identify their covariates.
Findings – Who commits and who engages depends upon the indicator used to measure the attitude/behaviour in question. Changing these indicators sometimes means that an individual no longer commits/engages. Further, even for the same indicator of commitment/engagement, who commits/engages varies across individuals.
Research limitations/implications – The indicators of commitment and engagement examined are derived from the responses in a pre-existing data set which has its origins in survey instruments which had quite comprehensive terms of reference. Owning to the cross-sectional nature of this data set and the statistical methodology applied, the statistical results are correlations between some possible indicators of commitment and engagement and some variables which denote the personal characteristics of individuals and the characteristics of the organisations with which they are employed. Causation cannot be inferred from these correlations.
Originality/value – Commitment and engagement are central to many models of the management of human resources. However, the likelihood that an individual commits and/or engages varies across the workforce has rarely been examined. This paper addresses this research lacuna using a data set which is rich in detail about an individual’s personal characteristics.
Keywords Commitment, Engagement, Models of human resource management, The Skils and Employment Surveys Series Data set
Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction
Commitment and engagement are central constructs in many prescriptive models of the management of human resources that detail policies by which management may both enhance worker well-being and improve organisational performance. For example, following the insider econometrics studies of high performance work systems (HPWS) in the USA, commitment was introduced as one possible transmission mechanism to explain why the implementation of such policies resulted in improved outcomes. More recently, if more especially in the UK, engagement has become an important focus for policy makers, subsequent to the publication of a series of case studies demonstrating how the introduction of enablers (or drivers) of engagement resulted in improvements in organisational performance. However, the possibility that the likelihood of committing or engaging may differ across individuals in the workforce, for example according to their personal characteristics and the characteristics of the organisation with which they are employed, has rarely been examined. This paper addresses this research lacuna.

The research investigation uses data extracted from the Skills and Employment Surveys Series Data set to construct the indicators of commitment and engagement. It applies an ordered logit model and an OLS model to identify the covariates of these indicators. The data set has its origins in a series of surveys designed to examine the employed workforce in Great Britain. Consequently, Great Britain is the focus of the empirical component of the paper.
2. A context from some literature of relevance to the empirical study

There are many diverse models of the management of human resources that detail the policies and practices by which management may fully realise labour’s capacity to produce, and thereby simultaneously improve the performance of the organisation and enhance the well-being of the worker. Employee commitment to and employee engagement with organisations are central constructs in many of these models. The specific roles played by these constructs in these models are many, varied and frequently contested. The aim of this section of the paper is to provide an informative context to the empirical investigation which follows. Therefore, it seeks neither to survey nor to evaluate the many issues in question. Often, it cites seminal references in preference to more contemporary ones. It is presented in two sections, one dealing with commitment, the other with engagement.

Commitment

Commitment in the early literature was conceptualised as a psychological contract between employee and employer, characterised by the former’s identification with the values and goals of the latter (Selznick, 1957; Kalleberg and Berg, 1987; Meyer and Allen, 1997). The construct was to become central to those models of the management of human resources that were influenced by writers associated with the neo-human relations school (e.g. Maslow, 1943; McGregor, 1960; Hertzberg, 1966) where it was viewed as a potentially important policy instrument. These models prescribed what Green (2006, p. 7) identifies as a “new ideology of control”, replacing traditional control structures reflected in, for example, compliance, hierarchy and bureaucracy (Legge, 2005). Articulated well in Storey’s (1989) frequently cited “soft version” of human resource management, these models advocated investments over the long term in human resources and the design and implementation of policies and practices that sought to motivate employees, gain their trust and thereby their commitment. The presumption was that “committed” employees were more likely to improve organisational performance.

Consequently, much within the relevant literature was about seeking to understand the conditions under which human resources became strategic assets capable of generating distinctive capabilities – and/or complementing other factors, notably technology to produce this outcome – and then devising and implementing the appropriate strategies. In principle, the exercise was one of building and developing a bundle of human and related technical resources, the latter manifest most especially in terms of work organisation, designed to enhance organisational performance (Boxall and Purcell, 2008). An unashamedly managerialist agenda dominated the mainstream literature that focussed upon identifying then prescribing “best practice” (Delbridge and Keenoy, 2010). As the high performance paradigm literature both in the USA and the UK was to illustrate, however, there was no definitive list or bundle of policies and practices appropriate to this task (e.g. Becker and Gerhard, 1996; Ichniowski et al., 1996; Wood, 1999; Procter, 2008).

The emergence of models reflecting the high performance paradigm was associated with empirical research published in the USA (e.g. Appelbaum and Batt, 1994; Huselid, 1995; MacDuffie, 1995). The principal focus of these studies was the attempt to establish a causal relationship between work practices – reflected in various sets of human resource (hereafter HR) policies and practices and various forms of work organisation – and organisational performance. Always fraught with problems pertaining to theory, methodology and data, this research sometimes did succeed in establishing positive statistical associations between HR policy and practice and organisational outcomes. Nonetheless, it was less successful in explaining how this relationship did come about (Boselie et al., 2005).

Latterly, the research agenda was to change to one which sought to identify and examine the nature of the “transmission mechanisms” (Procter, 2008) – or “linkages” (Ramsay et al., 2000) – by which this relationship did come about. The conventional wisdom was that this
relationship had its explanations in changes made to employees’ attitudes and behaviours by the policies in question. Two possibilities were mooted: one associated with “commitment” (Walton, 1985) and termed “high commitment management”; and the other associated with “involvement” (Lawler, 1986) and termed “high involvement management”. The former addressed employment practices and required a policy framework designed to commit (or re-commit) the worker with the cultural norms and expectations of the organisation. The latter addressed work practices and emphasised the salience of employee participation (Lansbury and Wailes, 2008). According to this latter perspective, the central assumption was that the implementation of policies and practices such as the creation of semi-autonomous work teams, the adoption of employee profit sharing schemes, etc., designed to create involvement, improved worker effort and, in turn, organisational performance. Irrespective of the transmission mechanism in question, however, and very much in accordance with the assumptions of the unitarist perspective of the organisation, the ultimate outcome was one of “mutual gains”. As well as the organisation improving its performance, employee well-being was enhanced (Kochan and Osterman, 1994).

Engagement
As with commitment, engagement is a contested construct. Bailey et al. (2017, p. 31) report a “bewildering multiplicity of definitions, measures, conceptualisations and theories of engagement”. Further, in some of the literature there is confusion as to whether the concept is an “attitude”, a “behaviour” or an “outcome” (Guest, 2013).

Of the variety of conceptual frameworks that exist, most were drawn from the literature of (organisational/work) psychology (Rich et al., 2010). The first to note was Kahn (1990, p. 702) who maintained that personal engagement occurred when “people bring in or leave out their personal selves during work-role performances”. When employees were engaged, they were assumed to express themselves cognitively, emotionally and physically. Engagement, therefore, was the converse of attitudes and behaviours such as alienation, apathy and detachment (May et al., 2004). Subsequently, there has been a shift away from Kahn’s original construct towards a more multidimensional perspective that seeks to distinguish between job engagement and organisational engagement (Saks, 2006), a change in focus that has consequences for an empirical component of this paper.

Although a job demands-resources framework has tended to dominate theoretical explanations of engagement, more recent developments make use of social exchange theory with its identification of reciprocity as a form of social exchange. This framework has featured in several important empirical studies of engagement (e.g. Saks, 2006; Shuck, 2011; Truss et al., 2013).

To the extent that its roots lie within positive psychology, the concept of employee engagement fits well with the unitarist perspective of the organisation (Watson, 2010). That said, an employee may be “engaged” but not necessarily behave in ways that benefit the organisation. Consequently, Arrowsmith and Parker (2013, p. 2697) maintain that “the pursuit of employee engagement is much more complex and dynamic, and the outcome uncertain”.

Engagement has proved to be one of the most significant concepts in management studies in recent years. Further, subsequent to and principally as a consequence of the publication of what is referred to as the “Macleod Report”, there has been a tendency for a consultancy approach to prevail (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009). Consultancy companies devise engagement surveys and HRD professionals are called upon to develop strategies designed to improve employee engagement (Keenoy, 2013; Purcell, 2014). Employees are viewed as passive actors within the system. Engagement, therefore, is assumed to be driven by the organisation and the search is for “drivers” of engagement (Robinson et al., 2004; Emmott, 2010; Francis and Reddington, 2012).

Research demonstrates associations between engagement and both individual and organisation performance. This research uses case study methodology and most of the case
studies were undertaken by consultancies (Purcell et al., 2003). Within this research there are many studies that seek to uncover the mechanisms by which HR policy and practice may impact upon individual behaviours. Rich et al. (2010) argue that engagement is the core mechanism. Truss et al. (2013, p. 2661) contend that “Engagement demonstrates the potential to become the ‘new best practice’ HRM approach, with the prospect of ‘high engagement HRM’ becoming the dominant discourse within mainstream HRM”.

Many of the discourses on commitment and engagement – most especially those which employ a micro-econometric methodology – tend to assume that attitudes and behaviours are homogenous across individuals. Little attention is paid to the possibility that the likelihood of committing and/or engaging may differ between individuals, for example according to their personal characteristics and/or the characteristics of the organisations with which they are employed. If commitment and/or engagement are indeed heterogeneous across individuals, therefore, it is quite probable that the impact of a given set of HR policies and practices on individual and organisational outcomes also will be heterogeneous rather than homogeneous.

Accordingly, this paper addresses two questions: who commits? And who engages? For example, does an individual’s likelihood of committing/engaging vary with his/her age; or with the level of his/her qualifications; or with his/her occupation? Of what consequence are the characteristics of the organisation with which the individual is employed?

3. Research methodology
Commitment and engagement are complex social phenomena. Moreover, an individual’s propensity to commit and/or engage both influences and is influenced by equally complex work situations such as the nature of the job, management style and the culture of the workplace. Frequently, therefore, case study methodology – making use of research methods such as interview and observation – has been used to generate the rich qualitative data necessary to understand and explain the complexities of the manifold inter-relationships which exist between actors, processes and contexts (e.g. Jenkins and Delbridge, 2013; Dromey, 2014).

The principal advantage of case study methodology is its potential to address research questions such as “why”? Its principal disadvantage, however, is its limitations when addressing research questions such as “who?” Case study methodology does not make possible an examination of the nature of the statistical relationships between commitment and engagement and, for example, the characteristics of workers and the organisations with which they are employed, the ultimate justification of the construction of the survey instrument designed and applied by Mowday et al. (1979). Further, case study methodology does not lend itself to investigating trends over time in these concepts. To do this, survey methodology is the preferred methodological option. Consequently, there are many instances of “black box”-type models of commitment and engagement in which micro-econometrics is used to examine the survey data to analyse the possibility of relationships between “policy” and “performance” with commitment and engagement operating as the transfer mechanisms (e.g. Alfes et al., 2013; Bakker and Xanthopoulou, 2013). However, a feature of most of these studies is the (often implicit) assumption that commitment and engagement are homogeneous across individuals.

Survey methodology is not without its own potential disadvantages. For example, analysing cross-section data sets only produce statistical associations between the dependent and independent variables. Only the use of less frequently available panel data sets eliminate unobserved heterogeneity and makes the identification of causal relationships between the dependent and independent variables possible.

(from 2006, the UK). Although with a more explicit skills focus, the series builds upon two previous studies, namely the Social Change and Economic Life Initiative Surveys, 1986-1987 and Employment in Britain, 1992. Each survey was administered to nationally representative samples of individuals aged 20-60 in employment as employees. The Skills and Employment Surveys Series Data set, 1986, 1992, 1997, 2001, 2006 and 2012 extracts data from the six original surveys where common questions are asked. The data set is created by retrospectively pooling selected cross-sectional data.

This research investigation, therefore, analyses responses from a pre-existing data set that has its origins in a survey instrument that had quite comprehensive terms of reference. It is data driven, hence atheoretical. It does not attempt to address – indeed cannot address – the manifold theories that relate to either commitment or engagement, nor seek to discriminate between them. The indicators of commitment and engagement that are constructed and examined, therefore, are inevitably constrained by the nature of the questions and statements posed in survey instruments originally devised for other purposes. Although there is precedence for the three indicators of commitment used in the earlier research of van Wanrooy et al. (2013), the same cannot be said for the four indicators of engagement. Indeed, some such as Saks (2006) may argue that the responses made to the quasi-thought experiment-type questions used to measure engagement may be more indicative of measures of commitment. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there are no variables within what is an employee-based data set which makes possible an examination of how higher levels of commitment or engagement on the part of individuals may translate into higher levels of organisational performance.

4. Data

Questions pertaining to commitment and engagement appear in years 1997, 2001, 2006 and 2012 of the original data set. Observations from these four years, therefore, constitute the working data set.

Commitment is associated with an individual identifying with the goals and values of the organisation. In this investigation commitment is analysed initially using three indicators produced by examining responses to the following three statements, namely:

1. “I feel little loyalty to this organisation” (where the name of the corresponding dependent variable in the analysis which follows is “loyal”).

2. “I find that my values and the organisation’s values are very similar” (where the name of the corresponding dependent variable in the analysis is “values”).

3. “I am proud to be working for this organisation” (where the name of the corresponding dependent variable in the analysis is “proud”).

There were four possible responses to these statements namely, “strongly agree”; “agree”; “disagree”; and “strongly disagree”. The original responses in the data set were re-coded where necessary to produce outcomes whereby the highest (lowest) degree of commitment was associated with the highest (lowest) number.

The percentage frequency distributions of responses to each statement are presented in Panel A-C of Table I. The response rate for voicing a positive commitment is (approximately) 75 per cent for each indicator.

To produce a more holistic perspective of commitment, the (re-coded where applicable) Likert scale responses were treated subsequently as scalar variables and aggregated across the three statements to produce a composite indicator (where the name of the resultant dependent variable in the analysis is “commitment”).

Engagement is associated with particular behaviours on the part of the employee, manifest, for example, in exercising discretionary effort (cf. Rees et al., 2013).
However, rather than probing only an individual’s willingness to use her/his “own initiative”, in this research investigation engagement is probed further, if in a hypothetical manner. This is reflected in questions that relate to the willingness of an individual to increase the supply of effort and to make potential monetary sacrifices.

Engagement is investigated initially using four indicators which are produced by examining responses to one question and three statements namely.

1. “How much effort do you put into your job beyond what is required?” (where the name of the corresponding dependent variable in the analysis which follows is “effort”).
2. “I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation succeed” (where the name of the corresponding dependent variable in the analysis is “help”).
3. “I would take almost any job to keep working with this organisation” (where the name of the corresponding dependent variable in the analysis is “takeany”).
4. “I would turn down another job with more pay to stay with this organisation” (where the name of the corresponding dependent variable in the analysis is “turndown”).

There were four possible responses to the question, namely “a lot”; “some”; “only a little”; and “none”. And there were four possible responses to the three statements: “strongly agree”; “agree”; “disagree”; and “strongly disagree”. Again, the original responses in the data set were re-coded where necessary to produce outcomes whereby the highest (lowest) degree of engagement is associated with the highest (lowest) number.

The percentage frequency distributions of responses to the question and each statement are presented in Panels A-D of Table II. Perhaps reflecting their diverse nature, marked differences are discernible. Whereas (approximately) 80 per cent of respondents would “engage” by increasing the supply of effort (i.e. the indicators “effort” and “help”), (approximately) 70 per cent would not do so if this was to entail making personal monetary sacrifices (i.e. the indicators “takeany” and “turndown”).
To produce a more holistic perspective of engagement, subsequently the (again recoded where applicable) Likert scale responses were treated as scalar variables and aggregated across the one question and three statements to produce a composite indicator (where the name of the resultant dependent variable in the analysis is "engagement").

5. The models estimated

Two models were used to analyse the data set, namely an ordered logit model and an OLS regression model.

An ordered logit model is an econometric model designed to analyse the dependent variables that have ordered multinomial outcomes, a classic example of which is the responses presented in a Likert-scale format. Consequently, it is the most appropriate model to analyse three of the four indicators of commitment (namely “loyal”, “values” and “proud”) and four of the five indicators of engagement (namely “effort”, “help”, “takeany” and “turndown”).

The model used conforms to convention and is presented as a latent variable model that reflects an individual’s likelihood of committing/engaging (Long and Freese, 2014). Defining $y^*_i$ as this latent variable, that takes the values $-\infty$ to $\infty$, the corresponding structural model is:

$$y^*_i = X_i \beta + \epsilon_i$$

where “$y^*$” is the indicator in question, “$i$” is an observation, “$X$” a vector of independent variables, “$\beta$” a set of coefficients to be estimated and “$\epsilon$” a random error term. In the corresponding measurement model, $y^*$ is divided into $J$ (in this instance four)
ordinal categories:

\[ y_i = m \text{ if } \tau_{m-1} \leq y_i^* < \tau_m \text{ for } m = J \]

where the cutpoints (or thresholds) \( \tau_1 \) through to \( \tau_{J-1} \) are estimated.

The vector of independent variables contains the variables of two discrete types. The first reflects an individual’s personal characteristics, such as gender, age, highest educational qualifications, occupational classification and length of tenure with the organisation. The second reflects the characteristics of the workplace at which the individual is employed. The surveys upon which the working data set are based are the surveys of employees. Consequently, the number of variables appropriate to capturing fully a workplace’s characteristics is limited. Nonetheless, it is possible to incorporate variables which denote the size of the workplace, the Standard Industrial Classification of the activity undertaken and its sector. Integral to these workplace characteristics are four dummy variables identifying HR policy interventions often considered to be conducive to engendering commitment and engagement. To examine whether commitment and/or engagement has changed over time, a set of year dummies are included. Further details about the independent variables used in the seven ordered logit estimations may be seen in Column 1 of Table III and the footnotes to this table.

The two composite indicators “commitment” and “engagement” are scalar-dependent variables. Consequently, they are analysed best using an OLS regression model (Cameron and Trivedi, 2010). Again the model conforms to convention, namely:

\[ y_i = \alpha + X_i \beta + \epsilon_i \]

where “\( y \)” is the indicator in question, “\( i \)” is an observation, “\( X \)” a vector of independent variables, “\( \beta \)” a set of coefficients to be estimated and “\( \epsilon \)” a random error term. The vector of independent variables in the OLS model is the same as that used in the ordered logit estimations.

6. Results

The detailed results of the estimations of the four indicators denoting commitment are presented in Table III, with the ordered logit results for the three initial indicators (i.e. “loyal”, “values” and “proud”) appearing in Columns 2, 3 and 4, respectively, and the OLS results for the composite indicator (i.e. “commitment”) appearing in Column 5. The results of the estimations of the five indicators denoting engagement are presented in Table IV, with the ordered logit results for the four initial indicators (i.e. “effort”, “help”, “takeany” and “turndown”) appearing in Columns 2, 3, 4 and 5, respectively, and the OLS results for the composite indicator (i.e. “engagement”) appearing in Column 6.

The coefficients on the explanatory variables in the ordered logit results have a qualitative interpretation (because their average marginal effects have not been computed). A positive coefficient for an independent variable implies that an individual with this characteristic has a higher value of latent commitment/engagement and, hence, is more likely to report a higher value of self-reported commitment/engagement (and conversely when the coefficient of an independent variable is negatively signed). In principle, in the OLS regression results a one unit increase in the value of the independent variable changes the expected value of the dependent variable by the magnitude of the coefficient in question. However, in the application of this principle in this particular context, some qualification must be made for the origin and construction of the dependent variables in question. Nonetheless, the signs of these coefficients and their relative magnitudes will measure, the direction and the strength of the relationships between the variables in question respectively.

The aim of remainder of this section is to report the salient results from the seven ordered logit estimations, with a focus upon those independent variables which denote the characteristics
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Ordered logit results (robust SE)</th>
<th>OLS results (robust SE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>&quot;loyal&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.1324** (0.0337)</td>
<td>0.0090 (0.0575)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age categories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>0.0532 (0.0624)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>30-39 (the reference category)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>0.0663 (0.0535)</td>
<td>0.1891*** (0.0584)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>0.0049 (0.0585)</td>
<td>0.2142*** (0.0639)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest educational qualifications</strong> Categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None (the reference category)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>−0.1043 (0.0903)</td>
<td>0.0124 (0.0964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>−0.0256 (0.0747)</td>
<td>−0.0202 (0.0796)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>0.0409 (0.0794)</td>
<td>0.0153 (0.0851)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 or above</td>
<td>−0.0776 (0.0845)</td>
<td>−0.0705 (0.0919)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a union member</td>
<td>0.2187*** (0.0553)</td>
<td>0.1629*** (0.0580)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOC categories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0.4400*** (0.0880)</td>
<td>0.4978*** (0.0937)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>−0.0927 (0.0865)</td>
<td>0.1135 (0.1062)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>0.0043 (0.0828)</td>
<td>0.0377 (0.0853)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional and Technical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trades</td>
<td>−0.4426*** (0.0887)</td>
<td>−0.2534** (0.1027)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal services</td>
<td>−0.2704*** (0.1008)</td>
<td>0.1099 (0.1086)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>−0.2971*** (0.1023)</td>
<td>−0.1527 (0.1045)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operatives</td>
<td>−0.4855*** (0.1029)</td>
<td>−0.3154*** (0.1047)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>−0.4666*** (0.0945)</td>
<td>−0.2835*** (0.0967)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure categories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>−0.0277 (0.0856)</td>
<td>0.1778* (0.0963)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 1 and 2 years (the reference category)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2 and 3 years</td>
<td>−0.0130 (0.0941)</td>
<td>0.0697 (0.1057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 3 and 5 years</td>
<td>−0.0045 (0.0856)</td>
<td>−0.0297 (0.0940)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 5 and 10 years</td>
<td>0.0707 (0.0766)</td>
<td>0.0007 (0.0864)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years or more</td>
<td>0.1248 (0.0787)</td>
<td>−0.0514 (0.0875)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a permanent contract</td>
<td>−0.2911*** (0.1027)</td>
<td>−0.2624*** (0.1099)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working part time</td>
<td>0.2253*** (0.0841)</td>
<td>0.2314*** (0.0916)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector categories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector (the reference category)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>0.0243 (0.0762)</td>
<td>0.1074 (0.0836)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not for profit organisation</td>
<td>0.2312 (0.1430)</td>
<td>0.7498*** (0.1557)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace size categories Less than 25 employees</td>
<td>0.2316*** (0.0556)</td>
<td>0.3207*** (0.0602)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III. Estimation results: commitment (continued)
of the individual and the workplace at which he/she is employed. Discussion of these particular results and the other results presented in Tables III and IV is deferred to the subsequent section.

An examination of these identified results indicates the independent variables that, generally, produce consistent outcomes across the three indicators of commitment and the four indicators of engagement.

Managers (relative to administrative and secretarial workers, the reference category) are more likely to commit more highly, irrespective of the indicator used. Similarly, high levels of engagement on the part of managers are observed for three of the four indicators used. The exception is managers’ unwillingness to take any job to keep working with the organisation. In contrast, individuals who are in occupations such as skilled trades; sales; operatives; and elementary are more likely to be much less committed and engaged with the organisation, irrespective of the indicator used.

Individuals who are not on permanent contracts of employment (relative to those who are) are more likely to commit less highly, irrespective of the indicator used. Also, they are more likely not to work beyond the terms of their existing contract or not be prepared to do so to assist the success of the organisation. By way of contrast, individuals who have

### Table III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Ordered logit results</th>
<th>OLS results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coefficient (robust SE)</td>
<td>Coefficient (robust SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“loyal”</td>
<td>“values”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 25 and 99 employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employees</td>
<td>−0.1925*** (0.0575)</td>
<td>−0.1516*** (0.0699)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 100 and 499 employees</td>
<td>−0.1678*** (0.0672)</td>
<td>−0.1556*** (0.0678)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No unions present at the workplace</td>
<td>0.2556*** (0.0583)</td>
<td>0.3338*** (0.0597)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received training</td>
<td>0.1754*** (0.0471)</td>
<td>0.1072*** (0.0490)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was appraised “Quality Circles”</td>
<td>−0.0447 (0.0554)</td>
<td>0.0494 (0.0575)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operate</td>
<td>0.2947*** (0.0454)</td>
<td>0.3068*** (0.0483)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management held</td>
<td>0.4565*** (0.0571)</td>
<td>0.4691*** (0.0595)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997 (the reference category)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>−0.0412 (0.0621)</td>
<td>0.0726 (0.0657)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>−0.2612*** (0.0613)</td>
<td>−0.0427 (0.0661)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>−0.1829*** (0.0761)</td>
<td>−0.0263 (0.0807)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/cut1</td>
<td>−2.0520 (0.2535)</td>
<td>−1.7335 (0.3790)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/cut2</td>
<td>−0.3242 (0.3494)</td>
<td>0.6446 (0.3755)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations</td>
<td>12,514</td>
<td>12,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald $\chi^2$</td>
<td>(59) = 812.85</td>
<td>(59) = 790.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob &gt; $\chi^2$</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo $R^2$</td>
<td>0.0423</td>
<td>0.0467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$ (59, 12,144)</td>
<td>21.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob &gt; $F$</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.1285</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Additionally, the estimated model controlled for the following: ethnicity (via a dummy variable); marital status (via a dummy variable); the length of time it took the individual to learn to do his/her present job well (via a set of 6 dummy variables); the log of the number of hours usually worked; and the SIC of the activity undertaken (via a set of 13 dummy variables). **Statistically significant at $p < 0.1$; *** $p < 0.05$ and **** $p < 0.01$, respectively.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient (robust SE) &quot;effort&quot;</th>
<th>Ordered logit results</th>
<th>OLS results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.6090*** (0.0622)</td>
<td>0.073 (0.0556)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>−0.2257*** (0.0717)</td>
<td>0.0199 (0.0655)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-39 (the reference category)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>0.1829*** (0.0687)</td>
<td>−0.0383 (0.0626)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highest educational qualifications Categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None (the reference category)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>−0.0475 (0.1126)</td>
<td>−0.1634* (0.0943)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>−0.0622 (0.0821)</td>
<td>−0.0701 (0.0750)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>−0.2917*** (0.0955)</td>
<td>−0.0662 (0.0788)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 4 or above</td>
<td>−0.4189*** (0.0993)</td>
<td>−0.0624 (0.0846)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not a union member</td>
<td>0.0113 (0.0637)</td>
<td>0.2334*** (0.0588)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOC categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0.1343*** (0.0988)</td>
<td>0.2766*** (0.0887)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>0.1075 (0.1089)</td>
<td>−0.0867 (0.0935)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>professional and Technical</td>
<td>0.0897 (0.0930)</td>
<td>−0.0747 (0.0844)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative and secretarial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skilled trades</td>
<td>−0.2156 (0.1005)</td>
<td>−0.0442*** (0.1006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal services</td>
<td>0.1500 (0.1231)</td>
<td>−0.1847* (0.1045)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>−0.1017 (0.1190)</td>
<td>−0.3575*** (0.1057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operatives</td>
<td>−0.1587 (0.1136)</td>
<td>−0.4675*** (0.1060)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>−0.0264 (0.1062)</td>
<td>−0.3838*** (0.0949)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>0.1234 (0.1035)</td>
<td>0.0585 (0.0910)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between 1 and 2 years</td>
<td>0.1234 (0.1035)</td>
<td>0.0585 (0.0910)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between 3 and 5 years</td>
<td>0.2198* (0.1138)</td>
<td>0.0533 (0.0882)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between 5 and 10 years</td>
<td>0.2988*** (0.1057)</td>
<td>−0.0099 (0.0878)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 years or more</td>
<td>0.0777 (0.0351)</td>
<td>0.0675 (0.0812)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not a permanent contract</td>
<td>−0.1183 (0.0927)</td>
<td>−0.0824 (0.0830)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working part time</td>
<td>−0.2370** (0.1143)</td>
<td>−0.2978** (0.1148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sector categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>−0.0384 (0.0896)</td>
<td>−0.0604 (0.0781)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not for profit organisation</td>
<td>0.1192 (0.1600)</td>
<td>0.2078 (0.1552)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workplace size categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 25 employees</td>
<td>0.1941*** (0.0670)</td>
<td>0.2377*** (0.0578)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV. Estimation results: engagement (continued)
part-time contracts of employment (relative to those who have full-time contracts of employment) are more likely to both commit and engage more highly across all indicators.

Individuals who are not union members (relative to individuals who are) and individuals who do not work at workplaces at which unions are present (relative to individuals who work at workplaces at which unions are present) are more likely to commit more highly across all three indicators. Similar outcomes are observed for the four indicators of engagement, although not all of these results are statistically significant

Individuals working in small workplaces (relative to those working at workplaces with 25-99 employees, the reference category) are more likely to report higher levels of commitment and engagement, irrespective of the indicators used. In contrast, although not uniformly across all size categories, individuals employed at relatively large workplaces are more likely to report lower levels of commitment and engagement.

Further examination of the results reveals that there are other independent variables that produce outcomes which are not consistent across the three indicators of commitment and the four indicators of engagement.

---

Table IV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient (robust SE)</th>
<th>Ordered logit results</th>
<th>OLS results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;effort&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;help&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;turnover&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(effort)</td>
<td>(help)</td>
<td>(turnover)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 25 and 99 employees</td>
<td>0.1111 (0.0683)</td>
<td>-0.0147** (0.0066)</td>
<td>-0.1464** (0.0057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 or more employees</td>
<td>-0.0837 (0.0755)</td>
<td>-0.1272** (0.0067)</td>
<td>-0.0777 (0.0661)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No unions present at the workplace</td>
<td>0.1621** (0.0689)</td>
<td>0.1938*** (0.0689)</td>
<td>0.1227** (0.0572)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received training</td>
<td>0.1677*** (0.0532)</td>
<td>0.0536 (0.0473)</td>
<td>0.0612 (0.0468)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was appraised</td>
<td>0.1646*** (0.0624)</td>
<td>0.0331 (0.0576)</td>
<td>0.0542 (0.0573)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Quality Circles&quot; operate</td>
<td>0.3861*** (0.0532)</td>
<td>0.3202*** (0.0464)</td>
<td>0.0925** (0.0445)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with management held</td>
<td>0.1059* (0.0621)</td>
<td>0.2115** (0.0569)</td>
<td>0.2956*** (0.0583)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 25 and 99 employees</td>
<td>0.0130 (0.0652)</td>
<td>-0.0166 (0.0612)</td>
<td>0.0022 (0.0615)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 or more employees</td>
<td>-0.0748 (0.0603)</td>
<td>-0.0748 (0.0603)</td>
<td>0.0646 (0.0611)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No unions present at the workplace</td>
<td>0.1159 (0.0761)</td>
<td>0.3721*** (0.0758)</td>
<td>0.1497*** (0.0760)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received training</td>
<td>0.2049 (0.3603)</td>
<td>-1.2117 (0.3614)</td>
<td>-0.4576 (0.0657)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was appraised</td>
<td>1.2193 (0.3609)</td>
<td>1.5962 (0.3614)</td>
<td>0.0623 (0.0618)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Quality Circles&quot; operate</td>
<td>3.3262 (0.4086)</td>
<td>2.8220 (0.3638)</td>
<td>3.1688 (0.3638)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with management held</td>
<td>0.1059* (0.0621)</td>
<td>0.2115** (0.0569)</td>
<td>0.2956*** (0.0583)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997 (the reference category)</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>-0.0519 (0.0727)</td>
<td>-0.0130 (0.0652)</td>
<td>0.0222 (0.0615)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-0.1501** (0.0722)</td>
<td>-0.4576*** (0.0668)</td>
<td>-0.0748 (0.0603)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-0.0414 (0.0863)</td>
<td>0.1159 (0.0761)</td>
<td>0.3721*** (0.0758)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/cut1</td>
<td>0.0690 (0.1110)</td>
<td>-0.2049 (0.3603)</td>
<td>-1.2117 (0.3614)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/cut2</td>
<td>1.3682 (0.4083)</td>
<td>0.0466 (0.3624)</td>
<td>1.2193 (0.3609)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/cut3</td>
<td>3.3262 (0.4086)</td>
<td>2.8220 (0.3638)</td>
<td>3.1688 (0.3638)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations</td>
<td>12,547</td>
<td>12,489</td>
<td>12,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald $\chi^2$</td>
<td>509 = 1,132.90</td>
<td>509 = 740.97</td>
<td>509 = 680.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob &gt; $\chi^2$</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo $R^2$</td>
<td>0.0512</td>
<td>0.0393</td>
<td>0.0330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Notes: Additionally, the estimated model controlled for the following: ethnicity (via a dummy variable); marital status (via a dummy variable); the length of time it took the individual to learn to do his/her present job well (via a set of 6 dummy variables); the log of the number of hours usually worked; and the SIC of the activity undertaken (via a set of 13 dummy variables). ***, *** Statistically significant at p < 0.1; p < 0.05 and p < 0.01, respectively.
In terms of commitment, women, relative to men, are more likely to express more highly their loyalty to the organisation, although they are less likely either to share its values or to voice pride in working for it. In terms of engagement, they are more likely to be more willing to work harder than necessary for the organisation and be more likely to be more willing to take any job to keep working with the organisation.

There are some discernible patterns to the results of the age categories variables. While individuals in the older age categories (relative to the reference age category) are more likely to report more highly sharing the values of the organisation, the manifestation of their commitment is restricted to this indicator. In the context of engagement, individuals in these same age categories (again relative to the reference age category) are more likely to turn down outside job offers in favour of remaining with the organisation. Whereas individuals in the youngest age category are less likely to increase their supply of effort beyond their immediate job demands, individuals in the oldest age category are more likely to do so.

Individuals with educational qualifications (relative to those who do not have them) are more likely to be less willing to voice pride in working for their organisation. Further, they are more likely to be less willing to take any job to remain with the organisation.

Individuals working at workplaces in the public sector and in the not-for-profit sector (relative to those working in the private sector, the reference category) are more likely to be more proud of the organisation with which they work. Individuals who work in the public sector (again relative to those working in the private sector) are more likely to turn down alternative job offers in favour of remaining with their present organisation.

Some organisations seek to engender commitment and engagement by implementing particular policies and practices with respect to the management of human resources. It was possible to examine the implications of four such policies and practices, namely that an individual has received training; that an individual has been subject to some form of appraisal; that an individual is employed at a workplace where quality circles operate; and that an individual is employed at a workplace where meetings are held with management. In the context of commitment, where the individual has received training; where the individual is employed at a workplace which uses quality circles; and where the individual is employed at a workplace where meetings are held with management, individuals are relatively more likely to commit more highly across all three indicators. The outcomes are more complex in the context of engagement, however. First, for each of the four policy-related variables, an individual is relatively more likely to work more than his/her immediate job demands necessitate. Second, where an individual is employed at a workplace which uses quality circles and where an individual is employed at a workplace at which meetings are held with management, individuals are relatively more likely to engage more highly whatever indicator is used. No other outcome is statistically significant. In essence, therefore, there are positive correlations between only some of the policies and practices examined and only some of the indicators of commitment and engagement.

From this examination of these results it is evident, therefore, that the likelihood of an individual committing and/or engaging is contingent upon how these constructs are measured. Changing these indicators may mean that an individual may/may not appear to commit and/or engage. Furthermore, for any one indicator of either commitment or engagement, the likelihood that an individual commits/engages varies according to the personal characteristics of the individual and the characteristics of the workplace at which he/she is employed. There is evidence of more heterogeneity than homogeneity in an individual's likelihood of committing and/or engaging.

7. Discussion
Whereas some of the empirical results reported in Tables III and IV accord with a priori expectations, others do not. Whereas some outcomes may be rationalised, mindful of the fact
that it is correlations that are being reported, others are open to explanations that have nothing to do with either commitment or engagement.

That managers (relative to administrative and secretarial workers, the reference category) are more likely to commit more highly, irrespective of the indicator used, is compatible with expectations. To the extent that the managers are “leaders” within their respective organisations, often advocates and/or proselytisers of this attitude/behaviour, this outcome is not unexpected. Equally, high levels of engagement on the part of managers are to be expected for the same reasons. It is for three of the four indicators used. The exception is their apparent unwillingness to take any job to keep working with the organisation, an outcome which may be rationalised by their reluctance, perhaps, to lose their managerial status.

Similarly, that individuals who are not on permanent contracts of employment (relative to those who are) are more likely to commit less highly, irrespective of the indicator used, and are more likely not to work beyond the terms of their existing contract or not be prepared to do so to assist the success of the organisation also accords with expectations. By definition, these individuals are transients, willingly or unwillingly, and neither commitment nor engagement are likely to feature highly in their immediate work orientations.

Unionisation, with its attachment, and often allegiances, to agencies outwith the employing organisation, is incompatible with the unitarist perspective of organisations that dominates the managerially prescriptive literature as it relates to commitment and engagement. Consequently, the outcomes that individuals who are not union members (relative to individuals who are) and individuals who do not work at workplaces at which unions are present (relative to individuals who work at workplaces at which unions are present) are more likely to commit and engage more highly accords with expectations.

Tenure, however, is one variable where the statistical outcomes do not accord with expectations. Given the opportunities to do so exist, an assumption could be made that employee-organisation mismatches would result in an individual quitting voluntarily. Therefore, the expectation is that levels of commitment and engagement would be relatively higher for those with relatively longer spells of tenure. This is never found in the context of commitment and is seldom found in the context of engagement. Admittedly, there is a positive correlation between the two longest spells of tenure and a higher willingness to take any job to remain with the organisation, but this relationship could equally well be explained by an individual’s awareness of the potential costs of job changing.

That individuals who have part-time contracts of employment (relative to those who have full-time contracts of employment) are more likely to commit and engage more highly across all indicators are outcomes that may be attributable to the precarious nature of the employment situation of these workers and, therefore, their perceived need to be seen to demonstrate certain attitudes and behaviours, desired or expected, by management (Or, alternatively, it could be that individuals working on this type of employment contract do indeed possess and demonstrate the attitudes and behaviours that are often keenly sought by some organisations).

Individuals working in small workplaces (relative to those working at workplaces with 25-99 employees, the reference category) are more likely to report higher levels of commitment and engagement, irrespective of the indicators used. In contrast, if generally, individuals employed at relatively large workplaces are more likely to report lower levels of commitment and engagement. One possible explanation for these different outcomes may be that the informality sometimes associated with the management of control in small workplaces is, from the perspective of workers, to be preferred to the formality of the same often found in the bureaucracy in larger workplaces and this has positive consequences for an individual’s commitment and engagement.
Women, relative to men, are more likely to be more willing to work harder for the organisation with which they are employed to help it succeed. However, that women are more likely to be more willing to take any job to keep working with the organisation may be attributable more to their sometimes constrained labour supply rather than engagement with the organisation.

Although individuals in the older age categories (relative to the reference age category) are more likely to report sharing the values of the organisation more highly, their manifestation of commitment is restricted to this indicator. Individuals in these same age categories (again relative to the reference age category) are also more likely to turn down outside job offers in favour of remaining with the organisation. Equally, however, this latter outcome may be attributable to their manifold costs of job changing rather than any particular manifestation of engagement with the organisation. Whereas individuals in the youngest age category are less likely to increase their supply of effort beyond their immediate job demands, individuals in the oldest age category are more likely to do so. However, these outcomes could equally well be rationalised in terms of age differences in tacit knowledge as well as expressions of engagement.

Some of the other results reported in Tables III and IV are also worthy of note and some comment.

By their construction, the composite indictors of commitment and engagement are the aggregation of their respective original (amended where necessary) Likert-scale measures. As a consequence, therefore, the results of the OLS estimations inevitably tend to reflect the results of the seven ordered logit estimations. Nonetheless, the OLS estimates do add value in two ways. First, they identify more clearly those variables where the relationship between the variable in question and commitment and engagement differs. To illustrate, females (relative to males) are statistically significantly (positively) associated with engagement but not commitment: individuals who have qualifications (relative to those who do not) are statistically significantly (negatively) associated with engagement but not commitment: and individuals who are employed in the public sector (relative to those who are employed in the private sector) are statistically significantly (positively) associated with commitment but not engagement.

The second way in which the results from the OLS estimations add value is the manner in which the magnitude of the coefficient of the independent variables measures the strength of the relationship between that variable and commitment and engagement. Again for purposes of illustration, the positive relationship between being a manager (relative to the reference category) and commitment (value of coefficient: 0.4279) and engagement (value of coefficient: 0.3162) is almost as equally strong as the negative relationship between a skilled trades person and commitment (coefficient value: −3.559) and engagement (coefficient value: −3.286); and the extent of the negative relationship between an individual having level 4 and above qualifications (relative to having no qualifications) and engagement (coefficient value: −0.6149) is much greater than it is for an individual who has level 2 qualifications (coefficient value: −0.1878).

Finally, one further advantage of the data set used in the investigation is the scope to examine whether there has been a secular change with respect to an individual’s likelihood of committing and/or engaging. The economic environment prevailing in 2006 and 2012 in Britain contrasted with that of 1997, the reference year. The former was a year when the economy was expanding; and the latter was a year when the economy remained within what van Wanrooy et al. (2013) described as the shadow of the recession. In the context of commitment, there is a suggestion that loyalty has decreased since 1997. Although there is no equivalent trend in the context of engagement, nonetheless, there are some results of note. There is some evidence to suggest that an individual’s willingness to increase his/her supply of labour voluntarily has decreased over time. On the other hand, the willingness to accept monetary consequences to remain with the organisation increased in 2012, relative to 1997.
Equally, however, this latter result would also be compatible with a hypothesis that features risk adverse employees being reluctant to accept the unknown of other organisations during a period of economic retrenchment.

8. Conclusions and implications for future research
Commitment and engagement play central roles in many of the prescriptive (or what Guest (1997) refers to as “normative”) models of the management of human resources. Although operating in differing ways, frequently these constructs operate as quasi-conduits in the metaphorical “black box” whereby select bundles of HR policies and practices result in improved performance, however performance is defined and measured (Walton, 1985; Procter, 2008).

Over time, the role played by commitment in these models has changed. With Walton (1985), given the requisite bundle of HR policies and practices, commitment was a necessary and sufficient condition to enhance performance. Although a lack of consensus continues to persist with respect to the meaning, structure and measurement of commitment (Klein et al., 2014; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001), high commitment management has now become subsumed into the more encompassing model of HPWS (Wood, 1999; Cappelli and Neumark, 2001). Whereas high-involvement management and high commitment management once offered alternative, contrasting routes to improved performance, now they have been integrated into a more generic approach to managing organisations that aspire to improve their performance, with the former addressing work practices and the latter addressing employment practices (Belt and Giles, 2009; Boxall and Macky, 2009; Wood et al., 2013).

Although empirically, the causal relationship between HR policy and practice and performance remains contested (Wall and Wood, 2005), there are two important consequences to be observed from this more comprehensive HPWS model. The first is that, inevitably, the size of the critical bundle of HR policies and practices is increased considerably. The second is that the number of components within the metaphorical black box (such as commitment) – reflecting the processes by which policy inputs (the independent variables in the model) are transformed into performance outcomes (the dependent variables in the model) – are also increased. Moreover, their possible inter-relationships become more complex. However, in the expeditious search to examine the central causal relationship between dependent and independent variables in the HPWS model using micro-econometrics, many heroic assumptions are made about the nature of the transmission mechanisms which operate within the black box. One is that the likelihood of committing is homogenous across individuals.

The first research question addressed in this paper is as follows:

*RQ1. Who commits?*

This question sought to examine the empirical basis for this assumption. The results suggested that there were none. The likelihood that an individual commits was seen to vary across the sampled population, an outcome that concurs with similar findings reported by Brown et al. (2011).

Engagement, with its still evolving theoretical base, is the more recent addition to the management lexicon in organisations’ never-ending search for competitive advantage. Case study methodology dominates this research agenda, with its focus upon gathering qualitative data about actors, their experiences and the inter-relationships of both to process as management seek to create the environment necessary to generate engaged employees and translate their newly acquired positive attitudes and beliefs into improved performance. Nonetheless, there are instances of black box-type analysis of engagement in which micro-econometrics is used to examine survey data (e.g. Alfes et al., 2013; Bakker and
Xanthopoulou, 2013). Too frequently, however, there is a lack of both agreement and precision about how engagement is incorporated in the empirical studies that use this model. Is it antecedent, mediator or outcome (Bailey et al., 2017)?

In all this, the second research question which is rarely raised is as follows:

RQ2. Who engages?

Once again the implicit assumption is that the likelihood of engaging is homogeneous across individuals. The empirical results of this paper challenge this assumption.

This empirical investigation has demonstrated that who commits and who engages depends upon the indicator used to measure the construct in question. Changing these indicators may mean that an individual may appear to no longer commit or engage. Furthermore, even for the same indicator, who commits or engages may vary across individuals, according to their personal characteristics and the characteristics of the workplace at which they are employed. There is, therefore, considerable heterogeneity in the likelihoods that an individual commits or engages. Consequently, neither commitment nor engagement can be assumed to facilitate non-problematically the conversion of policy inputs into performance outputs. The implications for future research are considerable.

Acknowledgement

The Skills and Employment Survey, 2012 was financially supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the UK Commission for Employment and Skills Strategic Partnership and the Wales Institute for Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods for the Welsh boost. The Skills Survey, 2006 was supported by the Department for Education and Skills, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Learning and Skills Council, the Sector Skills Development Agency, Scottish Enterprise, Futureskills Wales, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the East Midlands Development Agency. The Skills Survey, 2001 was funded by the Department for Education and Skills. The Skills Survey, 1997 and the Social Change and Economic Life Initiative Surveys, 1986-1987 were supported by the ESRC. Employment in Britain, 1992 was supported by the Leverhume Trust and an industrial consortium of funders. The author acknowledges constructive comments from two referees on earlier drafts of this paper.

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About the author
John Sutherland is an Honorary Research Fellow in the Scottish Centre for Employment Research (SCER) in the Department of Human Resource Management, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. John Sutherland can be contacted at: john.sutherland@strath.ac.uk

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Labour reputation and financial performance: is there a causal relationship?

María Dolores Odriozola, Antonio Martín and Ladislao Luna

Business Administration, Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to analyse if there is a circular relationship of causality between the labour dimension of corporate social performance (CSP) and corporate financial performance (CFP).

Design/methodology/approach – The sample is formed by the best companies to work for in Spain according to the labour reputation (LR) ranking developed by MERCO from 2006 to 2013. This study overcomes the limitations of previous studies using the panel data methodology (System generalised method of moments) and the Granger causality test.

Findings – The results suggest that the labour dimension of CSP cause CFP, but there is not causality in the opposite direction.

Originality/value – Studies about the relationship between dimensions of CSP and CFP demonstrated that there are divergences in the results depending on the dimension analysed. Despite managers and employees are interested in the impact of labour dimension of CSP on CFP, there are few studies about it and they have important limitations.

Keywords Corporate social performance, Corporate social responsibility, Human resource management, Corporate financial performance, Labour reputation

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The use of economic resources from companies to achieve social objectives is a growing trend in society in response to social demands made by their stakeholders. Investment in corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the preamble to what is known as corporate social performance (hereafter CSP), which is the configuration of a business organisation with social responsibility principles and policies, programmes and observable results about social relations of the company (Wartick and Cochran, 1985). The results of CSP are assessed by the stakeholders. The reputation of the firm serves as a tool to know how well the organisation is satisfying the stakeholders’ demands and expectations on it (Figure 1).

The inclusion of social demands in business strategy has generated great interest and controversy in the academic literature. Increasing the economic results of the company is a priority objective, and higher economic resources are useful to invest and growth. However, the conditions under the corporate financial performance (CFP) are obtained affect the sustainability of the company. Stakeholder’s theory argues that, in addition to get benefit, if companies respond to social demands they legitimise their activity and thus maintain a sustainable growth over time. For this reason, the line of research in the academic literature to study the relationship between CSP and CFP has been relevant from the 1970s until today. Furthermore, the concept of CSP is defined as a multidimensional construct, as it brings together different social areas (environmental, labour, products, customers, etc.). Thus, in the academic literature, there are studies on the relationship between the specific social dimensions of CSP and CFP, and not all dimensions have the same effect on financial performance. In addition, not all dimensions of CSP have received the same attention, and there is a big difference in the number of studies related to each dimension. Labour dimension of CSP has received less attention despite managers and employees are concerned about the quality of working life (QWL), and it has a critical role in many of...
the labour market theories (e.g. the need satisfaction approach to QWL, or spill-over approach to QWL) (Chauvin and Guthrie, 1994). As a result, there is little empirical evidence of its impact on financial performance (Lau and May, 1998; Ballou et al., 2003). The main reason for the lack of studies in this critical area is the difficulty that has existed in the past to measure the employee’s quality working life in a company (Lau and May, 1998; Chauvin and Guthrie, 1994; Sirgy et al., 2001). Thus, studies regarding the labour dimension of CSP have increased in recent years due to the appearance of more labour reputation (LR) rankings at an international and national level. LR is an assessment made by stakeholders and used to know the firm’s appeal to work for it when it is compared with other competitors (Odriozola et al., 2015).

The interest in the labour dimension of CSP is justified for several reasons: employees are key stakeholders to the company sustainability because they maintain a formal and legitimises relationship with the company; employees are a large and powerful group of the company, because they have tools to show the urgency of their demands (e.g. strikes), they gather technical knowledge, the intellectual capital and labour force (important factors from which mainly depends the productive performance of the company and can generate important competitive advantages (Mitchell et al., 1997; Huselid, 1995)); from a purely economic perspective, the staff costs represent a large percentage of total gross costs of firms (between 60 and 70 per cent as average); and finally, empirical studies cite CSR practices aimed at employees and customers as those carried out by companies with greater frequency (Papasolomou-Doukakis et al., 2005). Therefore, to make an efficient economic management, it is interesting to know whether resources invested to have better working conditions have impact on CFP.

The purpose of this paper is to test whether the best companies to work for (i.e. with higher LR) have a significant positive causal relationship with financial performance and vice versa. The results of this study provide useful information for human resource managers in the decision-making processes. Besides this work aims to address limitations of previous studies using robust methodologies: panel data technique using a System generalised method of moments (GMM) to contrast the hypotheses, and a vector auto-regression model (VAR) with a Granger causality test to analyse the causality between the main variables (LR and CFP), testing a positive and circular relationship. Therefore, the study of the direction of causality between the variables and the time lag established between them is one of the methodological contributions provided by this study.

2. Research background

The relationship between CSP and CFP becomes important from the 1970s in the academic literature, as a main research line to refute scepticism towards investing in CSR. The results have not been unanimous because positive relationships, negative relationships, and lack of relationship between the two variables have been found. The hypothesis of social impact supports the positive effect of CSP on CFP. This hypothesis is defended by Freeman (1984) in the stakeholder theory (which supports that CSR meets the requirements of the
stakeholders) leading to improved reputation and CFP. The positive relationship between CSP and CFP clarifies that social and economic objectives may converge in the company. Waddock and Graves (1997) argue that the costs of investment in CSR are lower than the benefits derived therefrom, generating competitive advantages. In the opposite way, a negative effect of CSP on CFP would be consistent with the hypothesis of trade-off defended by Friedman (1970) in his book *Capitalism and Freedom*, whereby companies only have the social responsibility of increasing their profits, so that investment in CSR increases their costs and reduces their profitability (Friedman, 1962).

Moreover, this relationship has been also studied changing the causal sequence of the two variables, which is, focussing on the effect of CFP on the CSP. The positive effect of CFP on CSP is explained by the hypothesis of the availability of funds (Waddock and Graves, 1997), according to which the investment in social issues and the social behaviour of the company may depend on the availability of resources. In the case that CFP has a negative effect on CSP, the hypothesis of the opportunism of managers is confirmed, which states that when CFP is high managers reduce the investment in CSR to maximise their personal income in the short term (Williamson, 1988).

Regardless of the direction of causality, the possibility of having a neutral relationship must be considered, that is, an inconclusive relationship between CSP and CFP due to the existence of variables that moderate this relationship or by the fact of using different measures of the CSP (De la Fuente Sabate and De Quevedo Puente, 2003). Finally, there may be a circular relationship between the two variables, arising the likelihood of positive synergies (confirming the hypotheses of the social impact and the availability of funds), and negative synergies (confirming the hypotheses of the trade-off and the opportunism of managers).

In addition, this study goes a step further. Considering the multidimensionality of CSP five types of social dimensions are distinguished: “Environmental dimension”, “Diversity”, “Consumer relations”, “Community relations” and “Labour dimension”. The main studies about the relation of some dimension of CSP and CFP classified in Table I are found in Google Scholar in the time interval that goes from 1972 to 2013. The social issues selected to classify the studies follow similar classifications of other reviews based on the dimensions of CSP, such as in Sethi (1975), Carroll (1979), Waddock and Graves (1997), and Inoue and Lee (2011). Analysing the studies of Table I, we can see that the labour dimension is one of the less studied.

Focussing on studies about the relationship of labour dimension of CSP with the CFP (see Table II), they have common aspects:

1. The empirical analyses are carried out with samples including companies from the USA, thus this relationship has not been studied for Southern European countries, although the results could be different from American samples because of their institutional characteristics or market (Paauwe, 1996).

2. They used a ranking of reputation for measuring the labour dimension of the CSP. Chauvin and Guthrie (1994) used the ranking of LR developed by *Working Mother* magazine, Hannon and Milkovich (1996) used rankings of the best companies to work for published by several US magazines, and the remaining studies (Lau and May, 1998; Fulmer et al., 2003; Filbeck and Preece, 2003; Ballou et al., 2003) used the ranking published by *Fortune* magazine and developed by “Great Place to Work”.

3. The methodologies used in those previous studies (OLS regression, event study methodology, comparative analysis, standard event methodology, t-test statistic, correlations, ANOVA) have limitations. Some of the criteria that accuse the lack of robustness of the results are the use of cross-sectional data, the delay with which the reputation affects profitability and vice versa, the lack of empirical analysis of the causality between variables to eliminate the possibility of spurious relationships.
or biased (De la Fuente Sabate and De Quevedo Puente, 2003; Paauwe and Boselie, 2005), the unobserved heterogeneity time (e.g. corporate culture, management decisions or investment policy, among others), and dynamism of the variables. In some cases, the use of OLS regressions with pooled data is not consistent due to the possible correlation between the regressors and the error term (Baltagi, 2008), and more advanced methodologies such as autoregressive models allow solving the deficiencies of OLS regressions and obtaining estimations with higher consistency and efficiency.

### Table I.
Review of the literature of the most relevant studies about the impact of specific dimension of CSP on CFP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Measures of labour dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chauvin and Guthrie (1994)</td>
<td>“Best companies for working mothers” created by Working Mother magazine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table II.
Review of the studies about the relationship between labour dimension of social performance with financial performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Measures of labour dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carter et al. (2000)</td>
<td>Diversity (for minorities/women and suppliers) (n = 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han et al. (1998)</td>
<td>Consumer relations (quality products) (n = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard et al. (2007, 2013)</td>
<td>Community (ethics and society) (n = 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen and Lenox (2001)</td>
<td>Labour (n = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brake and Spencer (1983)</td>
<td>(n = 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synnestvedt (2002)</td>
<td>Consumer relations (quality products) (n = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaughter and Staglino (1991)</td>
<td>Community (ethics and society) (n = 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannon and Milkovich (1996)</td>
<td>Labour (n = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hart and Akoja (1996)</td>
<td>(n = 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liou and Sharma (2012)</td>
<td>Consumer relations (quality products) (n = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guenter et al. (2012)</td>
<td>Community (ethics and society) (n = 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavine et al. (2002)</td>
<td>Labour (n = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballou et al. (2003)</td>
<td>(n = 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filbeck and Prece (2003)</td>
<td>(n = 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulmer et al. (2003)</td>
<td>(n = 23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considering the limitations of these studies and the growing interest in understanding the relationship between dimensions of CSP with financial performance (Rose and Thomsen, 2004), this study aims to answer two questions. First, “Which is the sign of the relationship between the labour dimension of CSP (measured by LR) and CFP?” and second, “Is there causality between both magnitudes?”, since it is probable the existence of a circular relationship between them. Therefore, two main hypotheses are proposed:

**H1. Hypothesis of social impact: LR causes a positive effect on financial performance.**

In the first case, a positive relationship between the labour dimension of the CSP and CFP would be due to the positive impact of the social actions. According to the resource-based view theory, reputation can generate competitive advantages for the company due to its specific characteristics (Barney, 1991). The academic literature identifies several competitive advantages from LR, such as reducing search costs to engage and retain productive employees (Chauvin and Guthrie, 1994), reducing cost of training staff due to firms with LR attracts highly qualified personnel (Vergin and Qoronfleh, 1998), reducing transaction costs (Roberts and Dowling, 2002), increasing employee motivation and productivity (Cravens et al., 2003), increasing consumer confidence (Greyser, 1999), and increasing the number of employees that would want to improve their skills to promote (Chauvin and Guthrie, 1994). These issues respond to the benefits of belonging to a company with good LR: greater job security, good human resource practices, or working in a company where the most qualified applicants will seek employment and will form competitive teams, among others. All the above generate barriers to entry in the market to new competitors (Hall, 1992), and leads us to expect a positive relationship between the labour dimension of CSP (LR) and CFP (H1):

**H2. Hypothesis of availability of funds: financial performance causes a positive effect on LR.**

The expected positive relationship in the second hypothesis is justified through the hypothesis of the availability of funds. According to this theory, the more financial resources of the company available, the more social investment to improve working conditions. Programmes and actions to respond the social demands of workers increase its LR through the stakeholders’ assessment of the CSP (Odriozola et al., 2015). In addition, the second hypothesis responds to the limitations of previous studies about the relationship of LR and CFP, which has only been tested in one sense of the relationship (see H1).

All the above justify the need for new contributions. The causal relationship between the LR and the CFP proposed in this paper could lead to a convergent theory, where economic and social purposes have a joint role in the business activity (social goals should not reduce the possibility of increasing economic benefits, and pursuing a high profitability should not downplay social aims of the company).

3. Methodology and data

**Sample**

The companies that form the sample used in this study were collected from the list of the 100 best companies to work for in Spain. The index of LR “Merco People” developed by MERCO was collected each year during the period of 2006-2013. Finally, a panel data set composed by 758 observations, which correspond to 119 companies, was constructed. There are companies that have been not considered due to the lack of accounting data.

**Data analysis method**

To test the causal relationship between LR and CFP, and therefore contrast the hypotheses proposed (H1 and H2), the panel data methodology through the specification of GMM is used. System GMM is an appropriated method used in social sciences (Baltag, 2008),
because it controls individual unobserved heterogeneity between different companies, it eliminates the risk of obtaining biased results (Nelling and Webb, 2009), and it allows analysing the dynamic behaviour of the dependent variables. The System GMM specification is performed for both senses of causality, thus being the dependent variable CFP in one specification (1a), and being LR as dependent variable in other (1b). Where $CFF_{it}$ is the financial performance of the firm $i$ in year $t$, $LR_{it}$ the labour dimension of CSP of the firm $i$ in year $t$, $CFF_{it-1}$ the financial performance of the firm $i$ in year $t-1$, $LR_{it-1}$ the labour dimension of CSP of the firm $i$ in year $t-1$, $SIZE_{it}$ the size of the company $i$ in year $t$, $DIFF_{it}$ the differentiation strategy of firm $i$ in year $t$, $DEBT_{it}$ the risk (debt) of the firm $i$ in year $t$, $\sum_{j=1}^{5} \delta_{j} SECTOR_{ij}$ represents sectoral dummies; $\sum_{t=2006}^{2013} Y_{t}$ a set of time dummy variables that collect temporary effect; $\gamma_{i}$ the unobserved heterogeneity which is assumed constant for the company along $t$; and $\mu_{it}$ the error term:

$$
CFF_{it} = \alpha_{0} + \beta_{1} CFF_{it-1} + \beta_{2} LR_{it-1} + \delta_{3} SIZE_{it} + \delta_{4} DIFF_{it} + \delta_{5} DEBT_{it} + \sum_{j=1}^{5} \delta_{j} SECTOR_{ij} + \sum_{t=2006}^{2013} Y_{t} + \gamma_{i} + \mu_{it} \quad (1a)
$$

$$
LR_{it} = \alpha_{0} + \beta_{1} LR_{it-1} + \beta_{2} CFF_{it-1} + \delta_{3} SIZE_{it} + \delta_{4} DIFF_{it} + \delta_{5} DEBT_{it} + \sum_{j=1}^{5} \delta_{j} SECTOR_{ij} + \sum_{t=2006}^{2013} Y_{t} + \gamma_{i} + \mu_{it} \quad (1b)
$$

The methodology described above help us to know whether there is a significant relationship between LR and CFP and what variables explain the dependent variable in each case, however, it is not determinative to analyse the causation between them (i.e. the existence of correlation between two variables does not mean that one of the variables is the cause of alterations in the values of the other). To confirm the causality between LR and CFP, Granger test is used, which is based on the premise that past values may affect future values of another variable. Granger test contrasts as null hypothesis ($H_{0}$: “Independent variable does not cause the dependent variable”) that must be refuted (at the 5 per cent of significance level $H_{0}$ can be rejected). If $H_{0}$ is rejected, the alternative $H1$ is accepted ($H1$: “Independent variable can cause the dependent variable”). In this sense, we can say that causality Granger test is necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the existence of causation. So, this test cannot affirm strictly the causality of one variable on another, but it can assert the contrary, the absence of causation. Details about the variables and their measures can be found below.

**Labour dimension of CSP**

The measures of CSP used in the literature are: the technique of content analysis of social information disclosed (Orlitzky et al., 2003; Wu, 2006); partial measurements by sending questionnaires to managers or employees (about philanthropic activities, labour policies, CSR activities, or pollution control, for example), and the most used in the literature, the reputation indexes developed by independent organisations (KLD, Fortune, Moskowitz, Business Ethics (Wu, 2006) or MERCO (Fernández and Luna, 2007; Saenz and Gomez, 2008; Delgado-García et al., 2010; Odriozola et al., 2015)). These reputation indexes publish the stakeholders’ CSP assessment each year.

LR indicates the degree of company compliance with social and labour demands, so it is an appropriate assessment and measure of the labour dimension of CSP. In this contribution, the reputation index “Merco People” (published by MERCO) is used, which
refers to a ranking of the most reputable companies to work for, and it is a multi-stakeholder measure (because it is constructed based on the assessment of stakeholders with different nature, while other rankings, as Fortune, are based on the evaluation of respondents with strong financial halo (CEOs, shareholders, executives and financial analysts) (Odriozola et al., 2015)). The process for developing this index integrates six different assessments. Last year university students, alumni of business schools and human resource managers are surveyed to identify the most desirable companies to work for in Spain. Subsequently, a benchmarking about human resource management policies and then reputation surveys are conducted internally among employees. Finally, a representative sample of the general population is surveyed by telephone using the technique called “Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing”. Finally, the ranking of the 100 better places to work for in Spain is obtained, where each company included have an exact score, being 10,000 points the highest score.

**CFP**

Market-based measures of CFP (such as the share performance, market performance, market value, and share price) reflecting changing perceptions of stakeholders (Orlitzky et al., 2003) with less lag time, however, they are affected by other economic factors of the market or by circumstantial events in certain sectors, so they are not suitable for a short-term sample (Rose and Thomsen, 2004). Besides, they only reflect the perceptions of financial stakeholders (McWilliams et al., 2006) although non-financial stakeholders are also affected by the actions of CSR, and in the case of having asymmetric information, market measures do not reflect the evaluation of social actions. In this study, many of the companies of the sample analysed are unlisted, so it makes difficult to obtain the market price of them, and severe changes caused by the economic crisis under the Spanish stock market in recent years only affect a portion of the sample, so market measures would be biased. Measures based on accounting sources, such as the return on assets (ROA), asset turnover and growth measures (Wu, 2006), could be more suitable, and they may be affected by CSP (Wu, 2006). This stream has advantages such as the accessibility to the accounting data, its easy interpretation, and that reflects the internal efficiency of the organisation. Due to the above, ROA has been selected for this study to measure CFP, as it is the accounting measure most widely used in the literature, which allows to compare the results with previous studies, increasing its usefulness. This profitability ratio was obtained from the accounting data extracted from the database SABI Bureau van Dijk.

**Control variables**

To test the relationship between labour dimension of CSP and CFP, it is necessary to include control variables that give internal validity to the model.

**Size.** The larger the size of the company, the more likely to benefit from economies of scale (Osterman, 1995), or have higher degree of monopoly. Furthermore, the literature review confirms that size may have a positive impact on CSP, because larger organisations have many relationships with stakeholders and they are more vulnerable to pressure from stakeholders. A larger size means a larger number of employees and hence greater investment in social practices that may influence the reputation and future performance (Waddock and Graves, 1997).

**Differentiation strategy.** Companies adopt a differentiation strategy to make their products stand out against the competition, to retain customers and achieve a supplement on the price of their products. Previous studies concluded that a greater financial effort by companies to differentiate their products or services will lead to obtain more profit from their activities, having a positive effect on financial results (Fernández and Luna, 2007;
Barnett and Salomon, 2012). Investment in research and development (R&D) and advertising for their products can also affect the reputation of the company (Waddock and Graves, 1997; Padgett and Moura-Leite, 2012). The variable of differentiation strategy is measured by a proxy based on the ratio of R&D and advertising expenses divided by net sales of the company. The data of R&D and advertising expenses were not available for each company, so, following Fernández and Luna (2007) "other operating expenses", which cover the above, are used instead.

**Debt/risk.** The debt variable is necessary in this analysis because it indicates available financial resources in the company. A higher debt, higher risk assumes the company and less capacity to invest in socially responsible practices (Roberts, 1992). The ratio used to measure the level of debt of a company, and therefore the risk, is the total long-term debt divided by total assets (Waddock and Graves, 1997; Mahoney and Roberts, 2007).

**Sector.** The composition, structure, and degree of activism of stakeholders varies from sector to sector, either by internal pressures arising from the internal competitiveness in each sector (number of competitors, degree of monopoly, differences in demand) or by outside pressures inherent in an industry (asset specificity, specialisation or legislation) that influence the profitability of firms (De la Fuente Sabate and De Quevedo Puente, 2003). Several authors recommend introducing a control variable to consider sectoral differences (Hillman and Keim, 2001). To control the existence of sectoral differences in model estimations, include dummy variables relating to the sector classification determined by the Madrid Stock Exchange. This classification differences six sectors: oil and energy, raw materials, industry and construction, consumer goods, consumer services, financial and real estate services and technology and communications.

### 4. Results

Table III shows descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations of the variables LR and CFP, and the control variables included in the study. The average value of LR is close to 4,000 points; the minimum value is 405 and the maximum 10,000. The average of CFP stands at 5.82 per cent. Pearson correlation coefficients between the variables show that CFP was positively correlated with LR (for a significance level at 95 per cent) and negatively correlated with size and debt. LR has a negative correlation with strategy of differentiation for a significance level at 95 per cent. Also, LR has a positive relationship at a 99 per cent level of significance with size.

The results of the autoregressive model with system GMM estimator and Granger test are presented in Table IV. The correct use of system GMM estimator in Equations (1a) and (1b) has been verified by specification tests. The test of first-order autocorrelation, MI, with a p-value under 0.05 indicates the existence of dynamic effects. The M2 statistic confirms there is not second order autocorrelation. Finally, Hansen test confirms that do not exist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aCFP (%)</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bLR</td>
<td>3,970.21</td>
<td>2,140.58</td>
<td>0.08**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cSize (thousands €)</td>
<td>2.66e+07</td>
<td>1.24e+08</td>
<td>-0.10**</td>
<td>0.25***</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dDiffer. strategy</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.08**</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eDebt (%)</td>
<td>64.82</td>
<td>23.90</td>
<td>-0.32***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.20***</td>
<td>-0.15***</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** The above variables are measured as follows: “Return on assets (per cent); b Ranking of labour reputation “MercoPeople” (0-10,000); c total assets (thousands of euros); d ratio: R&D and advertising expenses/net sales; e ratio: total long-term debt/total assets. **,***Significant at 95 and 99 per cent levels, respectively
over-identified equations. These results confirm that there are no problems of endogeneity between variables and verify the validity of the instruments used.

To test the causality with a Granger causality test is necessary previously analyse the distributed-lag model, which relates the dependent variable to various lags of the independent variable. The aim of this preliminary analysis is determining the number of delays necessary to run the causality model. The number of delays is selected following the indication of the statistical Akaike information criterion and Schwarz Bayesian information criterion. The more convenient order of lags is where the values of these statistical are minimised (Nickelsburg, 1985). In the present study one lag year between the main variables is set in both specifications. This delay is necessary to prove causation of one variable on another, and this result is consistent with the theoretical review of the literature. We find studies about the relationship between CSP and CFP that test the relationship between those variables with one year delay (Vergin and Qoronfleh, 1998; De Quevedo-Puente et al., 2007; De la Fuente Sabate and De Quevedo Puente, 2003). It should be noted that the reputation rankings are published every year after the assessment of the social behaviour of the company about the previous period. Also, the autocorrelation of the residues for the VAR model is contrasted by the Lagrange-multiplier test, which argues the null hypothesis of no autocorrelation in the lag order selected. The results of the Lagrange-multiplier test for one lag order determined the absence of autocorrelation in the residuals ($p$-value = 0.0053), which does not conflict for the subsequent test of causality.

The dynamic model (using the System GMM estimator) for the Equation (1a) determines that CFP is correlated positively for a significance level at 99 per cent with the lagged dependent variable and the lagged LR. Therefore, the CFP would be affected in a broad spectrum by the profitability of the previous period. The results confirm the existence of a positive relation between CFP and LR, suggesting that LR can cause CFP. To confirm this possible causation, it is necessary to analyse the Granger test results. We should remember that the null hypothesis of Granger test is defined as: “X does not Granger cause Y”, in this case it would be that the LR does not Granger cause CFP. The result is a $p$-value = 0.0081, therefore less than 0.05, which allows us to reject the null hypothesis of the test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of causality</th>
<th>Dependent variable CFP</th>
<th>Dependent variable LR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent variables</td>
<td>(1a) $\beta$ (Sig.)</td>
<td>(1b) $\beta$ (Sig.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFP$_{-1}$</td>
<td>0.4629 ***</td>
<td>0.0018 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR$_{-1}$</td>
<td>0.0716 ***</td>
<td>0.8093 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>-0.0516 ***</td>
<td>0.0243 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation strategy</td>
<td>-0.1752 ***</td>
<td>-0.0002 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>-0.0414 ***</td>
<td>-0.0499 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 1</td>
<td>-0.0031 ***</td>
<td>-0.0103 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 2</td>
<td>-0.0348 ***</td>
<td>-0.0143 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 3</td>
<td>0.0115 ***</td>
<td>0.0029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 4</td>
<td>-0.0029 ***</td>
<td>-0.0140 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 5</td>
<td>-0.0259 ***</td>
<td>-0.0001 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specification test</td>
<td>Statistic $p$-value</td>
<td>Statistic $p$-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arellano – Bond test M1</td>
<td>-4.12 0.000</td>
<td>-5.47 0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arellano – Bond test M2</td>
<td>-0.89 0.374</td>
<td>-0.13 0.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansen test of overidentification restrictions</td>
<td>101.73 0.988</td>
<td>99.25 0.992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** The dummies were included in the analysis but not included in the table. *, **, ***Significant at 90, 95 and 99 per cent levels, respectively

Table IV. GMM estimator and granger causality test
Thus, the hypothesis of social impact ($H1$ in this study) cannot be rejected, and therefore, LR could cause financial performance.

In the opposite direction of the previous causality the dependent variable is LR (Equation (1b)). The results of the autoregressive models System GMM show a strong dependence of LR with the LR in the previous year ($LR_{t-1}$), what is supported by academic literature (De Quevedo-Puente et al., 2007), as reputation is a cumulative asset over time (stock). The relationship between LR and the lagged CFP is not significant. The differentiation strategy has little weight and it is not significant to explain the LR. Sectorial differences of companies are significant in explaining LR. The results of the Granger test confirm the indications of System GMM regarding the hypothesis of the availability of funds ($p$-value 0.3744), and it does not allow to reject the null hypothesis of the test “CFP does not Granger cause LR”. Therefore, the second hypothesis proposed in this study is rejected, and we conclude that CFP does not cause LR.

5. Discussion and conclusions

About the relationship between dimensions of CSP on CFP, there are several authors who believe that all social actions do not have the same effect on firm performance (Makni et al., 2009; Inoue and Lee, 2011), and therefore they consider necessary investigations that shed light on the effect of less aggregated measures of social performance (Hillman and Keim, 2001; Rose and Thomsen, 2004; Nelling and Webb, 2009). The relationship between some dimensions of CSP (environmental (Lioui and Sharma, 2012; Guenther et al., 2012), diversity (Golicic and Smith, 2013), consumer relations (Wang and Sarkis, 2013), community (Inoue and Lee, 2011), labour dimension (Fulner et al., 2003)) and CFP have been studied, but the causality between these variables has hardly been analysed. The labour dimension of CSP is one of the least studied and with serious limitations in studies that address it.

The present study concludes that in the relationship between labour dimension of CSP (measure by LR) and CFP, higher LR could cause greater economic returns. This conclusion is supported by studies in other countries (Chauvin and Guthrie, 1994; Hannon and Milkovich, 1996; Lau and May, 1998; Ballou et al., 2003; Filbeck and Preece, 2003; Fulner et al., 2003; Nelling and Webb, 2009), confirming the positive impact of reputation on the profitability and on business growth (Rose and Thomsen, 2004).

In the opposite sense, we conclude that CFP does not cause LR. In the academic literature, there are few previous researches to compare it, due to the literature gap about the labour dimension of CSP. As a reference, the work of Fulner et al. (2003) also contrasted if a greater profitability cause greater LR, using the companies included in the ranking “100 best companies to work for in America”, and they did not found statistical evidence that the LR arises from increased CFP. The fact that higher availability of financial funds does not have a direct impact on the labour dimension of the CSP may be due to social investments in the workplace are not so evident as in other dimensions of CSP or because better working conditions are not necessarily associated with a monetary cost (since some of them are the result of organisational improvements, shift changes, or working conditions).

The results obtained in this study are an important contribution for academics and practitioners. The academic contribution is provided through the literature review of the dimensions of CSP, and contrasting with the use of advanced methodologies the causal relationship between one of the less studied dimensions of CSP and CFP. For managers, it can generate a growing interest in obtaining higher LR to enhance the profitability of the company, by improving working conditions and employer engagement, thus generating a “win-win” relationship between managers and employees.

Finally, although this work covers methodological limitations of previous studies, new research lines emerge from it. Taking into account that LR is a joint measure of the
assessments of the labour actions of the company could be an interesting research question to study the causal relationship between specific labour policies of CSR with the CFP. It is possible that could exist differences in the impact generated by some of them, so it would allow to identify if there are policies that fulfill the social and economic purpose together better than others.

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Further reading

Corresponding author
Maria Dolores Odriozola can be contacted at: odriozolamd@unican.es
How effective are disability sensitization workshops?

Mukta Kulkarni
Organizational Behavior and Human Resources Management, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, Bengaluru, India

K.V. Gopakumar
Organizational Behavior, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, Ahmedabad, India, and

Shivani Patel
Pre-University, Mallya Aditi International School, Bengaluru, India

Abstract

Purpose – Organizations are increasingly investing in disability-specific sensitization workshops. Yet, there is limited understanding about their hoped outcomes, that is, increased knowledge about disability-related issues and behavioral changes with respect to those with a disability. The purpose of this paper is to examine the effectiveness and boundaries of disability-specific sensitization training in organizations.

Design/methodology/approach – This is an interview-based study where 33 employees from five industries across India were interviewed over the span of a year.

Findings – The findings suggest that sensitization workshops are successful with regard to awareness generation. Paradoxically, the same awareness also reinforced group boundaries through “othering.” Further, workshops resonated more so with individuals who already had some prior experience with disability, implying that voluntary sensitization is likely attracting those who have the least need of such sensitization. The findings also suggest that non-mandated interventions may not necessarily influence organizational level outcomes, especially if workshops are conducted in isolation from a broader organizational culture of inclusion.

Originality/value – The present study helps outline effects of sensitization training initiatives and enhances our understanding about how negative attitudes toward persons with a disability can be overcome. The study also indicates how such training initiatives may inadvertently lead to “othering.” Finally, this study offers suggestions to human resource managers for designing impactful disability sensitization workshops.

Keywords India, Disability, Training workshop

Paper type Research paper

Diversity training is a key component of organizational diversity initiatives and comprises programs aimed at enabling constructive intergroup interactions and reducing discrimination. The most common forms of diversity training are sensitization or awareness training (e.g. being sensitive to how we see ourselves and others) combined with skill-building or behavior-based training (e.g. learning how to communicate, which actions are appropriate) (Bezrukova et al., 2012; Phillips et al., 2016). Despite increasing investments in such programs, we do not know if and under which conditions such sensitization training is most beneficial, who benefits, and if benefits persist over a long term (Dwertmann, 2016); critical knowledge for human resource managers who wish to better design and implement diversity training within their organizations (Rynes and Rosen, 1994; Kearns, 1997; Bezrukova et al., 2012; Kalinoski et al., 2013; SHRM, 2014).

Further, while the broader diversity training research indicates that focus on a specific demographic group may pose problems as it highlights differences between participants (Bezrukova et al., 2012; Ellis and Sonnenfeld, 1994), specific groups such as persons with a disability are being increasingly focused upon in organizational diversity and inclusion initiatives (SHRM, 2014). The disability-specific research also suggests the criticality of focused sensitization training (Stone and Colella, 1996; Phillips et al., 2016). However, empirical
evidence for such is equivocal, outlining positive effects (e.g. Wilson et al., 2009) as well as cautionary notes (e.g. French, 1992). We are thus faced with a situation wherein the focus on disability-specific training is increasing across workplaces, but we do not know if and under which conditions such training is effective.

In the present study, we outline effectiveness and boundaries of disability sensitization training in organizations. More specifically, through interviews with 33 respondents across five industries in India, the present study makes the following contributions. First, the broader diversity training literature suggests that training has a positive short-term impact on attitude of participants, but long-term assessments are less positive (Rynes and Rosen, 1994) and actual behavioral change after awareness training is not firmly established (Kulik and Roberson, 2008). With an explicitly long-term focus, the present study can help outline lasting effects of sensitization training initiatives. Second, as Barney (2011) explained with regard to the disability-specific literature, understanding how negative attitudes toward persons with a disability can be overcome is important as such attitudes mean society overlooks contributions of this talent pool, and members of this group are not able to support themselves through productive wage-earning. Finally, as the disability-specific training focus (and spend) increases (SHRM, 2014; Kulkarni, 2016; Kulkarni et al., 2016), studies such as the present one can serve as guides to human resource managers with regard to designing effective sensitization training programs.

**Importance of disability sensitization training in the workplace**

Organizations may choose to engage with diversity training because of strategic objectives and external forces. For example, training may be used to impart information, obtain employee buy-in for diversity programs, change employee behavior, achieve diversity goals toward competitive advantage, and for compliance with legal standards (Kulik and Roberson, 2008; Cocchiara et al., 2010). Said alternately, diversity training can be framed around the why (legal mandates, moral imperatives, and business success), what (e.g. types of change desired or the goals), and how (e.g. type and duration of learning, Ferdman and Brody, 1996). The most common form of diversity training is awareness training, wherein the immediate goal is to increase awareness of cognitive processes which may lead to differential treatment of certain groups of employees (Rynes and Rosen, 1994; Kulik and Roberson, 2008).

While diversity training is noted as benefiting those least in the need of it (Kulik et al., 2007), reinforcing group boundaries when it is meant to obliterate such (Bezrukova et al., 2012), and as imposing costs when the benefits are unclear (Rynes and Rosen, 1994), it is also shown to contribute in the aggregate to organizational economic performance beyond the effects of a traditional high-performance work system (i.e. bundles of work practices and policies) (Armstrong et al., 2010). Furthermore, diversity training remains indispensable as legislation alone may not always have the intended effect on organizational inclusion of certain groups such as persons with disabilities (Cocchiara et al., 2010).

Disability-specific sensitization training in the workplace is especially important for the following reasons. As Baldrige et al. (2017) explain, despite being the world’s largest minority whose rights are protected through legislations, persons with a disability continue to face overt and subtle workplace discrimination. Persons with a disability may be inadvertently overlooked as job profiles may depart from essential requirements and include ideal profiles, or managers may recruit in mainstream spaces that do not have a pool of diverse candidates such as those with a disability (Stone and Colella, 1996; Stone and Williams, 1997). As Lengnick-Hall et al. (2008) found, employers may also harbor fears and misconceptions about the productivity of persons with disabilities.

Once hired, the inadvertent or intentional sidelining of persons with disabilities may continue. For example, accommodations, a critical component of workplace adjustment and
success may not always be within reach. Coworkers may form judgments about distributive (Colella, 2001) and procedural (Colella et al., 2004) fairness with respect to requested or granted accommodation, and to the extent workplace norms discourage accommodation seeking, persons with a disability may suffer a disadvantage. Social inclusion, another key facet of workplace adjustment and informal workplace learning, may also be suboptimal as coworkers may not interact enough with persons with disabilities, and managers may offer undemanding projects based on kindness or low expectations (Colella, 1994). Finally, careers of persons with a disability may be derailed given aforementioned barriers (e.g. employer misconceptions, inadequate accommodations, or suboptimal social inclusion).

However, as Schur et al. (2009) demonstrate, disability is not and need not be disabling in all workplaces. More specifically, organizational cultures which are responsive to the needs of all employees particularly benefit those with a disability. Such workplaces are characterized by fairness and responsiveness, and are perceived as inclusive by all employees. This sense of inclusion can be brought about through sensitization training wherein both those with a disability and other organizational members understand each other’s needs, expectations, and styles of working (Kulkarni, 2016; Phillips et al., 2016). Training programs can also help challenge stereotypes and impart information about how to communicate with and better integrate persons with disabilities (Stone and Colella, 1996). Despite the stated importance of such training, very minimal research—described below—has focused on it.

**Past research on disability-specific sensitization training in the workplace**

Past research has focused on targeted interventions for specific disabilities in specific contexts. For example, Bailey et al. (2001) focused on professionals who can help with successful inclusion of persons with intellectual disability in communities. Their study involved trainee police officers from the Royal Ulster Constabulary (Northern Ireland). Through their quasi-experimental design (role-play), Bailey et al. found that awareness training was associated with a more favorable attitude toward persons with intellectual disability.

In two other studies focused on learning disabilities, Murray et al. also found that disability training was positively associated with favorable attitudes and actions. For example, in one study, faculty members who had undergone disability sensitization scored higher on willingness to provide exam accommodations, knowledge about learning disabilities, willingness to personally invest in students with learning disabilities, and personal actions (e.g. inviting disclosure and providing accommodations) as compared with those who did not receive training (Murray et al., 2009). In the other study, university staff members who underwent training reported greater scores on general knowledge and sensitivity toward university students with learning disabilities as compared with those who did not (Murray et al., 2011).

Other studies focused on specific disabilities have included training interventions aimed at supportive communication, job-site analysis, and accident investigation for work injuries (McLellan et al., 2001), simulation exercises for healthcare professionals working within a regional neuro-rehabilitation service (Wilson et al., 2009), and interventions for disability attitudes and knowledge, empathic communication, and strategies for return to work to reduce workers’ compensation claims (for work injuries) (Shaw et al., 2006).

Alternatively, studies have focused on disability in general, and not on specific types of disability as noted above. For example, Hunt and Hunt (2004) examined if a brief educational intervention could impact individual attitudes and knowledge. Their quasi-experiment included undergraduate business students. The results indicated that even after controlling for gender and prior experience with persons with disabilities (e.g. knowing friends and family who have a disability), there is significant effect of a one-hour presentation. Although there were decrements in scores one week after the presentation, both knowledge and attitudes remained higher than they were before the intervention.
In another study, Barney (2011) examined if type of sensitization workshop plays a role in decreasing negative attitudes about disability among future healthcare professionals. In this study, students either attended an experiential (playing wheelchair basketball) or a didactic (classroom lecture and discussion) workshop. The results indicated that neither workshop decreased negative attitudes compared to the baseline (control group) results for students. However, stigmatizing attitudes were found to be lower among participants in the experiential workshop than among participants of the didactic workshop. Barney concluded that attitudes about disability are pliable only under certain conditions. This scarce disability literature is thus not developed enough to classify in the aforesaid framework of the why, what, and how of diversity training (Ferdman and Brody, 1996).

With regard to studies focused on the Indian organizational context, we found that while sensitization training has been noted as being critical for social inclusion and other career outcomes (Kulkarni, 2016; Kulkarni et al., 2016) no study has examined the effectiveness of such training programs. Further, while persons with a disability are seen as a talent pool by employers (NASSCOM, 2016), theorizations of disability are anchored in a medical view of the body (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2013), and there is yet stigma associated with disability (Chishti, 2016; Petcosky-Kulkarni, 2017), implying the need for awareness building or sensitization programs.

Overall, despite the stated importance of disability-specific training to bring about attitudinal and behavioral change, there is very sparse literature focused on the topic. Most research has focused on targeted interventions for specific disabilities in specific contexts. By examining effectiveness of sensitization workshops across different types of workplaces, we hope to contribute to this important body of work.

Method

The number of persons with a disability in India is said to range from the census number of 26.8 million (Dhar, 2013) to as high as 100 million (Cherian, 2012). The Department of Disability Affairs of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, is the principal actor in the Indian institutional environment which oversees disability-specific awareness and sensitization plans. From The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995 through the most recent The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, the government has stressed the importance of awareness and sensitization programs. For example, the Act of 2016 stresses the importance of general awareness about disability as well as employment-specific sensitization programs to fully include persons with a disability in all spheres. As another example, a current focus is on training and sensitization of key functionaries of central as well as state governments, and local bodies. The XII Five Year Plan has made an outlay of 20 crore rupees to create awareness about disability-related legislation, development programs, and rehabilitation and referral services amongst the various governmental stakeholders (Rehabilitation Council of India, 2015). The government’s Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, that is, the Accessible India Campaign involves conducting zonal awareness workshops for sensitizing all stakeholders such as government officials, professionals (e.g. engineers, architects), students, and so forth (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2015).

There are also other actors within the country that support and work toward awareness and sensitization specific to workplaces. For example, certain non-governmental organizations or disability training agencies (Kulkarni and Scullion, 2015) and a few employers (Kulkarni and Rodrigues, 2014; Kulkarni, 2016; Kulkarni et al., 2016) have made efforts at disability-specific sensitization. However, according to a study by the American India Foundation (2014), while there is an increasing trend toward inclusive workplaces in India, only a “handful” of organizations have disability in their employment focus and lack
of employer awareness or sensitization is a factor in unemployment of persons with a disability. The same study notes that sensitization is important for improving employment as well as workplace integration of persons with a disability.

Data sources and analysis
We gained access to employees, our sample, who had attended disability-specific sensitization workshops in two ways. First, we approached two disability-specific organizations which are known throughout India for engaging in activities that sensitize various societal segments to the realities of persons with a disability. We asked them for contacts within organizations in which they had conducted disability-specific sensitization workshops. These contacts were typically someone in the organization’s human resources department. Next, we also approached our own professional contacts within organizations. Notably, despite the impressive country-wide client list of the organizations and our efforts, we did not have expected success in access to organizations, a point we discuss later.

We asked to be connected with employees who had participated in the disability sensitization workshop at least six months before the interview date. This is because while attitudinal change persists over six months, it may deteriorate afterwards (Bezrukova et al., 2012) and we were interested in relatively long-term effects of attending a sensitization workshop. Further, a recent study across five states in India shows that employers invest in two forms of sensitization programs, e-learning and face-to-face modules (Kulkarni, 2016). For standardization, we requested contacts only with those who had participated in face-to-face sensitization workshops. Finally, again, to maintain a degree of standardization in comparing respondent experiences, we only focused on similar workshops – specifically, half-day workshops[1] conducted with an explicit focus on awareness generation and behavioral changes. Thus, the workshops were not focused on the aforesaid dominant “medical” view of disability. The first and second author independently attended two such sensitization workshops in 2015 to ensure that present respondents were exposed to very similar materials and so that we could follow their descriptions and experiences of the workshop. The workshops covered what disability is (degree/type of ability), examples and videos of different (dis)abilities, and the different workplace solutions and accommodations. Sympathy, charity, and aid for the collective was discouraged, and ability and the daily differences in how diverse persons navigate their personal and work lives was stressed. Workshop participants could ask questions and make comments both during and after the workshop.

We conducted interviews with 33 respondents from five industries. Interviews took place over a span of about a year starting from May 2015 to March 2016. Of the 33 respondents, 11 were female and 22 were male. Respondents had attended the non-mandatory sensitization workshops in the year 2013 (13 respondents), 2014 (9 respondents), and 2015 (11 respondents). Seven interviews were conducted over telephone and 26 interviews were conducted in person. Most of our respondents worked in the banking and finance industry (12) followed by retail (8), aviation (6), consulting (5), and precision engineering (2).

Following past research (Bezrukova et al., 2012), we relied on participants’ self-reports to capture their learning from the workshops. The interview method was also well suited to the present case given paucity of research on this topic (Phillips et al., 2016), implying an inability to construct specific predictions (Grote and Raeder, 2009). Our interview guide covered the following broad areas: respondent recall of the workshop, if their thinking changed as a result of the workshop, any changes they or their work unit/organization undertook as a result of the workshop, organizational policies and practices, if any, with regard to inclusion of persons with a disability, and their background (e.g. their work designation in the organization, and when they had attended the workshop).

While it was a straightforward task to, for example, capture if respondents’ thinking changed as a result of the workshop, we noted that certain respondents seemed to be more
sensitized than others. We noted such points. Coding was driven by past research, and we were open to new themes. For example, what types of changes (Ferdman and Brody, 1996), who benefits (Kulik et al., 2007), and boundary conditions of training (Bezrukova et al., 2012) were noted. The first and second author independently coded each interview, noting similarities and dissimilarities across participants. Later, the two of us examined all data and discussed each finding as well as appropriate illustrative quotes. There were some disagreements which we resolved in person. For example, one of us had coded only actual individual behavior as a result of the workshop (e.g. learning some sign language), while the other had coded intent (e.g. wanting to learn some sign language) in our theme titled “workshops lead to behavioral outcomes.” In this case, to avoid any double counting and to separate awareness from behavior, we decided to count only instances of actual behavior (not intent) in the aforesaid theme. In this manner, we counted each instance and discussed each transcript, such that all numbers below are agreed upon by both coders.

Findings

Data indicate the following about effectiveness of disability sensitization workshops:

Workshops lead to general awareness about disability-specific matters

Each of our respondents could recall parts or the general summary of the sensitization workshops and what they learned about disability-specific issues. More specifically, 21 percent of respondents explained that they were more aware about the types of jobs persons with disabilities can effectively perform, 21 percent knew of the diverse types of disabilities which require different accommodations, and 94 percent claimed that they learned of appropriate attitudes and behaviors to assume when working with persons with disabilities. Referring to the diverse jobs which persons with disabilities can undertake, a respondent explained:

The kind of activities which people with disabilities can do was really an eye opener for me. Specifically, I was looking at the way people were actually working in petrol pumps or [...] supermarket [...] it was a very good insight for me also to understand where all people can contribute, notwithstanding their disabilities [...] some of the jobs what these people are able to do are really astonishing. I personally wouldn’t have thought of that from the beginning [...] my own perception and my own views of what kind of people, what kind of job they can do, are certainly changed (Male, Technology lead, Precision engineering, attended workshop in 2013).

Respondents also noted how they became aware of the different types of disabilities as a result of the workshop. For example, a male respondent who works in a bank in the operations department explained that earlier he had not thought about invisible disabilities, but was more aware of such as a result of the workshop. He explained how he now understood that a certain blood condition, an invisible disability would require specific accommodations. Another respondent spoke of her realization that “disability has a very wide definition and has multiple sides”:

One of the main things which kind of helped me from the sensitization program is that you know like for example there is hearing disability but there are multiple types of disabilities in hearing as well [...] For example, in hearing disability some people do lip reading, some people do hand signs and all those things. I got to know that there are various kinds under one big disability umbrella.
So, if I know that this particular candidate has a hearing impairment but he is very good with lip reading, we can make sure that we speak to him face to face so that he can read whatever we are speaking and respond accordingly (Female, Analyst, Banking and Finance, attended workshop in 2014).

Finally, awareness meant the understanding of appropriate attitudes and behaviors to assume when working with persons with disabilities. Respondents explained how “we should never be sympathetic” and be “equal” in approach toward persons with a disability.

A female respondent explained her change in attitude:

I mean, it will help to remove all the barriers in the mind […] treating them differently, feeling sorry […] I think those things can be just removed from the thought process itself […] you know, feeling sorry and feeling sad about their situation is the biggest barrier. It stops anybody from their growth whether it’s an organization or an individual. I think the training helps to cut that away from the whole thought process (Female, Compliance Manager, Banking and Finance, attended workshop in 2015).

In referring to understanding of appropriate behaviors, a respondent stated the following:

Before that we didn’t have any specific opinions about people with disabilities. After the workshop we learnt how to behave with them, how to interact with them and how to treat them also […] Before what we used to do is, if a person who has visual impairment is crossing the road we will pull their hands and ask them to come with us. After this workshop, we were told that we should request their permission for what to do […] when you are speaking with deaf people, we need to look at them and speak. We should not have our back to them (Male, Manager, Banking and Finance, attended workshop in 2014).

Overall, workshops seemed to have been successful in increasing general awareness about disability-specific matters as evidenced by respondent recall, even when the workshop had occurred two years prior to our interview.

Workshops resonate more so with certain individuals

While each respondent seemed to become aware of disability issues as a result of attending the workshop, the workshop seemed to have made a particular impression on people who were already familiar with disability issues. We say that because 36 percent of respondents explicitly noted that they identified with the workshop content because they already knew someone with a disability or had some prior experience with disability. For example, a respondent narrated the story of a cousin, who is a person with a disability:

Because I too have a cousin who is physically handicapped and he’s working for [technology organization name]. And from my childhood, we used to encourage him whenever he was with us. Like even if we played cricket with him, just encourage him by bowling slowly, like with a bit of difference […] I felt happy that [my organization] encourages such people (Male, Data Development, Consulting, attended workshop in 2014).

Another respondent who volunteers his time at a disability-specific non-governmental organization noted that he was already sensitized to disability-specific issues prior to the workshop conducted in his bank. He explained that the workshop was useful in adding specific knowledge over and above his awareness such as “If somebody is visually impaired we have tools like JAWS, which basically does text to speech conversion.” It is noting that “I was already very sensitive” prior to the workshop, another of our male respondents who works in the aviation industry explained that he had volunteered at a school where he taught music to children with a disability. He explained that though he “had not attended any sensitization workshops for people with disabilities” his teaching made him “very conscious of the challenges these people face.” We also heard stories about someone’s daughter having an attention deficit syndrome, someone’s neighbor being a person with a
disability, and how that had influenced respondents’ thinking prior to any formal workplace sensitization training they underwent. A respondent captured this point:

For me, it’s not really just particular to this workshop, I have been engaged with the disability forum for quite a few years now […] I think [the workshop] is more impactful when somebody that you know of personally has had a disability; permanent or temporary doesn’t really matter as much I would say. But then having that personal connect definitely is more impactful rather than you know just attending a workshop (Female, Associate, Banking and Finance, attended in 2015).

Overall, workshops thus seemed to resonate with people who had already had some prior experience with disability.

Workshops lead to behavioral changes for some employees but not across the organization

We had asked respondents to tell us about specific and voluntary behavioral outcomes which resulted from the workshop. Respondents referred to three individual level behavioral changes – learning very basic sign language to converse with those with a hearing loss (27 percent), facing those with a hearing loss in conversation so as to facilitate lip reading (27 percent), and volunteering for organizational activities aimed at inclusion (30 percent).

A respondent explained that he had learned the sign language after the workshop to better integrate those with a hearing loss into his team:

I have learnt sign language. Not in depth. But like how to explain […] If I need any information, I can get it from them. If I have to explain anything to them, they are able to understand what I’m trying to say […] Like if I hadn’t for that training, it would have been difficult to understand what they need. For example, in sign language […] it’s easy for me to get information on what I want and what they are required to do or what they want me to do (Male, Customer representative, Banking and Finance, attended workshop in 2015).

Another respondent who works in the retail sector demonstrated to us the basic greetings (sign language) he had learned after the workshop, so he could make small conversations with those with hearing loss. We were also told of changes in behaviors such as facing the person with a hearing loss so they could lip read during in-person conversations, and not helping the visually impaired unless help was asked for. With regard to volunteering for organizational activities, respondents said they volunteered for their organization’s “disability forum” or asked for more training and involvement from their human resources department. For example, a respondent explained that to work more with his deaf and hard of hearing subordinates and help them succeed, more engagement would be beneficial, and he brainstormed with his human resources team:

I think that a specific kind of an orientation or seminar can definitely work. I think quarterly, once in 6 months, or once in a year makes a lot of difference if you have started working with this kind of an atmosphere with persons with a disability and when you are managing them. And also I have also suggested to the Human Resources team that you should have a skill based or a sign language based training. [Also] […] what about their growth? That becomes a challenge for HR. I think HR has not thought about it. But yes I suggest that they should engage with […] a lot of training institutes are out there […] who can train better than us for this kind of staff. So probably we can give them a career opportunity and how they can grow within the group for the next level. So we can think on those lines (Male, Senior Area Manager, Retail, attended workshop in 2013).

In no case, however, did such individual efforts lead to systemic organization-wide changes. In fact, one of our respondents specifically narrated a story wherein the three deaf people she had hired were fully integrated in her workgroup in a span of a year and a half, and her team of 15 members had voluntarily learned basic sign language and had informally started a referral program for her group (referring persons with a disability for employment).
Nonetheless, despite her attempt, her consulting organization did not go beyond the sensitization workshop to creating any formal policies.

Instead, we found that workshops led to systemic behavioral outcomes only in organizations that are already “disability friendly.” Such outcomes included increased hiring of persons with a disability across departments, providing accommodations hitherto not provided, sponsoring educational scholarships as part of extended CSR activities, and having more targeted awareness workshops (e.g. recurring peer sensitization workshops in departments as new persons were hired). In total, 79 percent of respondents specifically noted that the workshop helped (or would help) only because it was (or if it were) part of a larger inclusion initiative within the organization. One of our respondents clarified his organization’s “combination” approach:

[Workshop] does sensitizze them. The appreciation and understanding of disability comes from that fact that they will probably be a lot more aware of what disability means […] But if you were to ask me if it is impactful enough for them to make a difference in the way they approach disability […]? Not […] That’s why we’ve got to be a little more targeted in what we want to do […] We do hire people with disability […] What is it that we can do both from a technology perspective such that when they are on board as an employee of the firm they can face any challenges. I think we’ve done quite a bit in the technology aspect already (Male, Vice President, Banking and Finance, attended workshop in 2013).

Such a “combination” approach, the same respondent noted, was critical because otherwise attending workshops only leads to basic awareness and increases one’s “diversity credits” as one attends sessions. Another male respondent from a bank noted that “all these factors have come together in the company” such that you should not only be aware and learn to interview “a hard of hearing or a visually impaired person,” but also know “what workplace accommodation you have to do, how you sensitize the peers of his or her group so they feel comfortable.” This respondent went on to explain his organization’s “diversity month […] a grand month with a lot of diversity focus events” within which the disability-specific workshop was scheduled. The same respondent explained that the workshop may help “map the right person for the right role” as it helps understand the various types of disabilities and required accommodations in his “disability friendly” organization.

A similar view was noted by a male respondent in the precision engineering industry. He explained that workshops make a behavioral impact as his organization is also “known for hiring people with disability from very long back” and that inclusion has been in “the DNA of [the organization] from very long back.” In fact, 18 percent of our respondents thought that workshops on their own did not make a difference at the level of the organization. For example, while acknowledging that the workshop increased his awareness, a respondent complained that he did not quite see how that would translate into hiring:

We generally receive some emails regarding the referrals for hiring of people with disabilities but we are not sure about the exact policies (Male, Data Development, Consulting, attended workshop in 2014).

Overall, while workshops led to behavioral changes for some individual employees, there were no organizational level changes unless the organization was already “disability friendly,” that is, had a culture of inclusion.

Workshops lead to inadvertent othering

We noticed two points which we thought were misaligned with the thrust of the workshops. First, 36 percent of our respondents seemed to view persons with a disability as heroes. For example, we heard phrases such as, “seek a chance to learn from them;” those with a disability are “brilliant;” “heroes,” and that they are “motivators.” This was surprising as throughout the workshop, the notions of equality and degrees of ability were stressed. It is
likely this “hero” interpretation stemmed from depicting of success stories within the workshops, as respondents often referred to specific stories when making this point. For example, a female respondent who works in a consulting organization explained, “This session has changed my outlook towards life […] instead of looking down upon impaired persons, we should give them more and more opportunities. And I am confident they will do better than us.”

Such assumptions of heroism were also noted by respondents whose organizations seemed to engage in the aforementioned “combination” approach. For example, as one of our respondents stated:

It was more of an awareness week that we had […] It’s a weeklong program showcasing some of the achievements of people with disabilities […] The performance levels are in fact even a little higher and they are much more brilliant. So, it was only showcasing […] They also have certain folks who have done excellence in research in the area of maybe aviation or locomotives […] things that normal people wouldn’t have even thought of […] So, a new kind of appreciation that comes in and people will start treating them with respect (Male, Analytics lead, Aviation, attended workshop in 2015).

Next, despite the stress on terminology of equality and person-first language in the workshops, there was a degree of inadvertent “othering.” A surprising 42 percent spoke of “them,” “the disabled,” “the handicapped,” and so on; words and phrases which seemed to allude to persons with a disability as some out-group. Even when seemingly positive, we heard responses such as “A disabled person, after getting trained, became like any normal staff and in fact they are doing better than what a normal staff does.” Yet, another respondent explained that “we should do something for society” and that his organization hires other than the “normal” people:

Today I have a ratio of 10:2. Ten will be normal employees and 2 will be persons with disability staff. Ok, so 10 people should have a positive approach to accept these people […] for that approach I think we should conduct [sensitization] activities (Female, Senior Executive, Retail, attended workshop in 2014).

One respondent thought that workshops may, in fact, backfire and may not help the organization, even if they sensitize individuals attending the workshop:

I have to give it a thought. When you organize such kind of activities it also means that you are making people aware that there is a difference between these two which is a kind of pointing out with a finger. But I don’t agree on not conducting such activities because my being there I found some difference […] I don’t think as a company it helps [organization name] but I guess it helps people in developing positivity towards life and self-motivation (Female, Scientist, Aviation, attended workshop in 2015).

Overall, by priming differences, workshops led to inadvertent othering of the very groups which were to be assimilated.

Certain workshop formats may be more useful than others
In total, 33 percent of our respondents noted that workshops may be more effective if they were either conducted by someone with a disability or were more experiential, and these changes be combined with or added to the traditional format they had experienced. Noting the first point, a respondent narrated how a blind person had helped her in the organization by showing how she handled interviews and how that had helped the respondent gain “practical knowledge”:

So I think practical knowledge is much better than just presentation […] presentation you will go back with the notion that I need to be accommodative of such people, that’s all. Maybe that’s just the frame that you get […] but if people really spend time with such people you will kind of get to
know that each and every task of theirs [...] [so] it might not just be a plain vanilla presentation that’s going to help you [...] A workshop will definitely be effective if you get to interact with such individuals and you form your opinion on your own (Female, Lead Data Analyst, Banking and Finance, attended workshop in 2013).

Referring to more experiential formats being useful, another respondent who also works in the banking and finance industry recalled his incredulity when he discovered that the person leading the “dialogue in the dark[2]” was blind. Another respondent explained that “even if get these eminent personalities to talk, we have a panel discussion, people come, people listen, people love it, people clap and they go away. But once they go away, the hangover is not there for a long term.” He explained that “the impact is tenfold” when an “employee with disability” shows how he handles all tasks on a daily basis.

None of the respondents, however, dismissed workshops they had attended. Alternative formats were noted as extensions and supplements to what they had undergone. As one elaborated:

See it’s a mix of both [...] so it’s theoretical versus the practical, right? So before you get into the practical you need to understand the theory [...] it’s as simple as that. So yes you have to go through workshops with the theory as well as with the practical. First I prefer theory, because first time when I met a person with low vision I don’t know how to deal with the person. So if I understand the theory of it then I can deal with the person practically. Yes, theory is the first and practical is the second (Male, Analytics Leader, Banking and Finance, attended workshop in 2015).

Overall, respondents did not dismiss the importance of the workshops they had experienced. They did note that alternative formats wherein workshops were facilitated by someone with a disability or were more experiential would be more impactful.

**Discussion**

We examined if disability-specific sensitization workshops are effective in organizations, that is, if such workshops bring about increased knowledge about disability-related issues and behavioral changes such as increased employment and workplace integration of those with a disability. Considering the increased focus and spend on such activities, we believe that unless we engage with conditions under which such workshops are beneficial, efforts of human resource managers may be futile. Below we discuss each finding and how it contributes to the workplace disability literature.

**Contributions to the workplace disability literature**

We found that sensitization workshops led to general awareness such as understanding the diversity of disabling conditions (e.g. differences in severity of hearing loss, invisible disabilities) and knowledge of how to interact with someone with a disability (e.g. facing someone who is hard of hearing in face-to-face conversations). This finding is in line with past research (e.g. Bailey *et al.*, 2001; Murray *et al.*, 2009, 2011) but also extends it by showing that even when the workshop is not targeted to a specific disability group (as was the case in aforementioned studies), overall awareness is achieved. We especially find it heartening that respondents’ awareness was sustained two years after they had attended workshops. The findings, thus, indicate that awareness persists over a long term and is not a short-term gain with diminishing utility over time (cf. Hunt and Hunt, 2004).

We do wonder, however, if these non-mandated workshops as well as our interview requests attracted only the believers. We say this because, as noted in the method section, despite the impressive country-wide client list of the disability organizations we approached for contact leads, their attempts to connect us with their client organizations, and our own efforts, we did not achieve expected success in access to organizations. Further, our findings show that workshops resonated more so with individuals who already had some prior
experience with a disability (e.g. they had a child with a disability, or they had volunteered for disability work prior to attending the workshop). The possibility that workshops advocate to people who already share convictions aligned with the thrust of the workshop implies that voluntary sensitization is likely attracting those who have the least need of such sensitization. This finding is in line with the work of Kulik et al. (2007) who found that employees with greater knowledge of equal opportunities express more interest in voluntary equal opportunity training than employees with less of such knowledge.

Relatedly, we found that workshops lead to behavioral outcomes at the level of the individual, but unless the organization already had a culture of inclusion, there was no further behavioral gain – at the level of the organization. For example, recall the finding that while persons in one group seemed to voluntarily learn basic sign language to integrate their deaf colleagues, there was no change at the level of their organization for inclusion or integration of persons with a disability. Taken together, these findings imply that there are boundaries to the effectiveness of such sensitization workshops. The potential argument then is not so much if such workshops help or not in the aggregate (e.g. Murray et al., 2009, 2011; Wilson et al., 2009) but to understand boundary conditions under which workshops are effective. In no instance did any respondent dismiss the importance of the workshop.

The most troubling finding is that workshops led to the “othering” of persons with a disability. We were taken by surprise to hear of this collective as being referred to as “heroes” or as those different from “normal.” While workshops may increase awareness, we wonder, as do Bezrukova et al. (2012), if awareness comes at the cost of inadvertently reinforcing group boundaries. This finding about othering of certain groups through language implicitly highlights who is “normal” or accepted more so as an employee in organizations (cf. Galvin, 2003). The discourse of othering can comprise contradictory discourses of ableism (that produce difference) and tolerance and inclusiveness (which render it problematic to talk about difference). Well meaning organizational stakeholders, through such contradictions, can end up reinforcing the very discursive representations they wish to de-emphasize (Mik-Meyer, 2016). Present finding again points to the boundary conditions under which workshops are effective, and not just the binary of if-or-not such workshops are effective.

Overall, present findings move forward the conversation in the disability workplace literature by pointing out that sustained awareness can result from short duration training interventions. Paradoxically, though, the very same awareness can reinforce group boundaries, and collectives meant to be integrated are inadvertently seen as different. The findings also suggest that non-mandated interventions may preach to the choir and not necessarily influence organizational level outcomes – if the workshops are conducted in isolation and there is no broader organizational culture of inclusion supporting such workshops. We hasten to add though that we are not dismissive of such workshops. Based on the present findings, we offer some suggestions for making such workshops more impactful.

**Implications for employers**

First, human resource managers should not stop at the mere administration of the workshop, but ensure that they have follow-up events to capture if and how much intended outcomes are achieved. We say that because, in the present study, the stated objectives were both attitudinal and behavioral – at the level of both the individual and the organization. While awareness seemed to have increased, actual outcomes at the level of the organization (as a result of the workshop) were missing. One way of doing so would be to create personal action plans for integration of and full utilization of available talent (e.g. De Meuse et al., 2007). It is also important that employers elicit employee feedback about such workshops, or better yet, design such with stakeholder inputs. This is because stakeholder commitment may be higher for those practices that are perceived as effective by those involved (Khoreva et al., 2017; Maxwell et al., 2001).
Second, the finding that the voluntary sensitization workshops are likely to attract those already open to engaging with disability is an important point of leverage for human resource managers. If such individuals can be identified pre or post the workshop, they can serve as formal or informal ambassadors for inclusion efforts. Here, we also echo an idea suggested by Kulik et al. (2007) that human resource managers can conduct pre-training needs assessment to specify minimal skills required for compliance with local legislation, and ensure that employees who do not meet this criterion attend sensitization workshops.

Third that workshops did not alter behaviors at the level of the organization is a noteworthy point for human resource managers. The broader diversity research shows that to increase diversity, structures which help establish responsibility (e.g. affirmative action plans, diversity committees, and diversity staff positions) are critical (Kalev et al., 2006). Stand-alone activities may not be as impactful, and employers will benefit most from their diversity efforts if several initiatives (e.g. recruitment, training, mentoring programs) work in tandem (Kulik and Roberson, 2008; Cocchiara et al., 2010). In fact, if not understood, fashioned, and realized within the socio-historical and organizational context, diversity management efforts can hinder more than help individual and collective efforts (Knights and Omanović, 2016).

Fourth, the present finding about “othering” is significant. Human resource managers may wish to engage employees in a reflection exercise wherein linguistic choices are examined. If employees claim awareness about appropriate attitudes are exposed to person-first terminology, and they yet engage in referring to persons with a disability as “the other,” a deeper engagement with one’s biases and diversity-related blind spots may help toward true inclusion. Identities are indeed ascribed through the “othering” of certain groups through use of language and such ascribed differences need examination (Galvin, 2003). Employees can also be sensitized to the fact that disability is a human condition given functional limitations and job demands, and not something that is specific to some “other” groups of humans (cf. Kearns, 1997).

Finally, we think respondents’ views about format of the workshop (e.g. workshops conducted by someone with a disability, experiential workshops) are practicable. Disability studies scholars have also proposed that workshops be conducted by highly trained persons with a disability where participants learn through facilitated discovery. Such a facilitated discovery can be achieved through formats such as group discussions, cases, and examination of how disability is portrayed in media, and so on. Combining such formats with actions’ plans per participant can not only produce impact but also reduce the possibility of viewing persons with a disability from just a medical angle where impairment is the focus (French, 1992).

Limitations and directions for future research
No study is without limitations, and ours is no exception. Our limited sample size, the one country focus, and type of workshop present restrictions to the generalizability of findings. While we can cast as a finding in itself the difficulty in inducing employers to invite researchers into their premises to talk about the present topic, we cannot but acknowledge this limitation. We also agree with Baldridge et al. (2017) that there are national variations in the cultural and legal definitions of who is defined as a person with a disability, and in employment experiences and discrimination encountered by different disability groups. Furthermore, there may also be within-nation differences. For example, as we noted in an earlier section, the Indian context primes people to think of disability as a medical condition (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2013) but also sees persons with a disability as a talent pool (NASSCOM, 2016). We do not know which view respondents espoused before attending the workshop, a key matter for future research.

Next, diversity training is a complex endeavor with regard to why and how organizations are engaging with it (e.g. reason, type, and duration of learning, Ferdman and Brody, 1996). For example, with respect to type of disability-specific workshops, there are
electronic formats (Kulkarni, 2016), which we did not consider in the present case. We also agree with Kulik and Roberson (2008) that future research could examine effectiveness of diversity training using designs that make use of random assignment to training conditions and non-trained control groups, and how much training translates to changed behaviors toward diversity issues – to the extent such assignment is not unlawful. Said limitations also present opportunities to conduct more research as well as offer further implications for human resource management, possibly through large-scale quantitative studies.

Finally, the most important stakeholder is the person with a disability. While coworkers may claim awareness and employers may claim engagement with diversity inclusion efforts, it will be useful to gain the perspective of the persons with disabilities who may not experience said culture of inclusion. How those with a disability organize and negotiate workplaces is of importance when we examine, in any form, the possibilities of production of social categories of difference (Foster and Fosh, 2010; Williams and Mavin, 2012). This is especially important as, in many workplaces, employees with a disability occupy a contradictory discursive and material position and have to navigate an ableist assumption of lower productivity (Jammaers et al., 2016; Mik-Meyer, 2016).

**Conclusion**
This study contributes to our knowledge regarding the effectiveness of disability sensitization workshops in organizations. We attempted to examine if disability-specific sensitization workshops bring about hoped outcomes, that is, increased knowledge about disability-related issues and behavioral changes such as increased employment and workplace integration of those with a disability. Our findings point to both positives and boundary conditions of such workshops and we hope that researchers and practitioners engage with present findings for making such workshops more impactful.

**Notes**
1. While the actual workshop content did not exceed two hours, often the question-and-answer session was extended. We were told that organizations had referred to them as “half-day workshops.”
2. The respondent explained that this is an experiential practicum wherein people are blindfolded or are in pitch dark environments and learn to navigate it.

**References**


**About the authors**

Mukta Kulkarni is a Professor and the Mphasis Chair for Digital Accessibility and Inclusion at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore. Her research interests include social inclusion and diversity management. She has been a Member of the Confederation of Indian Industry's National Committee on Special Abilities, has authored reports on disability for the Government of India, and continues her attempts to understand workplace inclusion of persons with a disability. She has published papers in journals such as *Academy of Management Journal, Human Relations, Human Resource Management, Journal of Organizational Behavior*, and *The Leadership Quarterly*. Her co-authored papers have been recognized as the best paper in *Academy of Management Journal* (2007) and as the outstanding paper in the Literati Network Awards for Excellence in Personnel Review (2016). Mukta Kulkarni is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: mkulkarni@iimb.ernet.in

K.V. Gopakumar is an Assistant Professor at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad. He received his Masters' Degree in Business Administration from Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur. His research interests include institutional changes and diversity management.

Shivani Patel is currently an Undergraduate Student at Amherst College, MA, USA. At the time of the writing of this article, Shivani was a pre-University student at the Mallya Aditi International School, Bengaluru, India.

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Expanding social actor-based explanations in labour market dualisation research

A combined macro-micro and micro-macro approach

Valeria Pulignano and Nadja Doerflinger
Centre for Sociological Research (CeSO) KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to contribute conceptually to debate on labour market dualisation by proposing a macro-micro and micro-macro (or macro-micro-macro) analytical approach to integrate actor-based explanations in the study of labour market dualisation.

Design/methodology/approach – This is a conceptual paper emphasising the need to combine qualitative and quantitative data and methods in studying the nature and incidence of labour market dualisation.

Findings – To study social divides – as a manifestation of labour market dualisation and, more generally, fragmentation – macro-micro and micro-macro (i.e. macro-micro-macro) relationships need to be established as part of an analytical approach to studying dualisation. This implies considering macro-level institutional and regulatory as well as micro-level workplace and organisational settings as factors in any analysis and interpretation of the determinants of labour market dualisation, i.e. integrating the dynamics of power and strategy as determinants of dualisation, fragmentation and more generally precariousness.

Originality/value – The paper points to the need to expand actor-based explanations within the labour market dualisation debate, which remains overly institutionalist in its approach. The authors propose a micro-macro-micro analytical approach as the way to systematise the study of concurrent macro-micro and micro-macro relationships shaping social divides in labour markets.

Keywords Inequality, Labour markets, Dualisation, Power relationship, Social divides

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction

Research on dualisation, segmentation, fragmentation and precariousness points to increasing divides in wages, working conditions and the quality of jobs (e.g. McKay et al., 2012; Gallie, 2007; Kalleberg, 2011). Growing divides in advanced capitalist societies provoke social concern because of the wide-ranging implications for their economies and societies.

Theoretical discussion has captured the policies, strategies and processes affecting labour market dualisation (e.g. Emmenegger et al., 2012; Thelen, 2014; Rueda, 2007). These issues have often been studied at different levels: company (and/or workplace) (e.g. Holst, 2014; Pulignano et al., 2016), industry (or sector) (e.g. Greer and Hauptmeier, 2016; Hermann and Flecker, 2012) and country (or national) (e.g. Palier and Thelen, 2010; Hassel, 2014). When the macro- (national and/or sectoral) and micro- (company and/or workplace) levels are brought together, the emphasis is often on the effects of national (and sectoral) institutional and regulatory configurations and their developments on social actors’ actions and strategies at the local (company and workplace) level. On the other hand, when micro dynamics are examined, they are frequently studied within the broader macro context of institutional change, and therefore understood as being driven by forms of regulation, rather than being considered as the outcome of their interaction with existing capitalist work and employment structures.

This leads to the risk of inflating the study of dualisation, with attempts made to explain distinctive national institutional legacies leading to patterns of labour market dualisation.
dualisation (Thelen, 2014) rather than to explore how these patterns are the result of transformations in employment practices and work arrangements within existing capitalist structures.

Hence, a systematic examination of how (shifts in) national institutional and regulatory settings and social actors (e.g. labour unions, workers’ and employers’ representatives) are nested in complex and dynamic macro- and micro-political economies is basically non-existent. In particular, it is often unclear how labour market and industrial (employment) relations and their associated institutional and regulatory conditions affect – and are affected by – political processes taking place at both macro and micro levels.

This is because actors’ actions and strategies are frequently examined at the macro-level, where they are often associated with policymaking processes as the outcome of broader political coalitions, with democratic parties supporting the global competitiveness of large companies in export-oriented (mainly manufacturing) sectors (Hassel, 2014; Thelen, 2012).

Yet, actors are active at different levels, including sectors, organisations and workplaces. Moreover, although macro-level regulatory settings are important variables for explaining dualisation, they are often treated as “static”, i.e. not fully reflecting institutional change through not capturing the micro-level variation of employment practices (Doellgast, 2008).

Within the comparative political economy tradition in employment studies, for example, Rueda (2007) included labour market institutions (e.g. trade union density, degrees of collective bargaining centralisation and coordination) as control variables in an attempt to capture part of this “micro” dimension.

Nevertheless, establishing a causal relationship between labour market institutions and social outcomes is becoming increasingly difficult. Weakening labour market and industrial relations structures, coupled with increasing variation in employer strategies at the organisational level, are enhancing complexity (see Doellgast, 2012; Pulignano et al., 2016). We thus call for a more nuanced understanding of organisational and workplace- (micro-) level forces and their interaction with macro-level institutional settings when studying labour market dualisation. Crouch (2005), for example, stressed the need for future research better and more consistently integrating workplace power relations in the analysis of existing institutional and regulatory structures. This can be done through in-depth company-level studies, as these help shed light on the processes and dynamics of distinctive social phenomena.

The present paper takes up this desideratum by arguing that dualisation is a contested political process, characterised by continuous tensions between key actors across (and within) different societal levels and structures. Therefore, dualisation reflects a distinctive configuration of mutually reinforcing power relationships between regulatory macro institutions and micro organisational and workplace dynamics. This is in line with early sociological debates emphasising the role played by “the processes by which structure and agency shape and re-shape one another over time”, and “to explain the variable outcomes at different times” (Archer, 1998, p. 203) resulting from the interaction between structure and agency.

We therefore propose a combined macro-micro and micro-macro (i.e. macro-micro-macro) analytical framework, helping us to investigate and explain divide-creating processes and mechanisms by systematically focusing on the dynamic interactions (or interconnections) between macro- and micro-settings and actors. These settings and actors are key characteristics of a dynamic social environment where power forces operate as the reflection of the contested social relationships between capital and labour at different levels. These dynamics are complex and could give rise to vacuous statements in which everything relates to everything else, thereby raise potential critiques on the key analytical steps concerning the “macro-micro-macro” analytical approach. In this respect, we draw from and extend a previously developed approach by Beynon et al. (2002), which emphasises the interrelationships between organisational/workplace (i.e. performance, culture and power relations) and institutional (regulatory) factors when examining employment change.
The extension we propose adds to the complexity of the aforementioned framework by emphasising the complementarity of the two levels (organisational/workplace and institutional/regulatory) when examining their social influences. When studying macro-micro-macro relationships, the starting point (macro-micro or micro-macro) depends on the specific research question; however, the two levels should be considered as interdependent and complementary, and change generated by this interaction should be seen as the reflection of the transformations occurring within existing capitalist structures. For example, a national government may enact new regulations regarding temporary work, which requires changes in policy concerning the use of such contracts within companies. Equally, workplace managers could work out strategies like outsourcing to overcome possible barriers stemming from national regulation as a response to change in external market conditions. In this light, the paper also discusses some epistemological implications for methodology, emphasising the usefulness of mixed-methods research combining qualitative and quantitative methods, data and techniques for analysis to capture macro-micro-macro relationships.

The paper starts by critically looking at current socio-economic and socio-political debates on dualisation. It goes on to explain the reasons for proposing a combined macro-micro and micro-macro (i.e. macro-micro-macro) approach by building on sociological theory on the micro-foundations of societal phenomena associated with dualisation. Before concluding, it provides some methodological reflections based on an analysis of the relationships between macro- and micro-levels.

**Dualisation and beyond**

In the 1970s and 1980s, the debate on labour market dualisation focused on the impact of individuals’ behaviours and social actors’ preferences on segmentation within companies. Accordingly, the differential treatment between a protected “core” (primary or internal labour market or insiders) and a less protected “peripheral” (secondary or external labour market or outsiders) workforce was considered as a function of a company’s economic, political and social resources (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Lindbeck and Snower, 1988). By attempting to go beyond the functionalistic view of early labour market segmentation studies, recent literature in the field of comparative political economy has added a “political” dimension to the existing socio-economic assumptions of the “insider-outsider” (or “core-periphery”) divide, focusing on macro-level socio-political and institutional contexts. According to these, dualisation results from structural regulatory and policy shifts, engineered by coalitions of trade unions and (social-democratic) governments (Davidsson and Emmenegger, 2013). Micro-level actors are expected to act in accordance with macro-level institutional logics (Emmenegger et al., 2012), and institutions are considered as strongly influencing individuals’ opportunities as well as shaping management and labour’s workplace strategies (Emmenegger, 2014). In addition, empirical studies within the aforementioned socio-political tradition have also used the growing numbers of outsiders (i.e. the unemployed and those in non-standard employment) and their limited movement into insider positions as evidence of dualisation (Bieger, 2014; Palier and Thelen, 2010). This approach reiterates the Varieties of Capitalism literature (Hall and Soskice, 2001) on institutional change in coordinated and liberal market economies, focusing on the politics of national-level coalition-building as leading to dualisation (Thelen, 2014). Accordingly, social policy reforms in the 2000s fostered a loss of national governments’ redistributive capacities in Europe, more pronounced in Southern and Continental than in liberal market economies (Gilbert, 2002). Furthermore, dismissal protection legislation, unions’ institutional involvement and labour market policies in coordinated and liberal market economies have either exacerbated or limited insider-outsider differences (Davidsson and Emmenegger, 2013). For instance, “two-tiered reforms” (Dolado et al., 2002) or “flexibility at the margin” politics (Palier and Thelen, 2010) in coordinated market
economies contributed to increasing dualisation, with unions focused on protecting insiders (manufacturing workers) at the expense of outsiders’ (service workers) wages, working conditions and job quality (Rueda, 2005, 2007; Hassel, 2014).

Recent contributions within comparative employment relations studies have enhanced the current dualisation debate by exploring management’s and labour’s strategies for understanding changing patterns of labour market divides. These studies focus on the political dynamics of institutional change, identifying the power resources that key actors (particularly trade unions) draw on in pursuing their interests. For example, Benassi et al. (2016) showed the importance of micro-level politics for the construction or erosion of solidaristic bargaining structures under liberalisation pressures, when studying the developments of sectoral collective bargaining in the telecommunications industry. Likewise, local-level practices are often used to highlight the growing range of union attempts to overcome the challenges posed by liberalisation, fragmentation and new forms of business organisation in global value chains (e.g. Holst, 2014; Frade and Darmon, 2005) as well to analyse the reasons for the failure of union efforts to overcome them (Doellgast et al., 2009). Overall, these studies stress that the actions and strategies of social actors (particularly trade unions) within companies and workplaces are relevant to understanding the extent to which and how dualisation occurs. Moreover, they illustrate that workplace power relationships are as important as macro-level institutional change for explaining social divides in labour markets.

However, it remains to be seen how the integration of macro- (institutional and regulatory) and micro- (companies and workplaces) settings and actors can be effectively accomplished. Beynon et al. (2002) addressed this concern when proposing moving towards an integrated (and dynamic) framework for understanding employment change processes: “In all economies and employment systems there is a dynamic between the organisation and the environment in which it operates. Employment has a macro-economic, social and organisational dynamic and the understanding of employment change has to address and interpret these different dynamics and their interrelationships. To treat them either as separate or as simply reflections of the same phenomena underplays the complexity of forces shaping employment change” (p. 26). Recent sociological literature has recalled this argument when dealing with labour market change, dualisation and employment precarity. For example, Peck and Theodore (2007) noticed that paying explicit attention to the political dynamics of dualisation at micro- and macro-level is incomplete. Gaps could remain, inhibiting our capacity to fully capture how change within capitalist societies occurs.

Hence, this paper is an attempt to move the discussion forward by repositioning early sociological concerns on the need to capture the dynamic macro- and micro-interactions (or interconnections) within the study of labour market dualisation. In particular, we claim that this requires systematically distinguishing – yet integrating – macro-micro and micro-macro relationships. We refer to this in the paper as a broader macro-micro and micro-macro (macro-micro-macro) approach. This approach is useful because it not only analytically differentiates between regulatory changes and changes in the organisation of production, but also – and more importantly – links the latter to changes in the organisation of work and employment. This requires examining how transformations in the organisation of production affect the organisation of work and employment, and how all of this, in turn, contributes to change in labour markets. Our combined macro-micro and micro-macro approach advocates placing labour strategies and bargaining (power) processes at the centre of the analysis of dualisation. This has an important analytical implication: labour market dualisation is understood as the result of dynamic power relationships within (and between) companies and workers. For example, as Bernhardt et al. (2016, p. 15) argued, the best way to analyse labour markets is to start at the company level, looking at how and why companies have reorganised their business and subsequently work arrangements. But this also requires
shedding light on the social mechanisms to understand the conditions (including marketization, financialisation and processes of economic and/or market integration at the macro-level) underpinning changes in work practices and company- and workplace-level arrangements to capture broader transformations of employment within contemporary labour markets.

**A combined macro-micro and micro-macro approach to studying dualisation**

The macro-micro and micro-macro approach can help elucidate key issues in existing dualisation and segmentation studies. For instance, we identify three main drawbacks this approach can help resolve.

First, this approach provides an alternative (compared to socio-political studies) going beyond the classical functionalistic view at the core of traditional labour market segmentation theories. As already mentioned, labour market segmentation theorists (e.g. Doeringer and Piore, 1971) focused on how the matching of technological and skill requirements of jobs led to labour market divisions. As Rubery (2006) pointed out, overcoming human capital supply-side (or productivity-related) explanations of labour market segmentation implies addressing the role of both organisations and workplaces and of societal (regulatory) systems in shaping employment outcomes[1]. As our macro-micro and micro-macro approach is based on the dynamic interactions between macro- and micro-levels, it offers a useful framework for studying dualisation and its social effects. Thus, dualisation is not considered as an “absolute” but rather as a “relational” concept, i.e. it relates to social actors’ actions and strategies within apparently distinctive – but analytically strongly interconnected – organisational, workplace and institutional (national and sectoral) contexts (Pulignano et al., 2017). The strength of a relational perspective on dualisation, gained through developing a macro-micro and micro-macro approach, is to bring into sharp relief the interconnections linking institutional, organisational and workplace settings with actors’ actions and strategies at different levels, thereby considering these settings as dynamic and complementary. Recent employment relations studies support this view, demonstrating the importance of focusing on cross-sector (or industry-level) variations when examining the effects of collective bargaining structures and relative outcomes (e.g. Bechter et al., 2012). These studies indicate growing variation resulting from increasing pressure on companies to innovatively organise production and work.

Second, and directly linked to the former, a combined macro-micro and micro-macro approach allows us to explore the extent to which social divides may occur between more than two social groups, thereby adding to the insider-outsider dichotomy in traditional dualisation and segmentation research. Exploring social actors’ actions and strategies, which are organised at different spatial scales (contexts) and/or levels in a continuum rather than at a single point in time, offers scope in this respect. Therefore, we expect social divides to be the result of cumulative and/or diversified social effects, produced at different levels and possibly reflecting differences between more than two social groups. This is in line with current theoretical debates claiming an increasingly fragmented, atomised and precarious reality of work in contemporary capitalism (Marchington et al., 2005; Fernández-Macías, 2012).

Third, existing dualisation studies often examine unidirectional (macro-micro or micro-macro) change processes. For example, Palier and Thelen (2010) showed how changing macro-industrial relations, policy and welfare conditions in manufacturing weaken industry-level unions’ bargaining power, causing them to accept workplace-level bargaining, in turn weakening their position in industry-level negotiations. Similarly, Boxall (2009) examined how the institutional environment influences union success in organising and representing the interests of precarious workers, the main sufferers of dualisation effects. On the other hand, however, case studies illustrate how metalworking unions can overcome employer “divide and rule” strategies at workplace level and re-build encompassing bargaining structures (e.g. Benassi and Dorigatti, 2015). These case studies also analyse the
reasons for the failure of union efforts to overcome divides, highlighting union difficulties in accessing local power resources (Holtgrewe and Doellgast, 2012). The combined macro-micro and micro-macro approach adds to such literature by demonstrating the need to shift from a mono- (or unidirectional i.e. macro-micro or micro-macro) to a “multi-scalar” or dynamic “multi-level” framework (Jordhus-Lier et al., 2015, p. 116), where different contextual settings mutually interact with diverse social actors’ actions and strategies. In other words, the macro-micro-macro approach underlines the need to study the dynamic and mutual interactions between distinctive institutional and regulatory (macro) and organisational and workplace (micro) contexts where actors develop and implement their actions and strategies. This is consistent with current employment (industrial) relations studies highlighting the need to systematically engage in investigating actors’ capacity to use available power resources rather than simply limiting themselves to addressing the existence of such resources. How actors are able to deploy these resources in a particular bargaining context (Fairbrother et al., 2013; Pulignano and Signoretti, 2016) is crucial, requiring us to assess the extent to which (and the conditions under which) macro-level regulatory and institutional settings matter, and whether (and how) the organisational level also contributes to enhancing (or hindering) labour’s capabilities (see also Kerkhofs et al., 2008). This implies advancing knowledge on within-country variation by linking actors’ actions and strategies at different levels. The aim is thus not only to investigate whether dualisation reflects political changes (or “the politics of change”, see Ermenegegger et al., 2012, p. 12), but also to explore the conditions under which actors (such as trade unions) can successfully counteract such changes (e.g. Holtgrewe and Doellgast, 2012). In other words, the main question is the extent to which actors’ actions and strategies regarding dualisation effectively depend on their “political” choices shaped solely by macro-level political dynamics and processes, or whether social conditions at the intersection of macro-micro and micro-macro levels exist, together shaping these choices. Our argument is that actors’ choices are framed within the social environment they operate in, and contribute to shaping. Therefore, understanding the conditions under which actors can contribute to change within the continuous interplay between organisational, workplace and institutional contexts requires uncovering the dynamic macro-micro and micro-macro intersections.

In sum, macro-level institutional and regulatory settings play a key role when examining micro-level organisational and workplace processes, to the extent that the former are grounded in the dynamic power relationships of the latter. These power relationships concur to shape actors’ actions and strategies, which are therefore far from being considered solely as “political” choices made by “rational” actors. As Bunge (1997) argued, any aggregation of micro-level actors’ actions and strategies within a specific social environment needs to be carefully understood instead of reducing it to simple macro-level occurrences. Thereby, an analytical architecture focused on systematising the examination of the dynamic interactions between macro and micro settings is pivotal for understanding the multi-level complexity when studying how dualisation is produced in labour markets. By understanding the social environments (i.e. institutional, regulatory, organisational and workplace settings) as not something dis-linked from actors’ actions and strategies at different levels, the macro-micro-macro approach offers a useful framework for capturing how actors’ actions and strategies lead to macro-level phenomena (Billiet and Meuleman, 2014).

Studying labour market dualisation through macro-micro and micro-macro interactions

We draw on Kalleberg’s (2000) claim that labour market institutional change is not only the irreversible, inevitable consequence of pure macro-economic and institutional forces alone, but also the outcome of changing power relationships at work. According to Kalleberg (2000), these relationships shape workplace arrangements, relating to employees’ and employers’ capacity to control tasks and negotiate the terms and conditions of employment.
(e.g. regulations covering wages, working time, and training for different groups of workers). On the one hand, understanding the macro-level dynamics driving micro-level outcomes is key to explaining trajectories of labour market change and their effects. On the other hand, these dynamics are the result of micro-level socio-political forces and conditions impacting equality.

Contemplating Polanyi’s emphasis on the embeddedness of market and production relations in local social, political and cultural contexts, earlier studies focused on within-institutional variation or “qualitative variegation” for understanding how national modes of capitalism evolve (Peck and Theodore, 2007). Importantly, they emphasised the changing balance-imbalance of power relationships as a key determinant in policymaking, in turn affecting distinctive “employment regimes” (Gallie, 2007), and shaping “good and bad” jobs (Kalleberg, 2011). Moreover, power relationships affect actors’ ability to exercise choices within the mosaic of possibilities for intervention, taking differing interests into account. The result is likely to be a “patchwork of various forms of regulation, whose contours reflect the outcome of contestation between a range of actors in which power resources are differently distributed” (Marginson, 2016, p. 1048).

However, macro-economic, micro-political and social dynamics are equally important when understanding employment change (Osterman, 1994). Therefore, what is required to assess the employment effects of the aforementioned change is an integrated and iterative analysis of macro- and micro-social environments (or contexts), forces and levels shaping it (Bosch et al., 2009; Beynon et al., 2002). This involves opening the dualisation “black-box” by studying the links or interactions between deregulation trends in labour markets and actors’ strategies and actions within companies and workplaces affecting the aforementioned changes. We thus need to pay particular attention to the dynamics underpinning the rise of dualisation, stemming from the interactions between macro- and micro-levels. We claim that these interactions lead to macro-(societal) level social divides based on macro-micro and micro-macro relationships. Based on these reflections, the question evolves how to operationally connect these levels. The paper proposes two temporally different but analytically interrelated steps.

First, the effects of (change in) regulatory settings (e.g. legal provisions, policy and/or collective agreements) as the result of “political processes” (Emmenegger et al., 2012) on micro-level actors’ actions and strategies need to be investigated (i.e. macro-micro interaction). Second, we need to explore how micro-level actors’ actions and strategies affect the aforementioned macro-level settings (i.e. “micro-macro” interaction) by looking at workplace- or organisational-level actors’ (agents’) capacity to influence and transform the social environment they operate in. This involves identifying the diverse range of factors and/or conditions underpinning distinctive actors’ actions and strategies within the social environment, including national regulatory settings and workplace and organisational configurations. This enables us to capture the transformations and evolutions grounded in actors’ actions and power relationships.

Framed within the social environment, these relationships are not solely the result of assumed “political” choices. Although actors’ actions and strategies are affected by macro-regulatory settings, they cannot be reduced solely thereto. Accordingly, we consider macro-(societal) level social divides as complex, interactive and dynamic macro-micro and micro-macro or “multi-level” phenomena (Oakes, 2009, p. 369). The proposed macro-micro-macro approach, thus, incorporates forms of social action and social choice capable of transforming the social environment and circumstances in which they are embedded. This is what Billiet (2013, p. 271) labeled the “micro-foundation of macro-level phenomena” within social science.

Hence, studying both macro-micro and micro-macro relationships enables us to go beyond establishing simple associations. Conversely, it entails exploring the social mechanisms that guide and shape dualisation (or macro-(societal) level social divides), while at the same time identifying the reasons and uncovering the processes through which
dualisation occurs. This is because macro-micro and micro-macro relationships address primarily agents’ actions in generating the structures they live in (Carter and New, 2004). Therefore, establishing these relationships allows us to move analytically and empirically towards a more dynamic understanding of the complex interactions between different levels at which societal change takes place, thereby assessing its effects in terms of macro-(societal) level social divides.

Coleman’s (1990) early contribution on understanding stability and change in social systems, combining principles of individual motivation and choice with a sociological conception of collective action, constituted a first attempt to identify macro-micro-macro causal connections. Yet, Archer and Tritter (2000) emphasised that these accounts of human motivation are a mockery of people’s capacity for agency. For example, Archer (2000, p. 77) argued that the notions of homo economicus and homo sociologicus “give us a passive actor who plays no part in morally shaping his own life”. In our attempt to capture the interplay of structural societal arrangements shaped by actors’ understanding and agency, and by granting adequate emergent properties and powers to both, we go beyond Coleman’s “methodological individualism”. In so doing, we do not consider social phenomena as the simple aggregation of distinctive individual behaviours. Instead, when conceptualising the micro-macro and macro-micro interactions we stress the importance to empirically study social phenomena as embedded in power relationships. Particularly, agents must be considered as capable of transforming their structural and cultural conditions, despite structures existing independently of them. This is because agents reflect upon the structural and cultural properties of the societal environment in which they live and operate and which condition their opportunities, but which they may also decide to transform collectively (Edwards et al., 2014).

Implications for research design and methodology

Within the contested political dynamics of capitalist economies, dualisation results from the interactions of macro- and micro-levels settings and actors’ actions and strategies. As the power relations within, and outcomes of, these interactions are not predetermined, they should be revealed through empirical enquiry (Coe and Ward, 2014; Jordhus-Lier et al., 2015).

Early work sociology proposed quantitative and qualitative research as the way to capture these social interactions. This implied combining statistical and intensive case study analysis and ethnographies (Lieberman, 2005; Burawoy, 1998). The motive underpinning this methodological choice is that quantitative analysis accounts for and explains a significant part of the variation in the phenomena of interest. However, it tells us little about what is going on at the level of the social processes and actions that underlie the interplay of the macro- and micro-level contexts and conditions (Breen and Goldthorpe, 1997). Qualitative analysis is therefore also needed to explore these processes and dynamics. This is particularly true in cross-national comparative research.

Mixed-methods designs combining quantitative and qualitative methods, data and analysis techniques have been used before, and there is a growing consensus about the advantages of such designs in sociological and political science literature, including authors associated with studies on dualisation (e.g. Rueda, 2007; Mahoney and Thelen, 2015). Nevertheless, the use of mixed-methods designs is not yet widespread and, even when used, they rarely embed national regulatory settings and their changes within the study of existing capitalist work and employment structures. This is what the combined macro-micro and micro-macro analytical framework proposes for future research on labour market dualisation.

Because of its focus on temporal sequences, comparative historical analysis (CHA) can be a useful tool in this respect. However, although CHA has been utilised at various levels of analysis, most frequently it has been applied to processes and outcomes in contextualised cross-national comparisons (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003). We share with CHA the view that sequences need to be examined, advocating the development of a sequential
mixed-methods approach using quantitative and qualitative methods, data and analysis techniques as a way to capture macro-micro and micro-macro relationships. The reason is twofold. First, combining various techniques enables researchers to look at the same research problem from different angles (Hurrell, 2014). Quantitative techniques may be especially suitable to study the extent to which macro-level institutional settings matter when explaining micro-level processes concurring to shape distinctive social outcomes, whereas qualitative techniques may be appropriate for exploring these processes. Second, conclusions drawn from combined qualitative and quantitative research are powerful due to the high quality of the resulting “meta-inferences” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 300). The richness of such meta-inferences stems from the combination of exploratory (qualitative) and confirmatory (quantitative) studies.

The following paragraphs sketch some advantages involved in studying social divides using a macro-micro-macro approach. As this is a conceptual paper, its aim is not to operationalise concepts, but rather to provide reflections and ideas on the practical use of the proposed macro-micro-macro approach. These reflections are illustrated with an example – i.e. the role of local unions regarding the use of temporary contracts at the workplace level – discussed on the basis of existing literature.

The sequence could begin with investigating the effects of policy, institutional and regulatory settings on the use of temporary contracts at the workplace level (i.e. macro-micro interaction). As mentioned above, existing studies on dualisation within comparative political economy (e.g. Rueda, 2007, 2014) suggest including union density and collective bargaining coverage rate as variables when examining the labour market (macro-level) regulation of employment contracts. Cross-national differences in the workplace use of temporary contracts could accordingly result from differences in union strength and bargaining structures across countries. In essence, large-scale European data sets could be analysed based on quantitative multi-level models using macro-level variables to explain a share of the variance in workplace (micro-level) data. Yet, such models remain limitative in discovering “what makes things happen in specific circumstances” (Sayer, 2000, p. 20). This is because they reveal a relation, but hardly explain why it occurs. Furthermore, the uncovered relation is only explained by the (macro) institutional variables selected to be integrated in the multi-level model. This creates two pitfalls. First, such models hardly capture the iterative feedback relationships between power and strategy (Turner, 2009). Marginson (2016) argued that there is significant sub-national variation in protective institutions, which would be neglected by the aforementioned models. Doellgast et al. (2018, forthcoming) argue in a similar vein, highlighting the need to trace the role of unions and employers in opposing or reproducing dualisation dynamics and identifying the challenges associated with restricting interest representation. Second, the aforementioned models consider the underlying political-economic conditions as given. Hence, studies solely using related techniques risk considering actors’ actions and strategies as rationally driven by “given” macro-level conditions, without engaging in critically discussing the extent to which and how changing societal settings (the “social environment”) can affect and are affected by them. On account of these reasons, the paper emphasises the importance of generating explanations for the investigated social phenomena by discerning “the qualitative nature of the phenomena and the intricacies of context” (Sayer, 2000, p. 20). Such explanations require adding qualitative data and methods to reveal different features of the same layered reality (Downward and Mearman, 2007, p. 16).

Recalling the earlier example, if high union density comes along with more or less temporary contracts, then a qualitative inquiry might explore the role of local actors (e.g. employer and employee representatives) and social processes (e.g. collective bargaining) concurring to shape this outcome, thereby providing an explanation for the uncovered relation. If a well-theorised macro-micro relationship cannot be proven by statistically significant results, qualitative inquiry could also target the question of
whether the relationship does (not) exist. Non-significance could also relate to problems of data quality (e.g. measurement and operationalization issues), leading to the assumption that qualitative research could be a means of capturing the theorised relationship. This is due to the difficulty of measuring micro-level actions and social processes as variables in large-scale comparative surveys, which are often used in quantitative multi-level studies.

The sequence, which strongly depends on the specific research question, could also be built the other way around, i.e. starting with an explorative qualitative study which is subsequently followed up by a confirmatory quantitative inquiry. Qualitative techniques are well-suited for investigating micro-macro relations, as in-depth case studies or ethnographic research can identify dynamic power relations between actors (at various levels) embedded in macro-structures. For example, Woolley (2009) illustrated how survey data are used in combination with qualitative case study and focus group data to identify processes underlying young people’s personal agency and particularly for exploring and understanding why people think as they do (see e.g. Morgan, 1988).

Overall, researchers should ensure clear links between the sequential (sub-) studies. The results of the initial (quantitative or qualitative) study create the basis for the subsequent study, so that both macro-micro and micro-macro relations are captured when investigating labour market dualisation.

Conclusion
Understanding macro-level regulatory influences resulting from legislation, policy and collective agreements on local actors’ actions and strategies as well as exploring the contested (micro-level) socio-political processes underlying these regulatory influences are essential for broadening our understanding of how labour market dualisation is produced. However, a key challenge remains in reverse terms, i.e. how to connect the two levels.

The present paper attempts to deal with this crucial issue, proposing that we go beyond unidirectional macro-micro or micro-macro links by analytically and empirically addressing the need to integrate micro-macro and macro-micro relationships. This implies uncovering the processes and mechanisms which contribute to creating the divides. The paper argues that the forces and factors concurring to produce divides need to be studied, contextualising them within the social environment – including different regulatory, organisational and workplace settings and actors – in which they are produced. Specifically, by emphasising the need to create dynamic interactions between the different levels and actors of enquiry, the paper conceives dualisation not as the product of unidirectional (i.e. macro-micro or micro-macro) forces, but of integrated and dynamic forces emanating from different actors operating at different levels (i.e. macro-micro and micro-macro). Therefore, the conceptual framework integrating macro-micro and micro-macro relationships is able to capture how divides occur as the result of the aforementioned dynamic interactions. This has two main implications for theory and future research: to propose a dynamic and interactive approach which aims to move beyond the early views of labour market segmentation; to empirically explore the extent to which divides may occur between more than two social groups, thereby adding to the insider-outsider debate in labour market dualisation research.

How to empirically connect the dynamic macro and micro contexts and actors remains a crucial aspect at the core of the macro-micro and micro-macro approach. The paper argues that quantitative aggregate-level data on the characteristics of social divides are useful for understanding the trajectories of institutional change shaping dualisation. However, such data have limitations in assessing how societal conditions are manipulated by the social actors (agents) at different levels of enquiry. Hence, we advocate using more sequential mixed-methods designs combining quantitative and qualitative data and methods, as such a research design can enable scholars to capture the dynamic interactions between different settings (contexts) and actors’ actions and strategies.
Currently, mixed-methods studies are rarely used in labour market research. On the one hand, this could relate to scholars’ preferences for epistemological disciplinary traditions. On the other hand, this could also be linked to the extensive resources needed to carry out a mixed-methods study. This may have implications for future research, possibly requiring social scientists to be more inclusive towards the use and combination of different data, methods and techniques for social enquiry. Moreover, it implies that European and national research (funding) policy should be more generous – and consequently less parsimonious – when distributing funds for social research.

Note
1. See also Osterman (1994), Grimshaw and Rubery (1998) and Beynon et al. (2002) from which we draw upon.

References


Further reading


About the authors

Valeria Pulignano is a Professor in Sociology of Labour and Industrial Relations and a Coordinator of the Center for Sociological Research (CeSO), KU Leuven, Belgium. She has published extensively on comparative employment and industrial relations and labour markets in Europe. Valeria Pulignano is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: valeria.pulignano@kuleuven.be

Nadja Doerflinger is a Postdoctoral Researcher in the Research Group “Employment Relations and Labour Markets” at the Centre for Sociological Research (CeSO), KU Leuven, Belgium. Her research especially focuses on contingent work, labour market segmentation and fragmentation, and flexibility and security in European labour markets.
Analysis of the impact of referral-based recruitment on job attitudes and turnover in temporary agency workers

Luis González
Department of Social Psychology and Anthropology, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain, and
Lorenzo Rivarés
EULEN Corporate University, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to analyse the referral-based recruitment process in temporary work agencies (TWA) and its influence on workers’ attitudes and turnover.

Design/methodology/approach – By means of a quasi-experimental design with equivalent groups and repeated measures, differences in attitudes -group commitment, task commitment, group satisfaction, general job satisfaction and job involvement- and turnover in a group of workers recruited by the TWA through the “bring a friend” procedure based on employee referrals and in another group comprising workers not recruited through employee referrals are studied.

Findings – The results obtained show that workers recruited through employee referrals by the TWA are characterized by having greater group commitment, task commitment, task satisfaction, general job satisfaction and turnover than employees not recruited through employee referrals. These differences are explained on the basis of expectations and the feeling of obligation generated in the recruitment process.

Research limitations/implications – The sample size is an element to take into account when valuing the obtained results. Moreover, the effects of the recruitment programs with employee referral on the TWA should be analyze on more qualified jobs. Furthermore, they should be also evaluated if the effects on the attitudes stay the same in longer periods.

Originality/value – This is the first paper to examine the impact of the employee-referral-based recruitment method known as “bring a friend” on attitudes – group commitment, task commitment, group satisfaction, general job satisfaction, and job involvement – and turnover of employees when used by TWA. Likewise, we want highlight the fact that this is a longitudinal research study.

Keywords Turnover, Temporary agency workers, Employee referrals, Group and task commitment, Job and group satisfaction, Job involvement

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The growth of emerging forms of non-traditional or contingent employment (Subramony, 2011), among which temporary agency workers can be found, has been a constant in the last few decades (González and Rivarés, 2013; Liu et al., 2010; Stanworth and Druker, 2006). In this regard, it is worth mentioning that, in 2015, temporary work agencies (TWA) (e.g. Adecco, Manpower, Randstad) employed 67.2 million people throughout the world (CIEFTT, 2016). Studying temporary agency workers is necessary not only because of their importance within the labor market, but also because most explanatory models of behavior in organizations have been raised from the standpoint of permanent workers (Connelly et al., 2011). This perspective has proved insufficient to explain the behavior of temporary agency workers, and, as stated by Wittmer and Martin (2011), it is necessary to conduct more thorough research to enable knowing which variables and processes influence the behavior of temporary agency workers and how they are affected by human resources management practices. The goal of this study is along these lines: to analyze the impact of
the employee-referral-based recruitment method in TWA and its influence on attitudes and turnover of workers.

The special circumstances of the TWA market make the response time required by their client companies very short. This time pressure implies that attracting and retaining workers stands at the core of their strategy to obtain and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage. Recruitment systems are one of the key elements of this strategy. Among the different recruitment methods, obtaining candidates through employee referrals is one of the most commonly used (Yu and Cable, 2012). The employee referral method is an informal person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding the company’s demand for a position available (Harrison-Walker, 2001).

One of the employee referral methods is the so-called “bring a friend.” In order to understand this recruitment method better, it is described in sequence below. First, TWA follows traditional recruitment procedures (e.g. web portals, people attending temporary agency to seek employment, databases). Second, candidates are subjected to different tests by the TWA (e.g. curriculum vitae assessment, professional tests, psychometric tests, interviews), and successful candidates that are considered suitable for the job will become worker-recruiters. Third, recruiting workers are asked the following question: “By any chance, have you got a friend who would be interested in this job?” TWA has no incentive to make referrals. Fourth, the recruiting worker recruits, among his/her friends those he/she deems fit to perform the job and the TWA apply the selection process needed to ensure that they match the professional profile required. Finally, the TWA hires the group of workers, comprised by the recruiting worker and the recruited workers, and supplies them temporarily to the client company.

The explanation of the effectiveness of employee-referral-based recruitment systems lies on two hypotheses. On the one hand, the one claiming that the origin of effectiveness is the effects of a previous realistic perception of the position and, on the other hand, the hypothesis based on the differential behavior of the method in terms of the characteristics of the workers recruited through it (Breaugh, 2012; Yu and Cable, 2012). According to the first hypothesis, candidates recruited through the referral an employee makes of the company would have a more accurate previous perception of the position and the organization. This explanatory hypothesis is not suitable in the “bring a friend” recruitment system in TWA, since the recruiting worker is unable to provide previous realistic information of the position and the organization, as he/she does not belong to and has not worked for the user company. Therefore, the explanation should be based on the second hypothesis, which argues that the recruitment process associated to this method would attract candidates with certain characteristics generated by the process.

The analysis of the “bring a friend” recruitment system in TWA should account both for the mechanisms the recruiting worker used to take the decision to make the referral of the position to a friend or relative, as well as for the processes that may determine the highest organizational performance of recruited workers. In this respect, the recruiting worker making a referral of a position reflects intrinsic motivation, where a self-confirmation process reinforcing the decision to work for the TWA and a process of involvement and helping other workers play a significant role (Bloemer, 2010; Shimar et al., 2004). Furthermore, the recruiting worker conducts a candidate screening process of potential candidates to whom he may make the referral, discarding workers whose performance he/she may have doubts about (Breaugh and Starke, 2000). That is to say, as stated by Fernandez et al. (2000), a reputation protection mechanism that entails positive screening process and expectations over the performance of recruited workers is involved. Additionally, intrinsic motivation in recruited workers is centered on what Castilla (2005) names a feeling of obligation. They will show a feeling of obligation toward the recruiting worker, as he/she gave them the job opportunity, and will be aware of the positive expectations that the recruiting worker has on their performance. If anything, this
explanation is grounded on the clear perception that, both the recruiting worker and the recruited worker have of their roles in the recruiting process and in the social group, which arises when the recruiting worker makes the referral and the recruited worker accepts it. This group comes as a new social network made up of the recruiting and the recruited workers, which extends from the social to the work-related environment. Therefore, we should envisage an initial hypothesis in this research job:

H1. Workers recruited through the “bring a friend” system in TWA perceive that the recruitment is based on performance expectations.

In the “bring a friend” recruitment process, role perceptions and workers’ expectations associated to the social group created, along with the feeling of obligation, will influence their work experience and will thus affect attitudes in the job they perform. Latham and Leddy (1987) found that employees who were referred had higher levels of job attitudes than employees who were unsolicited or responded to newspaper advertising. In this regard, one of the attitudes which are directly affected is organizational commitment. The study of organizational commitment of temporary agency workers must include a double perspective. On the one hand, from the triangular structure of labor relations where they are placed (Biggs and Swailes, 2006; Connelly and Gallagher, 2004), they are workers who formally belong to the TWA but who perform their job for a user company. In this context, the development of organizational commitment by the worker is limited by the restriction in permanence, and dissociated between the TWA and the user company (Connelly et al., 2007). On the other hand, in the specific case of workers recruited by the TWA through the “bring a friend” procedure, the fact that when the recruitment is conducted they still do not belong to the TWA formally should be taken into account. Therefore, the suitable perspective to analyze organizational commitment must be centered on the commitment foci (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Workers fully involved in the “bring a friend” recruitment process will develop a commitment focused on the group, based on the perceptions of their roles, on the expectations related to reputation protection mechanisms and on the feelings of obligation to the recruiter and recruited workers, respectively. This commitment is developed before joining the TWA and the user company, as the group is created when the recruiter takes the decision to make the referral. The adjustment between expectations and attitudes would start before joining the TWA and would focus on the work group. In this way, the group commitment of the workers recruited through the “bring a friend” procedure will be expressed in attitude changes in task commitment, group satisfaction and general job satisfaction (Aletraris, 2010; Wilkin, 2013). In this regard, Biggs and Swailes (2006) demonstrated that the agency worker relations, which in turn can influence organizational commitment, have a large influence on the level of job satisfaction. Therefore, we envisage the following hypotheses:

H2. The group of workers recruited through the “bring a friend” system will be characterized by stronger group commitment, task commitment, group satisfaction and general job satisfaction, than the group of workers recruited by TWA through their standard systems.

H3. The group of workers recruited through the “bring a friend” system will show more stability in group commitment, task commitment, group satisfaction and general job satisfaction, than the group of workers recruited by the TWA through its standard procedures.

Nevertheless, attitude changes in workers recruited through the “bring a friend” system by the TWA should not affect job involvement, as the latter reflects the degree of importance and identification that a person has toward his/her job (González and De Elena, 1999; Kanungo, 1982a). That is to say, job involvement is a cognitive status of identification with...
the job that expresses to which extent it is a key element in the life of the subject. Therefore, due to the nature of this identification, we envisage it will not be affected by the feeling of obligation and the expectations generated in the recruitment process through the “bring a friend” system. We envisage the following hypothesis:

H4. The group of workers recruited through the “bring a friend” system will be characterized by the same intensity and stability in job involvement, as the group of workers recruited through standard TWA procedures.

Finally, the results yielded by the meta-analysis conducted by Barrick and Zimmerman (2005) show that workers who were referred by current employees will be more likely to remain with their current employers. Furthermore, the impact of organizational commitment and job satisfaction on permanent workers’ turnover is known (Griffeth et al., 2000; Meyer et al., 2002). Similarly, job satisfaction has also been disclosed as a good predictor of non-permanent worker’s turnover (Wilkin, 2013). In this respect, we claim that the impact of the “bring a friend” recruitment process on commitment, both toward the group and the task and on job satisfaction, both toward the group and in general, will lead to lower turnover. The hypothesis is as follows:

H5. The group of workers recruited through the “bring a friend” system will have lower turnover than the group of workers recruited through the TWA standard systems.

Method

Samples

With the purpose of maximizing validity, the following conditions workers should comply with to become part of the sample were established:

1. the worker should perform the job as part of a group;
2. all companies should have two types of groups, the one consisting of workers recruited through the TWA’s standard procedures and the one created through the “bring a friend” system;
3. workers should have no prior experience with TWA or user companies, and the tasks that the workers of the work groups would perform should be identical;
4. no previous professional skills, or experience, were required for the performance of the tasks (e.g. mechanical assembly work, perfume packaging);
5. the companies the employees worked for had to be located in the same geographical area, sharing the same economic development and situation in the labor market;
6. all the workers of the sample had to be hired with the same hierarchical and functional category;
7. the duration of employment contracts should be between three to five months in all cases;
8. all workers had to begin and finish their job within the groups at the same point in time; and
9. workers were hired for a fixed term, this implying that once the hiring through the TWA finished, the client company was not obliged to hire temporary agency workers as part of their payroll.

To obtain the sample, more than 600 workers coming from 115 companies were assessed. The sample initially included 97 employees from the TWA, which performed their job for nine companies dealing in industrial production. The headcount of the companies ranged from 50 to 350 employees, with a number of workers supplied by the TWA in each of them ranging
from 15 to 50 employees. After starting the research two recruiting workers were dismissed by the client companies, which brought about a chain response of all the workers that had been recruited by them through the “bring a friend” system, three and four workers, respectively leaving the job by their own choice. Having lost the two groups recruited through the “bring a friend” system in these companies, it was necessary to also eliminate from the research the two respective groups of workers recruited through the TWA’s standard procedure to fulfill the second condition of the selection protocol. In brief, the sample finally comprised 76 workers, 31 out of which were recruited through the “bring a friend” recruitment procedure and 45 following the TWA’s standard procedure. From the 31 employees recruited through the “bring a friend” method, nine employees acted as recruiters.

The sample included mostly males, 86.4 vs 13.6 percent females. Gender distribution in the research groups was similar: 87.1-12.9 percent (male-female) in the research group recruited through the “bring a friend” procedure, and 85.7-14.3 percent in the group recruited through the TWA’s standard procedure, there being no statistical difference ($\chi^2_{(df)} = 0.03, p = 0.87$). Mean age of employees of the sample was 24.6 years, with 23.6 and 25.63 years of age in the research groups recruited through the “bring a friend” and TWA’s standard procedures, respectively. Finally, the educational/training level of workers of the sample was basic: most of them, 68.2 percent had primary education, 19.7 percent had vocational training and 10.6 percent had completed secondary education and only 1.5 percent had higher education. There are no significant statistical differences in educational/training level distribution according to research group ($\chi^2_{(df)} = 2.95, p = 0.40$).

**Procedure**

According to the protocol designed for the research, once the TWA received the request by a client company, compliance with the conditions workers had to fulfill to become part of the company was assessed. If the criteria were met and the client company accepted to get involved in the research, the process was started. The TWA selected the recruiting worker through its standard procedures and said recruiting worker was asked to recruit the recruited workers among his/her friends. The group of workers recruited through the “bring a friend” procedure (hereinafter R-BAF) included each recruiting worker and the workers he/she recruited. At the same time, the TWA recruited and selected through its standard procedures another group of workers that were unrelated to each other and who would become part of the group of workers recruited by the TWA (hereinafter R-TWA). Both workers of the R-BAF group and of the R-TWA group performed their job in the same user company.

Once the workers were selected, both of the R-BAF group and of the R-TWA group, a first attitude assessment was conducted, just after signing their employment contract and before start their job. One month after the job started in the user company, when the worker turned up at the TWA’s office to submit his/her first report of hours worked, the second assessment was conducted. Finally, when his/her contract ended, the third assessment was performed.

**Design**

The design used in the “bring a friend” recruitment process study at the TWAs has been a quasi-experimental design with equivalent groups and repeated measures. As depending variables, the following have been used: attitudes of the employee related to commitment -group commitment and task commitment-, job satisfaction -group satisfaction and general satisfaction-, and job involvement and, a variable related to the performance of the employee such as turnover.

**Analysis**

The analysis conducted is grouped into three categories. First, a study of the psychometric properties of the instruments used to assess independent variables was conducted.
The analysis of validity was performed through a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) on the structure of the questionnaires used to measure attitude in each of the three assessments using LISREL 8.8 (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1996). The robust unweighted least squares estimation method was used (Flora and Curran, 2004). As regards the assessment of the adjustment between sampling variance-covariance matrices and those generated from the hypothesized models on the factorial structure of the scales, the scaled $\chi^2_{S-B}$, RMSEA, TLI, and CFI indexes were used (Brown, 2006; Hu and Bentler, 1999). From the results obtained in the CFAs, reliability was calculated for each of the scale dimensions and through the composite reliability index (Raykov, 1997).

Once the characteristics of the instruments used were assessed, an analysis of the perception of workers belonging to the R-BAF research group as recruiting and as recruited workers was conducted. Since this group comprises two types of workers, recruiting and recruited through the “bring a friend” procedure, it was necessary to know whether they had a clear perception of them belonging to the two sub-classes. Furthermore, it was confirmed that there were no previous differences in attitudes among recruiting and recruited workers of the R-BAF research group as a condition to treat them as a group.

Finally, a series of repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted with a mixed factorial design or split-pot with a between-subject factor and another with a within-subject factor. The between-subject factor consists of two levels, corresponding to the procedures used to recruit R-BAF and R-TWA workers, and the within-subject factor consists of three levels, including the assessments performed.

Measures

The assessment of attitudes and of the worker's perception of his/her recruiting or recruited condition within the R-BAF research group was performed through a questionnaire including 28 items. To assess group commitment and task commitment, a scale comprising eight items was used, five out of which assessed group commitment and three assessed task commitment. The group commitment dimension was assessed through of the team-oriented commitment scale by Ellemers et al. (1998). Items of the task commitment dimension were specifically developed for the research, by analogy with proposals by Hollenbeck et al. (1989) and Schultheiss and Brunstein (1999) for the assessment of target commitment, and consisted in assertions related to task performance by workers. The worker had to assess each of the assertions using a Likert scale with a 1-7 range (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

General satisfaction and group satisfaction assessment was conducted through the general satisfaction scale and the group satisfaction subscale belonging to the specific satisfaction scale of the Job Diagnostic Survey questionnaire by Hackman and Oldham (1980). The general satisfaction scale is made up of five items that the employee assessed on a Likert-type scale with a 1-7 range (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). Group satisfaction was assessed through the three items on this aspect of the job. The worker had to express his/her degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction on a Likert scale with a 1-7 range (1 = Highly unsatisfied, 7 = Highly satisfied).

To assess job involvement, the job involvement questionnaire developed by Kanungo (1982b) was used. This questionnaire is made up of ten items which are assertions on which the worker must express degree of agreement through a Likert-type scale with a 1-7 range (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Finally, the perception of the recruiting or recruited condition within the R-BAF research group was assessed through two items. In the first, workers were asked to express their degree of agreement or disagreement with the following assertion: “I have been selected for this job because a friend from the work team, who believes I will perform it correctly, has ‘recommended’ me in the TWA.” To do this, a Likert-type scale with a 1-7 range (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) was used. The second item was a question on the
reasons why he/she had recommended the workers. The question was: “You have recommended a friend to the TWA so he/she is hired as part of this work team because.” The worker had to mark on a close-ended category scale the reason or reasons why he/she had recommended a worker in the TWA: “(a) I know he/she needs the job, (b) I believe he/she will perform it correctly, (c) We are friends, (d) I have heard good things about him/her, and (e) I have not recommended anyone for this job to the TWA.”

Results

First we will explain the results on validity and reliability of the scales used to assess the workers’ attitudes. Concerning commitment, the construct validity of a two oblique dimensional model comprising the factors corresponding to group commitment and task commitment has been estimated. As shown in Table I, the adjustment between the sampling variance-covariance matrix and the one generated from the hypothesized model is good in the three assessments. All goodness-of-fit indexes show much higher values than the cut-off points considered good-adjustment indicators (Brown, 2006; Hu and Bentler, 1999). As far as composite reliability is concerned, highly acceptable values are obtained ranging from 0.84 to 0.94, for the group commitment dimension, and from 0.74 to 0.86 for the task commitment dimension.

The results of the AFCs conducted to assess the validity of the scale used to measure group satisfaction and general satisfaction support the hypothesized model consisting of two oblique dimensions in the three assessments as shown in Table I. In this regard, two values are worth highlighting in the adjustment indexes of the AFCs conducted in the second and third assessment which show an excellent adjustment between the sampling data matrix and the one generated from the hypothesized model. Concerning composite reliability of job satisfaction subscales, they show rho index values ranging from 0.76 and 0.89 for general group satisfaction, and 0.85 and 0.90 for general satisfaction.

Finally, as far as validity of the job involvement scale is concerned, first the adjustment of a one-dimensional model including the ten items was assessed. Although the adjustment

<table>
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<th>TLI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
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Notes: $\chi^2_{S-B} =$ Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = comparative fit index; $\rho$ = $\rho$ index of composite reliability; $^a =$ group commitment; $^b =$ task commitment; $^c =$ group satisfaction; $^d =$ general satisfaction.
of the hypothesized model was acceptable in the three assessments, it was also concluded that the two items written from a negative point of view behaved differently; therefore, a second model was assessed without these items. As shown in Table I the results of the AFcs for this second model show an excellent adjustment in the three assessments. The composite reliability analysis offers results similar to the validity analysis with values in the $\rho$ index ranging from 0.89 to 0.94.

Once the validity and reliability of the scales used to measure the workers’ attitudes were analyzed, an index was calculated for each of the dimensions in the three assessments. These indexes were in all cases the average of the items of each dimension.

The logic of the research hypotheses lies on the role played by the perception the workers of the R-BAF group have as members of a group made up of workers with a recruiting or recruited role and its influence on attitudes and turnover. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of the perception of workers belonging to the research group R-BAF. In this respect, workers of the R-BAF research group with the recruiting role mostly answered, in 95.7 percent of the cases, that they totally agreed or agreed with the question; only one subject did not mark these options of the scale. Conversely, the nine recruiting workers of the R-BAF group have a clear perception of their role as recruiters as they all point out that they totally disagree with the assertion: “I have been selected for this job because a friend from the work team, who believes I will perform it correctly, has ‘recommended’ me in the TWA.” Furthermore, this difference in recruiting or recruited role perception is statistically significant ($U=4.00$, $p=0.00$).

The results obtained in the other question included in the questionnaire to analyze role perception in the “bring a friend” recruitment process, aimed at knowing the reasons why the recruiting worker recommends a workmate, confirmed the differential perception of the roles recruiting and recruited workers have. All recruited workers mark the option “I have not recommended anyone for this job in the TWA.” On the contrary, the recruiting workers of the R-BAF research group perceive their recruiting role with absolute clarity as all, 100 percent, leave the option “I have not recommended anyone for this job in the TWA” unmarked. That is to say, members of the R-BAF research group have an accurate perception of their role in the recruiting process, in one case as recruiters and in another case as recruited workers. The analysis of the rest of the response options of this question allows us to know the reasons the recruiting worker has to recruit. Among these are mainly the fact that he/she believes he/she will have a proper performance, in 100 percent of the cases, that he/she needs the job, in 87.5 percent of the cases, and that they are friends, in 57.1 percent of the cases.

Finally, and as both the recruiting and the recruited workers are part of the same research group, it is necessary to verify that there are no previous differences in the attitudes assessed as condition to be treated as a group. The results of the comparisons made through the Mann-Whitney U statistical index show that the groups do not differ in any of the attitudes in the first assessment: group commitment ($U=58.5$, $p=0.18$), task commitment ($U=76.5$, $p=0.60$), group satisfaction ($U=53.5$, $p=0.11$), general satisfaction ($U=65.0$, $p=0.30$) and job involvement ($U=86.5$, $p=0.95$). In brief, these results would confirm the first hypothesis rose concerning the perception of the role played by workers of the R-BAF group, either as recruiters or recruited workers.

Table II shows the results, mean values and standard deviation of workers’ attitudes, of the R-BAF and R-TWA research groups in the three assessments. As observed, R-BAF workers show higher commitment, both toward the group and the task, and more satisfaction, both toward the group and in general, than R-TWA group workers. This difference already exists in the first assessment, remains virtually equal in the second with a slight decrease, and increases in the last one being one point higher in group and task commitment.

The time evolution study of attitudes allows us to observe a different behavior in attitudes related to job commitment and satisfaction (see graphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Figure 1). As far as
commitment is concerned, both in group and task commitment, there is an equal intensity trend in the R-BAF group and a downward trend in the R-R-TWA group. Conversely, concerning satisfaction, the R-BAF group shows an upward trend both in group satisfaction and in general satisfaction, as compared to the R-R-TWA group, which is characterized by a significant increase in the second assessment to fall sharply in the third one. Finally, and concerning job involvement, the results obtained show that among the attitudes assessed it is the one with the lowest intensity in the two groups and in the three assessments and that is does not illustrate a consistent evolution pattern (see graph 5 of Figure 1).

In order to assess these differences a series of repeated measures ANOVA have been conducted on a mixed factorial design (2 × 3) including a between-subject factor, the recruiting procedure used, with two R-BAF and R-R-TWA levels, and a within-subject factor, made up of the three assessments. The results will be set out in groups according to the nature of depending variables, on the one hand, attitudes related to commitment and, on the other, to satisfaction, and finally to job involvement.

Concerning group commitment, the null hypothesis of equal means regarding the between-subject factor \(F(1) = 53.94, p = 0.00\) using a univariate approach is rejected, as Mauchly’s test confirms the sphericity of the variance-covariance matrix \(W_{CO} = 0.92, \chi^2 = 5.20, p = 0.07\). The level of group commitment depends on the recruitment type, being higher in workers of the R-BAF group. Likewise, the results of the within-subject factor \(F(2) = 3.65, p = 0.03\) emphasize that group commitment does not show the same intensity in the three assessments and that this evolution may be described by a linear function \(F(1) = 4.22, p = 0.04\). However, interaction of between- and within-subject factors is not significant. The study of the level of group commitment throughout the three assessments confirms higher stability in the R-BAF group than in the R-TWA group. As shown in Table III, there are no differences between any of the assessments in the R-BAF group, whereas in the R-TAW group there are differences between the first and the third one, and between the second and third, but not between the first and the second assessment.

With reference to task commitment, similar results are obtained. The value of Mauchly’s test \(W_{CO} = 0.87, \chi^2 = 8.98, p = 0.01\) shows that sphericity cannot be assumed and a multivariate approach must be used. The results obtained in the variance analysis regarding the between-subject factor do not support the null hypothesis \(F(1) = 32.11, p = 0.00\) and allow stating that the “bring a friend” type of recruitment is characterized by greater task commitment than the TWA’s standard recruitment system, there being no

<table>
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Table II. Attitudes of workers of R-BAF and R-TWA groups in the three assessments
interaction between assessments and type of recruitment. As far as the within-subject factor is concerned, multivariate statistical indexes (Wilks’s lambda = 0.17, $F_{(2)} = 6.28, p = 0.00$) lead to rejecting the null hypothesis of equal means and concluding that the level of task commitment is different in each of the assessments. Furthermore, it is proved that the evolution in task commitment level follows a linear function ($F_{(1)} = 11.24, p = 0.01$). A thorough study of this evolution throughout the three assessments allows confirming.
as hypothesized, greater stability in the group recruited through the "bring a friend" procedure as compared to the group recruited through the TWA’s standard procedures. Within the R-BAF group there are no statistical differences between assessments (see Table III). However, in the R-TWA group there are no differences between the first and the second assessment, but there are differences between the second and the third, and the first and the third assessment. Over time, task commitment in the R-BAF group remains stable, whereas in the R-TWA group it tends to decrease.

The results obtained in the repeated measures ANOVA with group satisfaction show an effect, both of the recruitment type factor and the assessment factor, but not of the interaction between them. Contrasting the null hypothesis under the assumptions of sphericity ($W_{(2)} = 0.91, \chi^2 = 5.56, p = 0.06$) and equal variance-covariance matrices ($M$ de Box = 11.48, $F_{(6)} = 1.81, p = 0.09$) shows that the level of group satisfaction is different depending on the type of recruitment of the worker ($F_{(1)} = 30.79, p = 0.00$) and on the moment of the assessment ($F_{(2)} = 3.13, p = 0.04$), rather than on the interaction between the type of recruitment and the moment of the assessment ($F_{(3)} = 2.73, p = 0.07$). Workers recruited through the "bring a friend" procedure are characterized by a higher level of group satisfaction in all the assessments than workers recruited through the TWA’s standard procedure. The in-depth study of the evolution of the group satisfaction level shows us two different patterns according to the type of research group (see Table III). Workers of the R-BAF group are characterized by stability in their level of group satisfaction, there being no difference among any of the three assessments. On the contrary, group satisfaction in the R-TWA condition is not stable, increasing at the beginning to then decrease down to initial levels, an evolution that adjusts to a quadratic function ($F_{(3)} = 14.91, p = 0.00$). These results confirm both the second and the third hypothesis concerning greater intensity and stability of group satisfaction in workers recruited through the “bring a friend” procedure, as compared to workers recruited by the TWA through its standard procedures.

The results obtained in the intensity analysis of general satisfaction are analogous to those of group satisfaction. In this case a univariate testing has been used as Mauchly’s test confirms the sphericity of the variance-covariance matrix ($W_{(2)} = 0.934, \chi^2 = 4.30, p = 0.12$) and the equal variance-covariance matrices of the factors ($M$ de Box = 10.66, $F_{(6)} = 1.68, p = 0.12$). The univariate $F$ statistical index allows rejecting the null hypothesis of equal means between the R-BAF and the R-TWA group ($F_{(1)} = 12.69, p = 0.00$). The group of workers recruited through the “bring a friend” procedure shows greater general job satisfaction than the group recruited by the TWA through its standard procedures. Likewise, the results obtained in the test concerning the effects of the within-subject factor leads to rejecting the null hypothesis of equal means in the three assessments ($F_{(2)} = 3.13, p = 0.04$). Therefore, it could be argued that the level of general job satisfaction is different in

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<th>2nd vs 3rd</th>
<th>1st vs 3rd</th>
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<td>−1.522</td>
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Notes: $t$ = student’s $t$-test; *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.  

Table III. Differences between assessments in attitudes of workers of R-BAF and R-TWA groups
the three assessments. It is important to highlight that the evolution of general satisfaction level is better described through a quadratic function than through a linear function ($F(1) = 4.70, p = 0.03$). A more thorough analysis brings out the fact that in the R-BAF group the level of general job satisfaction shows an upward trend over time (see Figure 1). Conversely, in the R-TWA group there are no statistically significant differences among any of the three assessments (see Table III). Finally, it should be pointed out that the results obtained do not show an interaction effect between the type of recruitment and the assessment factor ($F(2) = 1.77, p = 0.17$). The results confirm the second hypothesis that suggested higher general satisfaction in the group recruited through the “bring a friend” procedure but do not allow validating the third hypothesis concerning higher stability in attitudes in the R-BAF group. Conversely, the R-TWA group is the one that is characterized by stability in its level of general job satisfaction, whereas in the R-BAF group there is a constant upward trend that is mainly conveyed in early stages.

Out of all the attitudes assessed, job involvement is, as hypothesized, the one showing a pattern that differs from the rest (see Table II and Figure 1), which is confirmed with the results obtained in the variance analysis of repeated measures. As sphericity in the variance-covariance matrix ($W(2) = 0.88, \chi^2 = 8.09, p = 0.17$) and equal variance-covariance matrices of levels of the within-subject factor within each level of the between-subject factor (M de Box = 9.34, $F_{(6)} = 1.48, p = 0.18$) are assumed, univariate statistical indexes show that the probability associated to the $F$ statistical index referring to the between-subject factor ($F(2) = 0.21, p = 0.65$) leads to accepting the null hypothesis and stating that there are no differences in the level of job involvement between the R-BAF and R-TWA groups. Likewise, the null hypothesis of equal means among the three assessments cannot be rejected either, although the critical level of the statistical index is in the limit ($F(2) = 2.99, p = 0.05$) In summary, these results support the fourth hypothesis concerning the job involvement attitude: workers recruited through the “bring a friend” system do not show greater job involvement than workers recruited through TWA’s standard procedures and it is not more stable over time either.

Finally, an analysis of the voluntary turnover rate according to the type of recruitment was conducted. There was a turnover of 18 workers throughout the study, two of which belong to the R-BAF group and 16 belong to the R-TWA group. The chi-square statistical index points out that this difference is significant ($\chi^2 = 6.30, df = 1, p = 0.01$), and it could therefore be argued that the recruitment of workers through the “bring a friend” procedure generates a much lower turnover than the recruitment of temporary workers by the TWA through standard methods, and the fifth hypothesis of the study could be confirmed.

**Discussion and conclusions**

The goal of the present study has been to analyze the impact of the employee-referral-based recruitment method known as “bring a friend” on attitudes and turnover of employees when used by TWAs. The results obtained reveal the changes generated on attitudes such as group commitment, task commitment, group satisfaction and general satisfaction. Likewise, they show a strong impact on turnover, as workers recruited by the TWA with this method show lower turnover than workers recruited through standard procedures.

When a TWA launches a recruitment process using the “bring a friend” method based on employee referrals, it activates two simultaneous and interrelated processes. On the one hand, it aims the recruiting worker’s search at his/her social networks and, on the other hand, it prompts a screening mechanism on the part of the recruiting worker. Social networks make frequent social interaction easier and allow the recruiting worker to convey information and accurately identify the characteristics of the potential candidates on whom to make the referral (Beaman and Magruder, 2012). Simultaneously, the “bring a friend” recruitment procedure segments the social network and prompts in the recruiting worker a
screening process of the employees he/she perceives as having similar characteristics and behavior to himself/herself (Burks et al., 2013). As stated by Fernandez et al. (2000), this screening process might be due to a reputation protection mechanism on the part of the recruiting worker.

An essential element to explain changes in attitudes and turnover of workers recruited through the “bring a friend” method by the TWA is the creation of a social group, which is to become a work group when they are hired, made up of the recruiting and the recruited workers. This social group is created when the recruiting worker takes the decision to make the referral and the recruited worker accepts the referral, and entails the generation of certain expectations and the perception of obligations. In this regard, the results obtained point out that both the recruiting worker and the recruited workers have a clear perception of their role within the group. The recruiting worker generates and transmits the expectation on the workers that could be defined as follows: I have selected you because I believe you will perform the job correctly. It should also be added that recruited workers perceive the expectation of having been selected by the recruiting worker because he/she expects they have a good performance, which generates a feeling of obligation (Breaugh, 2012; Castilla, 2005).

The creation of this social group, with the attached expectations and obligations, is accountable for the changes in attitudes of the workers recruited through the “bring a friend” procedure by the TWA. In this regard, and as might be expected, the attitude that shows a bigger difference between the group of workers recruited through the “bring a friend” method and the group of workers recruited by the TWA through standard methods is group commitment. It is worth highlighting that this difference exists before starting the job, which can only be explained if, as hypothesized, it is related to the creation of the group at the time when the recruiting worker takes the decision to make the referral and the recruited workers are linked to the referral.

As stated before, the social group created in the recruitment process is characterized by the expectations and obligations associated with the role of each worker as recruiting and as recruited worker. These expectations are structured around the performance of the task, task commitment also being one of the attitudes which show a bigger difference as compared to the workers recruited by the TWA through other methods. Furthermore, there are differences that existed before commencing the job and which are explained according to the expectations over performance and feeling of obligation.

The explanation of the differences in group satisfaction must also be based on the dynamics related to the social group that is created in the recruitment process. In this respect, workers recruited through the “bring a friend” method are characterized by higher group satisfaction than workers recruited through the TWA’s standard methods. Moreover, this level of group satisfaction is stable over time and has previous differences. As this social group is created before commencing the job and will later become a work group within the user company, it is one of the facets of job satisfaction which is affected by the recruitment process. The “bring a friend” recruitment process carried out by the TWA allows adjusting the workers’ expectations according to the group and also directly linking the group to need satisfaction and, as a consequence, giving them more value. These two processes lead to a higher level of group satisfaction as expectations are accomplished and these expectations are valuable for the worker (Locke, 1976).

The explanation of the results in terms of general job satisfaction is more complex, as it is related to the whole work experience and not only to one facet. Workers recruited through the “bring a friend” procedure show greater general satisfaction than workers recruited by the TWA through standard means but it is not stable, tends to increase over time. The level of general satisfaction is due to the confirmation of expectations generated in the creation of the group during the recruitment process and to the influence of group and task commitment (Meyer et al., 2002).
As far as job involvement is concerned, the results obtained confirm the hypothesis stating that there would be no differences between the groups recruited through the “bring a friend” method and those recruited through the TWA’s standard procedures. These results indirectly support the processes involved in referral-based recruitment, as the nature of job involvement, related to the psychological identification with the job which reflects the importance the subject assigns to the job and whether he/she considers it a key element in his/her life, is not affected by the expectations and feeling of obligation associated with the process (González and De Elena, 1999; Kanungo, 1982a).

Finally, and as hypothesized, workers recruited through the “bring a friend” procedure show lower turnover than workers recruited through the TWA’s standard methods. These results supported previous findings (Barrick and Zimmerman, 2005) according to which the employee referral method is an important predictor of turnover among non-contingent workers. This lower turnover is rooted in changes generated in attitudes – group and task commitment, and group and general satisfaction (Griffeth et al., 2000; Meyer et al., 2002) – as a consequence of the expectations and feelings of obligation associated with referral-based recruitment (Breaugh, 2012; Castilla, 2005; Fernandez et al., 2000). The feelings of obligation generated by the process are so intense that if the recruiting worker leaves the company, as in the case of two recruiting workers that were dismissed during the research, the rest of the workers recruited by them also leave the company voluntarily.

Strengths, limitations and directions for future research
Some strengths of the present research should be noted. First, this research focuses on one kind of worker, the TWA employees, who eventually are getting more importance on the global labor market. As was noted, nowadays there are more than 67.2 million of workers who are hired by a temporary help-service agency. The penetration rate globally hovers around 1.6 percent, while some of the more established markets, including the USA (2.2 percent), Australia (3.7 percent), Japan (2 percent) and several European countries like UK (3.9 percent) or Germany (2.1 percent), have higher penetration rates (CIETT, 2016). Despite the importance of this type of employees, there are not several researches that analyze the TWA’s human resources management practices. In this respect, one of most used human resources management practices by TWA is the recruitment through employee referral programs. The researches about the effects of the employee recruitments via referral programs has been carried out with permanent employees and mainly from a sociologic perspective (e.g. Castilla, 2005; Fernandez and Weinberg, 1997; Fernandez et al., 2000; Yakubovich and Lup, 2006). Mostly these researches are descriptive and focused on the analysis of the differences between various methods of recruitment on outcomes as hiring probability, turnover or performance (Aamodt and Carr, 1988; Breaugh, 2013). In the present study, the referral employee recruitment in TWA is analyzed with a descriptive and explicative perspective integrating the models of the organizational commitment, the job satisfaction and turnover. Finally, we want highlight the fact that this is a longitudinal research study.

The current study presents some limitations, which need further attention. The sample size is, without a doubt, an element to take into account when valuing the obtained results. This is why, in further investigations, the results should be confirmed if they are obtained with larger sample size. Moreover, the effects of the recruitment programs with employee referral on the TWA should be analyze on more qualified jobs. Furthermore, they should be also evaluated if the effects on the attitudes stay the same in longer periods. As a final point, in future researches we should also analyze the negative effects of employee referral recruitment programs, related to social networks, that the process generate (Tassier and Menczer, 2008). These social networks are not integrated on the functional structure of the organization and they are characterized by a strong emotional component. On the negative effects that these types of social networks can generate we can find the discrimination on the
recruitment process, the reduction of the diversity of the workforce in the organization or the decreasing of the work performance (Fernandez et al., 2000).

The results of the research have direct effects on TWA’s human resources management practices. In this regard, we should highlight the importance of employee referral methods as a recruitment strategy that allows providing human capital to the TWA, acting on workers’ attitudes, such as group commitment or job satisfaction, and reducing turnover.

References


**About the authors**

Luis González is a Professor of Organizational Behavior and Human Resources Management at the University of Salamanca, Spain. He earned his PhD in Work and Organizational Psychology from the University of Salamanca, Spain. His research interests encompass human capital, psychological capital, employees’ attitudes in the workplace, and apply SEM methodology in the analysis of behavior in organizations. Luis González Fernández is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: lgf@usal.es

Lorenzo Rivarés is an International Human Resources Officer of the north zone of America and Portugal (USA, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Panama and Portugal) in the company EULEN Group. He earned his PhD in Organizational Psychology at the University of Salamanca, Spain. His research interests include management and processes involved in the behavior of human resources contingent employment.

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Executive compensation: influence and reciprocity effects

Frans Maloa
Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa College of Economic and Management Sciences, Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to understand the effects of influence and reciprocity as the elements in the determination of executive compensation.
Design/methodology/approach – A purposive sample was drawn, which comprised of 12 respondents chosen for their expertise relating to the determination of executive compensation in state-owned enterprises (SOEs). A semi-structured interview guide was used as the data-gathering instrument. A thematic analysis technique was used for data analysis.
Findings – The findings in this study identified three themes resorting under influence as crucial in the process of determining executive compensation, namely an executive’s social capital, intellectual capital and social comparison. Two major themes emerged under reciprocity, namely the pay-performance relationship and role complexity. Finally, the political-symbolic role emerged as the main theme that described the relationship between influence and reciprocity.
Practical implications – The findings provide a more detailed description of the process involved in determining executive compensation in SOEs.
Keywords Reciprocity, Influence, State-owned enterprises, Executive compensation, Socio-psychology

Introduction
Although research on executive compensation continues to proliferate and determinants of executive compensation have received substantial attention from both academics and regulators, there is still no interdisciplinary consensus on the primary forces shaping observable patterns of executive compensation (Baxamusa, 2012; Shaw and Zhang, 2010; Tosi et al., 2000; Van Essen et al., 2015). The lack of consensus is most visible between scholars in economics and finance, who advocate the primacy of market-based explanations and scholars outside these two disciplines, who have challenged these explanations and some of their underlying assumptions by highlighting the importance of the power of socio-psychological processes in the creation of compensation practices (DiPrete et al., 2010).

Prior to this research, there has been limited, if any, empirical study on the process involved in setting executive compensation. The limited focus has always been on accounting measures and traditional performance measures such as return on assets, return on equity or market performance (stock return) as criteria for determining executive compensation (De Wet, 2012; Li et al., 2013). However, research by Wu and Wu (2010) found that, except for the return on assets indicator, there is no obvious positive correlation between executive compensation and other indicators, such as asset convertibility, that represent cash performance and the stock yield representing the wealth of shareholders. In particular, the debate on executive compensation focuses primarily on how much executives are paid (Fleming and Schapp, 2012; Scholtz and Smit, 2012; Theunissen, 2010) and less on the process that determines executive pay. However, discourse on executive compensation needs to focus on socio-psychological processes in the determination of
executive compensation. According to DiPrete et al. (2010), a more conclusive understanding of executive pay would be achieved by considering executive pay as an outcome of a social process in which the actors involved have considerable discretion to influence the outcomes. Branch et al. (2011) capture the social mechanism of pay determination by stating that “the realities that some compensation outcomes are a result of a negotiation as opposed to a quoted market price must be considered” (p. 83). Similarly, Lorsch and Khurana (2010) contend that for senior executives, the compensation arrangements, in reality, depend heavily on negotiations between the executive, and usually his attorney, and the compensation committee and its advisers. These negotiations cover not only the amounts to be paid but also the form of compensation, as well as the performance metrics, if any, to which these are to be related (Lorsch and Khurana, 2010). Incorporating the social and psychological views attempts to provide a more comprehensive and conclusive explanation of the process of determining executive pay in theory and practice (Otten, 2007). In the same way, this study is designed to explore mechanisms of which the socio-psychological elements of influence and reciprocity are explored in the process of setting executive compensation.

**Influence**

A number of studies have demonstrated that executives can increase their pay beyond what is justified by economic determinants through exercising their influence (O’Reilly et al., 2014; Shin, 2013; Van Essen et al., 2015). Many of the empirical and theoretical propositions in contemporary treatments of influence relate variations in influence to other observable variables. For example, studies of the factors associated with leadership, the phenomenon of authority, the persuasion effects of different types of communication content, the formally defined power structure in an organisation and informal relations in a community all assert propositions in which “influence” is a major variable (March, 1957). Similarly, in the current study, influence is expressed in terms of the power an executive possesses. According to Cormier et al. (2016), one can argue that the formal analysis of power within organisations originates from Maximilian Weber’s work on bureaucracies. Weber observes that economic power is the predominant form of power for the modern capitalist and is derived from economic relations arising from control of the means of production (i.e. ownership). Such power is socially constructed and manifests itself in social organisations and networks (Cormier et al., 2016; Lukes, 1974; Stammers, 1999). As explained by Bebchuk and Fried (2003), managers wield substantial influence over their own pay arrangements, and they have an interest in reducing the saliency of the amount of their pay and the extent to which that pay is de-coupled from the managers’ performance. However, several theories could explain this phenomenon of influence with reference to executive compensation, namely the managerial power theory, the figurehead theory and the social comparison theory.

**Managerial power theory**

The managerial power theory argues that executive pay is an outcome of power relationships and that pay setters and receivers are able to use discretion in the pay-setting process (Ebert et al., 2008; Otten, 2007). Chen et al. (2011) identified two types of executive power, namely structural power and prestige power. Structural power, on the one hand, relates to formal positions within an organisation and increases as executives move up the hierarchy. The greater an executive’s structural power, the greater his/her control over colleagues’ actions to pursue self-interests, including obtaining more pay. On the other hand, prestige power relates to the role of outside directorships and education as key components of prestige, which could result in executives receiving more pay (Li et al., 2007). Prestige power also manifests as the executive’s positional and expert
power, which includes the manager’s ability to absorb uncertainty from the institutional environment (O’Reilly et al., 2014; Shin, 2013; Van Essen et al., 2015). Thus, executives can use such prestige power to influence and neutralise efforts designed to restrain their compensation (Van Essen et al., 2015; Westphal and Zajac, 1995).

**Figurehead theory**

The figurehead theory is another theory that would lead to similar predictions. According to this theory, an executive, especially the CEO, plays a political/symbolic figurehead role when communicating within and outside the organisation (Van Essen et al., 2015). Political connectedness, which is one form of “social capital”, consists of resources available through political social networks that a CEO can use to influence policy decisions that are in the interest of both the executive and the firm (Aslan and Grinstein, 2011).

Aslan and Grinstein (2011) found that political networks are positively related to levels of compensation and negatively associated with pay-performance sensitivity. In particular, the results of their study revealed that a political connection is associated with a 9 per cent increase in a CEO’s annual compensation and a 17 per cent decrease in his pay-performance sensitivity, hence the complexity of the symbolic political role as a token of the executive’s mandate and ability to manage reflects the level of executive pay.

**Social comparison theory**

To complement the managerial power theory and the figurehead theory, literature on executive compensation also relates to the social comparison theory. Social comparison literature focuses on determining which individual or groups are likely to serve as influence and reference when determining executive compensation (Boivie et al., 2015). Social comparison theory on executive compensation finds expression in the fundamental and pervasive psychological process of social influence.

Social influence, also referred to as social capital (O’Reilly and Main, 2010), refers to the resources available through social networks and elite institutional ties (such as club memberships) that an individual can use to enhance his or her position (Belliveau et al., 1996). Social capital can provide important cues – such as the credibility and attractiveness of an executive – that people may use in place of facts when the judgement task is ambiguous when deciding on compensation (O’Reilly and Main, 2010).

The social capital of executives influences pay through a process in which executives with greater social status or connections than comparison groups receive higher compensation (O’Reilly and Main, 2010). Therefore, it is likely that the social comparison process of anchoring executive pay based on readily available and relevant comparison groups will help to increase executive compensation, since individuals would rarely use social referents as justification to decrease their pay (Boivie et al., 2015).

Following the aforementioned, the current study, therefore, sought to determine the following research objective:

- To investigate the effects of influence in the determination of executive compensation.

**Reciprocity**

Another element that applies to the process of determining executive compensation is reciprocity. O’Reilly and Main (2010) extend the concept by stating that reciprocity is a fundamental norm in all societies and pervades both economic and social life. Norms are social expectations of how people ought to behave in a given social context (Bandura, 1991). As a norm, reciprocity dictates that “When one party benefits another, an obligation is generated” (Gouldner, 1960, p. 174). Reciprocity finds expression in the psychological contract an executive enters into with the employer that demonstrates their shared
expectations (how one should behave) and sanctions (what happens if one does or does not conform) (O’Reilly and Main, 2010). The current study, therefore, sought to determine the following research objective:

- To investigate the effects of reciprocity in the determination of executive compensation.

The relationship between influence and reciprocity as determinants of executive compensation

The relationship between influence and reciprocity in the determination of executive compensation is demonstrated by how an executive is rewarded for his/her political connectedness, which in turn benefits the organisation. Although Aslan and Grinstein (2011) found that political networks are positively related to levels of compensation and negatively associated with pay-performance sensitivity, supporting evidence is already available that the political social network connectedness of executives increases their compensation, and that connection-based pay is positively associated with future performance (Horton et al., 2012). Similarly, Li et al. (2007) contend that the positive association between executives’ political influence and the performance of the firm has also been shown empirically, suggesting that increased compensation arising from the executive’s political influence may be rooted in increased firm-level performance. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that executives are aware of the performance-enhancing benefits of their political influence, and in return, organisations may be willing to provide greater compensation because of the associated benefits. Politically connected executives may, therefore, demand higher compensation (Aslan and Grinstein, 2011).

The relationship between influence and reciprocity is further demonstrated by the nature of benefits an executive could derive. For example, one reason politically connected managers may be willing to accept less compensation is that they take into consideration the potential opportunities of being politically promoted (Aslan and Grinstein, 2011). Even unconnected managers may be willing to accept less compensation because working for the organisation may allow them to develop their own political connections. Based on the aforementioned, the current study, therefore, sought to determine the following research objective:

- To investigate the relationship between influence and reciprocity in the determination of the executive compensation process.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows: the first section describes a summary of the methodology followed and presentation of the findings. The paper concludes with a discussion of influence and reciprocity, and the relationship between the two constructs in the determination of executive compensation. What follows is a description of the methodology and research design adopted for the current study.

Methodology

Several scholars advocate different paradigms (worldviews) and philosophies that underpin knowledge production (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Habermas, 1972; Zikmund et al., 2013). Although there are differences in scholars’ advocacy of research philosophies that include among others interpretivism, realism and positivism (Saunders et al., 2012; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010; Srivastava and Rego, 2011), a common theme is that no knowledge is neutral, and all research is embedded in philosophical preferences. From an epistemological stance, this research adopted an interpretivist approach that advocates subjective views of the phenomenon under study.
Research design

A research design refers to the overall research plan. It is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002, p. 34). This plan stems from the objective of the study. The research design followed in the current study is discussed according to the sub-headings below.

Research strategy

A research strategy may be defined as a plan of how a researcher will go about answering a research question (Saunders et al., 2012). It is the methodological link between the research philosophy and subsequent choice of methods to collect and analyse data (Denzin and Lincoln, 1985/2000). The research strategy employed in this study consisted of a phenomenological study. The phenomenological study was employed as a means to understand the perception of key informants about executive compensation in the context of South African state-owned enterprises (SOEs). A researcher applying phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the people (Greene, 1997; Holloway, 1997; Kruger, 1988; Kvale, 1996; Maypole and Davies, 2001; Robinson and Reed, 1998) involved, or who were involved, with the issue being researched (Groenewald, 2004). According to Giorgi (as cited in Groenewald, 2004), the operative word in phenomenological research is “describe”. The aim of the researcher is, therefore, to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts.

Participants and setting

A purposive sample of SOEs was used for the study. In purposive sampling, the sample is chosen for a particular purpose (Leedy and Ormrod, 2013, p. 215). The researcher needs to use judgement to select cases that will best enable him/her to answer the research question(s) and to meet research objectives (Saunders et al., 2012). A key component of a purposive sampling is, therefore, the “depth” of data in order to gain deeper understanding rather than to generalise or to focus on the frequency (O’Reilly and Parker, 2013; Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002).

In order to clarify concerns about the sample size, Creswell (2007) suggests that a heterogeneous population would require between 25 and 30 interviews, while semi-structured/in-depth interviews require a minimum sample size of between five and 25 (Saunders et al., 2012). In this study, the sample was drawn from the directory of South African SOEs; which entails a population of more than 700 enterprises. However, only those SOEs that had been categorised under Schedule 2 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 1999 and fell under the large group business enterprises category were considered.

The Schedule 2 group of SOEs consists of 21 SOEs. The reason for selecting only Schedule 2 enterprises was that they were the only entities among all the South African SOEs that were large and competed directly with the private sector in particular.

However, of the 21 Schedule 2 SOEs, only 13 enterprises were interviewed. A single research participant represented each SOE at the interview. The sample size of 13 representatives from various SOEs sufficed for the study, since the sample was from a homogenous population (i.e. Schedule 2 SOEs).

Table I shows a list of the participants along with information on their position in their organisations.

Data collection

Data were collected using one-to-one semi-structured interviews (one hour in length) with representatives and experts in the field of executive compensation in South African SOEs. Semi-structured interviews were preferred, since they usually have an overarching topic,
general themes, targeted issues and specific questions, with a predetermined sequence for their occurrence (Lee, 1999). In addition, a conversational interview technique was used to collect data. The conversational interview technique was deemed suitable since its major characteristic is its openness. It also allows the researcher to address several issues of thematising, design, situation, criteria for evaluation and transcription as they relate to conversational interviews (Lee, 1999, p. 81).

**Procedure**

Participants were interviewed in a secured office away from their desks and free from interruption by a ringing phone or working colleagues. The researcher asked permission to use a tape recorder to capture a verbatim account of the interview for processing at a later stage. The participants consented to have interviews tape-recorded. However, the participants remained anonymous.

**Trustworthiness**

The issue of trustworthiness in a qualitative research is important to the practice of good science (Streubert and Carpenter, 1999, p. 61). Several writers on research methods have demonstrated how qualitative researchers can incorporate measures that deal with these issues in their own qualitative studies (Shenton, 2004). For this study, Guba’s model for qualitative research was used with the aim of ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings. The four criteria to ensure the trustworthiness of this research were credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1991; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002).

In addressing credibility, investigators attempt to demonstrate that a true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny is being presented (Shenton, 2004). In this study, to achieve credibility, the interviews were all tape-recorded and notes were transcribed with the assistance of a professional transcriptionist. The transcribed responses were checked against the tape recordings for consistency, in order to ensure the integrity of the research data (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Krefting, 1991; Schurink et al., 2011; Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). As a follow-up from the initial interviews, the researcher wrote analytic notes and held analytic meetings with other experts in qualitative analysis to capture the initial thinking and tentative ideas about the data. This was done to ensure that the views of the participants and the reconstruction of those views by the researcher coincided (Schurink et al., 2011). Transferability in this study was achieved by the researcher richly describing

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**Table I.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position in the organisation</th>
<th>Gender (Age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Company 1: Development finance (RP1)</td>
<td>Group executive HR</td>
<td>Female (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Company 2: Development finance (RP2)</td>
<td>Senior manager remuneration</td>
<td>Female (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Company 3: Development finance (RP3)</td>
<td>Senior manager reward and remuneration</td>
<td>Male (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Company 4: Aviation 1 (RP4)</td>
<td>Manager remuneration and benefits</td>
<td>Female (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Company 5: Freight and logistics (RP5)</td>
<td>Divisional executive manager HR</td>
<td>Male (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Company 6: Energy (RP6)</td>
<td>Manager HR</td>
<td>Female (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Company 7: Telecommunications (RP7)</td>
<td>Manager HR</td>
<td>Female (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Company 8: Communications (RP8)</td>
<td>Manager remuneration</td>
<td>Male (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Company 9: Aviation (RP9)</td>
<td>Senior manager</td>
<td>Female (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Company 10: Aviation (RP10)</td>
<td>Human resource manager</td>
<td>Male (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Company 11: Communications (RP11)</td>
<td>Manager remuneration</td>
<td>Male (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Company 12: Energy (RP12)</td>
<td>Remuneration and rewards manager</td>
<td>Female (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Company 13: Defence (RP13)</td>
<td>Human resources manager</td>
<td>Female (48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: RP, research participant*
the data and providing exact definitions of constructs as determined by the literature reviewed and cross-validation with experts in executive compensation. To achieve dependability, the researcher entered the interviews with a predetermined interview schedule containing specific questions with the intention to pursue emergent topics and to probe more deeply than the initially planned questions (Lee, 1999, p. 62). Subsequently, the researcher documented the research process in a logical and well-structured manner for ease of coherence and understanding (Schurink et al., 2011). Finally, regarding conformability, bracketing was used throughout the data collection process so that the researcher could suspend any preconceived notions or personal experiences that would unduly influence what he “heard” the participants saying (Saunders et al., 2012).

Data analysis
Thematic analysis was adopted as a method to analyse data. As described by Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It is for its contextualist strength that thematic analysis was chosen for the current research. The mode of thematic analysis followed for this study was the meaning condensation technique. As the name suggests, meaning condensation involves data reduction, while simultaneously articulating the key emerging themes from transcripts containing interview data (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Yin, 1994).

Meaning condensation as adopted in this study involved five basic steps. First, the author read the entire transcript of the interviews. Second, portions of the text that were judged to relate to an identifiable theme were identified. Subsequently, the natural meaning units were clearly defined and arranged into themes with sub-themes based on the actual responses of the participants, using a software package (Atlas.ti).

Findings
Findings were condensed under the two variables investigated, namely influence and reciprocity. Under influence, three themes emerged, namely social capital, intellectual capital and social comparison. Two main themes emerged under reciprocity, namely the pay-performance relationship and role complexity. Lastly, the political-symbolic role of the executive emerged as the theme that described the relationship between influence and reciprocity. The findings are presented next.

Influence
*Social capital as an influence in the determination of executive compensation*
Table II indicates the broad theme and the sub-theme, including examples of original responses that were analysed.

The main theme that emerged from the interviews was the executives’ social capital as an influence in executive compensation. Social capital was described as the executives’ relationships and network with key government stakeholders. The executives’ influence was expressed as the ability to command respect among their peers and the international community at large. Thus, social capital was perceived as the executives’ ability to network and engage with critical stakeholders for the success of the organisation and in turn, be rewarded accordingly. Similarly, the importance of the stakeholder relationship was extended to relate to the executives’ ability to subscribe to the regulatory bodies that govern SOEs.

Overall, the responses of the participants indicated that executive compensation is determined by the executives’ ability to engage with various stakeholders who are critical to the delivery of the organisations’ strategic intent that would, in turn, influence the level of executives’ compensation. Thus, the executive is able to influence his or her level of compensation through social networking.
Table II.
Social capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Social capital as influence    | Executives’ relationships and stakeholder engagement | “[…] being able to engage a stakeholder is critical because this is about relationships and making sure that you leverage into the customer […]” (RP2)  
“[…] So you have to manage stakeholders that are very critical to the economy of the country to grow. And that becomes a big determinant of the level of compensation,” (RP9)  
“[…] this is somebody who is able to leverage relationships, this is somebody who is a strategist, somebody who is international savvy in the sense that he can talk to investors from China that are coming to help us build work for locomotives for one of our operating divisions […]” (RP7) |

Note: RP, research participant

Table III indicates the broad theme and the sub-theme, including examples of original responses that were analysed.

Research participants were of the opinion that executives with advanced institutional knowledge of the organisation were at an advantage in negotiating better pay and increases than executives who had joined the organisation later. They believed that knowledge acquired over time on the functioning of an SOE and the environmental legislation that governed such entities gave an executive an edge to negotiate for better compensation, compared to other executives who might be lacking such institutional knowledge. In addition, research participants contended that as part of institutional knowledge, the educational background together with acquired experience facilitated understanding of the socio-economic factors that put an executive at an advantage to “manage effectively and in turn be rewarded accordingly”.

Overall, it is apparent from the responses of the participants that an executive is able, to some extent, to influence his or her level of compensation using institutional knowledge. Such knowledge is acquired over time on the functioning of an SOE and the environmental legislation that governs the entities. Executives use acquired institutional knowledge to negotiate for better compensation, compared to that of other executives who may be lacking such knowledge.

Table III.
Intellectual capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Intellectual capital as influence | Leverage on institutional knowledge             | “[…] somebody that has a big picture view of the company” (RP8)  
“[…] there is a lot of institutional knowledge which we need somebody to leverage on and to be able to deliver” (RP4)  
“[…] we look at the experience […] what the incumbent has done previously […]” (RP9)  
“[…] as a state-owned enterprise you need to be aware of the environmental legislation, you need to be aware of PFMA, Treasury regulations” (RP3)  
“[…] there is a lot of socio-economic factors at play. It has to be somebody that understands our labour union environment because a strike could have a catastrophic impact on the economy” (RP11)  
“It is purely based on the knowledge and on what you could offer as an incumbent […]” (RP6) |

Intellectual capital as an influence in the determination of executive compensation

Table II.
Social capital

Table III.
Intellectual capital

Executive compensation
Social comparison as an influence in the determination of executive compensation

Table IV indicates the broad theme and the sub-theme, including examples of original responses that were analysed.

The theme that emerged in the interview was the role of comparison as a key determinant in setting executive compensation. Research participants contended that SOEs deliberated on which peer groups to consider when setting executive compensation relevant to a specific executive. However, arriving at the level of a suitable compensation package was in most cases informed by the job function of the executive compared to other executive positions within and beyond the SOE. Research participants mentioned that the setting of executive compensation involved the remuneration committee that was tasked with making sure that the proposed packages were competitive enough to attract and retain an executive.

Research participants highlighted the fact that it was important to identify the correct market or industry in order to make comparisons and to benchmark executive compensation accordingly. However, research respondents mentioned that the competitive market according to which executive compensation could be set was not clearly defined for ease of reference and comparison. Overall, the nature of the market or typical industry that SOEs used to set executive compensation was important. In order to identify the correct benchmark, SOEs employed the services of external consultants to assist them. Consultants are used to interpreting the trends and to come up with estimates of executive compensation. This would seem to mean that the type of industry would be more influential in the determination of the level of executive compensation.

Reciprocity
Pay-performance relationship

Table V indicates the broad theme and the sub-theme, including examples of original responses that were analysed.

Research participants perceived remuneration as being determined by performance measures that are aligned to the strategic intent and business plans of the organisation. The strategy details key performance indicators and focuses the effort and attention of individuals on the strategic deliverables for long-term sustainability, as well as on short-term business plan deliverables for profitability, both of which are imperative to shareholder value creation. Thus, an executive will be compensated for delivering results according to the performance targets of the organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social comparison</td>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
<td>“[…] I probably can be able to easily find an executive of human capital than find a CFO” (RP8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>“[…] In our organisation branding is important, thus the communication executive would be considered to be very important, maybe more than a finance person […]” (RP4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>“[…] When you talk resource management, the CFO will have more responsibilities to manage financial resources compared to the human resources executive” (RP10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“[…] the corporate services executive, which is responsible for more than what a human capital executive does outside our organisation? So they are in charge of the human capital, in charge of marketing, in charge of IT and facilities. So we look at what’s the content of their jobs, and what is the influence to the organisation as a whole […]” (RP9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.
Social comparison
Overall, executive compensation is perceived as performance-driven and depends on its affordability for the organisation. Market conditions, which determine the supply of and demand for executive skills, also play a role in the determination of executive compensation.

**Role complexity**

Table VI indicates the broad theme and the sub-themes, including examples of original responses that were analysed.

Respondents viewed the complexity of the role as influential in the determination of executive pay. The complexity of the role of an executive was viewed in terms of its impact not only on the organisation in relation to other executive positions but also in terms of its contribution to the economy of the country. According to the research participants, the executive’s role and mandate are intended for social and economic advancement.

In addition, the research participants emphasised the impact of the role as the main differentiator in the level of executive compensation, but also extended the impact element to include the dynamics of size and complexity of the organisation as influential in the determination of executive compensation.

Overall, the complexity of the role as an influence on the level of compensation involves the executives’ ability to manage size not only in terms of the number of employees but also in terms of the complexity and ability to generate and manage large amounts of revenue. In turn, the challenge and difficulty of the position in generating the necessary revenue are reflected in the level of compensation due to the executive.
Relationship between influence and reciprocity

*Political-symbolic role*

Table VII indicates the broad theme and the sub-theme, including examples of original responses that were analysed.

The relationship between influence and reciprocity finds expression in the complexity of the political role played by the executive. Research participants highlighted the importance of the political mandate that executives should carry in order to fulfil the developmental mandate of the SOEs. The critical stakeholder is the government represented by the minister, who indirectly influences the level of executive compensation. Executive compensation is expected to be in alignment with the expectations of the minister and members of the public.

The overall finding is that executives are compensated for the political role they play to the benefit of the SOEs in meeting their obligation in terms of the developmental mandate. Moreover, it is important that executive compensation does not exceed the expectations of members of the public and does not spark unnecessary debates about social inequality.

Discussion and conclusion

The findings support the role of the two main elements under study, namely influence and reciprocity, in the determination of executive compensation. Influence has been described in terms of the social capital, intellectual capital and comparability of an executive in relation to compensation. Reciprocity has been described by the pay-performance relationship and the complexity of the executive role, while the relationship between influence and reciprocity has been described by the political-symbolic role of the executives in the determination of executive compensation.

Influence

Based on the findings, one of the themes that emerged under the heading of influence is that executive compensation is influenced by the social capital of the executive. Social capital has been described as consisting of the social networks established by the executive. The social networks and stakeholder engagement are mostly political in nature. Thus, the executive is recognised and rewarded for his or her political networks and leadership role demonstrated in translating the vision of the SOE to be adopted by employees and accepted by the broader stakeholders who include the main shareholders (the government) and the third parties (communities) they serve.

The findings of the study seem to align with the previous literature. For example, Aslan and Grinstein (2011) found that political networks are positively related to the levels of compensation. That is, the more the executive is able to establish a network with most of the critical decision makers, especially those with political influence, the easier it becomes for the executive to carry out his or her mandate and thus deliver the required performance.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political-symbolic role</td>
<td>Political mandate</td>
<td>“The Minister has always intended to set parameters for SOEs for a long time. So when we give him our final recommendations for salaries for noting, he does come back with comments and say listen beware of the media, and if you going to give high bonuses you must understand its implications to the public” (RP8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“[…] we run the risk of offending the Minister should we dare to compete with the private sector by paying huge salaries. Taking that risk will invite unnecessary press attention. And the media also becomes a challenge” (RP2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VII. Political-symbolic role
With an increase in the level of performance comes compensation commensurate with the level of influence exerted by the executive.

The findings of the study also indicated that executives with advanced institutional knowledge of the organisation were at an advantage in negotiating for better pay and increases. Institutional knowledge finds expression in the intellectual capital of the executive. As explained by the research respondents, part of institutional knowledge consists of experience acquired over time on the functioning of an SOE and the ability to apply this and comply with the environmental legislation that governs such entities. Based on the findings, it would also appear that intellectual capital is not considered in isolation, but to the extent to which it contributes to the ability of the executive to establish the necessary social and political networks and to contribute to the developmental mandate of the organisation. Overall, institutional knowledge was perceived as the edge used by the executive to negotiate for better pay.

The findings of the study seem to corroborate previous studies. For example, Greve et al. (2010) contend that the more knowledgeable and experienced the executive is, the better the compensation. Similarly, figurehead theory considers an executive's political connectedness and social networks in general as the most important social capital that can be used to influence policy decisions that are in the interests of the organisation.

The findings of the interviews also highlighted comparison of executives as another influential element in the determination of executive compensation. Research participants mentioned that a number of referent and comparable peer groups were considered when SOEs set executive compensation. The findings of the current study seem to concur with those of previous studies. For example, social comparison theory focuses on determining which individuals or groups are likely to serve as referents when making comparisons (Graffin et al., 2008; Wade et al., 2006). As a result, executives with greater social status or connections than comparison groups would receive more favourable compensation (Belliveau et al., 1996; Westphal and Zajac, 1995). However, the findings of the current study revealed that the minister as a representative of the government and as a stakeholder had a direct influence on executive compensation. All SOEs had to check with the minister, especially when the package seemed to be higher than expected.

Reciprocity

Based on the findings, executive compensation is seen as resulting from a relationship between the achievement of performance targets aligned to the strategic intent and business plans of the SOE by the executive. The research respondents asserted that the strategic objectives focus on strategic deliverables for long-term sustainability, as well as on short-term business plan deliverables for profitability, both of which are imperative to shareholder value creation. In turn, the executive would be compensated for reaching the set performance targets. Thus, the determination of executive compensation is reciprocal in that the remuneration philosophy for the executive is designed to align remuneration with long-term shareholder growth and sustainable profitability of the SOE.

Further, it seems from the participants’ responses that executive compensation results from deliberations based on the mutual exchange that involves more than just the interaction between the executive and the organisation. The interactive process takes into consideration the complexity of the role of the executive and the extent of the collective engagement according to which the SOE would establish parity in executive compensation. These findings of the study again seem to align with previous studies. For example, according to Farid et al. (2011), executive compensation does not flow from the predictions of narrow self-interest. As captured by Rhee (2014), executive compensation is no longer purely a matter of private contracting. In other words, executives’ selfishness does not determine executive compensation.
The relationship between influence and reciprocity in the determination of executive compensation

The relationship between influence and reciprocity in the determination of executive compensation finds expression in the setting of executive compensation as a symbiotic exercise. Symbiosis in this context involves the incorporation of influence that facilitates the negotiation of expectations between an executive and the organisation, as well as an element of reciprocity, which defines the agreed amount of compensation to be given to the executive for the achievement of the predetermined set of performance targets. Thus, the makeup of the pay mix depends on the complexity of the political role of the executive that serves the best interest of the organisation, which in this context, is the ability of the SOE to meet its developmental mandate to society. The findings on the relationship between influence and reciprocity seem to align with previous studies. For example, according to Aslan and Grinstein (2011), Horton et al. (2012) and Li et al. (2007), influence and reciprocal exchange produce beneficial effects for both the individual executive and the organisation.

Overall implications of influence and reciprocity as the determinants of executive compensation

The findings of this study, unlike those of previous economic and financial studies, have demonstrated that executive compensation is a product of endogenous and exogenous factors. Endogenous factors include an important individual attribute such as the executive’s influence. The executive is recognised and rewarded for his or her leadership role demonstrated in translating the vision of the SOE to be adopted by employees. Exogenous factors entail the accepted predetermined performance standards between the executive and the broader stakeholders who include the main shareholders (the government) and expectations from the third parties (communities) they serve.

As an endogenous factor, the determination of the executive compensation process finds expression in the managerial power theory and the figurehead theory that illustrate how the individual executive uses his/her influence and political social networks to achieve the organisational objectives required to determine compensation. As an exogenous factor, the determination of executive compensation finds expression in the social comparison theory, which demonstrates how executive compensation entails consideration of the executive’s counterparts, to arrive at the final compensation package.

However, the findings of this study have demonstrated how executive compensation not only depends on the power of the executive as referred to by the managerial power theory, but also takes into consideration the executive’s role in meeting expectations from the organisation as articulated by the social mandate. The social mandate dictates the psychological contract, which determines the performance expectations required between the executive and other critical stakeholders. Above all, the social mandate serves as a criterion used to determine the compensation level of an executive.

In addition, the findings of the current study have demonstrated that executive compensation is contextual and reciprocal in nature. That is, the determination of executive compensation involves not only the strength of the social networks and political connectedness as alluded to by the figurehead theory, but also compliance with expectations from the critical stakeholders such as the minister as the representative of the government and the members of the public.

Overall, this study has demonstrated how socio-psychology is able to surpass the economic and accounting disciplines. For example, the socio-psychological approach provides a more detailed description of the nature and application of executive compensation from a process perspective than the economic and financial sciences do. The economic and financial sciences are limited in that they emphasise economic or agency
perspectives focusing on how executive pay varies with performance while ignoring the manner in which executive compensation is decided.

The findings of this study contribute to the advancement of compensation theory and research by introducing an alternative perspective by which compensation in SOEs can be analysed. The findings of this study centre on the sociological conception of the process in the determination of executive compensation. This theoretical analysis stresses the abstract specificity of the process and the employment relationship between the executive, his/her organisation and the external environment in the determination of executive compensation.

In particular, the findings of this study have demonstrated how the process of determining compensation is characterised by a significant departure from conventional management practices that emphasise economic and accounting factors. The findings of this study provide new insight into the conceptualisation of the process and the possible relationships of the constructs (influence and reciprocity) as the determinants of executive compensation.

The findings also contribute to the field of personnel psychology. As a sub-discipline of industrial and organisational psychology, personnel psychology is concerned with the scientific study of individual differences in work settings, and includes activities such as employee reward and remuneration, employee performance evaluation, attracting and retaining scarce and critical talent and encouraging adherence to employment-related legislation, among others (Schreuder and Coetzee, 2010). As a contribution to the field of personnel psychology, the findings of this research serve as a baseline study towards understanding the development and implementation practices on compensation.

In addition, the practical implications of the findings of this study seem to place more emphasis on the determination of executive compensation as a collective process. That is, the determination of executive compensation is not merely the result of a selfish demand by the executive, but of a mutual agreement with all the other stakeholders involved in the process. A more conclusive understanding of the process of setting executive compensation is therefore seen as a socially constructed process that takes into consideration the effects of influence and the reciprocal nature of the relationships of all stakeholders in arriving at the level of executive pay.

However, the challenge that arises from the current study is how to measure executive influence and its impact on executive compensation in a manner that is standard across all SOEs. There is also a need for further study on how to measure the level of reciprocal interaction as a determinant of executive compensation.

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Further reading


About the author
Frans Maloa is an Associate Professor in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology at the University of South Africa. He is responsible for both undergraduate and postgraduate tuitions. Before joining academia, Frans spent many years in the corporate environment having worked for a blue chip organisation in banking as a Human Resources Manager, a state-owned enterprise as a Senior Manager Remuneration and Organisational Development and as a Human Capital Consultant for three of the Big Four Consulting firms. In his capacity as a Consultant, Frans facilitated and advised management on the development and implementation of a reward and remuneration strategy including job evaluations/job grading, salary benchmark, performance management systems and organisational development for organisations in both the public and private sectors. As an academic, Frans has published in numerous international and local journals and presented at international conferences. Frans possesses five degrees which include a Bachelor’s Degree, an Honours Degree and two Masters’ Degrees, one in Business Leadership (MBL) another in Industrial and Organisational Psychology (MA), and a Doctoral Degree (PhD). He is registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as an Industrial Psychologist. He is also a Panel Member of the higher degrees committee of all South African Universities for the South African Board of People Practice (SABPP). Frans Maloa can be contacted at: maloaf@unisa.ac.za

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Temporary agency workers stepping into a permanent position: social skills matter

Nathalie Galais and Klaus Moser
Organizational and Social Psychology, University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, Nürnberg, Germany

Abstract

Purpose – Temporary agency work (TAW) has increased enormously in recent decades. Most temporary agency workers are pushed involuntarily into this work arrangement and prefer permanent work arrangements. Therefore, the motive to find a permanent job through TAW is predominant for the majority of temporary agency workers. However, little is known about what helps in obtaining a permanent job in a client organization. The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of social skills by simultaneously considering the human capital aspects and motivational background of the individuals for transition success.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper is based on a questionnaire study of 151 temporary agency workers with two measurement points. The questionnaires were first administered at the very beginning of their work as a temp and again five months later.

Findings – The findings show that the social skills of temporary agency workers in contrast to various aspects of human capital and motives for temping had a significant impact on becoming a permanent worker in a client organization.

Research limitations/implications – The generalizability of the finding that social skills help temporary agency workers to find a permanent job in a client organization may be restricted due to the particularities of the work setting in the clerical sector. The incidences as well as the determinants of transition success may depend on the industry sector because of the respective assignment characteristics as well as the clients' reasons of using temporary agency workers. Future research should investigate more thoroughly the role of assignment characteristics for the experiences of the workers.

Practical implications – Social skills seem to play a crucial role for transition success in TAW. Qualification measures should therefore include the training of interpersonal behavior. It would be desirable when the involved organizations would assume responsibility in this respect. Furthermore, policy makers should provide adequate training formats since they promote TAW as a stepping stone opportunity for unemployed people.

Originality/value – This paper suggests that career mobility in the context of flexible work arrangements may be driven by more informal processes of social integration into the existing permanent team. While TAW is seen as a temporary solution in Germany, this study focuses on the individual determinants of transition success of temporary agency workers that is still rare in studies on the topic.

Keywords – Social skills, Temporary agency workers, Contingent work, Motives for temping, Stepping stone, Transition success

Paper type – Research paper
Actually, workers mostly choose TAW because they have no job alternatives and simply prefer TAW to unemployment (Aronsson et al., 2002; Kvasnicka, 2009). Generally, the attractiveness of TAW is rather low because of the relatively poor working conditions, including low earnings, lack of health insurance or pension benefits, and high job insecurity (Erickcek and Houseman, 1997; Kalleberg et al., 2000; Nienhüser and Matiaske, 2006) and the restricted provision of formal training (Finegold et al., 2005; Nienhüser and Matiaske, 2006). Furthermore, the motivational background of the workers interacts with the perception of job quality that is lower for those who involuntarily exercise non-standard work (Kauhanen and Nätti, 2015).

Most client organizations just want to temporarily compensate for personnel shortages or increased cyclical staff requirements (Houseman, 2001; Jahn and Bentzen, 2012), and therefore they take advantage of the non-committed use of contingent workers (Alewell and Hauff, 2011; Davis-Blake and Uzzi, 1993; Kalleberg and Rognes, 2000; Pedulla, 2013; Pfefler and Baron, 1988). However, from the perspective of individuals, TAW can become a stepping stone into standard employment relationships. It means that either temping might improve one’s position in the job market, in general, by signaling that the temping individual prefers to work as a temp rather than continue to be unemployed, for example, or that temping itself helps individuals to get a job offer in client organizations. In fact, TAW can serve as a screening tool for client organizations (Druker and Stanworth, 2004; CIETT, 2011; Jahn and Rosholm, 2010); that is, the transition from an external temporary agency worker into an in-house employee can be the result of a screening process of the client organization. However, transition can also occur unintentionally as a side effect. This may happen when an unforeseen vacancy of a permanent position arises that seems to fit the temporary worker, or when a worker becomes more valuable for the client organization, resulting in a decision to permanently retain the worker by offering an in-house position.

The size of the stepping stone effect of TAW has been intensively debated in the economic literature during the last decade, but the empirical findings are still inconclusive. For Germany, there are differing estimations of transition rates, while representatives of the employment agency business proclaim that more than a third of temporary workers experience a transition into a client organization (Öchsner, 2011), the economic literature more cautiously estimates a transition rate of 13 percent (Lehmer and Ziegler, 2010). Note also that in this literature there is no clear differentiation between a transition into an in-house position in a client organization and a transition into a standard work arrangement found in the free labor market. Regardless of the much disputed transition rate, there seems to exist at least some evidence for a small stepping stone effect in several European countries for individuals who were unemployed before temping (e.g. Antoni and Jahn, 2009; Korpi and Levin, 2000; Lehmer and Ziegler, 2010). The question arises as to how to explain differences in transition success. Unfortunately, the literature is quite scarce, though human capital and motives seem to be candidates.

**Human capital**

From a human capital theory perspective (Becker, 1975), educational level should explain transition into a permanent job. More attractive jobs should be offered to those with more human capital. However, though human capital is related to career success in the context of standard employment (King et al., 2005), non-standard careers have rarely been investigated, with one exception: for unskilled workers, the transition rate into permanent employment is particularly low (Autor and Houseman, 2010).

Bauer et al. (2012) argue that especially the TAW sector depend on “high-quality workforce” to remain competitive (p. 868). But human capital might not play an obvious role in the context of TAW, i.e. the more, the better in terms of career path. Rather, it is plausible that the selection...
process may be fostered by an optimal fit between the job requirements of the client organization and the worker’s own human capital profile. This is why the present study will also include specific aspects of human capital, e.g. individual’s experience level with the assigned task. Agencies have a genuine interest in “delivering” workers who meet the expectancies of the client organizations because, otherwise, the client would be unsatisfied and send the workers back anyway if they do not fit well. This may be the reason why workers’ competencies and job demands are relatively high in TAW, and workers are more often considered to be over- instead of under-qualified for the assigned jobs (Galais et al., 2007). This is why the concerns came up that periods of TAW may lead to the de-qualification of the workers (Brose et al., 1990). Empirical research concerning competence development has shown that informal learning gains (e.g. learning how to come along with new work-settings, personal flexibility) were pronounced, whereas formal qualification stays very much in the background (Galais et al., 2007). Furthermore, transition processes in the context of TAW may be defined by the constraints imposed by the organizational strategies for the use of temp workers. The perceived as well as the objective permeability between a temporary agency job and a permanent position in a client organization may therefore vary with regard to the organizational needs as well as individuals’ characteristics (de Gilder, 2014; Sende and Galais, 2014). Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the statement of King et al. (2005) that “human capital literature has little to say about contingent employment” (p. 985) seems to be an appropriate summary.

Individual motives
Several studies have analyzed individual motives for working in a TAW organization. In fact, in research on temporary workers, motives for temping are one of the central constructs that have been investigated, and the differentiation between involuntary (lack of alternatives, unemployment, finding a permanent position) and voluntary motives for temping (variety, flexibility, learning, and skill development) is particularly well established (CIETT, 2007; Feldman et al., 1995; George et al., 2010).

Besides this common distinction, a more comprehensive approach that is based on the self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) differentiates between controlled vs autonomous motivations on the background of a motivational continuum extending from intrinsic to extrinsic motivations and allows for differentiating four different types of extrinsic motivations that vary in their level of autonomous nature (Lopes and Chambel, 2014). This framework takes a dynamic perspective of motivations that includes the idea of changes and modifications during the experience of temporary agency work as well as motivation profiles that display a coexistence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Sobral et al., 2016). There is strong evidence that motives with a more autonomous character contribute to an increased work engagement, while, contrary to the expectations, motivations had no effects on burnout (Lopes and Chambel, 2016).

Furthermore, motives have a moderating role for the relationship between the perception of organizational fairness and work-related outcomes. Indeed, it has been shown that workers with a strong stepping stone motive display fewer negative responses in the face of perceived unfairness with regard to performance, satisfaction, and intention to quit (De Jong and Schalk, 2010). In the context of the present study, the question arises whether motives predict transition success. There seem to be two approaches that can explain why motives and transition success should be related. First, the lack of a motive to use temporary work as a stepping stone might lead to no interest in – or even the rejection of – job offers from client organizations. Note that though research has emphasized the dominance of the stepping stone motive (Kvasnicka, 2009), at least a minority of temporary workers may have other reasons for working in this specific employment relationship (e.g. CIETT, 2011). For example, some might even prefer to remain as temporary workers because they seek variety or independence. In fact, whereas involuntary temps mostly seek a permanent
position in the client organization, voluntary temps may turn down a job offer by the client because they appreciate TAW (see findings in the context of in-house temporary workers by De Cuyper and De Witte, 2008).

Second, strength of motive to use temporary work as a stepping stone might be related to job performance and consequently increase the probability of a job offer by the client organization. Although neither the direct effects of motives on perceived performance (De Jong and Schalk, 2010) nor on general job performance (Ellingson et al., 1998) have been found, it might be useful to distinguish between task performance and extra-role behaviors. In fact, workers who consider TAW as a means to find a permanent job reported the highest levels of extra-role behaviors aimed toward the client organization (George et al., 2010).

Moreover, motives are related to loyalty and organizational commitment, which are both related to extra-role behaviors (Riketta, 2002). For example, workers who prefer to become permanent workers have more socioemotional relationships to the client organization than do voluntary temps (Chambel and Castanheira, 2007) and involuntary temps seem to be more committed to the client, especially when they seek a permanent position within the organization (De Jong et al., 2009). In sum, though both human capital and individual motives could be related to transition success, evidence is either indirect or modest at best.

The goal of the present study is therefore to introduce an alternative individual determinant that promotes the transition of temporary agency workers into an in-house position within the client organization under the consideration of human capital aspects as well as the motivational background of the workers. We focus on social skills and argue that temporary workers are exposed to high expectations to adapt to the client organization and its employees.

In the following section, we show that the work setting of temps is particularly challenging with respect to interpersonal behavior and social integration should be crucial for the transition success into an in-house position.

**Working conditions in TAW**

Mastering changing organizational environments is a major feature of TAW. With every new assignment, temps are confronted with a new workplace, new tasks, new coworkers and supervisors, and different organizational cultures in the client organizations. Temporary agency workers are external workers who help out for a limited period of time and can be easily replaced if they do not perform adequately in the eyes of the client (Koene and van Riemsdijk, 2005). Moreover, temporary agency workers may be seen as a threat to internal workers who may fear being replaced (Kraimer et al., 2005; Pedulla, 2013). Research on the social integration of temporary agency workers has even found that hostility and stigmatization (Boyce et al., 2007) as well as the exclusion from internal communication flows can happen (Viitala and Kantola, 2016). To be a temporary employee, therefore, means having an awareness of substitutability and a readiness to adapt (Garsten, 1999).

Because formal integration offers from the client organization’s side are rare (Benzinger, 2016; Koene and van Riemsdijk, 2005; Von Hippel et al., 1997), temps fall back on themselves to orient themselves within the client organization, to find support from the core workers in the client organization and to obtain information about organizational routines and standards of appropriate task fulfillment (Galais et al., 2007).

Furthermore, perceived support from supervisors and core workers in the client organization is related to an increased perception of insider status of temporary agency workers (Lapalme et al., 2009). However, in contrast to in-house newcomers, temporary agency workers are seen as external workers who are excluded from onboarding offers (Bezinger, 2016) and they cannot per se count on the goodwill of the core colleagues. As temporary workers have little opportunity to determine where they work, it is more
probable that they have to adjust themselves to the particular work role. In TAW, individual determinants related to interpersonal adaptation may therefore be important for successful adaptation even more so than is the case for internal newcomers (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011). We follow the reasoning of George et al. (2010) that the contact to the core workers is crucial for the temporary workers’ social wealth. We continue this argumentation by proposing that the social integration of the temporary workers increases the probability of getting a permanent job in the client organization and that social skills play a key role here.

Transition into a permanent job and social skills
Temporary agency workers in Germany in general feel socially excluded and less affiliated to society than permanent or in-house temporaries (Gundert and Hohendanner, 2014). This finding may correspond to the feeling of having an outsider role in the client organization (Garsten, 1999; Kirkpatrick and Hoque, 2006). According to the social exchange theory, social status and power determine the tangible and intangible resources that can be exchanged and initiate reciprocity processes (Blau, 1964). Due to the low social status of temporary agency workers in the client organizations, their contribution to social exchange may be limited. In fact, temporary workers may especially depend on positive day-to-day interactions with the core colleagues in order to increase their social capital (Viitala and Kantola, 2016) and foster their integration into the organization (Svensson and Wovén, 2010).

In contrast to the case of in-house newcomers where proactivity has been found to contribute to job search success and organizational socialization outcomes (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011), it is questionable as to whether proactivity is relevant for individuals whose position in the organization is rather weak and who are “only” requested to accomplish the assigned task (Kalleberg and Rognes, 2000). In fact, proactive individuals “[…] actively incite change in their environments” (Thomas et al., 2010, p. 276), which may not be expected of temporary workers. The findings of Viitala and Kantola (2016), in fact, found that temporary agency workers were only expected to fulfill their concrete tasks and that the clients were not interested in using the further knowledge of the workers.

This is why we assume that in the restricted work setting of TAW, gaining acceptance and support by the core workers through social adaptation is crucial for temporary agency workers. Findings in the context of TAW accordingly revealed that the relationship quality between temporary agency workers and core workers affected the attitudes and the organizational commitment of both groups (Biggs and Swailes, 2006).

With regard to social adaptability an adequate measure might be self-monitoring (Gangestad and Snyder, 2000). In fact, there exists one study that has analyzed the relationship between self-monitoring and transition success – workers attending a temp-to-permanent program (Bauer and Truxillo, 2000) – though the results were inconclusive. First, self-monitoring had no effect on transition success in the total sample, though it was predictive in a small group of workers who were tested for a longer period because the hiring company was uncertain about their suitability. Second, the generalizability of these results is severely limited due to the particular group of temporary workers belonging to a special temp-to-permanent program. Temp to perm programs differ from common TAW because the transition to a client organization is not merely a side effect, but rather the main goal of the program.

The usual work arrangement of TAW is characterized by a considerable ambiguity for temps who seek a permanent position in a client organization. Though they are in no explicit assessment and selection situation, they often expect that the temp job itself is one; that is, a situation they hope will lead to a job offer. In other words, their behaviors might become relevant for a future personnel selection decision. In fact, if we consider this setting as a low-structured assessment situation with only less reliable cues for the decision makers, social skills more so than inconsistency will contribute to positive evaluations.
(Moser and Galais, 2007). In such a setting, social skills but not ingratiation and conformity (i.e. chameleon-like behaviors) contribute to others’ perception of social integration, and hence will persuade them to offer a permanent job. In sum, we expect positive effects of social skills on the transition success for temporary agency workers. Our assumption is based on the idea that, without the acceptance of the core workers, temporary agency workers will have little chance of integrating into the organization. This assumption will be tested by taking into account the effects of differences in human capital as well as differences in individual motives for temping. This leads to the central hypothesis of this paper:

\[ H1. \text{ Social skills predict an increase of transition success.} \]

**Method**

**Organizational context**

The working conditions for temporary agency workers in Europe are less precarious than in North America due to legal regulations. Nevertheless, in Germany, temporary agency workers are often worse off than standard workers with respect to payment (Kvasnicka, 2009; Nienhüser and Matisaske, 2006), job security (Antoni and Jahn, 2009), and the provision of formal training (Galais et al., 2007). Although the contracts in TAW in Germany are mostly on an unlimited and full-time basis, the actual time that workers pursue TAW is limited to less than half a year, on average, and turnover is very high.

**Data collection and procedure**

The present study is based on the two measurement points of a longitudinal study on TAW (see Galais and Moser, 2009). Data were collected during the first eight weeks of workers’ employment in a temporary staffing agency (T1) and five months later (T2). These measurement points were chosen because a high percentage of workers leave TAW after six months (Bureau of Labor, Germany, 2008) and transition to another workplace, or a change of occupational status has presumably occurred at that time. At T1, we collected data on sociodemographic variables, human capital, the importance of TAW as a stepping stone, and on individuals’ social skills.

We aimed to limit the heterogeneity with regard to the assigned jobs and therefore only recruited clerical temporary agency workers, including clerical assistants, secretaries and receptionists. Workers were employed by different agencies and were assigned to a wide range of client organizations. We requested temporary staffing agencies to distribute our questionnaires to the temps that they had recruited recently and who were assigned to clerical jobs. To avoid the overrepresentation of a particular agency, the maximum number of questionnaires was restricted to 20 per agency. Participants were employed by 29 different agencies, primarily from the Southern region of Germany. The number of participants who were employed by the same agency ranged from 1 to 19 (\( M = 8.67, SD = 5.25 \)).

The recipients were instructed to complete their surveys and return them directly to the authors in pre-stamped return envelopes. The surveys were anonymous and included instructions to create an idiosyncratic identification code to match the respondents’ surveys over time. In order to directly contact participants at T2, and to ensure confidentiality, pre-stamped postcards were enclosed that requested participants to fill in their addresses and to send them separately from the questionnaires back to the authors. In order to increase the response rate and to reduce dropout, participants received €25 at T1 and €10 at T2. The overall response rate was 75 percent, which can be considered as high compared to similar studies (e.g. Bauer and Truxillo, 2000, reported a longitudinal dropout of 48 percent during three months). Nonrespondents at T2 did not differ with regard to age (\( t = 0.25, n = 151, \text{ns} \)), gender (\( \chi^2 = 0.18, n = 151, \text{ns} \)), experience with assignment task (\( t = 1.45, n = 151, \text{ns} \)), and education (\( t = -0.74, n = 151, \text{ns} \)) at T1.
Participants

A total of 151 (109 females) temporary workers participated at T1, and 110 at T2 (81 females). The proportion of female and male workers in our sample corresponds to the general distribution of gender in the clerical sector in Germany (Bureau of Labor, Germany, 2008). The average age of the respondents (T1) was 30.76 (SD = 9.67). The analyses on transition success will be based on 85 participants who were either still working as temporary agency workers at T2 or had found an in-house position in a client organization.

Measures

Social skills (T1). We used the social skills subscale of the true-false version of the self-monitoring scale (Gangestad and Snyder, 2000; Nowack and Kammer, 1987). A sample item is “At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going” (reversed coded). The social skills scale had an internal consistency of 0.72 (M = 1.46, SD = 0.26), which is comparable to other research (Moser and Galais, 2007). We chose this measure because it captures general social skills and social versatility in interpersonal interactions in contrast to in-role job behavior.

Employment status (T2). We assessed employment status five months after T1. Workers were asked whether they were still pursuing TAW or whether they were employed in a standard job. In cases where they obtained a standard employment, we asked participants if they had been hired by a client organization during their assignment. Participants were also asked as to whether they experienced unemployment, retirement, or vocational training. In all, 30 participants had become permanent workers at T2. Of these, 25 had been hired by a client organization and 14 were working in an organization that they did not come into contact with through their work as temporary workers; 60 were still pursuing temporary work; 9 fell into the categories unemployed, retired, self-employed, and undergoing vocational training (two missings). Based on this employment-status variable, we distinguished between temporary workers and permanent workers who had been hired by a client organization, which resulted in a 25-60 breakdown.

Human capital (T1). We included education as a measure of human capital. In terms of education, of the 85 participants who were included into the analyses, 2 did not have any level of school achievement, 24 had finished junior high school (9 years of schooling), 31 had finished secondary school (10 years of schooling), 15 were qualified for university enrollment (13 years of schooling), and 13 had a university degree (comparable to a master’s degree; M = 3.15, SD = 1.08). We further assessed experience with tasks as they were assigned in the client organization on a five-point Likert-type scale format (1 = no experience at all to 5 = a lot of experience; M = 3.07, SD = 1.08).

Motives for temping (T1). The motivational background for temping was assessed through the importance of TAW as a stepping stone (T1) by asking participants to indicate on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) how far they agreed with a number of reasons why they were working as temps. The following item was used as a measure of the importance of TAW as a stepping stone: “For me, TAW is a stepping stone into permanent employment” (M = 4.23, SD = 1.05).

Control variables (T1). Demographic factors (age, gender) were controlled because of their relation to career success in general (Becker, 1975; Boudreau et al., 2001), to reemployment success (Wanberg et al., 1996), as well as to transition success (De Cuyper et al., 2009). Finally, hours of work were measured (3 = full-time, 2 = part-time, 1 = on hourly basis). As expected the majority of the sample were full-time workers (n = 131), 7 were part-time workers and 11 temps were working on an hourly basis.

Results

Means and standard deviations as well as the correlations between the variables are shown in Table I.
There were no effects of the control variables on employment status at T2, though a marginally significant correlation between social skills and transition into a job in a client organization \((r = 0.21, n = 85, p = 0.06)\) emerged. The importance of TAW as a stepping stone motive was positively related to gender and age, indicating that women and older workers considered TAW as having a stepping stone function to a greater extent. Individual experience with the assigned task was positively correlated with hours of work. There was a negative correlation between social skills and gender, which is partially in line with meta-analytical findings that women score lower on self-monitoring than men (Day et al., 2002).

We conducted a mixed effects logistic regression to test our hypothesis. We took into consideration that we have a nested data structure of our sample because temporary agency workers were clustered by the different agencies they were employed by. We therefore modeled the intercept for agencies as random and individual differences as fixed effects. We used R (R Core Team, 2012) and lme4 (Bates, 2010) to perform a multi-level logistic regression because our outcome variable, namely, employment status at T2 was binary. Table II shows the results for the model with the effect of social skills and the model without the effect in question.

The results depicted in Table II reveal that social skills had a significant positive effect on the probability of being hired by a client organization what supports our hypothesis.
The comparison of the two models revealed a statistical significant differences in favor of model 2 that includes individual social skills as a predictor for the transition into a permanent job in the client organization ($\chi^2 = 5.66, p < 0.05$). The different aspects of human capital, e.g. experience with the assignment task had not statistically significant effect on transition success.

Discussion

The flexibility of labor markets comes along with high demands on individual adaptability (Hall, 1996). Careers are no longer built by organizations, and as “[…] work experience now tends to span multiple employers, work arrangements, and types of competencies, individuals are increasingly responsible for managing transitions in their own careers” (Seibert et al., 2001, p. 845). Individual differences that have been shown to be relevant for organizational behavior in general (House et al., 1996), and career success in particular (Boudreau et al., 2001), in standard work arrangements, may also be even more relevant for non-standard workers who are less integrated into organizational structures and processes.

In the present paper, we started with the assumption that the successful integration of temporary workers in the social network of the client organization is a predictor of a job offer by the client organization. The important role of the social aspects of work performance in TAW has also been emphasized by Grey and Garsten (2001) when they hypothesized that “[…] the attributes of a good temp are not so much skills, as the capacity to fit in with whatever organization to which they are assigned” (p. 244). Accordingly, Svensson and Wolvén (2010) suggest that the role of the co-workers for the integration of temps deserves more attention.

We investigated social skills as a measure of the motive and ability of individuals to adapt to organizational settings (Ickes et al., 2006). Indeed, our study found that social skills increased the probability of transition success from TAW to a permanent job in the client organization. We still do not know very much about the underlying processes that explain the role of social skills. First, becoming a permanent employee in a client organization might depend on the work group. In contrast to a classic standard selection process on the free market, which is considered to be a managerial task, the influence of the work group could be more important. For example, the advocacy for a temp worker by permanent coworkers could be supportive for a job offer by the client, whereas a veto by the core workers might prevent it. Second, social skills could help in receiving coworkers’ spontaneous support (Taylor, 2011), which would enable higher job performance of the temps that, in turn, may have positive effects on transition success. Third, the informality of the selection process might be important. A closer look at the social skills/self-monitoring relationships with career success, in general, has shown that their effects are modest. However, as Moser and Galais (2007) have shown, social skills are an important predictor if observers have less reliable cues of targets’ behaviors. The latter is true for the TAW setting, where temporary agency workers are assigned to the client organization without any explicit selection process on the client’s side. Nonetheless, temps may find themselves in a subtle informal screening process when being evaluated in their daily work. The results of this informal evaluation process may then lead to a job offer when a position is vacant. Further research should shed more light on the role of the core work group and on other social processes for organizational recruitment decisions in the context of contingent work.

Consistent with earlier work (King et al., 2005), we did not find an effect of education to be an important measure of human capital on the probability of transition into the client organization. There are two tentative explanations for this lack of an effect. First, agencies assign temporary agency workers to client organizations in a careful way, which means that the involved selection and placement processes limit the scope of misfits with regard to work experience and technical proficiency. However, there was a considerable variety in educational
level, rendering this approach rather speculative. A second explanation might be that contextual performance is more important in TAW, whereas technical proficiency is less important because externalized jobs are rather low in complexity (Davis-Blake and Uzzi, 1993; Kalleberg and Rognes, 2000). We did not find an effect of the subjective importance of TAW as a stepping stone to transition success. Though there exists some research on the relationship of motives in TAW with commitment and job satisfaction (Chambel and Cathaneira, 2007; De Cuyper and De Witte, 2008), relationships with career success seem to be nonexistent.

The herein presented findings have some implications for the practice. For the internal recruiting processes in organizations, it becomes clear that socially adaptive individuals will more easily find their way into a permanent position. As this may be considered as positive for the organization, it makes it clear that core colleagues can effectively contribute to personnel selection.

Although our study lacks information regarding the underlying interpersonal processes as well as the measurement of the core workers and the supervisors’ perspectives, it can be concluded that relationships truly count in the evaluation process of external workers. Therefore, it may be important for policymakers to support temporary workers who temp involuntarily in developing their social skills in order to help them to reach their goal. It seems that the wish of becoming a permanent employee alone is not enough and that the process of recruiting external workers should be more thoroughly investigated in order to find predictors that are influenceable by the involved individuals as well as the organizations.

Limitations

The generalizability of the finding that socially versatile temporary workers have an increased chance of finding a permanent job in a client organization should be considered with caution because it may be restricted due to the particularities of the job type in the clerical sector investigated in this study. Until now, information on different transition rates in different work settings in TAW has not been available. However, our findings may not apply for less qualified industrial workers because they have shorter assignments (Antoni and Jahn, 2009), are often assigned as complete groups of temporary workers, and more often compensate seasonal peaks. Further research should clarify how extensive TAW may offer possibilities for workers with restricted opportunities to find a permanent position in a client organization, and analyze the involved processes more thoroughly.

We did not control for cognitive abilities, though they are a known predictor of both job performance and career success (Schmidt and Hunter, 1998). However, we used education as a control variable, which is a proxy measure of cognitive abilities. More importantly, social skills and related measures (e.g. political skills) are not correlated with cognitive abilities (Day et al., 2002).

Since all our data rely on self-reports, mono-method bias might be an issue. One important countermeasure is the temporal separation of measurements. In fact, assessment of the predictor social skills (and the controls) was temporarily separated from the criterion. In addition, due to the use of a rather factual measure of transition success, we also considered inflated effects as less probable.

Another critical point may be that we measured the stepping stone motive only once at T1 and we, therefore, cannot rule out that some temporary workers may undergo motivational changes during their experiences in the assignments. However, we assume that the stepping stone motive is relatively stable over time although workers may refuse a job offer from a particular client. But even when the unlikely case occurs that workers are no longer interested in a transition into a client organization, we do not think that this would have a significant impact on our results because we do not expect systematic effects of motivational change on social skills.
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Further reading


Corresponding author

Nathalie Galais can be contacted at: Nathalie.Galais@fau.de
Target experiences of workplace bullying on online labour markets
Uncovering the nuances of resilience
Premilla D’Cruz and Ernesto Noronha
Organizational Behaviour Area, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, Ahmedabad, India

Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to report a study of bullying on online labour markets (OLMs), highlighting how abuse unfolds in digital workplaces and depicting the trajectory of target resilience.

Design/methodology/approach – Adopting van Manen’s hermeneutic phenomenology, targets’ lived experiences of bullying on OLMs was explored. Data gathered from Indian freelancers located on Upwork via conversational telephonic interviews were subjected to sententious and selective thematic analyses.

Findings – The core theme of “pursuing long-term and holistic well-being” showed how targets tapped into yet augmented their resilience while navigating the features of OLMs as they coped with their experiences of bullying. The interface between targets’ internal and external resources, including platform support, vis-à-vis the concreteness and permanence of the site as targets asserted agency, sought control and realized positive outcomes while preserving their reputation, relationality, success and continuity was captured. It may be noted that bullying in digital workplaces is exclusively virtual in form.

Research limitations/implications – Alongside theoretical generalizability, statistical generalizability of the findings should be established.

Practical implications – Recommendations for action for platforms and targets are forwarded. In particular, the critical role of formal workplace support in influencing employee resilience is emphasized.

Originality/value – The paper makes several pioneering contributions. First, it reports the first empirical inquiry examining bullying in digital workplaces. Moreover, OLM research on abuse and harassment has not been undertaken so far. Second, it furthers theorization of resilience, especially with regard to workplace antecedents. Apart from identifying the new organizational antecedent of formal workplace support, it uncovers the complexities of resilience. Third, it extends knowledge on workplace cyberbullying, positive outcomes of workplace bullying and OLMs in India.

Keywords Cyberbullying, Digital workplaces, Resilience, Quasi-perpetrators, Racism, Online labour markets, Quasi-perpetrators, Crowdsourcing

Paper type Research paper

Introduction
Workplace bullying, also termed workplace emotional abuse and workplace harassment, encompasses subtle and/or obvious negative behaviours embodying aggression, hostility, intimidation and harm, generally characterized by persistence, displayed by an individual and/or group to another individual and/or group at work, privately and/or publicly, in real and/or virtual forms, in the context of an existing or evolving unequal power relationship (D’Cruz, 2015). Person-related bullying comprises making insulting remarks, excessive teasing, spreading gossip or rumours, persistent criticism, threats and intimidation. Work-related bullying includes giving unreasonable deadlines or unmanageable workloads, excessive monitoring of work and assigning meaningless tasks or even no tasks (Einarsen and Hoel, 2001). Bullying, which sometimes co-exists with category-based harassment (D’Cruz and Noronha, 2013) and could be predatory or conflict related (Einarsen et al., 2011), is described as unethical behaviour that violates universal social rules of acceptability (Ramsay et al., 2011).

Insights into workplace bullying so far come from research situated in conventional work settings, marked by material foundations. Yet, the rapid development of information and communication technologies and devices (ICTDs) has led to the increasing dematerialization of work, with completely virtual workplaces emerging (Webster and Randle, 2016). Workplace
bullying research predominantly emphasizes adverse outcomes faced by targets. While extreme distress is expected in response to the traumatic nature of the problem, recent research highlights the relevance of resilience (DCruz and Noronha, 2012; Van Heugten, 2012). How does bullying unfold in digital workplaces? What is the trajectory of targets’ resilience?

We address these questions through the first empirical study of workplace bullying in digital workplaces, locating our inquiry on the Upwork platform. In addressing how targets experience abuse on online labour markets (OLMs), we speak to a gap in the literature as digital workplaces have not so far been examined as contexts of workplace bullying. In adopting the framework of resilience, we show how targets engage this ability, navigating the features of the platform, to realize positive outcomes alongside their strain. In the process, we capture the subtleties of resilience and contribute to the further theorization of the concept.

The paper begins by elucidating the relevance of resilience in workplace bullying. After describing the context, the method and findings of the study are presented. The discussion elaborates the trajectory of target resilience and highlights the features of workplace bullying in digital workplaces, closing with practical implications.

Resilience and workplace bullying

Though literature on target outcomes in workplace bullying emphasizes adverse impact (Hogh et al., 2011), there are a few emergent findings to the contrary, highlighting the relevance of resilience. Van Heugten (2012) found bullied targets reporting greater resilience in the aftermath of their difficult experiences. Acquiring control over the stressful situation and accessing and receiving support from bystanders and managers enhanced target resilience. DCruz and Noronha (2012) reported that bullied targets described how the experience had contributed to their personal growth. Relying on their resilience, targets were able to find various strategies such as better preparedness, versatile coping, social support, deep-seated personal values, reaffirmed authenticity and long-term orientation to survive the bullying experience and strive towards well-being. Targets reported emerging stronger from the stressful experience. Is resilience also true of targets of workplace bullying on OLMs?

Resilience, a positive construct (Luthans et al., 2006), is the ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive challenges, with good outcomes (Garmezy, 1993). It concomitantly draws on and augments an individual’s strengths (Richardson, 2002), allowing him/her to adjust to adversity, maintain equilibrium, retain some sense of control over the environment and continue to move on constructively (Jackson et al., 2007). Owing to resilience, individuals exhibit resourcefulness (Pooley and Cohen, 2010) and adaptive capacities under conditions of stress or uncertainty (Klohnen, 1996). Indeed, the concept is portrayed as a continuum with vulnerability at one end and resilience at the other (Rutter, 1985), with individual qualities, informal and formal social support and contextual factors serving as critical influences (Ungar et al., 2008).

Resilience is valuable in dealing with stressors. Linked to emotional regulation and associated with the ability to use internal and external resources in order to flexibly apply various coping strategies and/or emotional expression to meet the needs of a stressful situation (Nuttman-Shwartz, 2015), resilience is evidenced when individuals engage in behaviours that help them navigate their way to the resources they need to flourish (Ungar, 2013). Appraisal, problem-focused and emotion-focused coping and social support are key features of resilience (Polk, 1997) which is not just coherent with Folkman and Lazarus’s (1980) transactional model of stress but extends this through an emphasis on favourable outcomes (Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013).

Resilience at work is only recently receiving attention (King et al., 2016) as part of positive organizational scholarship where it forms a component of psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2015). Even so, much of the focus here looks at antecedents of resilience at the individual level of analysis (King et al., 2016; Luthans et al., 2015). Yet, what is the
influence of social support and context which research on resilience deems to be relevant as external resources? Workplaces are portrayed as settings which are expected to provide assistance to their workforce (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002) and hence, we argue, have a bearing on employee resilience. Yet, literature on resilience at work makes no mention of organizational antecedents. We believe that workplaces facilitate individual resilience through the arrangement of formal support, serving as contexts conducive to employee well-being. How does this play out in OLMs and what does it imply for target resilience in instances of bullying in digital workplaces?

Both D'Cruz and Noronha (2012) and Van Heugten (2012) provide valuable insights that rewrite the trajectory of target outcomes in workplace bullying. Resilience is of critical relevance to situations of workplace bullying, given that emotional abuse is an extreme workplace stressor that embodies adversity and unleashes disruption. Are these findings, based on studies conducted in conventional workplaces, true of virtual workplaces? And how does the workplace context impact individual resilience?

**OLMs as the study context: the case of Upwork**

We conducted the inquiry on Upwork, a skilled OLM formed in May 2015 as the merger of Elance-oDesk. Following the creation of Upwork, the oDesk platform remained the foundation, retaining the best of both legacies and adding new innovations. Upwork has 12 million registered freelancers and five million registered clients, with three billion jobs posted annually and more than US$1 billion worth of work done annually (Upwork, 2017).

Insights into the dynamics of bullying in digital workplaces are yet to be established, with our understanding of the phenomenon coming from conventional workplaces. Understanding target experiences of bullying on virtual workplaces assumes significance, since there is already evidence of abuse and discrimination on OLMs which precipitate freelancer distress (D'Cruz, 2017; D'Cruz and Noronha, 2016). OLMs are mediated exchanges operated by platform owners and their employees (i.e., site administrators) via the internet through which organizations/individuals (i.e., clients/buyers/requesters) access other individuals (i.e., freelancers/sellers/workers) for remunerative tasks of varying temporality and complexity with commensurate qualifications and returns (Green et al., 2014).

While all parties on OLMs are spatially dispersed strangers from across the globe, interactions, which are short-term, occur virtually and largely asynchronously, relying on written communication. (Kneese et al., 2014). Freelancers and clients signed up to Upwork cannot automatically connect with each other, with each parties’ contact details being unavailable. Instead, they are linked only via projects conducted on the platform or discussion fora provided by the platform. Interactions occur via synchronous and/or asynchronous text messages, embodying limited media richness. Freelancers compete for jobs via bidding, with reputation being a critical metric and relationality being a crucial condition for success and continuity. Freelancers must ensure that their task performance and overall behaviour are faultless and contribute to a highly rated positive image since this helps them get further work and be retained on the site (Kneese et al., 2014).

Platforms, which function as intermediaries with no liabilities as they deliberately and carefully protect themselves from any legal, financial and other commitments towards clients and freelancers (Caraway, 2010), are “borderless” and hidden from view, operating outside legislation and social dialogue (D'Cruz and Noronha, 2016), often going “off-state” and not subject to potential democratic oversight (Urry, 2014). Upwork stipulates minimum wages (US$3.00/hourly projects and US$30.00/fixed projects), undertakes authentication checks, specifies decorum protocol and has helpdesk and grievance procedures. These features protect freelancers and clients in several ways, providing a supportive work context. Authentication checks ensure that even though those signing up on the platform are strangers to each other, the risks of being misled are minimized. Decorum
protocol, which sets the stage for acceptable behaviour on the platform, is the basis for sanctioning defaulters picked up by site trackers. Grievance procedures allow freelancers and clients to raise complaints for resolution, limited to problems occurring and proof available on the site.

Documented evidence of abuse and discrimination on OLMs indicates that bullying in digital workplaces is exclusively virtual in nature (D’Cruz, 2017; D’Cruz and Noronha, 2016). Cyberbullying in conventional workplaces shows that ICTDs allow targets to be subjected to bullying anytime and anywhere, since they can be reached across spatial and temporal divides. Boundarylessness makes targets feel haunted and hemmed in. As well as not sparing targets’ significant others, the misbehaviour could be shared with people within and outside the workplace, enhancing audience reach. ICTDs as mediated communication lowers bully inhibition and accountability due to invisibility and sometimes anonymity. Sometimes, bullies are never identified. ICTDs give rise to virtual footprints bringing concreteness and permanence into play. Indeed, the availability of proof helps targets tackle the problem, though even here, organizational dynamics could hamper their endeavour. Nonetheless, replays fuel the persistence of misbehaviour and the possibility of generating evidence prevents counteraggression (D’Cruz and Noronha, 2013, 2017).

We argue that abuse on virtual workplaces provides the opportunity for targets to tap into and augment their resilience because of the features of concreteness and permanence. This is so because all activity on OLMs is recorded, through monitoring and surveillance tools. Due to the availability of virtual footprints, targets can successfully seek support, redress their grievance and regain control of the situation. Yet, given that their endeavours cannot compromise their reputation and relationality which are critical to their effectiveness and survival on the platform, what are the implications for their resilience? Further, how does target resilience unfold given that OLMs operate with no liabilities and exist beyond legislation and social dialogue? In what way does the platform serve as a conducive work context, contributing to the external resources of targets?

Method

In the course of a larger qualitative inquiry[1] of Indian freelancers’ subjective experiences of work on OLMs, featuring Upwork, 13 out of 24 participants described being targets of bullying, including racial harassment, displayed by clients and fellow freelancers. We explored this aspect through van Manen’s (1998) hermeneutic phenomenology which purports to grasp the essential structure of the meaning of participants’ experiences as they are lived.

Van Manen’s (1998) conversational interview was used to gather experiential narrative material. Though unstructured, the process was disciplined by focusing on the fundamental question that prompted the inquiry. The clarity of the research question did not preclude exploring issues that emerged during the interview, since the researcher was aware that they could generate important insights into the phenomenon under study. Interviews, conducted telephonically as participants were located all over India, were held as per participant convenience and generally lasted 1-1.5 hours. The first author conducted the interviews in English and these were transcribed verbatim by the research staff.

The treatment and analysis of data followed van Manen’s (1998) hermeneutical phenomenological reflection to identify themes which touch at the core of the notion the researcher is trying to understand. Following the sententious approach, each narrative was read as a whole to capture the basic meaning of participants’ experiences. With “pursuing long-term and holistic well-being” emerging as the overarching dynamic that undergirded participants’ narratives, it formed the core theme which depicted the essential meaning of participants’ lived experiences of being bullied in an OLM context. A selective approach was then undertaken where the text is read and examined for the meaning of statements which are particularly revealing in relation to the essential theme. Labels were assigned to these
sub-themes and later standardized across narratives. A comparison was done to highlight congruence in the sub-themes and their linkages across participants. Next, across narratives, those sub-themes that dovetailed together in meaningful yet distinct ways were developed into themes. Further, narratives were compared to ascertain relationships across themes and those themes that held together were formed into major themes which comprised “seeking resolution” and “moving on”. In this manner, a progression from the idiographic to the nomothetic was realized (Karson, 2007).

Once the inductive component of the analysis, as described above, was completed, the core theme, major themes, themes and sub-themes were viewed through the lens of resilience. We found that while participants reported distress, an outcome commonly associated with workplace bullying, they also displayed resilience. This latter aspect was evident across all the findings as participants relied on their individual qualities, informal support, formal platform provisions, where applicable, and contextual influences to navigate through their experiences in a bid to assert agency and regain control. In so doing, they worked through their distress to realize positive outcomes. This process unfolded with participants keeping in mind the issue of virtual footprints and their implications for reputation, relationality, success and continuity on the platform. That is, participants drew on the evidence of their bullies’ misbehaviour, where available, while making sure that their attempts at tackling the situation did not generate proof that harmed them. Our findings reinforced that resilience influenced participants’ appraisal of and coping with their experiences of abuse and resulted in personal growth. In the next section, the elucidation of the findings reflect how participants drew on and built up their resilience, tapping into internal and external resources, while addressing abusive experiences on OLMs, highlighting how the particular features of digital workplaces affected this process.

Reflexivity informed the study (Krefting, 1991) as we remained mindful of our biases. Familiarity with the workplace bullying literature which emphasizes negative target outcomes and postpositivist frameworks which allow holistic insights aided us in maintaining a balanced approach towards the data, rather than being pulled in either direction. Regular and detailed debriefing sessions with colleagues well versed with employment relations and qualitative methods were held throughout the conduct of the study, alerting us to our prejudices. These discussions helped us keep the research questions and emergent data as the central focus of the endeavour, with consensual validation undergirding the data analysis (van Manen, 1998). Consequently, theoretical generalizability (Thompson, 1999) was achieved.

Findings
A total of 13 participants reported being bullied by clients and freelancers in about 10 per cent of their interactions over the platform. Sociodemographically, this included six women and seven men, aged between 23 and 38 years, coming from nine Indian cities. Participants, who were graduates (six) or post-graduates (seven), working full time (eight) or part time (five) on the platform, undertook tasks such as data entry, research assistance, content writing, marketing and public relations, business analytics and IT (information technology) applications. Full-timers’ average monthly earnings ranged from Rs10,000-Rs400,000. Eight participants worked independently, interfacing with clients only, with the rest combining independent and team work in varying proportions. Participants were happy with their earnings from the platform and wished to continue being a part of it.

Participants described intimidation, aggression and abuse manifested over text messages on the platform or through oral or written means off the platform. Negative acts ranged from insulting remarks, excessive criticism, extreme hostility, threats, allegations about misbehaviour, slandering, exclusion, micro-management and unmanageable deadlines and workloads and were either one-off or repeated incidents.
Various factors accounted for the bullying behaviours of clients and fellow freelancers. Clients’ concerns/miscommunication over task completion, issues about freelancer integrity and racial bias were relevant and could also be linked to a sense of superiority derived from their pseudo-employer status which brings in the element of hierarchy. Bullying behaviours from fellow freelancers occur on project teams, during the bidding process or via general interaction fora, being attributed to insecurity linked to the competitiveness of surviving and excelling and to racial bias. Some participants reasoned that freelancers from developed countries are hostile towards them because the lower rates for developing countries undercut the former in terms of remuneration and opportunities.

Being the target of abuse precipitates distress in participants. The reported strain could be fleeting or persistent, lasting for a week, a fortnight or longer. Participants’ reactions varied from shock, anger, sadness, anxiety, injustice and diffidence, and in some instances, affected their health, resulting in influenza, gastrointestinal problems, sleep difficulties and hypertension, as well as their performance, precipitating errors in task completion, disinterest in work and so on.

The core theme of “pursuing holistic and long-term well-being” encapsulates targets’ lived experiences, evidencing their resilience. All participants sought to resolve the bullying situation where possible, as this was important for them. Individual qualities, formal platform support and contextual factors were critical in this regard. Where platform mechanisms and client interventions were unavailable, participants showed initiative in the matter. But they needed to keep their positions on the platform intact while safeguarding their dignity. Hence reputation, rationality, success and continuity were always privileged and guided participants’ choices and actions about resolution. To this end, participants were careful to select options whose virtual footprints did not compromise their interests. Even when participants could effectively tackle the situation, they experienced residual distress stemming from being bullied. Thus, regardless of being able to resolve the problem or not, all participants attempted to work through and integrate the experience into their lives. Personal capabilities and significant others’ support helped participants overcome their strain and move on. Through engagement with internal and external resources, participants went beyond merely demonstrating mastery and control over the situation to actually realizing their positive attributes and inner strengths and the supportive elements in their environment. This allowed them to feel more empowered and develop positive self-perceptions such that the achievement of personal growth was the final outcome. Overall, participants were able to promote their interests in terms of both livelihood and respect keeping a future-oriented perspective in mind.

Seeking resolution
Platform avenues, where applicable, and client intervention, when displayed, played pivotal roles in helping participants deal with their experiences of abuse. Participants reported feeling empowered, underscoring how formal workplace support and contextual influences provided means of resolution and fuelled participants’ resilience. Where such avenues were unavailable to them, participants drew on their personal qualities and informal support networks. These internal and external resources were important in addressing the situation and mitigating the distress, helping participants feel a sense of agency, retain autonomy and emerge stronger.

The first line of action for participants when confronted with abuse was to attempt to rectify the situation. Towards this end, they spoke of the redressal option available on the platform, emphasizing the requirement of site-based evidence to avail of this mechanism. Here, participants had to approach site administrators with their complaints. Their decision to exercise this option, in addition to being contingent on the availability of platform-based proof, was influenced by the clarity of the evidence. Participants shared that when the
site-based evidence supporting their case was obvious, the complaint was sorted out in their favour without any doubts crossing the minds of the site administrators.

To illustrate, a participant who developed an android application was accused of plagiarism by the client who then turned rough and abusive. Knowing that his work was the result of his own initiative, creativity and hard work, the participant found the allegations and hostility very upsetting. Since attempts to convince the client about authenticity were reported to be emotionally draining, apart from meeting with little success, the participant decided not to prolong the negative situation and escalated the matter to the site administration. Knowing that he had sufficient documentation of his originality, ideation and efforts, the participant had no doubt that his complaints would be successfully resolved. His predictions were upheld, with site administrators relying on the platform-based evidence he submitted to settle the case. The participant emphasized that his decision to use the site redressal mechanism was clinched by the clarity of his platform-based proof which ensured that his reputation and continuity were not compromised. Moreover, having evidence to back up his case, the participant considered the intervention of site administrators to be a better option than insisting on his innocence with the client. The latter approach would only worsen matters and invite negative repercussions on his profile, hampering his position on the site.

Instances where proof was marked by ambiguity, complicated by the limited richness of the medium, often acted as a deterrent. Participants in such a position refrained from seeking redressal, opining that the process may go against them, invite negative perceptions from site administrators and hamper their profiles and success on the site.

In addition, platforms maintain decorum rules whose implementation is aided by monitoring and surveillance mechanisms. Owing to this, platform intervention in cases of abuse and incivility is automatic. Without target initiative, site trackers pick up behaviours that violate platform expectations and perpetrators are sanctioned. Participants report observing instances of freelancers undermining each other through negative comments about others’ ideas or about the quality of others’ English on various discussion fora such as message and knowledge-sharing boards. Platform administrators, who pick up the communication due to technological tools, sanction the sender for violating site etiquette, particularly when the latter’s posts demonstrate blatant and severe abuse and discrimination. Senders are admonished publicly, and sometimes also privately, with varying degrees of punishment. Other freelancers, viewing the instructions of site administrators sometimes accompanied with a sign that the offending post has been deleted, are reminded of the importance of maintaining decorum on the site.

One participant, for example, reported how during the bidding process, when he put up a proposal for a project, another freelancer who saw it wrote a nasty comment on his cover letter. Despite being distressed by the unwarranted and caustic public criticism, the participant did not respond to the post believing that such a move would push the matter out of hand. Site administrators, alerted through digital traces, intervened and corrected the person.

Participants spoke positively about the avenues provided by the platform, holding the view that the site is concerned about freelancer well-being despite the absence of “employee status”. In their view, the platform was not obliged to take care of freelancer interests and hence the availability of such measures left a favourable impression. Platform provisions operated as formal workplace support providing participants with a critical external resource. Indeed, the mechanisms offered by the site constituted an integral component of participants’ resilience, emphasizing the significance of the work setting as a conducive factor:

They need not bother because we are freelancers. But they do their best to create a good environment. It helps you solve problems head-on because backing is there, that too from bosses. You feel good [….] protected (Male/32/Full time/IT).
Other than platform provisions, some participants elaborated on their own initiative to deal with the negative situation. This move was either backed by proof and circumstances completely in their favour or by contextual factors that reinforced their position/interests combined with able negotiation skills. Such measures, which helped mitigate participants’ strain, were adopted only when participants were sure that no adverse harmful consequences would arise.

One participant, for instance, reported client intimidation during the course of the project as differences surfaced. Client expectations, deviating from those initially agreed upon without commensurate changes in remuneration, precipitated conflict which progressed into bullying. The participant opted to take up the matter directly with the client. Her decision to exit the project was facilitated by circumstances in that being an hourly project with the payment amount pre-authorized, it was possible to end the engagement once the time was clocked. Hence, following completion of the hours in the agreement, the participant informed the client that she could not continue further due to her inability to meet his new requirements. The project was closed as “completed”, the payment despatched and the participant received a four-star rating. The participant could not account for the client’s fluctuating behaviour but expressed appreciation that despite his demands and misbehaviour which left her distressed, her returns and feedback did not suffer. Nonetheless, that she had honoured the terms and conditions of the project agreement was not lost on her. Since the matter ended satisfactorily, the participant had no reason to seek site administrator’s intervention:

We had agreed on (the) job […] the client did not clarify this thing when he awarded (the) job to me. He mailed to me that I have work for you and you have to work now. And in India, the time was 9 pm/10 pm. I was sleeping (at) that time and I got the message that you have to work now. Sometimes I also work(ed), sometimes I co-operated, but he started giving me work in the night on (a) daily basis. So I said sorry, you did not ask me that prior to awarding (the) job to me […] he got rude and hostile and began to threaten (Female/26/Part time/Administrative tasks).

Beyond the aforementioned options, participants pointed out that directly confronting bullies, retaliating or publicizing the matter in a bid to shame the bully, amenable to being picked up on the platform, could be construed as misbehaviours by and invite sanctions from site administrators. Further, if such reactions were displayed directly to clients, repercussions on targets’ profiles were expected. Subtle manifestations of abuse are complicated by the limited media richness of the platform. Though targets may be certain about their perceptions and interpretations, they recognize that in the absence of cues, the bullying could be viewed as ambiguous and they could be chided for misreading and misattributions. Under such circumstances, participants were careful in the choices they made when addressing the situation, drawing more on internal resources and informal social support.

Where bullying took place in team settings, a range of responses was apparent. Observing freelancer hostility and aggression towards (a) team member(s), some clients spontaneously corrected the errant person(s) and ensured cordial team dynamics. Clients were then perceived as providing a favourable environment for the task to proceed. This, according to participants, contributed to the creation and maintenance of an appropriate team climate. Clients’ behaviour, interpreted as an external influence on the work context, was described as critical to facilitating participants’ effective coping with the situation. Participants were of the opinion that clients who did not address the situation had either not picked up the dynamics or chose to ignore their observations because they did not wish to receive negative comments from freelancers. Freelancer actions varied with the situation. Where bullying behaviours from a team member involved misrepresenting participants’ contribution to the client, the participant would provide data to substantiate his/her work. With “repeat” clients who were familiar with his/her outstanding performance,
the strategy was effective as the clients would either correct or drop the recalcitrant team member from the project. Where team members excluded participants, apart from the ensuing isolation, the work also suffered. Participants attempted to pre-empt the possibility of exclusion by visually depicting the importance of co-operation and co-ordination to the client and fellow freelancers at the initiation of the project. Through this, he/she would emphasize the gains of inclusion and transparency to the project.

A few participants spoke of bullying experiences which occurred off the platform. Clients and freelancers moved off the platform either for the selection process in order to use synchronous, oral and interactive media such as Skype or for the entire duration of the project in order to save the site fee. Overt and severe racial harassment and person- and task-related abuse were reported in numerous cases. One participant reported four instances of direct and overt racial abuse. These occurred during selection interviews held over Skype for jobs posted on the platform. Here, clients were abusive to the extent of using filthy language if they did not see eye to eye with the participant about the terms and conditions of the job. The participant reported being shocked and disturbed the first time, with the feelings of distress being less during the subsequent incidents:

This lady posted a project online and then she asked me to come on Skype for a short interview. And then she said that you send me an article and I will review it and I will give you more work. And I told her that I do not send articles like that, until and unless you pay me – because there is no payment surety. She started abusing me all of a sudden. She is like you Indians are like that and she used very … I mean disgusting words … that was a bad experience. I was shocked for a while (Female/29/Full time/Writing and translation).

Seeking platform redressal in such instances was ruled out due to the unavailability of site-based evidence, with targets having to fend for themselves. Participants either confronted the perpetrator, tried to appeal to the latter’s good sense, spelt out the requirements of acceptable behaviour, chose not to maintain any further links with the client after the project ended, opted not to pursue further negotiations towards a project contract and so forth. In addition to personal capabilities, support from significant others was relied upon. The participant described above, constrained by the absence of platform proof, blocked the clients from her Skype account. She emphasized that whereas the site is usually successful in limiting misbehaviour due to vigilance and sanctions, abuse could occur offline since targets have no recourse.

Moving on
Strain endured not just for participants who were unable to resolve the bullying situation but also for those who did. Though it is not surprising that the former group reported greater degrees of distress since their predicament remained unaddressed, a residual sense of discomfort persisted in the latter group despite having successfully tackled the problem. Both sets of participants relied on alternative options, essentially intrapsychic mechanisms and informal social support, to work through their experiences, regain equilibrium and feel in control. Engaging internal and external resources both reflected and enhanced participants’ resilience. Tapping personal attributes and reaching out to significant others not only indicated participants’ agency in their attempts to overcome strain but also helped them realize the extent of resources at their disposal. Being thus empowered, participants were not only able to overcome the negative experience successfully but also felt well-equipped to handle adversity in the future since they were now aware of the several options available to them. Participants therefore perceived many positive aspects emerging from the experience of being bullied, reporting an enhanced self-concept and a sense of personal growth. Cognitive restructuring, affective blunting, compartmentalization, spiritual leanings, selective forgetting and resignation were the intrapsychic means adopted.
An optimistic disposition, a professional approach, a spiritual orientation and a pragmatic outlook were described as underlying these mechanisms. Some participants shared that their positive personality helped them focus on their gains rather than their difficulties. Those who enjoyed successful resolution underscored their advantage as a means of buoying their disturbed demeanour. Some attributed their ability to bifurcate to their work ethic which separated work and non-work. Others pointed out the futility of ruminating over the past, which cannot be undone, preferring to "let go" or "switch off". One participant referred to her metaphysical preferences which helped her transcend the negative experience, stating that bullying reflects badly on the actor rather than the recipient. Another participant who was able to tackle the bully derived solace from invoking existential perspectives to explain misbehaviour. In instances where clients’ ire arose due to communication gaps or doubts about freelancer integrity, participants emphasized their sincere performance, taking comfort from the fact that they had put in their best effort.

Soliciting and/or receiving emotional support from their social network off the platform was specified. Participants shared their encounters of hostility and abuse with their family members and friends, describing their feelings and exploring their options. Significant others helped participants choose the most appropriate action, depending on the details of the situation. Lending a listening ear and exhibiting sensitivity and empathy were other important considerations that significant others made. One participant elaborated how sharing her abusive experiences with her spouse helped her realize the futility of pursuing platform-based redressal since the ambiguity of the bully’s behaviour could go against her. Her husband’s patience, understanding and comfort helped her view the situation as a learning experience. Another participant emphasized that even though site administrators had spontaneously sanctioned the person who had posted hostile messages against her, she continued to feel humiliated especially by the public nature of the abuse. Her parents helped her to not only see the situation as "a part of life’s learning" but also appreciate her good fortune that the platform had automatically sorted the matter out. A third participant described the interesting situation of offline significant others comprising childhood and college friends living in his vicinity who also freelanced on the same platform. The participant reported gaining support not just from the long-standing bond but also from the empathy arising from sharing a common work context. Undoubtedly, these linkages and exchanges occurred in materiality away from the platform:

We all friends here in the colony share our experiences when we meet […] it helps. Sometimes, it is the only help. Because when proof is missing, then platform will do nothing. You are on your own (Male/25/Part time/Writing).

In addition, participants emphasized the importance of vigilance in that being alert and picking cues of bullying behaviour were key to avoiding or pre-empting similar situations in the future. A few participants shared that if they pick up clients' racist tendencies during the bidding and selection process, they do not pursue such projects but if they pick these up after getting into the contract, they complete the project so as not to spoil their profile and forfeit the money which was the primary attraction. The participant who experienced misrepresentation by team members was particular to watch out for the signs and ensure that the client was always apprised about her work. One participant shared that despite the problems she faced with the client, he approached her for work later but she declined as she was not prepared for a possible replay of the negative experience.

Even the strain associated with being bullied could not motivate participants to disregard caution. Participants remained unwilling to take any risks despite the adverse outcomes associated with being subjected to misbehaviour. Coping via "taking matters into one’s own hands" such as direct confrontation, public announcements, sharing frustrations, maligning and vindictive acts was out of the question. As described above, participants
turned to intrapsychic mechanisms and informal social support to work through their
difficult experiences. These were seen as safer options that would not compromise
their continuity and success on the platform. Yet, such approaches could not obliterate
participants’ negative reactions always and immediately. Nonetheless, participants
preferred these route rather than “taking on the situation” and “putting myself in a spot”.
In any case, thoughts of retaliation and revenge were not entertained.

Particularly in instances of being unable to resolve the bullying situation, participants
address their experiences within the limits of socially acceptable behaviour. Aware that
reputation and relationality are critical to their survival and that platform owners are
vigilant, participants proceeded prudently and ensured that they took no action which
involved concreteness and permanence and left traces that could implicate them directly in
the short run with current clients and platform administration or in the long run with those
accessing the site or indirectly through the effects on ratings and feedback:

What to do? I was very, very upset. But I had to control myself. Taking up the matter myself would
hurt me only. My family really supported (me) so I could come out of it. They would comfort me, tell me
focus on work, forget […] so I drowned in work, did well. If I had fought him, they (site administrators)
would punish me, my profile would suffer (Male/33/Full time/Writing and analytics).

Participants reported that in the long run, being targets of abuse and bullying on the
platform resulted in numerous personal gains. Being faced with adverse unexpected
experiences helped participants understand the extent of their inner strengths and tap into
these attributes. A spectrum of positive abilities was described, namely, toughness, patience,
caution, optimism, pragmatism, courage, managing uncertainty and operating within
limited options. Becoming aware of one’s capabilities meant one could tap them whenever
needed. Moreover, participants realized the range of external resources available to them.
While acknowledging the role of significant others, platform mechanisms and client
interventions, participants stated that knowing about these options reassured them of
accessing support whenever required. Indeed, they asserted the significance of informal
social support and formal workplace arrangements. Participants’ sense of agency and
mastery were augmented, adding to their confidence. Overall, participants opined that the
experience had left them stronger and had resulted in personal growth which would hold
them in good stead later in life. An additional gain some participants alluded to was the
ability to forgive the perpetrator. Overlooking the abusive act by not holding grudges but
rather viewing the bully compassionately was reported. For some participants here,
forgiveness came easily because of dispositional factors or because of previous similar
adverse experiences. For others, forgiveness took longer as they needed time to grapple with
an unanticipated and difficult experience.

Discussion

The paper presents the first empirical inquiry on bullying in digital workplaces where abuse
occurs exclusively in virtual forms. It extends our understanding of workplace bullying,
particularly workplace cyberbullying, which has so far been studied in conventional
workplaces. Moreover, in evidencing target resilience, the paper not only reinforces
emergent findings that target outcomes are not completely adverse but also illuminates the
nuances of resilience, deepening our grasp of and aiding the theorization of the concept.

Resilience aptly fits in with the transactional model of stress and coping, highlighting the
relevance of appraisal and internal and external resources as well as the importance of
mastery, control, well-being and growth. As targets rely on personal, social, platform and
contextual resources to assert agency and regain equilibrium, the role of appraisal, coping
and the pursuit of positive outcomes are clearly evidenced. Targets are careful how they
tackle the situation, keeping their long-term interests in mind.
Engaging with resilience serves to augment this capability, underscoring a dual yet reciprocal process. That is, as targets rely on personal, social, platform and contextual resources to achieve control and restore well-being, their greater awareness of the internal and external avenues available to them feed into their resilience, making them feel more empowered and stronger. Capitalizing on their resilience serves to make targets more familiar with the extent of its reserves available to them. Drawing on their resilience therefore leads to enhancing the quantum of this ability. The exact processes by which this occurs are not known and are worth investigating. Further, being able to handle a stressful situation and experiencing greater resourcefulness to face similar circumstances in the future add to targets’ sense of personal growth and self-esteem. Realizing one’s inner strengths and preserving one’s well-being in the face of adverse circumstances are important dimensions of targets’ experiences. Understanding how these gains are linked to targets’ self-concept is another worthy area of inquiry for researchers of workplace bullying, given the negative effects of abuse on targets’ self-worth. Embracing forgiveness, reported by some participants, illustrated healing and restoration (Bradfield and Aquino, 1999) rather than pseudo forgiveness (Butler and Mullis, 2011), highlighting another theme for exploration in the substantive area. The findings of proposed studies, together with those of identity work in the context of workplace bullying (D’Cruz and Noronha, 2012; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008), can feed into interventions.

Digital workplaces bring in further dynamics to the unfolding of target resilience. Concreteness and permanence operate as a double-edged sword. The virtual footprints of bullies’ misbehaviour, particularly when clear and unambiguous, open up avenues for redress and resolution, sometimes initiated directly by platform administrators. Targets appreciate the site’s concern for their well-being, recognizing that platform mechanisms, rules and processes protect and empower them. Targets feel a greater sense of control over their situation, fuelling their resilience. Nonetheless, since OLMs are technologically anchored, targets exercise caution in their attempts to tackle the bullying situation since their actions generate evidence and have implications for their reputation and relationality. Counteraggression, elsewhere associated with a sense of control and self-worth (Lee and Brotheridge, 2006), is therefore circumscribed. As targets are obviously careful about their choices because they do not wish to jeopardize their success and continuity on the site, they tap into their resilience to cope with the situation. Personal and social resources are instrumental in helping targets. Problem-focused and emotion-focused coping show an inextricable link with resilience.

Platform support by way of redress procedures, decorum rules and administrator interventions fosters target resilience. This evidences the critical influence of formal workplace support as an external resource. By identifying an organizational antecedent, the study findings bring a new dimension which helps close a gap in the literature on resilience at work. Yet, given that OLMs are known to operate with no liabilities and beyond any regulation, these provisions vary across platforms. Amazon Mechanical Turk, for example, has no provisions to assist freelancers (Bergvall-Kareborn and Howcroft, 2014), contrasting with Upwork. Undoubtedly, the trajectory of target resilience will unfold differently contingent on platform features. Exploring workplace bullying across a range of diverse OLMs will be insightful, in addition to ascertaining the relevance of legislation and collective action.

The findings throw up interesting insights into workplace cyberbullying, highlighting its distinctive character in the context of digital workplaces. Though OLMs virtually connect people who are physically apart, transcending geographical distance, their spatial and temporal boundarylessness is limited since abuse usually reaches targets asynchronously and requires that the latter is logged into the platform to receive the message. At the same time, the global reach of OLMs underpinned by the dynamics between developed and developing countries (D’Cruz and Noronha, 2016) gives rise to category-based harassment bringing in aversive racism (Grandey et al., 2004). Further, though misbehaviour on OLMs marked mainly
by private displays, public manifestations take place on discussion boards and bidding areas and during team work but are contained within the boundaries of its particular location on the platform. Audience reach is therefore restricted.

Identities are always available on OLMs such that targets know who their perpetrators are. Yet, notwithstanding the lowered inhibition and accountability linked to the invisibility afforded by the medium, what emboldens bullies to misbehave remains to be determined given that, in addition to the lack of anonymity, the technological basis of the platform constantly generates proof which can compromise reputation, relationality, success and continuity on the site.

In addition to both facilitating yet impeding targets’ problem-focused coping as described earlier, the concreteness and permanence of site-based proof exacerbate target strain. Being able to re-read the abusive message triggers persistence, with two implications. First, a single incident acquires frequency and duration since it can be endlessly revisited. Second, the target takes on a quasi-perpetrator role when he/she engages in replays, exposing himself/herself repeatedly to the abusive act, thereby re-harming himself/herself. Arguments forwarded in favour of redefining workplace bullying in the light of the features of virtual abuse cannot overlook these critical dimensions.

**Practical implications**

The study findings suggest several areas for action. Helping employees in general and targets in particular to nurture their resilience is important. Initiatives facilitating the development of internal resources and the identification of external resources should inform interventions. Moreover, ensuring the availability of formal workplace support to address stressors is critical. Indeed, focusing on resilience offers an opportunity-oriented approach to workplace bullying interventions, contrasting with the current predominant problem-oriented approach linked to the greater emphasis on negative outcomes (Van Heugten, 2012).

Specific to OLMs, platforms can consider expanding their provisions to address cyberbullying. Behavioural screening of entrants to the site through robust psychometric instruments as well as mandatory training for and evaluation of appropriate etiquette held for clients and freelancers at the time of entry to the platform and repeated annually are relevant avenues. Developing and publicizing pointers and mechanisms to assist targets in coping with misbehaviour, particularly when platform options are unavailable to them, is useful. Efforts here should capitalize on the workplace bullying-resilience link. Measures to pre-empt aversive racism cannot be delayed. On the part of targets, reaching out to the numerous existing fora for freelancers associated with OLMs such as informal groups on LinkedIn and Facebook (Caraway, 2010) and initiatives like Turkopticon (Irani and Silberman, 2013) and initiating co-worker mobilization and collective action are significant ways ahead. The reach of these various avenues should not stop with workplace cyberbullying but cater to all matters of concern such that freelancers’ interests are protected through the availability of conducive contexts.

**Note**

1. Being virtual and invisible, with no office in India, the possibility of organizational access to Upwork freelancers was eliminated. We posted the research call on social networking sites and searched the internet for blogs and personal testimonies of freelancers. Through these efforts, about 70 Upwork freelancers from across India responded. During initial interactions via phone or e-mail, we described the study in detail, addressing queries and doubts. Interview appointments were fixed with 47 participants who expressed willingness to be involved. With not all those who agreed to interviews completing the process, the inquiry concluded with 24 participants spread across the country.
References


Further reading


About the authors

Premilla D’Cruz is a Professor of Organizational Behaviour at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, India. Her research interests include workplace bullying, emotions at work, self and identity, organizational control, and information and communication technologies (ICTs) and organizations. Her studies on workplace bullying in the Indian context have been pioneering both in terms of geographical location and substantive issues. She has recently authored Depersonalized Bullying at Work (Springer, 2015) and Co-edited Critical Perspectives on Work and Employment in Globalizing India (Springer, 2017; with Ernesto Noronha). She has been a Visiting Scholar at various European and Australian universities and has received several multi-lateral and bi-lateral research grants. She is currently the President of the International Association on Workplace Bullying and Harassment (IWBH), having earlier served as Secretary (2010-2016) and Special Interest Group Coordinator (2008-2010). Premilla D’Cruz is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: pdcruz@iima.ac.in

Ernesto Noronha is a Professor of Organizational Behaviour at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, India. His research interests include workplace ethnicity, technology and work, and labour and globalization. He has been awarded many bi-lateral and multi-lateral grants to study various aspects of employee experiences of work in India’s offshoring and outsourcing sector, focusing on new and unexplored areas such as organizational control, diversity, telework and collectivization. His current research looks at the informal sector in India across conventional and emerging occupations. He has been a Visiting Professor at the Industrial and Labour Relations (ILR) School, Cornell University and at the Institute for Sociology, University of Vienna. He has presented invited talks as a visiting scholar at numerous European universities such as Strathclyde, Portsmouth, Bergen and Hamburg, in addition to the keynote address at the 2010 Work, Employment and Society (WES) conference.

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Relationship between gender-sensitive practices and family support and its impact on psychological well-being of women employees in call centers in India

Monica Verma
Department of MBA, IMS Engineering College, Ghaziabad, India
Kanika T. Bhal
Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, New Delhi, India, and
Prem Vrat
Department of Management, The Northcap University, Gurugram, India

Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship of gender-sensitive practices and family support in predicting psychological well-being of women assessed as stress, job satisfaction, commitment and intention to leave. Using the crossover theory, it also examines how gender-sensitive practices lead to family support, which in turn leads to reduced stress leading to high satisfaction and commitment and reduced intention to leave.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Data were obtained from a sample of 302 women employees working in call centers in NCR, India on psychometrically sound scales.

**Findings** – Analysis revealed that gender-sensitive practices are positively related to family support through the mechanism of crossover. Ample supported by data, the study exhibits the complementary relationship between gender-sensitive practices and family support, and their impact on psychological well-being of women employees.

**Research limitations/implications** – The sample may reflect same source bias as the data are collected from a single source.

**Practical implications** – The implementation of effective gender-sensitive practices might invite strong family support and then, both can be a source of great happiness to women employees and can lead to reduction in stress and, hence, greater job satisfaction, commitment and lesser intent to leave.

**Originality/value** – Very few research exist which have taken up the issue together. So, this study is an endeavor toward understanding the relationship between gender-sensitive practices and family support and their effect on job outcomes in a novel socio-cultural environment.

**Keywords** India, Call centres, Crossover, Women employees, Work-family interface

**Paper type** Research paper

**Introduction**

The role of employees in call centers is generally recognized as demanding, repetitive and monotonous (Belt et al., 2002) and highly stressful (Holman, 2002). Strict monitoring and control (Taylor and Bain, 1999) and unusual working hours (Wharton, 1993) lead to high levels of burnout among employees (Tripathi, 2006). Since call centers in India cater to overseas clients having time zones different from that of India, employees are required to work at night with constantly rotating shifts and schedules. The nature of work of call centers requires its employees to follow a prescribed script with very little or no autonomy while dealing with clients. Moreover, employees have to be on phone calls for long hours...
leading to physical discomfort. These working conditions interfere with the family lives of employees and cause work-family conflict.

In India, women constitute about 35 percent of the workforce of call centers, and are likely to be affected by the unusual working environment of call centers. Moreover, it is an established fact that women world over are responsible for household and child and elderly care, which further adds up to the stress levels of women employees, leading to family-work conflict. Realizing the significance of women’s contribution to the growth and development of organizations, a large number of women-centric policies have been developed by organizations so as to attract and retain meritorious and efficient women employees in the organization and provide them an environment where they are able to balance their personal and professional lives (Kelly et al., 2008). On the personal front also, there is ample literature available on the positive impact of social support (support of a spouse, parents, children, relatives, friends, etc.) on work-family balance and reduction in stress levels (Cohen and Wills, 1985; Dunseath et al., 1995). Although past research has given us much insight into the impact of gender-sensitive practices and social support on employee’s work attitudes and turnover intentions, limitations in those research leave theoretical and empirical gaps in our understanding of how gender-sensitive practices affect family support and, hence, the employees’ work attitudes.

The last few years have witnessed many transitions in the research on the work-family interface. It has changed from conflict aspect (Barnett, 1998; Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1999) to that of having positive consequences of combining work and family roles (Barnett, 1998; Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1999). Studies suggest positive effects on the family due to participation in work roles (Rothbard, 2001). Brough et al. (2005) reported the positive impact of “family-friendly” organizational resources on job and family satisfaction. Work-family enrichment model propounded by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) explains the linkage between work and family (work to family and family to work) with the help of two concepts, namely, instrumental and affective paths. Instrumental path suggests that the development of resources, skills, etc., in one area directly leads to high performance in the other area. The affective path consists of two components. The first component highlights the production of positive affect in a domain due to development of resources in the same domain. The second component explains the spillover effect of positive affect developed in first domain leading to a high performance in the second domain. This implies that the benefits and facilities received at the workplace make the employee happy and satisfied resulting into him/her shouldering and fulfilling the family responsibilities happily, thus improving his/her family role performance. The positive environment, thus, created in the family domain gets spilled over to the workplace motivating an employee to stay focused and committed. Now, how this spillover takes place from the employee to his/her family members and vice versa is the main objective of this study.

There is ample literature available on a process that occurs when there is a transfer of strain from one person to another person in the same social environment (Bolger et al., 1989; Westman and Etzioni, 1995) and is referred to as crossover. Crossover occurs when stress or strain in one person leads to an increase in stress or strain in a partner/spouse (Westman and Vinokur, 1998). This implies that strain experienced by a spouse in the work domain transfers to his/her partner in the home domain who in turn strains the employee in the home domain. The employee carries this strain to the work area and feels stressed. Crossover theories are primarily dominated by transfer of strain between partners (Hammer et al., 1997). However, research predicts positive crossover also to take place (Bakker and Demerouti, 2009; Bakker et al., 2009) in much the same way spouses transfer their negative attitudes and affect. In this paper, we begin to answer these questions by examining how the implementation of gender-sensitive practices in the organizations lead to support of family to the employee by drawing from crossover theory.
We identify crossover mechanism by which employee experiencing the benefits of gender-sensitive practices can influence the attitude of his/her family members.

The study is conducted on women employees of call centers in India and makes a significant contribution to the literature of work-family interface. The study is also important from the point of view of crossover literature as most of the crossover studies have focused on the effect of husband’s job stress on their wives. The reverse has hardly been studied. This study focuses on women employees of call centers in India as samples for the in-depth study of work-family interface. The existing studies have dealt with the issues of organizational support (Burke, Burgess and Fallon, 2006; Burke, Koyuncu and Fiksenbaum, 2006; Moon and Roh, 2010) and family support (Gordon and Whelan-Berry, 2004; Tara and Ilavarasan, 2009) separately. Very few studies exist which have taken up the issue together (Valk and Srinivasan, 2011) but have not dealt with the transfer mechanism. So, this study is an endeavor toward understanding the relationship between gender-sensitive practices and family support and their impact on stress and other outcomes.

Research framework and hypotheses

Around the world, it is the responsibility of women to take care of children and elders, household work and other family-related issues. They work in “two shifts, one in paid employment and the second one at home” (Broadbridge, 2008). Hence, it becomes difficult for them to synchronize their personal and work life. This situation becomes even more difficult for women working in call centers as these call centers are characterized by the unusual working environment (Bidwai, 2003; Taylor and Bain, 1999) (night shifts, westernized culture and rigid control). Therefore, they require such support which can help them to carry out their responsibilities both at the workplace and in the family smoothly without any stress.

Off lately, gender-sensitive practices or work-life balance practices are one of the much talked about human resource practices (Fleetwood, 2007) providing some relief to women employees. These practices are known to have many benefits like: increased job satisfaction (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998; Thompson and Prattas, 2005; Verma et al., 2013), organizational commitment (Kopelman et al., 2006), reduced work-family conflict (Thomas and Ganster, 1995) and lower levels of stress (Verma et al., 2013). Burke, Burgess and Fallon (2006) and Burke, Koyuncu and Fiksenbaum (2006) reported that more the number of supportive organizational practices for women, higher their job and career satisfaction leading to increased levels of psychological well-being. Flexitime provides autonomy to employees which helps them to develop work patterns such that they are able to combine work and personal life commitments (Wickramasinghe and Jayabandu, 2007). Researchers suggest that formal “family-friendly” policies with flexible time schedules enable women to participate more in family responsibilities, thereby enhancing their performance in the family role (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000). Thus, they are able to balance their work and family roles (Papalexandris and Kramar, 1997) and decrease the pressure of multiple roles (Kossek and Ozeki, 1999). Some researchers have gone to the extent of postulating that absence of work-life balance policies is a major barrier to realizing work-family balance (Adisa et al., 2016). On the basis, of the above-mentioned literature, we hypothesize that:

\[ H1a. \] Gender-sensitive practices have a negative relationship to stress.

There are innumerable studies which have explained the interdependency of work and family roles (Barnett, 1998; Edwards and Rothbard, 2000; Lambert, 1990). These studies on work-family interface talk about impact of work on family, both by creating work to family conflicts (Eby, 2001; Eby, et al., 2005; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) and by stimulating positive spillover from work to family (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). This implies that nature or characteristics of work have an impact on family members.
Innumerable studies have talked about the formation of attitudes of spouse toward the organization of employee (Weiss, 2002), especially toward the organization in which the working conditions lead to work-family conflicts, for example, long work hours in case of nurses, doctors and fire fighters (Barger et al., 2009) or night shifts in call centers (Verma et al., 2013) or life-threatening situations in which police officers work (Oudejans, 2008). Studies have reported that combining of work and family roles lead to positive results (Barnett, 1998; Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1999). At the same time, the positive aspect of work-family interface has also been explained in terms of benefits gained in one role positively affecting the other role. For example, positive and flexible work environment leads to positive behavior and consequences in the family (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000; Voydanoff, 2001). Organizations through implementation and practice of gender-sensitive practices affect the family members in a positive way or facilitate the formation of positive attitudes (Kelly et al., 2008). This suggests that there is an increased likelihood of developing a positive attitude of family members toward the employer and a positive environment in the family if organizations implement policies which help employees to cope up with the demands of the family. The congenial environment, thus, created at home might encourage a family member to support his/her partner to focus more on workplace responsibilities. The formation of the attitude of spouse and his/her commitment toward the company is widely supported by research (Bourg and Segal, 1999; Burrell et al., 2003; Gade et al., 2003) but exactly how a spouse or other family members will support the employee remains unstudied.

Crossover is a process in which the strain suffered by one spouse affects the strain level of the other spouse (Westman and Vinokur, 1998). Crossover research in work-family literature describes how transference of strain takes place between spouses through a number of communicative mechanisms (Westman and Vinokur, 1998; Westman, Vinokur, Hamilton, and Roziner, 2004). Westman and Vinokur (1998) explained three mechanisms of how crossover takes place. These mechanisms include stressors, empathetic reactions and an indirect mediating interaction process. They suggested that common stressors in a shared environment increase strain of both the partners and can be treated as a crossover. Empathetic reactions lead to the transfer of strain from one partner to another leading to empathetic crossover. The basis for this view is that as the partners are closely related to each other and care for each other, they are therefore strongly affected by each other's emotions and moods. The third mechanism throws light on the indirect crossover, i.e., an increase in strain in one partner is likely to trigger negative interactions in the family which are perceived by the partner also in the same manner. Majority of the studies have focused on the crossover of psychological strain (Hammer et al., 1997, 2003; Westman et al., 2001; Westman, Etzion and Horovitz, 2004); however, positive crossover has also been predicted to occur (Bakker and Demerouti, 2009; Bakker et al., 2009; Westman et al., 2009). A study by Westman et al. (2001) suggests that the partners' negative and positive emotional displays can be seen as an “interpersonal exchange style” that can serve as an indirect crossover mechanism (Green, et al., 2011). According to Westman et al. (2001), just as negative job demands have a negative impact on the well-being of partner, in a similar manner, positive job demands may invoke positive feelings in the employee and may crossover to the partner affecting his/her positive well-being. Similarly, Morris and Keltner (2000) pointed out that emotional displays by one person can affect other peoples' behavior by stimulating emotional responses in them or by providing them information or by reinforcing specific behaviors in them. Bakker and Demerouti (2009) propounded that empathetic crossover would result not only in negative experiences but would be applicable for the positive crossovers also. A study on the crossover and business trips domain reveals that positive feelings and vigor expressed by the travelers are transmitted to their life partners (Westman et al., 2009). This gives an insight that negative emotional displays in one person evoke negative feelings in the other member and positive emotional displays by the employee crossover to evoke positive feelings in the family.
members. Happiness and satisfaction felt by the employee due to some positive organizational resources may crossover evoking positive feelings in the family members and may lead to support and encouragement by them. Given the aforementioned arguments, it follows that spouses may transfer their positive emotions or affect or attitude in much the same manner as they transfer negative emotions and attitude. Since India is a family-oriented society, we argue that crossover of positive emotions takes place not only between spouses but among family members also. Hence, we hypothesize that:

**H1b.** Gender-sensitive practices have a positive relationship to the family support.

The literature consistently provides evidence in favor of the positive impact of social support on work-family balance and positive career outcomes (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000; Voydanoff, 2001). Social support may be from different sources such as employees’ spouse, parents, siblings, children, extended family and friends. Researchers report that the help extended by a spouse is complementary to the work-life balance practices and benefits provided by the organizations (Barnett and Rivers, 1996) and leads to more happiness and satisfaction of women (Cohen and Wills, 1985). Instrumental support, i.e., household chores of the employees being shared by family members (Wayne et al., 2006) results in saving of time at home which can be utilized by employees for important workplace activities. Interpersonal support (Becker and Moen, 1999) by husbands and emotional support (Wayne et al., 2006) by relatives contribute to positive affect that helps women to concentrate at their workplace.

Researchers have demonstrated that satisfaction with both work and family makes an individual happy and satisfied with his/her life. It has a positive cumulative effect on his/her perceived quality of life (Rice et al., 1985, 1992). Researchers have observed a positive relationship between social support from family and satisfaction at work and career development (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000; Frone et al., 1997).

Though not much attention has been paid to the role of spouses or partners or family members in supporting the lives of working women, their contribution cannot be neglected. In a family-oriented culture like India, we believe that a family is an important unit providing support, cooperation, strength and courage to its members especially during the time of need. Therefore, we also explore the possibility of family support acting as a mediating variable between gender-sensitive practices and stress as it could alter the strength of some of the relationships. Hence, we postulate that:

**H2a.** Family support has a negative relationship to stress.

**H2b.** Family support will mediate the relationship between gender-sensitive practices and stress.

Elangovan (2001) examined the relationship between work-related stress, job satisfaction and organizational commitment and reported that higher level of stress results in reduced job satisfaction, which in turn leads to lower level of commitment. Similarly, Nagar (2012) in her research on school teachers concluded that job burnout is linked to decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Deery and Jago (2009) in their research on the tourism industry focused on the effect job satisfaction and organizational commitment have on employee’s intention to leave. The linkages between stress, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intent to leave indicated in the literature help us to develop the following hypotheses:

**H3a.** Stress has a negative relationship to job satisfaction.

**H3b.** Stress has a negative relationship to organizational commitment.

**H3c.** Stress has a positive relationship to intent to leave.

**H4a.** Job satisfaction has a positive relationship to organizational commitment.
H4b. Job satisfaction has a negative relationship to intent to leave.

H5. Organizational commitment has a negative relationship to intent to leave.

The hypothesized model is given in Figure 1.

Methodology

Sample and procedure

In order to test hypotheses, three models were compared. The first model assumes that family support plays a mediating role in the relationship between gender-sensitive practices and stress. In the second model, family support is assumed to partially mediate the effect of gender-sensitive practices on stress. The third model is a non-mediated model in which gender-sensitive practices are directly related to family support and stress.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 302 women employees employed in eight call centers situated in National Capital Region of Delhi, India. Out of a total of 302 respondents, 77.4 percent were unmarried and only 22.6 percent were married. The average age of the respondents was 21.7 years (SD = 0.947) and average experience in the call center was 1.40 years (SD = 0.729). Majority of the sample were call center agents or customer support representatives (75.5 percent), 19.3 percent were at the position of team leaders and only 5.4 percent were call center managers. In all, 36.5 percent of the respondents were graduates, 47.8 percent were postgraduates, 11 percent had a professional qualification and 4.7 percent fell in the “other” category.

Measures

Gender-sensitive practices

Gender-sensitive practices were assessed through a scale developed and used by National Association of Software and Services Companies – Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad Study (2009) on “Crossing the Digital Barriers.” Five items were taken for the present study. The respondents gave their rating on the basis of their agreement with each of the items on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree). A sample item is “Flexi timings of the organization help me to meet my family demands.” The reliability of the scale was 0.59 (see the Appendix for complete scale).

Family support

Family support was assessed through a three-item scale developed by the authors themselves. The respondents were asked to rate the items on a five-point scale (1 = strongly
disagree to 5 = strongly agree). A sample item is “My family extends full support to me in carrying out my work responsibilities.” The reliability of the scale was 0.68 (see the Appendix for complete scale).

**Job satisfaction**
Job satisfaction was assessed through a six-item scale developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951). Out of the six items, three items were reverse coded. The respondents were asked to rate the items on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). A sample item is “I feel fairly well satisfied with my job.” The reliability of the scale was 0.79 (see the Appendix for complete scale).

**Stress**
Stress was measured with four burnout and anxiety-related items (e.g. I feel emotionally drained by my job, I feel tense at my job) adapted from the scale developed by Tate *et al.* (1997). Respondents indicated the degree to which they experienced each of these symptoms on a six-point scale. The reliability of the scale was 0.79 (see the Appendix for complete scale).

**Organizational commitment**
Organizational commitment was assessed by using the scale developed by Mowday *et al.* (1979). Seven items from the original scale were used for assessing this construct (e.g. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization). The respondents were asked to give their rating on a five-point rating scale. The reliability of the scale was 0.79 (see the Appendix for complete scale).

**Intent to leave**
Intent to leave was assessed using Comprehensive Workplace Scale by Tate *et al.* (1997). It consisted of two items and the ratings were given on a five-point scale (1 = very often, 2 = fairly often, 3 = sometimes, 4 = occasionally and 5 = rarely or never). The sample item is “How often do you think of leaving your present job?” The reliability of the scale was 0.75 (see the Appendix for complete scale).

**Result and analysis**
**Descriptive statistics**
The data were analyzed using SPSS (version 20). The inter-correlations between variables and the mean, standard deviation and Cronbach’s α for each variable are presented in Table I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>GSP</th>
<th>FS</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>JS</th>
<th>OC</th>
<th>IL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GSP</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.295**</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>-0.249**</td>
<td>-0.234**</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.279**</td>
<td>0.352**</td>
<td>-0.486**</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.256**</td>
<td>0.287**</td>
<td>-0.523**</td>
<td>0.569**</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>-0.127*</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
<td>0.426**</td>
<td>-0.407**</td>
<td>-0.415**</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** n = 302. GSP, gender-sensitive practices; FS, family support; ST, stress; JS, job satisfaction; OC, organizational commitment; IL, intent to leave. Cronbach’s α is in parentheses along the diagonal. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

Table I. Scale correlation matrix
Test of the proposed model

Structural equation modeling analyses using AMOS 18 tested the models in order to validate the mediation hypothesis. The procedure was drawn from Baron and Kenny’s (1986) work. According to them, three steps must be taken to test the mediating role of a variable:

1. test a total mediation model with the indirect relationship of IV on DV (through MV) implying a significant relationship between the two;
2. estimate a partial mediation model, which has paths from the IV to the DV that are direct and that passes through the mediating variable (MV); and
3. compare this model with a non-mediated model in which IV causes both DV and MV but there is no direct relationship between MV and DV.

Testing the models

The fit indices are presented in Table II. The total mediated model was tested first in which family support plays a mediating role between gender-sensitive practices and stress. It did not adequately fit the data. The second model to be tested was partially mediated model which suggests that gender-sensitive practices affect both family support and stress. The non-mediated model was the last model to be tested which suggests the direct relationship between gender-sensitive practices and family support and between gender-sensitive practices and stress but no relationship between family support and stress.

Comparing the indices of the three models, it can be seen that the values of GFI, AGFI, IFI and CFI exhibit a fairly good fit of the data. Values of $\chi^2$ and RMSEA exhibit a poor fit to the data. Among all the three models, the indices of the partially mediated model are better than the other two models and, hence, can be accounted for.

Also, the partially mediated model exhibited significant path coefficients and in the direction hypothesized as shown in Figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\chi^2$/df</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total mediation</td>
<td>7.709</td>
<td>0.948</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>0.888</td>
<td>0.885</td>
<td>0.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial mediation</td>
<td>7.040</td>
<td>0.958</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td>0.914</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td>0.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-mediation</td>
<td>7.323</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td>0.894</td>
<td>0.892</td>
<td>0.145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II. Comparison of fit indices of models

Notes: **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Figure 2. Hypothesized model with path coefficients
Discussions and implications

The findings of the study indicate that women employees who experience and take benefit from gender-sensitive practices of the organization experience less stress and are more satisfied with their jobs (H1a). Our findings are in line with the prior research works which suggest that organizations having work-life balance policies enjoy high commitment of employees (Lourel and Gueguen, 2007; Smith and Gardner, 2007; Thompson et al., 1999). Similarly, research carried out in S. Korea indicates that family-friendly policies have a positive impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Park and Kim, 2001). Flexibility at workplaces permits women employees to devote more time to their families (Allen, 2001; Thomas and Ganster, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999) enabling them to maintain a balance between work and family. Researchers have shown that mere presence of various work-life balance practices, even if not availed by employees has a positive effect on the organizational outcomes (Nelson et al., 1990; Scandura and Lankau, 1997).

The main aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between gender-sensitive practices and family support and their impact on job outcomes. We find that gender-sensitive practices are positively related to family support (H1b) which gives a very interesting insight into the work-family interface. This implies that the spillover is not only in the attitudes/behavior of family members as well. Crossover from one domain to another has more extensive impact covering several actors. Consistent with earlier studies (Bakker and Demerouti, 2009; Bakker et al., 2009), a positive crossover seems to take place between women employees and their family members. The positive emotions displayed by women employees at home owing to gender-sensitive practices in the organization positively affect the behavior of other family members. Presence and implementation of gender-sensitive practices in the organization help women employees to balance between work and family demands (Thomas and Ganster, 1995). They are able to fulfill their family needs which make their family members happy. The satisfaction at both the fronts, i.e., work and family roles make them happy and results in life satisfaction and quality of life (Rice et al., 1985, 1992). This satisfaction may trigger positive emotions in them which when displayed in the family may create positive environment resulting into happiness and satisfaction of other family members also who reciprocate in the form of support to them so that they can work with more dedication and commitment at their workplaces. The basis for this crossover can be the close relationships between family members who care for one another and share greater parts of their lives together (Westman and Vinokur, 1998). Though the crossover literature is dominated by the crossover of strain between partners, our research finding reinforces the concept of positive crossover (Bakker and Demerouti, 2009; Bakker et al., 2009) not only between spouses but other family members also. This implies that more the organizational support more will be the family support.

Our next finding is the relationship between family support and stress (H2a). In a close knitted society like India, the immediate family or extended family is a source of great support and relief to the working women. As expected, our finding suggests that family support alleviates the stress levels of women employees. This implies that women who get family support are more satisfied and committed to their jobs and have lower intentions to quit their jobs and, thus, have lower levels of stress. Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) postulated that individuals having support from their spouses for child care activities have to make lesser adjustments at their workplaces and, hence, perform more effectively on the job. Researchers have observed a positive relationship between social support from family and satisfaction at work and career development (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000; Prone et al., 1997). Our findings highlight the significance of family support to women employees as this support helps them to mitigate the stress of the workplace which in turn might enhance job satisfaction and commitment which is consistent with the findings of Marks (1977).
who postulated that positive affect boosts an individual’s energy level to such an extent that it increases the likelihood of being highly engaged in another role. We had hypothesized that family support will mediate the relationship between gender-sensitive practices and stress on the premise that in India family is an important asset for any individual. For working women, family support is very important but only partial mediation was confirmed ($H2b$) with not all values fitting the data. The reason could be the satisfaction and happiness of women employees, due to the implementation of gender-sensitive practices in their organizations. Through these practices, women employees might be able to fulfill their family demands and, hence, able to maintain a balance between work-family life leading to less stress. This also means that they require less of family support.

The relationships between stress and job satisfaction ($H3a$), stress and organizational commitment ($H3b$) and between stress and intention to leave ($H3c$) have rightly been proved as increased levels of stress in the organization will result in reduced job satisfaction and organizational commitment but will enhance intention to leave.

The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment and between job satisfaction and intent to leave ($H4a$ and $H4b$) are found to be significantly related to each other. Women having a high level of job satisfaction are more likely to show greater organizational commitment. Women who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be happy and, hence, may be more committed toward their organizations which is reflected in their enhanced and improved performance. The finding is consistent with previous research (Nagar, 2012).

The study concludes that organizational commitment is a significant predictor of intention to leave the organization ($H5$). Women, who are not committed toward their organizations, do not develop a feeling of belongingness to the organization. They are not emotionally attached to their organization and, thus, have strong intentions to leave the organization.

This implies that both gender-sensitive practices provided by the organization and the family support are complementary to each other and together they support women employees in bringing satisfaction, reducing stress, enhancing commitment and decreasing the intentions to quit the job.

Since call center workers work under high organizational controls with rigid shift systems, the implementation of effective gender-sensitive practices might invite strong family support and then, both can be a source of great happiness to women employees and can lead to greater job satisfaction, commitment and reduction in stress and intent to leave. Human resource managers can take active role by implementing and making departmental managers understand that alternative work arrangements in the form of gender-sensitive practices not only increase job satisfaction and performance of employees and reduce their absenteeism and turnover (Baltes et al., 1999; Glass and Finley, 2002) but also have a very strong impact on other family members of the employees in the form of their support.

Limitations and directions for future research

The present study is not without limitations. First, the issue of causality may arise as the data was collected at the same point in time. Second, since self-report questionnaires were used to collect the data, chances are that common method bias may creep into the responses. However, the authors tried to control common method bias by giving assurance to participants that responses and surveys are anonymous. In addition, each participant was requested to answer the questions honestly as there is no right or wrong answer. Third, the majority of the respondents were unmarried, so it is not clear to what extent some of the variables were applicable on them and therefore, difficult to generalize these results to other sectors in other countries. Therefore, future researchers might consider the work-family interface with respect to married and unmarried women separately and also with respect to gender. We tried to explain the relationship between gender-sensitive practices and family
support through crossover theory though empirically we did not collect data regarding the same. Therefore, future researchers can study in detail the mechanism of crossover from work to family and vice versa.

In sum, the present results suggest the positive relationship between gender-sensitive practices and family support which might involve an empathic process or some interaction style which needs to be further researched by future scholars.

References


Tara, S. and Ilavarasan, V. (2009), “I would not have been working here!” Parental support to unmarried daughters as call centre agents in India”, Gender, Technology and Development, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 385-406.


Appendix. Questionnaire

PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

Please provide the following information.

1. Designation: ________________________________

2. Total experience in a call centre/BPO: ________________________________

3. Place (Location of your organization): ________________________________

4. Qualification: [tick (✓) whichever applicable]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under Graduation</th>
<th>PostGraduation</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Others(specific)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Age: ________________

6. Marital Status: [tick (✓) whichever applicable]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Single</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. If married, please specify,

   No. of children (please specify age): ________________________________

   Husband’s Profession: ________________________________

8. Type of Family: [tick (✓) whichever applicable]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joint</th>
<th>Nuclear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. No of members in the family: ________________________________

10. Please specify the relationship with the members of the family.
PART II

SECTION 1
The section below explores your opinion/perception/feelings about your job, organization and the factors leading to career advancement and stress. Indicate your responses by ticking (x) sign in the appropriate right-hand column of your choice below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GSP 1</td>
<td>Flexi timings of the organization help me to meet my family demands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSP 2</td>
<td>Good creche facility in the organization helps me to concentrate on my work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSP 3</td>
<td>There is no problem in getting leave in my organization in case I am required for non work/home responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSP 4</td>
<td>My organization makes sure that my responsibilities are well handled when I have unanticipated non work demands.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSP 5</td>
<td>I am not forced to work in tight shifts in my organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS 1</td>
<td>My family extends full support to me to carry out my work responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS 2</td>
<td>My family encourages me to work harder in the organization in order to achieve growth.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS 3</td>
<td>My family feels satisfied with the gender sensitive policies of my organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS 1</td>
<td>I feel fairly well satisfied with my job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS 2</td>
<td>Most days I am enthusiastic about my work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS 3</td>
<td>I like working here more than most other people who work for this organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS 4</td>
<td>I do not find enjoyment in my work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS 5</td>
<td>I am often bored with my job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS 6</td>
<td>I would consider taking another kind of job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC 1</td>
<td>I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC 2</td>
<td>I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>OC 3</td>
<td>I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>OC 4</td>
<td>I find that my values and the organization’s values are very similar.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>OC 5</td>
<td>I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC 6</td>
<td>I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>OC 7</td>
<td>This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>OC 8</td>
<td>Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization’s policies on important matters relating to its employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>OC 9</td>
<td>I really care about the fate of this organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About the authors
Monica Verma received PhD Degree from Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow, Master of Business Administration from Institute of Management Studies, Ghaziabad and an engineering Graduate from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Monica Verma has 17 years of experience of teaching postgraduate management students. She has published several papers in reputed journals and has organized various national and international conferences and seminars. Her current areas of research interest are gender inclusivity, gender-sensitive practices in IT and ITES industry. She is currently working as an Associate Professor and the Head in the Department of MBA at IMS Engineering College, Ghaziabad, India. Monica Verma is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: monicadev00@gmail.com

Kanika T. Bhal received PhD Degree from IIT Kanpur. Professor Kanika T Bhal has been a Visiting Fellow at Sloan School of Management, MIT, Cambridge, USA. She has published several articles in national and international journals and conferences and is on the editorial boards of International Journal of Digital Management and International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management. She has authored one and co-authored two books. She has done sponsored research for ICSSR, Dalma Group, MHRD, GLOBE Project (with Fordham and Wharton Business School) and US Air Force. Besides being a consultant to various organizations like Fifth Central Pay Commission of India, first national Judicial Pay Commission of India, DRDO, UPSC, DGS&D, Ministry of Rural Development and NICD, she is invited as an Expert in Government Committees and is a Member of the Academy of Management, USA, Society for Industrial Organization and Psychology, and Global Institute of Flexible Systems Management. Currently, she is Modi Foundation Professor of the Organization Management Group in the Department of Management Studies at IIT Delhi, India.

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Professor Prem Vrat is an outstanding academic, the Pro-Chancellor, a Professor of Eminence and the Chief Mentor at The NorthCap University, Gurugram. He was the Founder-Director, IIT Roorkee; Vice-Chancellor, U.P. Technical University, Lucknow (now known as APJAKTU, Lucknow. He has extensive experience of more than 48 years in Teaching, Research, Management Development and Consultancy. He has guided 41 PhD theses, 118 M Tech and 65 B Tech major projects on Industrial Application of Systems Approach and Management Science. He has published more than 455 research papers in reputed journals and proceedings of international and national conferences. His research papers have received more than 5,500 citations with g-index of 72 and maximum citation of a paper as 908 (as per google scholar). He has authored/co-authored seven books and completed five sponsored projects and 33 consultancy assignments.
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