

Exploring Theoretical Linkages Between Gender Role Expectations, Self-Efficacy, and Workplace Well-Being.

Niharika sharma¹, Shadab Ahmad Ansari²

¹Research Scholar, School of Liberal Education, Galgotias University, Plot No.2, Sector 17-A Yamuna Expressway, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, India 203201

niharikasharmadang@gmail.com

²Professor, School of Liberal Education, Galgotias University, Plot No.2, Sector 17-A Yamuna Expressway, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, India 203201

shadab.ansari@galgotiasuniversity.edu.in

ABSTRACT

The research examines the relationship between gender role expectations and employee well-being through their impact on self-confidence and belief in personal abilities. The framework uses Social Cognitive Theory along with Gender Schema Theory, Role Theory, and the PERMA+4 model to explain how workplace culture interacts with personal psychology to produce gendered experiences. The model shows how social norms affect personal beliefs and drive motivation, work performance, and growth through academic research combined with observational insights. This article brings together cultural viewpoints, especially from Indian workplace contexts. This article presents advanced knowledge about employee welfare and provides valuable information for researchers, teachers, and HR professionals.

Keywords-Gender role expectations; Self-efficacy; Workplace well-being; Social cognitive theory; Feminist theory; PERMA+4 model Conceptual Paper, Gender Psychology, Identity Construction.

INTRODUCTION

These co-gendered norms, which exist deeply within societal structures, continue to affect career decision-making and professional advancement, as well as access to workplace benefits. Widespread and subtle expectations significantly shape perceptions of an individual's competence, ambition, and level of success. The societal norms dictate that women need to fulfil traditional nurturing and compliant roles, whereas men must demonstrate assertive and leadership characteristics. The binary structure creates dual effects on both opportunity selection and self-efficacy perception through Bandura's definition of self-efficacy as the belief in one's ability to plan and execute actions toward desired results.

Indian organisations maintain substantial gender-based differences despite implementing policy reforms and increasing corporate inclusion programs and the workforce expansion of women over multiple decades. The number of women participating in organised work sectors grew from 3.64 million in 1990 to 5 million during 2005, yet they maintained below 19% workforce representation (Khandelwal, 2005; Ministry of Finance, 2007). Research findings showed that discrimination based on gender occurred to 18% of women while only 12% of men experienced it during their recruitment process, according to Kelly Services (2006). The occurrence of sexual harassment happens more frequently in both small firms and unorganised sectors, according to Kumari (2003). The current legal structures and institutional frameworks have proven insufficient to change the deeply embedded gender stereotypes.

The current research lacks understanding regarding how gendered expectations affect self-efficacy alongside workplace well-being. Researchers have studied gender roles, self-efficacy, and well-being separately, but no research integrates these elements into a single explanatory framework. The connection between these elements remains crucial to understand. The level of confidence people have in their abilities functions as a robust indicator that predicts their motivation levels and performance outcomes as well as their recovery capabilities (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Society's expectations either help or harm efficacy beliefs based on an individual's ability to have mastery experiences and their exposure to role models, positive feedback, and protection from stereotypes (Zeldin & Pajares, 2000; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

The paper establishes a conceptual framework titled Gender Role Expectations, Self-Efficacy, and Workplace Well-Being: An Integrative Conceptual Framework to merge theoretical understanding from Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977) with Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964), Feminist Theory (Tong, 2009) and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Through this framework, researchers understand how social gender norms create different levels of efficacy expectations by controlling access to opportunities, social feedback, and role model visibility. The mechanisms determine how people experience occupational well-being, job satisfaction, and personal growth.

The article uses empirical research from Mohr, Rath and Zurbirgen to demonstrate how actual workplace environments and gender role internalisation affect self-efficacy levels of working women either positively or negatively. The research aims to demonstrate three main goals by explaining how gender role expectations affect self-efficacy, identifying psychological links between efficacy beliefs and workplace well-being, and developing practical methods to create gender-inclusive spaces for professional success.

This synthesis works to enhance theoretical integration while generating gender-sensitive organisational practices and designing supportive interventions. Through a better understanding of how social expectations affect internal belief systems and well-being, we progress toward designing workplaces that offer gender-free success through equity-based empowerment.

Theoretical Background

Gender Role Expectations

Social norms, which are produced by society, determine the proper actions, qualities, and duties of people according to their gender assignment. These rules exist in institutional frameworks and spread through media networks, family systems, and educational institutions. The conventional standards in numerous cultural settings continue to associate women with communal nurturing roles and men with assertive leadership roles as described by West & Zimmerman (1987) and Eagly & Wood (2012). Gendered expectations create regular impacts on professional decisions, together with career choices, work assignments, and skill application.

Research conducted by Hofstede (2001) indicates that collectivist cultures create rigid gender norms in workplaces that prevent women from advancing into leadership roles. People develop internal societal scripts through repeated exposure to gendered behavioural models, which shape their self-assessment and social value perception according to Bem (1981). Khan (1964) states that social rule conflicts, which combine caregiving and professionalism, produce chronic rule stress mainly for women who perform dual roles.

.B. Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy represents the belief one holds regarding one's ability to produce desired results. According to Social Cognitive Theory, efficacy beliefs form through personal achievement experiences combined with watching others and getting feedback. Socialisation based on gender creates differences in available life experiences between men and women, which limits women's ability to develop efficacy beliefs (Zeldin & Pajares, 2000).

Feminist theory through the patriarchal system demonstrates how door opportunities that promote agency have been systematically limited for women (Tong, 2009). According to Weiner (1985), women tend to attribute their failures to personal deficiency while men attribute failures to external factors. These patterns lead to diminished self-confidence as well as decreased motivation because of discouragement that comes from early social communication (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

C. Workplace Well-Being

Workplace well-being consists of psychological satisfaction alongside significant engagement and a sense of belonging to the social circle, emotional resilience, and psychological satisfaction and meaningful engagement and social belonging and emotional resilience within the work environment. According to Seligman's PERMA model (2011), workplace thriving depends on five fundamental components, which include positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. The expanded PERMA +4 model developed by Donaldson (2020) adds workplace-specific components, physical health, mindset, work environment, and economic security to Seligman's original PERMA model for a more complete understanding of employee well-being.

The different areas continue to show gender-based disparities. Research shows that women bear the brunt of work-life conflicts and experience more occupational stress and exclusion from decision-making roles (Buddhapriya, 2009). Cast, class and race are intersectional factors that intensify current inequalities, which block access to resources that enhance well-being as described by (Crenshaw, 1989). Research conducted by Cavagnis (2022) and Campos-García (2022) demonstrates how organisations that foster flexibility and inclusion alongside psychological support generate better mental health results and higher engagement rates among women, which emphasises the need for gender-sensitive well-being interventions.

The theoretical understanding established above forms a comprehensive framework that connects gender role expectations with self-efficacy and workplace well-being. This table presents essential theories alongside their connected effects spanning these three domains.

Theory & Construct		Key Concepts	Theoretical relevance	Interaction Across Gender, Self-Efficacy & Well-Being	Sources
Self-Efficacy	Social Cognitive Theory.	Observational learning, efficacy building via mastery, modelling, persuasion	Explain how Gendered models and encouragement affect efficacy	Social learning of gendered roles shapes belief in capabilities, affecting engagement and well-being outcomes	Bandura (1977); Zeldin & Pajares (2000)
Feminist Theory		Patriarchal structures, power, and gender inequality	Structural bias limits efficacy-enhancing experiences for women	Inequity reduces access to well-being resources and weakens confidence in high-demand roles	Tong (2009)
Expectancy-Value Theory		Motivation is shaped by expected success and task value	Shows how beliefs about success and task value drive motivation and self-efficacy	Gendered socialisation can lead women to devalue tasks, lowering motivation and well-being.	Eccles & Wigfield (2002)
Attribution Theory		Three dimensions of causal attributions: Locus of Control, Stability, Controllability	Locus, controllability and stability of perceived causes future motivation, expectations, and emotions.	Women internalise failure as stable and uncontrollable, reducing efficacy and increasing vulnerability.	Weiner (1985)

Gender Role Expectations	Role Theory	Role expectations, strain, overload	Highlights how conflicting roles generate stress and impact perceived competence	Women face role conflict (work vs. home), reducing efficacy and harming well-being.	Kahn et al. (1964); Eagly & Wood (2012)
Gender Schema Theory.		Cognitive frameworks, gender behaviour and expectations.	Explains how internalised schemas influence domain-specific confidence	Reinforced gender norms limit perceived ability, reducing self-efficacy in non-traditional roles.	Bem (1981); Starr & Zurbriggen (2017)
Social Identity Theory.		In-group/out-group, self-appraisal via group membership	Shows how group membership shapes self-concept and motivation .	Gender group identity influences perceived competence and workplace fit, and moderates self-efficacy.	Tajfel & Turner (1979)
Self-Categorisation Theory		Group identities, conformity to group norms, and depersonalization.	Explains behaviour guided by social group norms and internalised identity	Explains how identifying with a gender group leads individuals to conform to its norms, impacting self-efficacy and well-being.	Turner et al. (1987)
Workplace Well-Being	PERMA +4 Model (Donaldson et al., 2020)	Positive emotions, meaning, accomplishment + 4 workplace domains	Offers a framework to understand holistic well-being in workplace settings.	Gender equity and support systems enhance flourishing and self-efficacy in the workplace.	Seligman (2011); Donaldson (2020)
Stereotype Threat Theory.		Anxiety, confirming stereotypes	Describes how stereotype activation impacts performance and self-belief	Fear of gender-based judgment lowers efficacy and reduces professional engagement.	Steele & Aronson (1995)
Job Demands-Resources Model		job stressors and support systems	Explains how work demands and supports affect burnout and engagement	Gendered division of labour increases	Cavagnis (2022);

			burnout and dissatisfaction.	Buddhappriya (2009)
--	--	--	------------------------------	---------------------

GAPS IN THE LITERATURE AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Gender role expectations, self-efficacy, and workplace well-being are all explained by various theoretical frameworks, but research frequently examines these factors independently, ignoring their dynamic interactions. The majority of research deals with gender through classification and psychological frameworks that overlook the impact of social and cultural factors on self-efficacy and well-being evaluation. Researchers cannot fully comprehend how internalised gender roles produce beliefs about personal capabilities that affect workplace emotions and career success if these components are examined separately. There is a significant gap in the current state of research because there are not many thorough theoretical frameworks that combine ideas from feminist theory with

motivational psychology and organisational behaviour. Most frameworks exist either as structural oppression analysis or individual psychological trait studies, while neglecting the connection between these levels. The analysis of institutional barriers by feminist theory fails to provide psychological details about efficacy development, while Social Cognitive Theory studies internal mechanisms but lacks analysis of structural gendered expectations. Academic research shows limited discussion about how gendered experiences persist through multiple layers of recursive workplace dynamics.

The current research demonstrates inadequate integration of intersectionality principles in its empirical approach. Research on the multiple aspects of gender shows awareness of its interaction with factors such as caste, class, age and family roles, yet academic investigations remain minimal. Research on the actual experiences of single mothers and working-class women, as well as gender-nonconforming individuals, remains insufficient, thus producing general conclusions and fundamental assumptions. The existing body of literature lacks a comprehensive investigation into male workplace experiences, which reveals how strict masculine norms about performance and emotional control impact their self-efficacy, as well as their workplace well-being. Research maintains a limited perspective about gender-based role expectations because it only focuses on female experiences.

Theories need more empirical validation to match their current state of development. Robust longitudinal and mixed-method research designs have yet to test conceptual links between gender role expectations and efficacy and well-being. Research in this field primarily depends on cross-sectional surveys, which fail to reveal developmental patterns of these constructs through time or their reactions to life changes, career shifts, and organisational programs. Researchers need to perform studies in diverse cultural settings, particularly in non-Western regions. The Western models fail to account for Indian gender norms because family structures, religious values, and community expectations heavily influence these.

Theoretical support remains scarce in current workplace applications. The majority of corporate diversity initiatives fail to recognize how internal gender stereotypes and self-protective biases affect daily workplace behaviours and choices. Work interventions tend to remain basic and brief because they fail to create lasting improvements in employee self-efficacy or workplace well-being. Theoretical foundations enable the development of meaningful policies through gender-neutral mentorship programs alongside equitable workload distribution and leadership pathways that support various life roles and family structures.

The research needs to bridge these essential knowledge gaps in the future. New conceptual frameworks must integrate both structural and individual-level components to create comprehensive models. Research should investigate how gendered expectations become internalised differently by social groups and how these internalised expectations influence self-efficacy development and occupational performance across time. The advancement of this field requires research that includes diverse samples together with intersectional analysis and theory-driven intervention studies. This approach will help researchers develop workplace well-being concepts that empower employees and adapt to specific settings beyond binary or deficit-based frameworks.

CONCLUSION

The research unites well-established psychological theories with existing gender-related discussions to develop a better comprehension of workplace interactions between these forces. The research suggests a unified framework that establishes connections between gender roles, personal work efficacy, and workplace happiness. This framework combines Social Cognitive Theory with Gender Schema Theory and Role Theory and the PERMA+4 model to explain how gender-based socialisation develops professional self-perceptions and workplace roles. These internalised beliefs drive how individuals participate in work activities while advancing their careers.

The analysis demonstrates how established social and cultural practices persist in restricting individual capability, particularly within workplaces that follow gender-based norms. This essay highlights the intricate relationships that exist between personal belief systems, gender role expectations, and job-related well-being. This discussion illustrates how individual workplace actions and behaviours stem from larger societal patterns and gender-based presumptions using the Job Demands–Resources Model, Social Cognitive Theory, Role Theory, and Gender Schema Theory. In addition to limiting confidence, gendered norms have an impact on how people interact with their roles, manage pressures at work, and maintain their emotional and mental well-being. I learned that gender roles influence workplace confidence levels, which in turn influence one's self-perception at work. Because it hinders goal-setting, erodes self-belief, and makes it harder to succeed in demanding job roles, rigid gender expectations can subtly limit performance. When companies continue to use antiquated power systems and unequal resource distribution, the detrimental effects on workers become more noticeable. People who work with unequal organisational structures and encounter systems that adhere to antiquated social norms encounter challenges with their well-being. This review shows that overly brief or oversimplified theories are unable to capture the full scope of workplace realities. Theories that only examine motivation or personality without examining how gender roles are formed in social-cultural contexts may overlook crucial aspects. Theories that only focus on structural factors have drawbacks because they fail to acknowledge people's resilience and the adaptive strategies, they employ to overcome challenges at work. Since their interaction determines work-related confidence and well-being, this review recommends using a holistic approach that looks at both personal beliefs and external circumstances. The research results in this paper lay the foundation for further scholarly studies to

The research findings presented in this paper establish the groundwork for upcoming academic investigations to develop new findings. The study unites essential theories to develop new research opportunities focused on authentic workplace experiences that focus on diverse genders and work roles while adopting inclusive perspectives. Research following this perspective would develop workplace policies that promote equality and create supportive environments that value all genders and foster well-being as an organisational objective.

Gender role expectation reevaluation stands as an essential duty to perform for people who experience work-related difficulties. Proper workplace support for growth and emotional well-being, along with fairness, requires comprehensive research and policy development that examines the interconnectedness of gender with self-belief and mental health.

REFERENCES

1. Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2), 191–215.
2. Bem, S. L. (1981). Gender schema theory: A cognitive account of sex typing. *Psychological Review*, 88(4), 354–364.
3. Briel, S., Osikominu, A., Pfeifer, G., Reutter, M., & Satlukal, S. (2022). Gender differences in wage expectations: The role of biased beliefs. *Empirical Economics*, 62, 187–212.
4. Cavagnis, L., Russo, C., Danioni, F., & Barni, D. (2022). Promoting women's well-being: A systematic review of protective factors for work–family conflict. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(24), 16938.
5. Cole, B. P., Baglieri, M., Ploharz, S., Brennan, M., Ternes, M., Patterson, T., & Kuznia, A. (2021). What is right with men? Gender role socialization and men's positive functioning. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 22(1), 88–100.
6. Donaldson, S. I., van Zyl, L. E., & Donaldson, S. I. (2020). PERMA+4: A framework for work-related well-being, performance and positive organizational psychology 2.0. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 2936.
7. Emslie, C., & Hunt, K. (2009). 'Live to work' or 'work to live'? A qualitative study of gender and work–life balance among men and women in mid-life. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(1), 151–172.
8. Hartman, R. L., & Barber, E. G. (2020). Women in the workforce: The effect of gender on occupational self-efficacy, work engagement and career aspirations. *Journal of Communication Studies*, 15(2), 45–61.

9. Rath, S., & Mishra, A. (2013). Gender-role perception and employment status in the self-efficacy of women. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, 2(3), 57–64.
10. Starr, C. R., & Zurbriggen, E. L. (2017). Sandra Bem's Gender Schema Theory after 34 years: A review of its reach and impact. *Sex Roles*, 76, 566–578.
11. Campos-Garcia, I. (2022). Wellbeing of female employees: What workplaces attract women? *Intangible Capital*, 18(3), 469–488.
12. Bussey, K., & Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation. *Psychological Review*, 106(4), 676–713.
13. Buddhapriya, S. (2009). Work-family challenges and their impact on career decisions: A study of Indian women professionals. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 16(2), 225–246.
14. Gervais, R. L., & Millear, P. (2016). Introduction: Key issues on women who work. In *Exploring resources, life-balance and well-being of women who work in a global context* (pp. 1–10). Springer.