

Shared Identity & Work-life Roles: A Study of Dual Career Couples

Tanvi Paras Kothari & Sameer Pingle

This paper examines the relationship between shared identity (affective, cognitive, perceived similarity, behavior and inclusion) and work-life role (occupational, marital, homecare and parental) in the Indian context. 380 dual career couples (DCC) working in different professions was contacted to fill self-administered questionnaires. To analyze the data multiple regression analysis was used. The results revealed an influence of various factors of shared identity on the occupational, marital, homecare and parental role commitment and value. The study serves as a guide to the development of high role commitment and reward for dual career couples. The study enriches the organizational behavior literature. This study identifies and validated the relationship between shared identity and work-life roles in the Indian context.

Tanvi Paras Kothari is Assistant Professor, Shri Jairambhai Patel Institute of Business Management, NICM, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India. E-mail: tanvi.faldu@gmail.com. **Sameer Pingle** is Associate Dean, SBM, SVKM Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, Indore Campus. Email: sameer.pingle@nmims.edu

Introduction

Globalization and urbanization were the forces which pushed entry of women in the paid workforce. Changing mindsets of women who do not want to be 'just housewives' but have career aspirations. This results in the redistribution of work and family roles among working couples. Indian values have an idealized demarcation of domain – men negotiated the colonial world, whereas women were seen as a custodian of the moral values at home (Mani, 1989). The entrance of women in the workforce has challenged this value system. Besides the increased education level of women resulted in a significant increase in conjugal role pattern (Conklin, 1973).

From the sociological point of view, responsibilities of men and women have changed at home and workplaces, which have redefined the family roles (Budworth et. al., 2008). The traditional view of roles has changed to more egalitarian viewpoints, resulting in equal sharing of home and work responsi-

bilities (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Entry of women in paid workforce did not free her from unpaid work responsibilities, resulting in a higher level of stress among women (HREOC, 2007). This gender defined attitude for role, hindered the idea of gender egalitarianism within Indian society. This situation indicated that there is an urge to develop understanding among couples especially for their identities.

Shared identity is the construct which was extensively studied among groups and teams. In the literature of groups and teams, it has been considered the main factor, which allowed individuals to act in their collective best interest especially in social dilemmas (Kollock, 1998). Budworth et. al. (2008) initiated to conceptualize the shared identity of dual career couples (DCC). They defined it as a partner involved in a common understanding of roles and corresponding behavior. Couple identity is a partner's sense of who they were as a unit and the extent to which a person views oneself as part of a couple and considered an important part of the self (Miller & Caughlin, 2013).

In India, family is considered as an important arrangement of the society and marriages are having special place in the Indian culture, which makes this relationship more precious. It urges to study this relationship development of a couple as a unit. Hence, this study is focused on the presence of shared identity and its association with various work and life roles for DCC.

Dual Career Couples (DCC)

In the late sixties, Rapoport and Rapoport (1969) introduced the term DCC. Both the heads of households had active careers and family lives in this type of structure. Dual-earner families were defined as "those in which both husband and wife are simultaneously employed in full time paid jobs outside their home. The jobs may be professional or non-professional and may vary with respect to their social prestige but they were generally undertaken due to mounting economic pressure rather than choice alone", whereas in "dual-career families women were in a professional job requiring professional education and high work commitment that is undertaken not merely due to economic necessity but also for personal fulfillment" (Bharat, 1995).

Division of Household Work

Despite the entry of women in the workforce cultural tradition and family role structure had not changed significantly. Women were responsible for day to day family tasks, for example, cooking, cleaning, shopping, and caring children and elder relatives (Sayer et al., 2009). Women participation in the workforce lead to progress, however it additionally made her work and render family life increasingly troublesome (Voydanoff, 2005).

Notwithstanding when both the partners worked on all the days, women kept on performing over twice as a great part of the unpaid family unit work as men (Baxter et al., 2005). There was a sig-

nificant observational proof that, in DCC, women assumed more responsibility for domestic work in the family compared to their counterpart men (Daly et al., 2008). An Indian study by Ramu (1987) found that employment of wife would not have noteworthy impact. Her spouse plays out his local job in light of the fact that the two life partners keep on being affected by conventional job duties and commitments. Men's workforce support was moderately steady over their life course, though mothers to a great extent pulled back from the professional work especially when they had young children (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Study of Stertz et. al. (2017) found that both partners' working hours involvement and duration of leave were associated with their attitude. For example, father's having egalitarian attitude decreased their working hours. It also affected the work decision of partner as such partner (mother) took shorter leaves and decreased their working hours, whereas mothers' attitude did not influence their husbands' behavior. Hence, women's work involvement decision was dependent on men's attitude for their gender-role after childbirth.

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Seagar (2005) examined that in the US, women spent a normal of 27 hours out of every week on household activities contrasted with men who spent just 16 hours each week for the equivalent.

In the UK, women spent 10 hours more on household activities than men, whereas in Sweden, men spent an hour less than women on household activities (Evertsson, 2006). Shockley and Allen (2018) studied that dual-earner couples' well-being is linked to their transition to parenthood especially for unequal division of paid and unpaid labor.

Role Strain & Role Stress

Women experienced high level of role overload and role stress/strain compared to their men counterparts. Despite their presence in the workforce, their home responsibilities had not been decreased. Studies on dual career families center around the job of a female as a mother in reference to her new role as co-worker which either encourage or impeded her new role (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1982). Research by Stanfield (1985) investigated that demands of two jobs- spouse/mother and professional-can expose her to strain. The simultaneous roles demand to set priorities.

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Hall and Hall (1980) found that stress among DCC was a result of role- overload, conflict and change. Women were often kept aside from taking an interest in significant authoritative exercises that were basis for promotions (Falkenberg & Monachello, 2007). In DCC, especially the females attempted to adjust the demands of two jobs: profession and fam-

ily. Hall (1975) found that the nature of expectation from spouse and mother was affected due to her working outside the home.

Indian Studies

Changing demographics of the workforce also increased the interest of researchers to widen the avenues of work and family related research in India. In the late nineties, comparative studies between dual-earner families and single-earner families had been carried out. The first study by Ramu (1987), followed by Shukla (1988), Shukla and Kapoor (1990), Rani and Khandelwal (1992) and Bharat (1995) found that work status of wives gave them the decision-making power in dual-earner families, which was lacking in the single-earner families. It indicated that the employment status of wives was a relevant factor for spousal power. In an egalitarianism system, it decreased husbands' power and increased wives' power (Ramu, 1989) seemingly in areas such as cooking and home decoration. Financial decisions of families were still with their husbands. Studies of Saxena and Bhatnager (2009) indicated that employed women gained power due to their employment status but they remained subordinate to men due to the patriarchal system which fosters women's dependence. Hence, it nullified the gains employment brought for them.

Bharat (1995) studied 326 working couples. The primary finding of the study was that career wives and their spouses had a positive attitude for working women

than non-career wives. The findings reflected that DCC experienced maximum satisfaction in performing their gender-defined roles (Shukla, 1988), as husbands attached highest significance to their role as an earner, while wives' attached highest significance to their domestic role, regardless of their career and working status. Another highlight of the finding was that all the respondents gave the highest rank to wives' child care role. The findings also reflected that the career wives considered the homecare role belonged to both, wives and their husbands, while their husbands considered that it belonged to the wives only, which actually was the reflection of the gender bias. Apart from this, role stress was also one of the consequences of dual career families. This stress might be generated due to traditional gender role ideology, resource inadequacy, personal inadequacy and lack of social support. Aziz (2004) in his study of women in the IT profession found a significant difference in the level of role stress among married and unmarried women. He also found the difference in inter-role distance. Female partner in DCC were also highly stressed (Patra & Suar, 2007) as they had higher achievement orientation as well as autonomy and dominance (Mathur & Bharti, 2001).

Krishna and Srivastava (2011) defined DCC in three categories: accommodators, adversary and ally. The authors mentioned that in India, the number of adversary type career couples was increasing. Marital problems, neglected home affairs, and other social and psychological problems, increase rate of divorce. The main reason for this undesir-

able outcome was higher job involvement, higher need of achievement, competition and low involvement of partner at home. Social support mechanism reduced the level of strain experienced by individuals to manage their work and family responsibilities. In India, social support mainly came from non-institutional sources such as spouse, parents, parents-in-law, friends, neighbors and paid help (Sekaran, 1992). Social support has been found to reduce the amount of strain experienced by individuals in managing their work and family responsibilities (Pal & Saksvic, 2006). Spousal support was an important predictor of well-being among employed wives with multiple role responsibilities (Rao et al., 2003)

In India, evolution of work and family roles for male and female presented an intricate web of attitude, some roles have changed with time and others remained stable (Bhatnagar & Rajadhyaaksha, 2001). This indicated that traditional role expectation was undergoing a transition, as couples agreed with their role change perceptions for spouse and family support (Narayana & Bhardwaj, 2005). In India, despite the gradual shift in societies' attitude and values towards gender roles, female still shouldered the major responsibilities for caring activities (Aziz, 2004). Remarkable changes have been noticed towards the attitude of husbands for household responsibilities but it had not reflected in actual participation (Narayana & Bhardwaj, 2005). Perception of an individual about their role is the most important when they associate themselves with either work or life roles.

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Literature review revealed that home responsibility of women was not decreased due to adoption of the new role as an employee. They were still spending more time for child and elder care. Based on literature, gap was found that not a single study focused on the influence of couples' unique relationship that they are sharing as a couple (a decision taken by one have an impact on the other will indicate the presence of shared identity among couples.) on various occupational and life roles. Based on this gap the following hypotheses were proposed.

- H1: Shared identity of DCC positive relation with occupational role commitment and value
- H2: Shared identity of DCC positive relation with marital role commitment and value
- H3: Shared identity of DCC positive relation with homecare role commitment and value
- H4: Shared identity of DCC positive relation with parental role commitment and value

Theoretical Construct

Shared identity is defined as the couple's sense of unity.

Work -life role is defined as 'an individual's personal expectation from his/her work and personal life.'

Life role salience refers to “an individual’s internalized beliefs and attitudes about the personal relevance of a role, standard for the performance of the role, and the manner in which personal time, money, and energy resources were to be committed to perform that role” (Amatea et. al., 1986)

Participants

A questionnaire survey of 380 (760 individuals) dual career couples from various industries and academia in Gujarat state of India was conducted to test the hypothesized relationship. Questionnaire was distributed to around 440 respondents out of which 380 completely filled useable responses were received.

Measure

This research was part of a larger doctoral study. Construct of shared identity does not have a valid scale available in the literature as it is found to be a new construct in the work-life literature. Hence, the scale was developed and validated as a part of the larger study. Based on validation five-factor structure has been identified as:

Factor	Item	Cronbach α
Affective	5	0.75
Cognitive	4	0.71
Perceived Similarities	4	0.70
Behavior	3	0.66
Inclusion	1	0.85 (Test-retest reliability)

Source: Kothari & Pingle (2019)

To measure work and life roles, life role salience scales (LRSS) developed and validated by Amatea et.al. (1986) was used to measure work and life roles. Reliability of occupational role commitment and value, marital role commitment and value, homecare role commitment and value, and parental role commitment and value are 0.67, 0.57, 0.62 and 0.80 respectively.

Analysis

Data was computed for DCCs by adding the responses of husband and wife, hence one couple is one respondent. For the subsequent analysis this nested data was used. The summarized results of multiple regressions are shown in Table 1

For the hypothesis to be true, the independent variable (factors of shared identity) must have a significant effect on dependent variable (occupational, marital, homecare and parental roles). Each model has significance value less than .05, which makes model fit.

From model 1 conclusion can be drawn that R square is 6.2 % which indicated that all the variance in occupational role commitment and value can be explained by CSI and PSSI. It indicated that one level of increase in CSI will increase the couples’ commitment and value for occupational role by .168. Similarly influence of PSSI can also be explained. As they both understand the importance of their professional commitment and value due to their involvement into a reputable profession, hence, H1 is partially accepted.

Table 1 Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

IV	ASI			CSI			PSSI			BSI			ANOVA						
	B	Std. β	t	Sign.	B	Std. β	t	Sign.	B	Std. β	t	Sign.	B	Std. β	t	Sign.	F	Sign.	R Square
Model 1	OR	-	-	-	.168	.219	3.49	.01	.106	.147	2.09	.04	-	-	-	-	6.15	.00	6.2%
Model 2	MR	.196	.290	5.68	.00	.189	.275	5.61	.00	-	-	-	.098	.154	3.02	.00	70.29	.00	65.5%
Model 3	HR	-	-	-	.148	.202	3.38	.00	.179	.258	3.86	.00	-	-	-	-	17.08	.00	39.3%
Model 4	PR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.276	.249	2.92	.00	-	-	-	-	11.86	.00	41.1%

IV- Independent Variable, ASI – Affective Shared Identity, CSI- Cognitive Shared Identity, PSSI- Perceived Similarity Shared Identity, BSI- Behaviour Shared Identity, DV-Dependent Variable, OR-Occupational Role, MR-Marital Role, HR-Homemaker Role, PR-Parental Role

Model 2 concludes that R square is 65.5 % which indicated that all the variance in marital role commitment and value can be explained by ASI, CSI and BSI. It indicated that one level of increase in ASI, CSI and BSI will increase the couple’s commitment and value for marital role by .196, .189 and 0.098 respectively. Couples have shared feelings, shared thinking and shared practices which ultimately increase their commitment and value for marital role. Hence, H2 is also partially accepted.

Conclusion can be drawn from model 3 that R square value is 39.3 % which indicated that all the variance in homecare commitment and value can be explained by CSI and PSSI. It indicated that one level of increase in CSI will increase the couples’ commitment and value for homecare role by .148. Similarly influence of PSSI can also be explained. Couples have similar feeling for home care role, as they might realize the burden of dual role and hence, perceive themselves similarly to perform homecare role also. Hence, H3 is partially accepted.

Conclusion can be drawn that R square value is 41.1 % which indicated that all the variance in parental role can be explained by PSSI. It indicated that one level of increase in PSSI will increase the couples’ commitment and value for parental role by .276. This is because couples’ relationship might be stronger due to presence of kids in their family, which improves their perceived similarity as parents. Hence, H4 is partially accepted.

Discussion Implications

Work and life roles were associated with shared identity was the major finding of the

study. Our findings replicated those of Rossignac-Milon and Higgins (2018). Their study indicated that the relationship of couples' progress through shared feelings, shared practices, and coordination to shared identity. Partners usually think in terms of "we" and include perspectives, resources and identities of each other in their sense of self. Study of Wadham et. al. (2016) revealed that the sense of identity, empathy and sensitivity among couples was influenced by shift in power and balance. Hence, they work to protect each other's sense of role and identity.

The relationship of couples' progress through shared feelings, shared practices, and coordination to shared identity.

Occupational role commitment and value have positive relation with CSI and PSSI factors of shared identity supported by the finding of Adisa et. al. (2017). Study indicated that professional communication of DCC was increased among partners especially when they belong to the same profession. Study by Petriglieri and Obodaru (2018) found that professional development - identity development was the result of mutual understanding of couples especially who had a bidirectional secure base. Both partners include each other's attributes for the development and expansion of their professional identity development, whereas Kierner (2018) found that the main reason to accompany a partner in foreign assignment was just to appreciate the opportunities and long-term career benefits. These

kinds of behavior were highly valued by partner., whereas study of Rajadhyaksha and Velgach (2015) contradicted the finding by indicating that women were significantly more egalitarian in their gender role ideology than men.

That marital role commitment and value has a positive relation with ASI, CSI and PSSI factors of shared identity is the reiteration of the finding of Walsh & Neff (2018), which indicated that relationship challenge was approached through better constructive behavior by fused couple identity. They engaged themselves in more constructive problem-solving behaviors in the situations of marital conflict. This finding was also backed by the research of Fallanchai et. al. (2018). They found that the experience of marital quality was dependent on supportive dyadic coping mechanism of the partner. When one of the partners or both partners experienced stress they viewed them as 'our stress' and engaged themselves in common dyadic coping due to sense of 'we-ness' which increase their marital satisfaction (Breitenstein et. al., 2018).

Positive relation of shared identity on homecare role commitment and value also replicate the findings of Makela et. al. (2016) who indicated that in DCC, household activities were shared equally among the couple as compared to their counterpart single career couples. The finding that the couples' relationship might be stronger due to presence of kids in their family, which improves their perceived similarity as parents was supported by Mauerer (2018) who found that father's involvement in parental care was the symbol of

Father's involvement in parental care was the symbol of gender equality among couples.

gender equality among couples. The simultaneous involvement in career and family roles required mutual understanding between husband and wife.

Conclusion & Future Research

The present study sought to analyze the effect of shared identity on various work (occupational) and life roles (marital, homecare and parental) commitment and value. The empirical results have highlighted that out of the five factors of shared identity, four factors (ASI, CSI, PSSI and BSI) have their impacts on various work and life roles commitment and value.

The present study provides a few important implications for family counselors, therapists and DCC. The study contributes to the existing work-life balance literature as it uses the DCC as a unit of analysis and adding shared identity as a construct of the study. Work and life role commitment and value understanding was developed with the aid of shared identity construct. It also aids the management of organizations to frame talent management strategies.

This study examined only a limited number of variables. An additional variable can be used to study the other different associations in future research. In this study profession-wise couples are

different. Study was limited to four major cities of Gujarat. Study was limited to Indian context, to see variations due to cultural settings using cross-sectional data. A comparative study among DCC and single career couples is also suggested. Finally, the proposed relationship of the study could be tested using moderating variables such as age, gender, and years of relationship of couples.

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