Organizational Culture, Macro and Micro Empowerment Dimensions, and Job Satisfaction: An Application of Concurrent Mixed and Multi-Level Methods in the Federal Sector

Timothy L. Bailey

Dissertation.com

Boca Raton
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Timothy L. Bailey received his high school diploma from Walter Hines Page High School in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1981. Also in 1981, he began his collegiate education at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, North Carolina where he received academic enlightenment in an intellectual environment. In 1985, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from the university. In 1996, he graduated Bowie State University in Bowie, Maryland where he received a Master of Arts in Administrative Management with a concentration in Public Administration while working full-time and raising a family with his wife Debra.

Timothy started his professional career with the federal government in 1985. During his federal government career, he has worked for the Department of Army, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and Department of Veterans Affairs. Professionally, Timothy is a Certified Government Financial Manager.
DEDICATION

It is to my utmost honor to dedicate this dissertation to my wife and best friend Debra. You were there when I envisioned the then impossible dream of pursuing a doctoral degree. You made the impossible dream turn into reality by simply saying that I could do it. You always made time to listen to me regarding my doctoral studies no matter how busy and tired you were from your job and family obligations. Finally, you stuck with me through the joys and pains of this process and you picked me up and provided me the life boat when my academic ship was quickly sinking and no one seemed to care. With all this said, Thank You!!!!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There have been various people that have provided invaluable support toward me completing this challenging journey.

First, I would like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Daniel Corcoran; Dr. Joanne Preston; and Dr. JD Eveland for their support and invaluable guidance during this dissertation process. Dr. Corcoran was there from the initial phase of the dissertation process, first as a committee member and then graciously assumed the duties as chairperson when things seem to go wayward. Dr. Corcoran not only provided excellent guidance and recommendation, but he was also the consummate mentor. I am truly grateful for your patience, commitment and encouragement. I am grateful to Dr. Preston for accepting the call to be my on my committee in the middle of the dissertation process. Dr. Preston provided very thorough and insightful reviews and I really enjoyed our conversations. Again, thank you Dr. Corcoran for stepping up and for Dr. Preston for stepping in.

Second, I would like to thank James O’Neill, Maureen Reagan, Belinda Finn and Linda Halliday from FEDCON for providing invaluable support and assistance toward making this dissertation happen. James O’Neill provided the initial support toward this dissertation and quite frankly without his astute persuasive skills this dissertation could not have happened. His inquisitive interest in the dissertation subject helped spark FEDCON’s leadership in participating in the dissertation study. Maureen Regan effectively coordinated and rallied FEDCON’s leadership to participate in the dissertation study. Belinda Finn provided constant reminders to her staff on the importance of
participating and completing the survey questionnaires. Linda Halliday, thank you for the lively discussions on the pros and cons of organizational culture and empowerment within the federal government.

Third, I would like to thank the employees of FEDCON who took time out of their busy schedules to complete the survey questionnaire.

Finally, I like to express my gratitude to my biggest cheerleaders, Debra, my lovely wife and my daughters Tiffany and Tyler. Your patience and understanding of this long endeavor and my long hours locked away in my home office and college libraries to complete my doctoral studies is greatly appreciated.
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

BIOGRAPICAL SKETCH ........................................................................................................ iii

DEDICATION ........................................................................................................................ iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ...................................................................................................... v

CHAPTER 1 .......................................................................................................................... 1

Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER 2 .......................................................................................................................... 3

Statement of the Problem ................................................................................................. 3

Purpose of Study ................................................................................................................ 5

Significance of Research .................................................................................................. 6

Research Question .......................................................................................................... 11

Organization of Dissertation ......................................................................................... 11

CHAPTER 3 ...................................................................................................................... 12

Literature Review ............................................................................................................ 12

CHAPTER 4 ...................................................................................................................... 54

Research Methodology ................................................................................................... 54

Research Design ............................................................................................................ 54

Participants and Sample ............................................................................................... 56

Data Management Anticipated Response .................................................................... 59

Control Variables ........................................................................................................... 60

Data Collection ............................................................................................................. 61

Quantitative Data Collection ....................................................................................... 61

Qualitative Data Collection ......................................................................................... 64
APPENDIX 15: Test of Normality for Single Level Variables in Hypothesis 2 and 4 with Graphs ................................................................. 241

APPENDIX 16: Summary of Analysis Performed for Study ................................................................. 249

APPENDIX 17: Organizational Culture Survey Instrument ............................................................. 253

APPENDIX 18: Conditions of Work Effectiveness Questionnaire II Instrument .............................. 255

APPENDIX 19: Psychological Empowerment Instrument .............................................................. 257

APPENDIX 20: Overall Job Satisfaction Instrument ........................................................................ 259

APPENDIX 21: Qualitative Questions .............................................................................................. 260
## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Trice Grid Dimension of Occupational Subculture .............................................48
Table 2: Calculation of Minimum Sample ........................................................................59
Table 3: Hierarchical Linear Modeling Equations ............................................................70
Table 4: Demographic Summary .....................................................................................78
Table 5: Correlations Among Organizational Culture Variable Dimensions ....................85
Table 6: Correlations Among Macro Empowerment Variable Dimensions .....................86
Table 7: Correlations Among Micro Empowerment Variable Dimensions .....................87
Table 8: Correlations Among Organizational Culture Job and Workplace Satisfaction
Variables ........................................................................................................................78
Table 9: Results from the Hierarchical Linear Modeling Unconditional
Null Model for the Level 1 Dependent Variables Micro Empowerment and
Job Satisfaction ..................................................................................................................94
Table 10: Results of from HLM Intercept and Slopes–as-Outcome Models
with Macro Empowerment as the Level 2 Predictor Variables and Micro
Empowerment and Job Satisfaction as the Level 1 Outcome Variables ...........................96
Table 11: Results of Regression Analyses: Micro Empowerment and Macro
Empowerment; Macro Empowerment on Organizational Culture; Job Satisfaction
on Macro Empowerment and Job Satisfaction on Micro Empowerment .......................101
Table 12: Independent T- Test for Sample Means for Hypotheses 5, 6, 7 and 8 ...........108
Table 13: Managers and Non-managers Respondents to Open-ended Questions ..........114
Table 14: Open-ended questions along with the corresponding quantitative variable,
subscale component and definition ..................................................................................115
Table 15: Keyword Indicator Identifying Positive, Neutral and Negative Tone .............118
Table 16: Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Data Organizational Culture
Category Element .............................................................................................................142
Table 17: Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Data Organizational Macro Empowerment Category Element

Table 18: Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Data Organizational Micro Empowerment Category Element

Table 19: Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Data Organizational Job Satisfaction Category Element
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Structural Empowerment to Empowerment Climate Synonymous Attributes........................................................................................................................................................................25

Figure 2: A Multilevel model of Integrating Organizational Culture, Empowerment Climate, Psychological Empowerment, and Job Satisfaction along with Directional Variable Occupational Subculture Influence .................................................. 27

Figure 3: Concurrent Triangulation Strategy for Proposed Research .................................. 55

Figure 4 – Summation of Survey Instruments’ Relationship to the Proposed Study Main Concept Variables ..............................................................................................................................66

Figure 5: Triangulation Results of Organizational Culture Category Elements .............. 146

Figure 6: Triangulation Results of Micro Empowerment Elements ............................... 147

Figure 7: Triangulation Results of Micro Empowerment Category Elements ............... 148

Figure 8: Triangulation Results of Job Satisfaction Category Elements ........................ 149
ABSTRACT

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, MACRO AND MICRO EMPOWERMENT DIMENSIONS, AND JOB SATISFACTION: AN APPLICATION OF CONCURRENT MIXED AND MULTI-LEVEL METHODS IN THE FEDERAL SECTOR

Timothy L. Bailey, Ph.D.

Touro University International 2009

This dissertation examined the interrelationship of organizational culture; macro (structural) and micro (psychological) empowerment; and job satisfaction. Specifically, this dissertation: (1) build upon the insights and framework of prior research literature that suggest the relationship of macro (structural) and micro (psychological) empowerment and its effect on job satisfaction (2) expanded existing empowerment models by introducing organizational culture as an influential organizational phenomenon (3) assessed the level of degree how organizational subculture groups perceive organizational culture, macro (structural) and micro (psychological) empowerment; and job satisfaction contextual attributes. The dissertation utilized mixed method research combining both a quantitative and qualitative study with a triangulation of methods. The quantitative study employed a sample of 258 federal government employees and used hierarchical linear modeling techniques, multiple regression, hierarchical regression analysis, and independent T-test of Sample Means to test for main and mediator effects. The qualitative study employed a sample of 69 federal government...
employees and used open-ended content analysis to analyze data. Results from the quantitative study revealed that there are strong and positive relationships of organizational culture; macro empowerment, micro empowerment; and job satisfaction. Further, the quantitative study revealed that occupational subculture influences the level of perception of organizational culture; macro and micro empowerment; and job satisfaction. Results from the qualitative study provided rich and robust descriptive results complementing the quantitative study.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Organizational researchers contend employee empowerment is the most successful way to improve employee morale, motivation, and job satisfaction, and a great deal of effort has been expended delving into the intricacies of this topic. Much of the existing research on the topic explores the relationship of employee empowerment to individual fulfillment needs, such as job satisfaction. Organizational culture is considered an important component of organizational life affecting both performance and behavior, whether positive or negative (Thompson & Luthans, 1990). So, does employee empowerment happen mysteriously with a touch of a wand, or are other factors involved such as organizational culture shaping the foundations of empowerment in organizations? This section begins with describing the viewpoints of employee empowerment and organizational culture. The section then continues with the Statement of the Problem, Definition of terms, Purpose of Study, Significance of Research, Rationale of Mixed, and Multi-level Method, Research Questions and concludes with the Organization of the Proposal.

Employee Empowerment - Does it help, or hurt organizations?

A great deal of academic literature suggests there is a direct correlation between empowerment and employee job satisfaction (Ugboro & Obeng, 2000). Employee empowerment scholars suggest both organizations and employees benefit from empowerment (Klagge, 1998). These benefits include increased (1) employee accountability (2) personal power, and (3) customer satisfaction. Scholars reinforce this framework by suggesting organizations failing to support employee empowerment and
participation programs run the risk of low employee morale, motivation, and poor quality (Margulies, 1995).

In contrast, there are also scholars who argue against the virtues of employee empowerment suggesting instead detrimental effects may result from empowerment initiatives. For instance, Locke, Scheiger & Latham (1986) suggest employee empowerment may result in decreased employee job satisfaction, productivity and customer satisfaction. Some researchers describe employee empowerment as complete failure. For example, Mills & Ungson (2003) suggests employee empowerment is a moral hazard destined for failure. Likewise, Russ (2000) further suggests employee empowerment efforts fail in organizations because of: (1) precipitous empowerment mandates (2) over reliance of psychological empowerment (3) one size fits all empowerment (4) power sharers neglect and (5) piecemeal approaches.

**Organizational Culture – Shaping and Defining Organizations**

Organizational culture is viewed as one of the predominant elements shaping the internal environment of both private and public organizations, and as a critical element to organizational effectiveness. This meaning is further illustrated by Thompson & Luthans (1990) concept that organizational culture shapes organizations and provides a better understanding of complex organizational components, such as empowerment and job satisfaction. Because of the importance of organizational culture, it is important to study and understand its effect on both organizations and employees.
CHAPTER 2

**Statement of the Problem**

Empowerment has garnered a great interest from macro (structural) to micro (psychological) perspectives. Structural empowerment theorists such as Bowen & Lawler (1995), Randolph (1995) and Kanter (1977) viewed empowerment as sets of management practices and procedures delegating power from managers to front-line employees. The structural views held firm until Conger & Kanugo (1988), Thomas & Velthouse and Sprietzer (1995) introduced the concept of empowerment as a motivation determinant associated with individuals. Organizational scholars have made significant strides researching both macro (structural) and micro (psychological) empowerment dimensions and the relationships of these variables such as customer and job satisfaction. However, there has been a lack of research exploring the integration of macro and micro empowerment dimensions reflecting the complex nature of modern organizations (Seibert, Silver, & Randolph, 2004). Presently, there are two known groups (e.g. Laschinger et. al., and Seibert et. al.,) of researchers exploring the integration of macro (structural) and micro (psychological) empowerment. Nevertheless, research delving into the integration of macro (structural) and micro (psychological) empowerment remains in the infancy stage and further research is needed to fully understand relational concepts of macro (structural) and micro (psychological) empowerment.

The research literature suggest that organizational culture is a pervasive part of the organizational working environment affecting performance and behavior (Thompson & Luthans, 1990). This lead to the question whether organizational culture is the pulse of organizations and whether that pulse influence management practices and procedures
and individuals, namely empowerment. Consequently, to my knowledge, there has been no research combining organizational culture and empowerment dimensions. Because of the gaps in research literature, this study attempts to determine whether organizational culture affect empowerment.

**Definition of Terms**

For this study, the following terms are defined for clarification:

*Structural Empowerment*

Structural empowerment is defined as the delegation of decision making prerogatives from the formal structure to the employees with the discretion to act on one’s own (Mills & Ungson, 2003).

*Psychological Empowerment*

Psychological empowerment is defined as individual experiences of intrinsic motivation based on cognitions about a person’s relation to work roles (Spreitzer, 1995).

*Empowerment Climate*

Empowerment climate is defined as shared perceptions about the extent to which an organization makes use of structures, policies, and practices supporting employee empowerment (Seibert, Silver & Randolph, 2004).

*Organizational Climate*

Organizational climate is defined as shared individual perception of those organizational polices, practices, and procedures that show; through rewards, support and expectations (Kopelman, Brief, & Guzzo, 1990). Additionally, Joyce and Slocum (1990) argues climate is based on the perception of individuals.
**Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture is defined as a shared perceived meaning reflecting organizational members’ beliefs, thinking, and feelings based on organizational myths, stories, and norms (Moran & Volkwein, 1992). Further, organizational culture is conceptualized on three levels: basic assumptions, value and artifacts (Schein, 1996b).

**Organizational Subculture**

Organizational subculture is defined as a patterned system of perceptions, meanings, and beliefs about the organization which facilitates sense-making amongst a group of people sharing common experiences and guides individual behavior at work (Bloor & Dawson, 1994).

**Occupational (Professional) Subculture**

Organizational subculture is defined as participants having (1) a self-identify from belonging to an occupational group where boundaries are established (2) uniform reference point deriving meaning (3) commonalty in unusually emotional demands (4) favorable self-image about their occupation and (5) extension of social relations in non-work life (Trice, 1993).

**Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is defined as the degree in which job characteristics, based on individual perception, will fulfill a person’s intrinsic or extrinsic needs.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this proposed study is to examine and understand the interrelationship of organizational culture; macro (structural) and micro (psychological) empowerment; and job satisfaction. To accomplish the purpose, the research seeks to
answer four main hypotheses; and four secondary directional hypotheses to assess comparative results of two subcultures within a Federal sector organization, FEDCON. The research study will include a mixed level design; and will employ hierarchical level quantitative methods.

**Significance of Research**

The study makes both theoretical and practical contributions. On the theoretical level, the study seeks to accomplish three objectives. First, the study strives to determine the extent in which organizational culture influences empowerment at the macro (structural) and micro (psychological) levels. Presently, there is no known research assessing the relationship of organizational culture, empowerment, and job satisfaction. This study aims to utilize a sample derived from a federal sector organization to initiate research dialogue on the influence of organizational culture on empowerment. Second, the study attempts to bridge and solidify existing macro (structural) and micro (psychological) empowerment research. Presently, there is very little research examining the integration of both macro (structural) and micro (psychological) empowerment. To date, Laschinger, Finegan, Shamtan & Wilk (2001) and Seibert, Silver & Randolph (2004) are the only known researchers integrating macro and micro empowerment perspectives and the effects of these variables on job satisfaction. However, both research studies either did not (1) consider the multi-level nature of organizations (Laschinger et al., 2001) or (2) utilize reliable data collection instruments (Seibert et. al., 2004). This study remedy these issues by utilizing data collection procedures and analysis techniques that better capture empowerment and job satisfaction relationships. Third, the study, in a small way, contributes and provides empirical based knowledge
linking macro and micro empowerment as integrated constructs. Although there is a
great deal of research addressing macro and micro empowerment, there is very little
research investigating the two constructs concurrently. Scholars attribute the lack of
research to the slow progress developing macro empowerment constructs comparable to
the micro constructs (Seibert et. al., 2004).

On the practical level, this study seeks to accomplish two objectives. First, the
study provides practitioners and managers with insight as to ways organizational culture
can influence the success and failure of empowerment based structural policies. Second,
the study may help to enhance the practitioners’ and managers’ awareness of
empowerment as an effective and beneficial management tool. This is especially
important for today’s practitioner and manager in the federal government. In the Federal
government, politics and bureaucracy impact culture, which may, in turn, impact
employee empowerment and job satisfaction (Gore, 1993). Empowerment may be an
important solution for attracting, keeping, and motivating employees. The General
Accountability Office (GAO, 1995b) report “Taking steps to meet current and emerging
human capital challenges page 24” estimated that 40% to 50% of the federal workforce
will would be eligible for retirement within a five-year period. GAO warned this could
result in an employee exodus resulting in loss of expertise and experience within the
government or “brain drain loss”.

Acknowledging the Federal workforce retirement dilemma, the Clinton
Administration commissioned the National Performance Review in 1993. The Review
assessed the efficacy of federal agencies during the Clinton Administration and reported
the culture of the Federal government as bureaucratic and mired by “Red Tape”. The
Review suggested that employees’ perception of powerlessness may contribute to an exodus of Federal government employees (Gore, 1993). In addition, the Review emphasized younger adults may not find the federal government appealing as an option for employment because of the perceived “Red Tape” and powerlessness inherent in federal sector jobs.

In essence, therefore, both these documents suggest that keeping and motivating a capable workforce is critical for the federal government to function effectively. A more thorough understanding of the efficacy of empowerment strategies utilized within the federal government may be helpful in slowing the anticipated brain drain loss predicted in the GAO report.

**Rationale for mixed method design and multi-level methods**

**Mixed Level Design**

For this study, mixed methods were used to enhance quantitative finding results with qualitative data. Mixed method designs combine both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2003). Mixed-methods seem best suited to accomplish the study’s intended purpose. Quantitatively, the study seeks to assess:

1. Whether organizational culture directly influence federal organizations’ macro empowerment (empowerment climate);
2. The relationship of macro empowerment (empowerment climate) and micro (psychological) empowerment;
3. To determine whether micro (psychological) empowerment plays a mediating role between macro (empowerment climate) empowerment and job satisfaction; and
(4) The relationship of employee empowerment and job satisfaction.

Qualitatively, the study seeks to identify and understand the integrated phenomena of organizational culture, empowerment dimensions, and job satisfaction. Specifically, the qualitative portion of the study compliments the quantitative results by providing a more robust and enriched effect of the study’s variables.

Various researchers advocate the use of mixed methods designs and have developed guidance. For example, Creswell (2003) and Curall & Towler (2003) provide guidance and benefits for using mixed-method designs. Creswell (2003) suggests mixed-methods designs expand the understanding of various methods, while Curall & Towler (2003) suggests management and organizational researchers use mixed method designs to investigate phenomena to yield more enhanced information, than from a single method. This study’s use of the mixed-level design will result in a more robust descriptive data that explores greater divergent views.

Also, the study employed concurrent data triangulation, a mixed-method technique that improves research validity. Essentially, concurrent data triangulation consists of collecting several forms of data at the same time during research and afterwards data are integrated into combined results (Creswell, 2003). As a result, there is a more complete portrayal of the study’s participants from multiple perspectives (Jick, 1979). Furthermore, triangulation off-set bias, thus strengthening results validity (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). To ensure a more comprehensive analysis of the study’s data, concurrent triangulation was employed.
Multi-level methods

Organizational behavior scholars argue that the organizational behavior field has become rapidly complex and not representative by single level research (Rousseau, 1985). These arguments suggest increased emphasis on multi-level research to capture the complexity of modern organizations. This study captures and considers the complexities at both organizational and individual levels of analysis. Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) provides researchers procedures to study relationships existing at two or more organizational levels (Hoffman, 1997). HLM provides the tool researchers need to study organizational phenomena at the correct level of analysis (Roberts, Madsen, & Desai, 2004).

To recapitulate, the study employed a mixed-level design, namely triangulation. Triangulation involves utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data was used to enhance the meaning of quantitative data. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed concurrently to provide a more robust research results. Research scholars conclude organizational behavior has become a more complex research field encompassing organizational, group and individual levels (Rousseau, 1985). Multi-level methods have become the vehicle researchers’ use to adequately capture various levels of today’s organizations without compromising levels of analysis. Thereby, the organization reviewed in this study is very complex in nature, specifically at the organizational and individual levels.