

## Influence of gender stereotypes on psychological empowerment: A structural model

## Influencia de los estereotipos de género sobre el empoderamiento psicológico: Modelo estructural

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### Abstract

The objective of this study was to analyze the impact of gender stereotypes on psychological empowerment among Mexican women. The study employed a mixed nonprobability sampling method, using convenience sampling initially and supplemented by snowball sampling. An instrument was administered to assess this construct in 337 women. The instrument also provided insights into seven factors: Activity outside the home environment, Self-confidence, Self-esteem, Participative communication, Influence of traditional gender stereotypes, Social influence, and Perception of importance to others. The proposed model was evaluated using partial least squares structural equation modeling in SmartPLS. The results indicate that gender stereotypes significantly affect psychological empowerment and the related factors, with the exception of Activity outside the home environment. These findings can inform the development of social intervention strategies that aim to understand which variables most significantly influence women's psychological empowerment.

**Keywords:** empowerment, psychological empowerment, gender stereotypes, structural equation modeling, partial least squares.

### Resumen

El objetivo del presente estudio fue analizar la influencia de los estereotipos de género sobre el empoderamiento psicológico en mujeres mexicanas. El estudio empleó un método de muestreo mixto no probabilístico, utilizando inicialmente un muestreo por conveniencia, complementado con un muestreo de bola de nieve. Se aplicó un instrumento para la medición de dicho constructo a 337 mujeres; el instrumento aportó información, además, de siete factores: Actividad fuera del entorno doméstico, Autoconfianza, Autoestima, Comunicación participativa, Influencia de los estereotipos tradicionales de género, Influencia social y Percepción de importancia ante los demás. El modelo diseñado fue contrastado mediante ecuaciones estructurales por mínimos cuadrados parciales, a través del software SmartPLS. Los resultados muestran que los estereotipos de género poseen un efecto significativo sobre el empoderamiento psicológico y los demás factores que se le vinculan, exceptuando Actividad fuera del entorno doméstico. Estos resultados pueden ser de utilidad para favorecer estrategias de intervención social que requieran conocer qué variables influyen, en mayor o menor grado, sobre el empoderamiento psicológico en mujeres.

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**Palabras clave:** empoderamiento, de género, modelo de ecuaciones empoderamiento psicológico, estereotipos estructurales, mínimos cuadrados parciales.

## INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is often conceptualized as a process of acquiring power, not over others (Riger, 1997), but over one's own resources and the capacity to decide and act for oneself (León, 1997); more succinctly, it implies the possibility of exercising complete control over one's own life (Rappaport, 1981). Rowlands (1997) defined empowerment as the accumulation of psychological processes that, when fostered and developed, enable the individual to operate in their environment, interact with it, and thus increase their capacity to exercise power.

Delgado-Piña et al. (2010), Perkins and Zimmerman (1995), Ramos-Vidal and Maya-Jariego (2014), Sánchez-Vidal (2017), Stromquist (1988, 1997), and Torres et al. (2022), as well as the aforementioned author, had already highlighted the relevance of psychological or cognitive aspects in empowerment. Rappaport (1987) emphasized, in relation to this process, the existence of a psychological dimension in which the individual develops their personal influence in order to impact society. According to Zani (2014), psychological empowerment "refers to empowerment at the individual level of analysis. It is a complex construct, deriving from the integration of different dimensions" (p. 5538).

The mention of an individual level of empowerment in the previous quote alludes to the studies of Rappaport (1984, 1987), who outlined that this concept operates at the personal, organizational, and community levels, with psychological empowerment being a construct specific to the individual position. This division of empowerment, according to its scope of operation, will be echoed in some additional studies:

In the first case, Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) and Zimmerman (1990, 2000) pointed out that intrapersonal, interactive, and behavioral elements structure psychological empowerment. The intrapersonal element refers to people's self-perception of their characteristics and qualities. The second refers to the resolution of difficulties through which it is possible to modify and influence the environment. The behavioral element refers to the actions taken to demonstrate control and participation in activities in which the individual is involved.

Rowlands (1997), for her part, and more specifically in relation to women's empowerment, envisioned this concept in terms of three dimensions: personal, collective, and close relationships. The first involves fostering a sense of individuality and personal capabilities, which can impact confidence. The collective dimension "consists of developing the

ability to negotiate and influence the nature of the relationship and the decisions made within that relationship” (p. 222). In the last, “individuals work together to achieve a greater impact than they could exert individually” (p. 223).

In addition to this division, the author identified a set of factors that either inhibit or promote female empowerment. Some of the concepts and actions mentioned in this survey include developing knowledge, expanding one’s circle of friends, ending isolation, and joining one or more groups.

The consideration of various concepts related to the operation of female empowerment already reflects a multifactorial conception, which various investigations have taken up. Some of the elements linked to empowerment at a personal (psychological) level are: activities carried out beyond the domestic environment (Delgado-Piña et al., 2010; Rowlands, 1997; Sosa & Cortés, 2015; Stromquist, 1997), self-confidence (Moser, 1989; Ros-Sánchez & Lidón-Cerezuela, 2018; Rowlands, 1997; Young, 1997), self-esteem (Banda & Morales, 2015; Delgado-Piña et al., 2010; Muñoz-Márquez et al., 2021; Ros-Sánchez & Lidón-Cerezuela, 2018; Rowlands, 1997; Stromquist, 1997), and social influence through communication skills (Aguilar-Idáñez & Buraschi, 2018; Riger, 1997; Rowlands, 1997), interaction (Montaña, 2012; Llana-Berñe et al., 2017; Rowlands, 1997; Úcar et al., 2017) and social participation (Banda & Morales, 2015; García et al., 2022; Montaña, 2012; Ramos-Vidal & Maya-Jariego, 2014; Rowlands, 1997). This complexity of the construct is due, according to Llana-Berñe et al. (2017), to its relational quality, since, as can be seen, several of the concepts and actions referred to allude to social issues.

The importance of empowerment, psychological empowerment, and the various factors associated with it, on a personal level, is based, on the one hand, on the following justification:

Personal empowerment makes the most significant contribution to overall empowerment. This means that if women, in their growth process, acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to build solid self-esteem and a firm belief in their ability to achieve their goals, this will enhance their empowerment in other dimensions and, at the same time, generate greater overall empowerment. (Kido et al., 2025, p. 12).

On the other hand, it also lies in the fact that such concepts have been addressed to support the generation and promotion of practical approaches to enhance personal qualities and skills, particularly of individuals and groups linked to some political, social, and/or economic disadvantage (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010; Muñoz-Márquez et al., 2021). Evidence of

this, in community contexts, can be found in the following empirical studies:

Cabrera (2014) conducted a study to promote the development of skills that would influence empowerment in Roma women in Spain. Cassab and Mayorca (2018) analyzed a set of managerial skills in Colombian women that could positively impact empowerment and gender equality. Delgado-Piña et al. (2010), as part of an empowerment project, examined the link between empowerment and identity processes, starting with a training workshop with women from the Bajío region of Mexico. Llena-Berñe et al. (2017) identified various moments, spaces, and processes that fostered the empowerment of a group of young people. Mora et al. (2018) explored, within the framework of a comparative intercultural study, the experiences of empowerment among Chilean Mapuche and Mexican Mayan women through their participation in a productive entrepreneurship program. Padilla and Pérez (2023) evaluated the effectiveness of an empowerment workshop for university students, used as a tool for preventing problems related to sexual health. Riaño and Okali (2008) reported unsuccessful experiences regarding perceptions of empowerment among women from rural contexts who participated in a microcredit program. Ros-Sánchez and Lidón-Cerezuela (2018) investigated, within a qualitative framework, the experience of empowerment among older women through in-depth interviews.

In a compendium titled *The empowerment of women as a social intervention strategy*, Silvestre et al. (2014) brought together a vast set of contributions, both theoretical and empirical, which also, as in the examples of the previous paragraph, highlight the use of the practical baggage of empowerment to support interventions aimed at supporting women who are victims of gender violence (Enciso, 2014), adolescents in guardianship (Marzo et al., 2014), women with functional diversity (Flores & Fernández, 2014), among others.

In addition to this set of applications, there is the use of psychological empowerment as an improvement strategy within organizations, as carried out by Carnero et al. (2019) who analyzed it as a predictor of civic behavior, Buksnyte-Marmiene et al. (2022) who studied its impact on performance and job satisfaction, and Torres et al. (2022) who explained its role in employee productivity.

Considering these approaches to empowerment and psychological empowerment, it is a widely recognized construct with considerable pragmatic value. This relevance is reflected in the attention it received from the United Nations (2015), which included it as one of the seventeen goals of its document, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable*

Development. Goal number five proposes to empower all women and girls, achieving gender equality.

Given this scenario, it is necessary to analyze the variables that influence the dynamics of empowerment and, as a multifactorial construct, its associated components. A set of key elements that can hinder the empowerment process are gender stereotypes (García et al., 2022), which can, in turn, negatively influence gender equity, an aspect of particular relevance to empowerment (Ley, 2023; Miranda, 2020; Murrieta et al., 2025; Riaño & Okali, 2008; Varga, 2025) (it is no coincidence that the United Nations combined both concepts in the aforementioned Goal 5 of its 2030 Agenda). León (1997) had already noted that empowerment constitutes a cornerstone in overcoming gender inequalities.

Gender stereotypes are the characteristics, traits, and qualities attributed to people based on their sex. These characteristics are assigned to each sex based on the social roles and identities assigned to men and women. [...] They are deeply rooted in society, shaping and controlling the expected behaviors of men and women, defining models of femininity and masculinity, and sanctioning behaviors that deviate from accepted gender norms. (Amurrio et al., 2009, p. 228).

These stereotypes constitute cultural barriers that women must overcome to excel in different areas of their lives, one of which is, of course, the workplace (Martín Pedraza, 2021); this is linked to the previously cited research, which studied psychological empowerment within organizations (Carnero et al., 2019; Buksnyte-Marmiene et al., 2022; Torres et al., 2022).

One way to “overcome gender stereotypes and pave the way for female empowerment, since it impacts family and personal life by breaking with established gender roles” (García et al., 2022, p. 15) may be to make them evident, thus allowing the erosion of “the normative power of traditional beliefs and inducing cultural changes aimed at empowering women in the most intimate and personal facets of relationships between men and women” (Amurrio et al., 2009, p. 230). Rodrigo and Sobremonde (2014) referred, in this regard, to “the need to empower women through actions that contribute to eradicating gender roles and stereotypes and thus build a more egalitarian society” (p. 90). The entire set of current demands aimed at mitigating gender inequality is based on a search for a reinterpretation of cultural traditions of inequality to promote the empowerment of women (Bartlett, 1995; Cook & Cusack, 2010).

The common factor in the vast majority of this recent body of research is its qualitative nature, which justifies the creation of a quantitative

contribution; furthermore, the originality of the current contribution lies in providing not only a theoretical but also a numerical overview of the influence of gender stereotypes on psychological empowerment and the various factors that underpin it. Thus, this premise and the background already discussed form the basis for the main objective of this research: to examine the impact of gender stereotypes on psychological empowerment, particularly among women. In addition to this primary objective, there are other specific objectives, grounded in studies that have emphasized the multidimensional nature of empowerment: to analyze the influence of gender stereotypes on the factors associated with psychological empowerment, on the one hand, and the impact of these factors on this overall construct, on the other.

The two secondary objectives are based on the following reasoning: many of the antecedents of this study, both theoretical and practical, highlight empowerment as a fundamental element for supporting various intervention strategies. Therefore, this study aims to assess the extent to which specific factors related to psychological empowerment and gender stereotypes influence these variables. The goal is to establish a benchmark for identifying which factors have a greater or lesser impact on the construct in question.

Thus, the hypotheses of this study are as follows, and are graphically represented in Figure 1:

- H1: Gender stereotypes significantly influence psychological empowerment.
- H2: Gender stereotypes significantly influence factors associated with psychological empowerment.
- H3: Factors associated with psychological empowerment significantly influence this overall construct.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### *Design and Scope*

This quantitative research employs a non-experimental, cross-sectional design with exploratory, descriptive, and correlational scopes.

### *Sample*

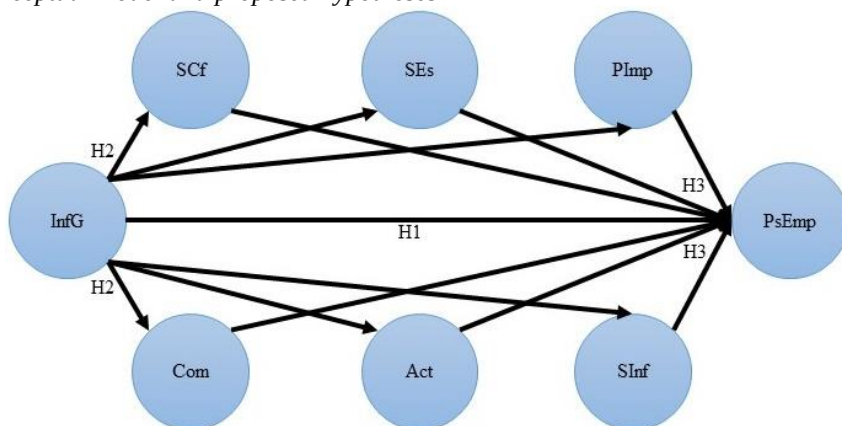
The study employed a mixed nonprobability sampling method, using convenience sampling initially and supplemented by snowball sampling.

The sample consisted of 337 Mexican women residing in Mexico City and the State of Mexico (38% and 62%, respectively). The age range spanned 18 to 81 years, with 21 years as the mode (23 cases), the median at 33, and the mean at 35 years. According to Hair et al. (2013), the

minimum number of units of analysis required for a structural equation model is 200; the total number of units in this study exceeds this parameter.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual model and proposed hypotheses*



**Note:** The model assumes that gender stereotypes influence psychological empowerment (Hypothesis 1) and the related factors (Hypothesis 2), as well as how these factors impact the overall construct (Hypothesis 3).

Regarding their education, 19 women reported having studied up to the secondary level (approximately 5.6% of the sample), 60 up to the high school level (17.8%), 25 held a technical degree (7.4%), 155 completed a bachelor's degree (46%), and 77 a postgraduate degree (22.8%). As for their occupation, 94 reported being students (approximately 27.9%), 150 employed (44.5%), 21 self-employed, primarily in the informal sector (mainly street vendors) (6.2%), 39 professionals working independently (11.6%), 22 dedicated solely to housework (6.5%), 8 declared themselves unemployed (2.3%), and 3 were retired (0.8%).

#### *Instrument*

The Instrument for Measuring Psychological Empowerment in Women, consisting of 37 items, was used, whose response format is a 5-level Likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree). It was developed and validated in a Mexican female population by Montufar (2026). This instrument provides information on psychological empowerment (overall score) and seven factors associated with this construct: Influence of traditional gender stereotypes (InfG: 12 items), Participative communication (Com: 7 items), Self-confidence (SCf: 6 items), Social influence (SInf: 5 items), Self-esteem (SEs: 3 items), Perception of importance to others (PImp: 2 items), and Activity outside

the home environment (Act: 2 items). Table 1 shows the instrument items and the factors to which they belong.

The instrument was in press, having already been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, at the time of its application.

#### *Data collection and analysis procedure*

Data collection, using the aforementioned instrument, took place between September and November 2025, primarily in the afternoons. An interviewer was trained to request completion of the questionnaire and to explain the informed consent process and instructions to participants; to ensure the anonymization and confidentiality of the data, participants' names were never requested, either in person or online. In addition, the interviewer asked participants if they could provide an email address to receive the questionnaire digitally via Google Forms. In this way, 106 questionnaires were collected remotely, while the majority (231 questionnaires) were collected in person. To avoid missing data, the interviewer (in the face-to-face application) was responsible for carefully reviewing the questionnaires once completed. In the remote application, Google Forms allows blocking the submission of the questionnaire if not all items have been answered. Thus, no imputation procedure was necessary.

The on-site application took place in September 2025 at University City and in the center of the Coyoacán mayor's office in Mexico City; in October of the same year at the Faculty of Higher Studies Acatlán and in the esplanade of the municipality of Atizapán de Zaragoza, in the State of México; and in November of the aforementioned year, finally, in different points of the municipalities of Nezahualcóyotl, Ixtapaluca and Chalco, in the State of Mexico.

The descriptive analysis of the data was carried out using Excel software from the Office 2016 suite to obtain the frequencies and percentages previously referred to in the previous sections.

Inferential analysis was performed using SmartPLS 4, a software program useful for structural equation modeling and data processing using partial least squares (PLS), which "is primarily used to develop theories in exploratory research" (Hair et al., 2017, p. 4) and "is very flexible in its modeling properties" (p. 25). The external (measurement) model was designed with this software and then evaluated using the PLS algorithm. An initial analysis of the data allowed for fitting the predicted model, followed by the analysis of the internal (structural) model using bootstrapping. Finally, the  $R^2$  and  $Q^2$  indicators were calculated to determine the model's predictive relevance.

**Table 1***Instrument items and the factors to which they belong*

| <b>Factor</b>                               | <b>Item</b>                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Influence of traditional gender stereotypes | 1. In a couple's relationship, it is up to the man to decide how many children to have.                |
|                                             | 2. A person should consult with their partner about whether or not they can dress in a certain way.    |
|                                             | 3. If a person attends a meeting, she must ask her partner for permission beforehand.                  |
|                                             | 4. Leadership ability is better in a man than in a woman.                                              |
|                                             | 5. If a woman is in a relationship, she must obey her partner at all times.                            |
|                                             | 6. It is normal for a person to forbid their partner from going out with other people.                 |
|                                             | 7. A mother should not teach household chores to her sons.                                             |
|                                             | 8. A man should manage the household expenses, not his wife.                                           |
|                                             | 9. Women should not do the jobs that men are supposed to do.                                           |
|                                             | 10. A man can have several partners at the same time, but a woman can only have one partner at a time. |
|                                             | 11. It looks bad for a woman to spend too much time away from home.                                    |
|                                             | 12. Household chores are primarily for women.                                                          |
| Self-confidence                             | 13. I am a self-confident person.                                                                      |
|                                             | 14. I have a lot of confidence in myself.                                                              |
|                                             | 15. I like my body just the way it is.                                                                 |
|                                             | 16. I am the one who controls my life, not others.                                                     |
|                                             | 17. I am capable of doing anything I set my mind to.                                                   |
|                                             | 18. I fail at what I set out to do.                                                                    |
| Participative communication                 | 19. Negotiating with other people makes me very nervous.                                               |
|                                             | 20. I find it difficult to communicate with other people.                                              |
|                                             | 21. I prefer to give in during arguments to avoid having to intervene.                                 |
|                                             | 22. I give in a lot to other people's decisions.                                                       |
|                                             | 23. I feel embarrassed expressing my ideas.                                                            |
|                                             | 24. I feel inferior to others.                                                                         |
|                                             | 25. Others make decisions for me.                                                                      |

|                                                       |     |                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Social influence                                      | 26. | I participate in discussions when there is one.        |
|                                                       | 27. | I have a lot of influence on other people's decisions. |
|                                                       | 28. | I am capable of generating changes in my environment.  |
|                                                       | 29. | When I'm in a group, I participate in the decisions.   |
|                                                       | 30. | I find it easy to express my ideas and opinions.       |
| Self-esteem                                           | 31. | I'm not very important.                                |
|                                                       | 32. | I should have been born with better qualities.         |
|                                                       | 33. | Others manage my money.                                |
| Perception of importance to others                    | 34. | No one respects me.                                    |
|                                                       | 35. | I am ignored by others.                                |
| Instrument items and the factors to which they belong |     |                                                        |
| Activity outside the home environment                 | 36. | I spend most of my time at home.                       |
|                                                       | 37. | I do many activities outside the home.                 |

**Note:** Own authorship.

RESULTS

*Evaluation of the measurement model*

Hair et al. (2017, 2021) refer to four steps for the evaluation of the internal model (if it follows a reflective pattern, as is the case here), the first and second of which are necessary to know the reliability, both at the indicator level and at the construct level, and the third and fourth steps to appreciate the validity (convergent and discriminant).

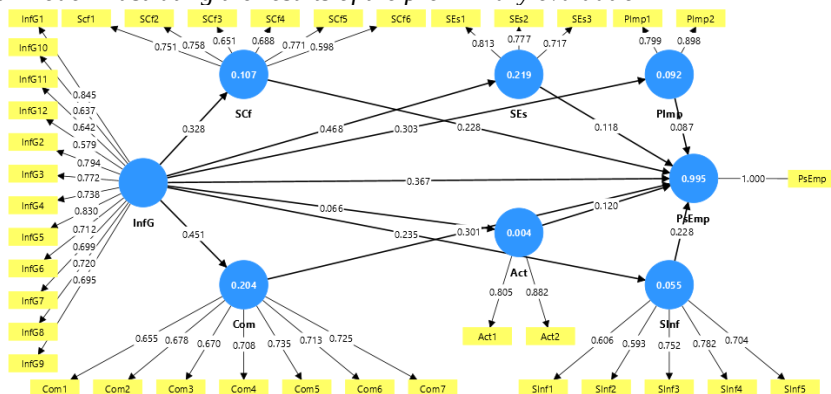
A preliminary analysis using the PLS algorithm of all the instrument's items (37) identified some indicators with factor loadings below the suggested limit of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2017) (Figure 2). From this set, items whose loading could affect the internal consistency indices and the extracted mean variance were removed, leaving an adjusted model as shown in Figure 3. From this final set, only one item with a loading below the aforementioned limit was allowed to remain: InfG9 (0.689). This decision is based on the recommendation made by Hair et al. (2017), which stipulates considering retaining items with loadings greater than 0.40 but less than 0.70, provided that this decision does not negatively affect either the reliability of internal consistency (first) or the average variance extracted (second). In addition to the factor loading values, there are the communality values: “communality of the variables, which is understood

as a type of variance associated with the behavior of the data series for each question, is defined as the square of the loading value, so the critical value for validation is 0.5” (Blanco-Mesa et al., 2024, p. 5).

The reliability indicators (first step of the evaluation) and the internal consistency reliability (second step) are grouped in Table 2. As shown, the vast majority of items exceed the 0.708 threshold, and including the pair of items below this value does not negatively affect the composite reliability, which is greater than 0.80 in all cases. This indicates good to excellent reliability (Moral de la Rubia, 2019) for all the constructs comprising the model. Currently, the composite reliability coefficient is recommended for evaluating internal consistency reliability (Green & Yang, 2015).

**Figure 2.**

*Path model illustrating the results of the preliminary evaluation*



**Note:** Prepared based on the results obtained in SmartPLS.

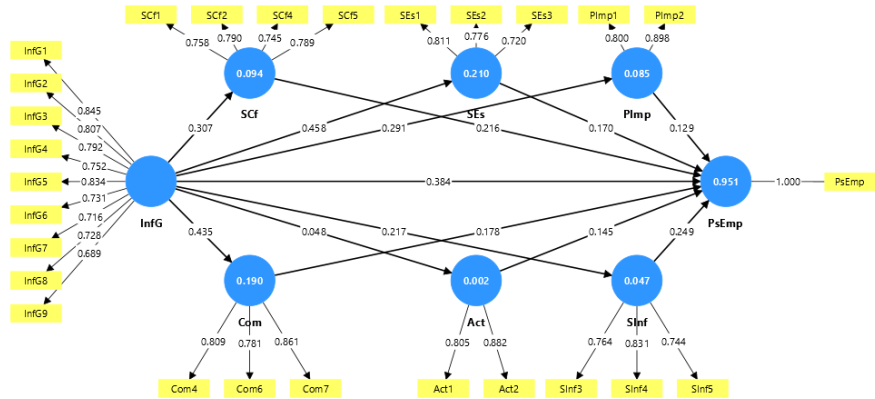
This same table also includes the values of the average variance extracted (AVE, an indicator of the model's convergent validity, the third step in the evaluation), which ideally should be equal to or greater than 0.50 (Sarstedt et al., 2021), since this verifies that “the construct explains at least 50% of the variance of its items” (Álvarez-Torres et al., 2018). Table 3 shows the values used to assess the model’s discriminant validity, using the Fornell-Larcker criterion; these values should be, for each construct, greater than the correlations with the other latent variables. In the table, it is noticeable that all the upper values in each column are greater than those below them, which demonstrates the discriminant validity of the constructs that make up the model.

*Evaluation of the structural model*

After adjusting the external model, the next step was to evaluate the internal or structural model. This evaluation followed the procedures recommended by Hair et al. (2017, 2021). The first step involved analyzing collinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). According to these authors, values greater than 3 indicate potential collinearity issues. As shown in Table 4, this criterion was met in all instances. Understanding this aspect of the internal model is crucial because it helps ensure that the predictor variables are sufficiently distinct to accurately assess their influence on the corresponding dependent variables.

The next step is to determine the significance and relevance of the path coefficients. For this, the bootstrapping test was applied with 5000 subsamples. These coefficients are presented in Table 4. The inclusion of confidence intervals is intended to allow “to measure the degree of volatility of the data and its replicability with similar sample sets” (Blanco-Mesa et al., 2024, p. 7), and, being short, they provide “robustness and significant statistical validation to the estimated model” (p. 7).

**Figure 3.**  
*Adjusted path model*



**Note:** Prepared based on the results obtained in SmartPLS.

The results support the acceptance of most of the study's hypotheses. The only relationship between variables that was not statistically significant involved the primary exogenous variable (Influence of traditional gender stereotypes) and its influence on the endogenous variable, Activities outside the home environment; the p-value of the path coefficient was greater than the conventional limit of 0.05, so in this case, it was not possible to reject the null hypothesis.

To provide information about the impact of the predictor variables on the response variables,  $f^2$  calculations, which represent the effect size

between the variables, are included; 0.02 indicates a small effect, 0.15 a medium effect, and 0.35 a large effect (Cohen, 1988). The effect size for Psychological Empowerment was large and significant, derived from the factors Activities outside the home (0.380), Self-confidence (0.480), Social influence (0.855), and Influence of traditional gender stereotypes (2.205). This last value stands out, which supports the rationale for this study. The effect size for Psychological Empowerment was medium and significant, based on the variables Self-esteem (0.323), Participative communication (0.334), and Perception of importance to others (0.244). Finally, within this set, the effect of traditional gender stereotypes was medium and significant for the following variables: Self-esteem (0.265) and participatory communication (0.234).

Finally, the  $R^2$  indicators in Table 5 provide a “relative measure of the variance explained in each of the dependent constructs” (Álvarez-Torres et al., 2018, p. 61) and serve as a predictive tool for the model (higher values indicate greater predictive accuracy). These indicators were statistically significant for the factors Self-Confidence, Self-Esteem, Participative Communication, and Perception of Importance to Others, as well as Psychological Empowerment overall. This set of variables, particularly Self-Esteem, Participative Communication, and Psychological Empowerment, largely explains the independent variables' capacity to influence the overall outcome.

The  $Q^2$  indicators (Table 6) also serve as measures of the model's predictive relevance (calculated here using the blindfolding technique with 10 folds); in general, this relevance is indicated by a value greater than zero (Barroso et al., 2018). As with  $R^2$ , the lowest factor was Activities outside the domestic environment, a variable that, in fact, was the only one that did not show a significant path coefficient for the impact of the Influence of traditional gender stereotypes.

**Table 2**  
*Evaluation results of the adjusted external model*

| Latent variable | Indicator reliability                 |          |             | Internal consistency reliability | Convergent validity |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|----------|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
|                 | Indicator                             | Loadings | Communality | Composite Reliability            | AVE                 |
| PsEmp           | Activity outside the home environment | Act1     | 0.805       | 0.832                            | 0.713               |
|                 |                                       | Act2     | 0.882       |                                  |                     |
|                 | Self-confidence                       | SCf1     | 0.758       | 0.854                            | 0.594               |
|                 |                                       | SCf 2    | 0.79        |                                  |                     |

|                                             |       |       |       |       |       |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                             | SCf 4 | 0.745 | 0.555 |       |       |
|                                             | SCf 5 | 0.789 | 0.623 |       |       |
| Self-esteem                                 | SEs1  | 0.811 | 0.658 |       |       |
|                                             | SEs2  | 0.776 | 0.602 | 0.813 | 0.593 |
|                                             | SEs3  | 0.72  | 0.518 |       |       |
| Participative communication                 | Com4  | 0.75  | 0.563 |       |       |
|                                             | Com6  | 0.741 | 0.549 | 0.858 | 0.669 |
|                                             | Com7  | 0.767 | 0.588 |       |       |
| Influence of traditional gender stereotypes | InfG1 | 0.845 | 0.729 |       |       |
|                                             | InfG2 | 0.807 | 0.651 |       |       |
|                                             | InfG3 | 0.792 | 0.627 |       |       |
|                                             | InfG4 | 0.752 | 0.563 |       |       |
|                                             | InfG5 | 0.834 | 0.696 | 0.928 | 0.59  |
|                                             | InfG6 | 0.731 | 0.533 |       |       |
|                                             | InfG7 | 0.716 | 0.516 |       |       |
|                                             | InfG8 | 0.728 | 0.53  |       |       |
|                                             | InfG9 | 0.689 | 0.474 |       |       |
| Social influence                            | SInf3 | 0.764 | 0.584 |       |       |
|                                             | SInf4 | 0.831 | 0.691 | 0.824 | 0.609 |
|                                             | SInf5 | 0.744 | 0.554 |       |       |
| Perception of importance to others          | PImp1 | 0.8   | 0.64  |       |       |
|                                             | PImp2 | 0.898 | 0.806 | 0.839 | 0.723 |

**Note:** Own work based on the results obtained in SmartPLS.

**Table 3**  
*Fornell-Larcker criterion*

|       | Act         | SCf         | SEs         | Com         | PsEmp    | InfG        | SInf        | PImp        |
|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Act   | <b>0.84</b> |             |             |             |          |             |             |             |
| SCf   | 0.28        | <b>0.77</b> |             |             |          |             |             |             |
| SEs   | 0.11        | 0.47        | <b>0.77</b> |             |          |             |             |             |
| Com   | 0.19        | 0.54        | 0.59        | <b>0.82</b> |          |             |             |             |
| PsEmp | 0.36        | 0.73        | 0.7         | 0.71        | <b>1</b> |             |             |             |
| InfG  | 0.05        | 0.31        | 0.46        | 0.44        | 0.705    | <b>0.77</b> |             |             |
| SInf  | 0.25        | 0.54        | 0.28        | 0.25        | 0.615    | 0.22        | <b>0.78</b> |             |
| PImp  | 0.16        | 0.37        | 0.43        | 0.41        | 0.561    | 0.29        | 0.28        | <b>0.85</b> |

**Note:** Own work based on the results obtained in SmartPLS.

**Table 4**  
*VIF values, path coefficients, and f<sup>2</sup>*

|            | VIF  | Path coefficients |                     |          | f <sup>2</sup> effect size |                     |          |
|------------|------|-------------------|---------------------|----------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------|
|            |      | Original sample   | Confidence interval | P-values | Original sample            | Confidence interval | P-values |
| Act→PsEmp  | 1.11 | 0.145             | [.114 - .177]       | .000*    | 0.38                       | [.235 - .576]       | .000*    |
| SCf→PsEmp  | 1.97 | 0.216             | [.174 - .260]       | .000*    | 0.48                       | [.291 - .737]       | .000*    |
| SEs→PsEmp  | 1.81 | 0.17              | [.130 - .210]       | .000*    | 0.323                      | [.180 - .492]       | .000*    |
| Com→PsEmp  | 1.93 | 0.178             | [.133 - .225]       | .000*    | 0.334                      | [.174 - .566]       | .001*    |
| InfG→Act   | 1    | 0.048             | [-.067 - .165]      | 0.42     | 0.002                      | [.000 - .028]       | 0.769    |
| InfG→SCf   | 1    | 0.307             | [.166 - .443]       | .000*    | 0.104                      | [.028 - .244]       | 0.063    |
| InfG→SEs   | 1    | 0.458             | [.331 - .584]       | .000*    | 0.265                      | [.123 - .518]       | .009*    |
| InfG→Com   | 1    | 0.435             | [.261 - .571]       | .000*    | 0.234                      | [.073 - .483]       | .025*    |
| InfG→PsEmp | 1.35 | 0.384             | [.334 - .430]       | .000*    | 2.205                      | [1.525 - 2.947]     | .000*    |
| InfG→SInf  | 1    | 0.217             | [.073 - .362]       | .004*    | 0.05                       | [.005 - .151]       | 0.202    |
| InfG→PImp  | 1    | 0.291             | [.162 - .412]       | .000*    | 0.092                      | [.027 - .204]       | .046*    |
| SInf→PsEmp | 1.47 | 0.249             | [.208 - .297]       | .000*    | 0.855                      | [.563 - 1.237]      | .000*    |
| PImp→PsEmp | 1.34 | 0.129             | [.093 - .167]       | .000*    | 0.244                      | [.134 - .404]       | .000*    |

**Note:** Own work based on the results obtained in SmartPLS. Statistically significant values are indicated with an asterisk.

**Table 5**  
*Values of the coefficients of determination (R<sup>2</sup>)*

|       | Original sample | Simple mean | Confidence intervals |        | T statistics | P values |
|-------|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|--------|--------------|----------|
|       |                 |             | 2.50%                | 97.50% |              |          |
| Act   | 0.002           | 0.006       | 0                    | 0.027  | 0.302        | 0.763    |
| SCf   | 0.094           | 0.101       | 0.027                | 0.196  | 2.159        | 0.031*   |
| SEs   | 0.21            | 0.218       | 0.11                 | 0.341  | 3.512        | 0.000*   |
| Com   | 0.233           | 0.193       | 0.068                | 0.326  | 2.885        | 0.004*   |
| PsEmp | 0.968           | 0.951       | 0.933                | 0.966  | 113.416      | 0.000*   |
| SInf  | 0.047           | 0.054       | 0.005                | 0.131  | 1.409        | 0.159    |

|      |       |       |       |      |       |        |
|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|--------|
| PImp | 0.085 | 0.089 | 0.026 | 0.17 | 2.264 | 0.024* |
|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|--------|

**Note:** Own work based on the results obtained in SmartPLS. Statistically significant values are indicated with an asterisk.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained are consistent with the contributions of Amurrio et al. (2009), García et al. (2022), and Rodrigo and Sobremonte (2014), who identified gender stereotypes as obstacles to the empowerment process, within which a series of factors are linked that academic and scientific literature has established as inherent to its operation. These results support the acceptance of the study’s first research hypothesis.

**Table 6**  
*Values of the indicators Q<sup>2</sup>*

|       | Q <sup>2</sup> predict | RMSE  | MAE   |
|-------|------------------------|-------|-------|
| Act   | -0.006                 | 1.008 | 0.835 |
| SCf   | 0.085                  | 0.966 | 0.755 |
| SEs   | 0.201                  | 0.912 | 0.646 |
| Com   | 0.183                  | 0.915 | 0.702 |
| PsEmp | 0.036                  | 0.990 | 0.771 |
| SInf  | 0.076                  | 0.974 | 0.763 |
| PImp  | 0.497                  | 0.720 | 0.560 |

**Note:** Own work based on the results obtained in SmartPLS.

In the present case, the factors Activity outside the home environment were taken up again, supported by studies such as those of Delgado-Piña et al. (2010), Rowlands (1997), Sosa and Cortés (2015), Self-confidence (Moser, 1989; Ros-Sánchez & Lidón-Cerezuela, 2018), Self-esteem (Banda & Morales, 2015; Muñoz-Márquez et al., 2021; Ros-Sánchez & Lidón-Cerezuela, 2018), Social influence (Aguilar-Idáñez & Buraschi, 2018; Riger, 1997; Rowlands, 1997), Participative communication, which echoes other variables, such as interaction (Montaña, 2012; Llena-Berñe et al., 2017; Úcar et al., 2017) and social participation (Banda and Morales, 2015; Montaña, 2012; Ramos-Vidal and Maya-Jariego, 2014;). In the case of the factor Perception of importance before others, it can be seen as a direct derivative of the relational quality of empowerment (Llena-Berñe et al., 2017), which is associated with the dimension of close relationships, according to Rowlands (1997).

Of these factors, all were significantly influenced by traditional gender stereotypes, except for Activities outside the home environment. In this regard, the influence of the sample characteristics can be inferred, since only 6.5% of the total sample reported being primarily engaged in housework. This demonstrates that a high proportion of units of analysis

engage in activities outside the home, regardless of their level of psychological empowerment. Thus, it was possible to reject the second null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis regarding the other factors linked to the aforementioned construct.

These variables (now including those related to activities beyond the home), in turn, have a significant impact on psychological empowerment, which confirms the third research hypothesis.

Considering that several of the studies that served as the basis for the theoretical support of the present research raise the importance of empowerment as a strategy to, on the one hand, favor the development of specific characteristics that influence personal, community (Cabrera, 2014; Delgado-Piña et al., 2010; Padilla & Pérez, 2023; Ros-Sánchez & Lidón-Cerezuela, 2018) and organizational growth (Carnero et al., 2019; Buksnyte-Marmiene et al., 2022; Martín Pedraza, 2021; Torres et al., 2022). Furthermore, on the other hand, to promote gender equality (Cassab & Mayorca, 2018; Miranda, 2020; Murrieta et al., 2025; Varga, 2025), in the current study the effect size of the various variables addressed was calculated, so that it is possible to provide a reference that indicates which exogenous factors have a greater impact on the dependents in question.

The effect size was statistically significant across the various combinations established in the structural model. However, similar to the result reported regarding the influence of traditional gender stereotypes on activity outside the home, the effect of the former was not significant on the latter. Stereotypes also did not significantly affect either self-confidence or social influence, which may indicate the direction that empowerment efforts should take as a social intervention strategy (as envisioned in the compendium by Silvestre et al., 2014): fostering and strengthening skills that promote self-confidence and the individual capacity to exert social influence, since these are qualities capable of withstanding the impact of gender stereotypes.

The endogenous variable with the lowest predictive accuracy was Activity outside the home (with a  $Q^2$  less than zero), which may lay the groundwork for conducting further studies that do not consider this variable, since it was also not significant in previous analyses. However, if it were included, it would be advisable to increase the sample size to include more cases who engage in a few activities outside the home, which, as already noted, was a limitation in the current research.

In contrast, the endogenous factors with satisfactory predictive relevance were Self-Esteem, Participative Communication, and Perception of Importance to Others, because not only were their coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) significant, but their  $Q^2$  value was also much greater than zero. This can lay the foundation for the construction of subsequent

models that ensure the inclusion of information related to such variables, which indicate the extent to which variation in endogenous variables is due to variation in exogenous variables.

### ***Limitations***

This research faced several limitations, the main one being the use of a nonprobability sample. Once this limitation is overcome, it would be possible to generalize the data obtained, which is currently not possible due to the non-probability nature of the sample used.

Other significant issue is that the sample consisted primarily of participants from urbanized areas within municipalities or boroughs in just two states. For future analyses, it would be beneficial to include participants from less urbanized regions and from other states in Mexico. Moreover, it's important to note that a large percentage of the sample holds higher education degrees (undergraduate and postgraduate). Therefore, it would be advantageous to achieve a more balanced sample by including a greater number of participants whose highest level of education is basic or secondary.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Empowerment, in general, and women's psychological empowerment, in particular, are useful concepts for developing and implementing intervention strategies that promote women's capacity to exercise power. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that both drive and inhibit its emergence and development.

To this end, a comprehensive list of components related to these concepts has been identified, as they operationalize their practice. Factors such as participative communication, self-confidence, and self-esteem, to name just a few, exemplify the multidimensionality of empowerment. In addition to these, a key factor influencing its development is the impact of traditional gender stereotypes.

To determine the impact of these variables, including others such as Activity outside the home environment, Perception of importance to others, and Social influence, this research was conducted. The results showed that gender stereotypes have a significant effect on psychological empowerment and on other associated factors, except Activity outside the home environment. Considering the previously stated concepts of empowerment and psychological empowerment as useful for promoting intervention strategies that strengthen the capacity to exercise power, these results can help develop social strategies that require understanding which variables influence, to a greater or lesser degree, psychological empowerment in women.

For future lines of research, it may be appropriate to conduct social interventions and measure their impact on psychological empowerment and the variables studied in both community and organizational settings, while accounting for the influence of traditional gender stereotypes. The adjusted model provides a more rigorous set of items for measuring the factors in question.

Although the impact of gender stereotypes on empowerment has been explored before, mainly through qualitative approaches, this research offers quantitative data for additional analysis. Consequently, gender stereotypes can either be examined as an external factor or treated as a covariate, which should be controlled for in interventions that focus on psychological empowerment as the primary dependent variable.

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