

Impact of Organizational and Supervisory Support Perceptions on the Turnover Intentions of Working Mothers-to-Be: A Study of the Indian IT Sector

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to examine the various factors that influence turnover intentions of working women at the threshold of motherhood. The impact and interrelationships of variables like organisational and supervisory support perceptions, flexible-work-options, work-family conflict, job and family satisfaction, and their effect on turnover intentions are examined. A questionnaire survey of 203 working women of three categories—women undergoing infertility treatment, pregnant women, and new mothers of the Indian IT sector—was conducted and hypotheses tested through structural equation modelling. Results validated the model developed and confirmed the causal relationships whereby employees working in family-supportive work environments experienced lower levels of work-family conflict, and reduced work-family conflict thereby led to greater job and family satisfaction followed by lesser turnover intentions. The study reiterates the need for organisations to offer specific policies that allow working-women to continue their careers as they go through motherhood.

KEYWORDS

Family Satisfaction, IT Sector, Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intentions, Work-Family Conflict

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Changing social structures, with increasing number of families of dual income couples and single parent households along with growing care responsibilities of both children and elders has led to increased interest and research on how work and family responsibilities can be effectively balanced by employees (Neal and Hammer, 2007). Work-family conflict has long since been recognised as a major concern affecting both employees and employers (Lapierre et al, 2008). Several theoretical frameworks have been used to study the complex and causal interrelationships of work and family along with studies focusing on the moderating influences categorised as person-specific, occupation-

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specific, organisation-specific and culture-specific (Bellavia and Frone, 2005; Poelmans, 2005) that affect work and family balance. Flexible work options have been one of the organisation-specific moderators and the relevance of alternative work arrangements such as telecommuting and flexible work options in reducing work-family conflict has been studied vastly in the western contexts (Allen 2001). Macik-Frey, Quick, Quick and Nelson (2009) studied the positive impact that flexible work options had on job decision latitude that helped reduce work-family conflict. There is a vast body of research that has studied the role of the supervisor and organisational policies in providing a family-supportive organisational environment that is crucial to reducing the work-family conflict (Thomas and Gangster, 1995, Friedman and Johnson, 1997). There are also theoretical and empirical reasons that explain as to how a family-supportive work environment reduces work-family conflict and thereby enhances career and life outcomes such as job satisfaction, family satisfaction and organisational commitment (Lapierre et al, 2008).

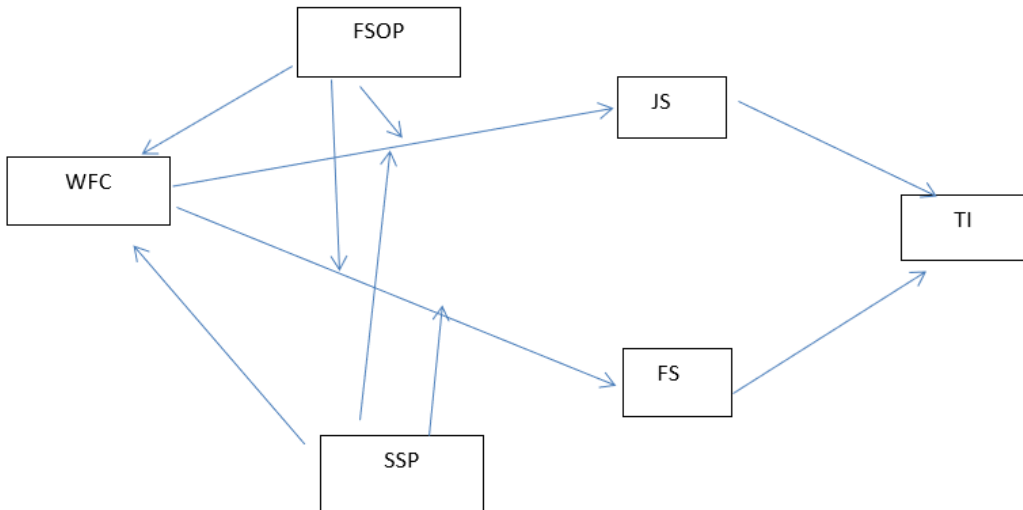
On the contrary, in emerging economies such as India, the importance of family-friendly benefits and the need to reduce work-family conflict by providing family-supportive work environment and organisational policies have not been studied as rigorously as in the west. One of the main reasons attributed to this is the still prevalent gendered distribution of work and family roles (Bhalla and Kaur, 2011) despite the increasing economic role of women in the Indian context. So research in the Indian context has primarily been based on career role salience of women and men's role at crossroads and the requirement of sharing the family responsibilities for men such as in Parikh and Shah's, (1994). With the advent of information technology and enabled services (IT & ITES) in India, many organisations began providing non-work domain services such as gymnasiums, day care facilities, laundry facilities, canteen facilities etc in an attempt to adopt the western organisational practices (Devi, 2002). The IT sector still remains the front runner and possibly the only sector that offers family-friendly benefits such as flexible work options to its employees (Rajadhyaksha, 2012). There are theoretical and empirical evidences, that a family-friendly work environment that provides flexible work options reduces work-family conflict and results in favourable career outcomes such as job and family satisfaction and less turnover intentions, therefore a continuous career for women in the IT workforce. Despite the availability of family-supportive benefits in the IT sector, studies such as that of Rajesh and Ekambaram (2013), state that, childbirth and pregnancy were found to be two of the most important obstacles that led to women taking a career break many a times never to come back to full-time employment. A survey of 55 IT firms in India by NASSCOM in 2017 has reported an alarming decline and exit of women employees in the IT companies for these reasons (NASSCOM, 2017).

It is in this context, that in this study the researchers have investigated the interrelationships between family-supportive organisational perceptions, supervisory support perceptions and work-family conflict on the one hand and the causal effect therefore of work-family conflict on job and family satisfaction leading to lesser or greater turnover intentions with a special group of women from the IT sector which include women undergoing fertility treatment, pregnant women and women who had just given birth at the time of study. Figure 1 gives the graphic representation of the proposed model showing the interrelationships between the various variables under study.

The research paper has been organised as follows, section 1 of this paper presents the hypotheses of the study with existing literature on the various variables such as perceptions of supervisory and organisational support, work-family conflict, job and family satisfaction and turnover intentions. The next section explains the research methodology, analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM) using AMOS and the results of the study followed by the discussion, limitations and the implications for theoretical, societal and future research.

Two models for Group using FWO and group not using FWO.

Figure 1.
Proposed theoretical model



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

The Role of Flexible Work Options in the Context of Impending Motherhood of Working Women

According to Lambert, Marler, and Gueutal (2008), flexible work options are defined as “employer provided benefits that permit employees some level of control over when and where they work outside of the standard workday” Many organisations especially the organisations of the Indian IT sector have begun to offer a range of flexible work options such as flexitime, compressed week, work from home, maternity leave, extended maternity leave without pay etc. Previous studies have shown that flexible work arrangements have a range of important positive organizational attitudes and outcomes. Meta-analysis studies such as that of Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, and Neuman (1999) reported that flexible and compressed workweek schedules were related to productivity and performance, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and satisfaction with work schedules. Flexible work options were introduced by organisations to negate the effect of work-family conflict, improve work-life balance thereby help employee retention (Kosseck, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006). It is interesting to note that the Indian IT firms have begun to focus on innovative initiatives mainly that of flexible work options such as work from home, transitional work arrangements, and specific improvement of supervisory sensitivity in providing a family-supportive work environment. All these efforts are focused to stem the attrition rate of both men and women in general and women (NASSCOM HR survey, 2015). The purpose of the study therefore is inquire into the crucial role of organisational policies and supervisory support in providing a family-friendly work environment that would encourage the employees (especially the young women employees who expect to become mothers) to avail the flexible work options. This study is to further inquiry into the need for organisations to actively promote flexible work options as an important retention strategy to plug the *leaky pipeline* of women leaving jobs due to childbirth.

Support Perceptions and Work-Family Conflict

Work-family conflict(WFC), one of the most elaborately studied relationship between work and family domains is defined as a form of role conflict that arises due to “*simultaneous pressures from both work and family that are mutually incompatible in some respect*”(Greenhaus and Beutall, 1985, p.77).

Substantive research in the past on the effects of work–family conflict on various organisationally valued outcomes has given fairly consistent results (Kinnunen and Mauno, 1998, Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian, 1996). A positive work-family balance has positive impact on employee attitude, behaviours, commitment, and well-being as well as organisational effectiveness and low intention to turnover (Eby et al, 2005). The organisations have also begun to recognise and have introduced a range of family –friendly benefits such as flexitime, compressed week, and work from home by which the employees exercise more control over their work that would greatly reduce the WFC.

There are also researches that prove that making family-friendly benefits available to employees alone is not sufficient to significantly reduce their WFC (Allen, 2001; Perlow, 1995; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). The positive impact of these family-friendly policies can be reaped only when the organisation provides a work environment that is family-friendly and encourages supervisor support. Therefore the perceptions of the employee that both the organisation and the immediate supervisor are family-friendly and supportive of the employee is crucial to reducing the WFC and a lesser work-family conflict would therefore have a positive impact on valued career and organisational outcomes (Perlow, 1995). However, these findings are mostly the results of western researches. In recent years, organisations in India especially the IT and ITES sector have begun to introduce family-friendly benefits especially flexitime, compressed week and work from home which are clubbed as flexible work options to deal with employee work-life balance issues (Poster, 2005), it is important, therefore to further examine the relationships between such interventions and job outcomes in India (Aryee et al., 2005) in the context of women employees at an important life stage of impending motherhood.

Therefore,

Hypothesis 1: Family-supportive organisational perceptions (FSOPs) have a significant impact on work-family conflict (WFC).

Hypothesis 2: Supervisory support perceptions (SSPs) have a significant impact on work-family conflict (WFC).

Work-Family Conflict and Career Outcomes of Job and Family Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions

Firth et al., (2004) define employee turnover intention as the precursor behaviour when an employee intends to leave the job due to various reasons. This intention to quit is a negative career outcome due to work-family conflict, low job and family satisfaction, low organisational commitment and citizenship among many other reasons. According to Bellavia and Frone, 2005, work-family conflict indicates that demands of both domains exceed resources that lead to limited role performance in both domains, and therefore work-family conflict shall also lead to low family satisfaction. Given the negative impact that increased work-family conflict will have on job and family satisfaction, the intention to quit the job would also be high for these women who are expecting to be mothers. Role theory assumes that individuals maintain multiple identities and conflict increases when the demands of these identities interfere with one another (Baldwin et al., 1999). Therefore, when the role demands of impending motherhood eclipses the work demands and women to be mothers foresee increased work-family conflict, there is a high possibility that their job satisfaction would be low and demands of the new born child for new mothers as well as the unpredictable outcomes of fertility treatment and pregnancy may impact their family satisfaction and many a times may increase their intention to turnover, Therefore, to further examine the causal effect of work-family conflict on career outcomes we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3: Work-family conflict (WFC) has a significant impact on job satisfaction (JS).

Hypothesis 4: Work-family conflict (WFC) has a significant impact on family satisfaction (FS).

Hypothesis 5a: Job satisfaction (JS) has a significant impact on turnover intentions (TI).

Hypothesis 5b: Family satisfaction (FS) has a significant impact on turnover intentions (TI).

Moderating Role of Support Perceptions

Several studies have indicated the direct impact that a sensitive supervisor has on reducing work-family conflict of the employees (Goffe *et al.*, 1990; Lu *et al.*, 2010; Hsu, 2011). These researches state that the social support provided by a sensitive supervisor at workplace acts as a buffer and negates the sting of work-family conflict and thereby improves job and family satisfaction. Studies such as that of Lapierre *et al.* (2008), reiterated the causal effect of a family-supportive work environment perceptions on lower levels of work-family conflict and with reduced work-family conflict leading to greater job satisfaction. Baral and Bhargava (2010) indicated that supervisor support and work-family supportive culture were positively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment. Support perceptions have been linked to positive job outcomes such as increased loyalty and decreased work-family conflict as also studies have supported a partial mediating role of both organisational and supervisory support perceptions on the relationship between availability of flexible work benefits and favourable career outcomes (Cook, 2009).

It is important therefore, to examine the moderating role of family-supportive organisational perceptions and supervisory support perceptions on the relationship between work-family conflict and job/family satisfaction especially when these women are in a crucial life stage of motherhood.

Therefore,

Hypothesis 6a: Family-supportive organisational perceptions (FSOPs) moderates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job satisfaction (JS).

Hypothesis 6b: Supervisory support perceptions (SSPs) moderates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job satisfaction (JS).

Hypothesis 7a: Family-supportive organisational perceptions (FSOPs) moderates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and family satisfaction (FS).

Hypothesis 7b: Supervisory support perceptions (SSPs) SSP moderates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and family satisfaction (FS).

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The snowball sampling technique (Green, Tull, & Abraham, 1995) was used to identify the participants for the research as there were no available sources to locate working women with impending motherhood in the Indian IT industry and a survey research through a questionnaire was conducted to gather data. Validated scales of the various variables under study were used to develop the questionnaire to test the hypothesised model. While the initial participants were approached through relatives and friends of the researchers, a major number of participants were contacted by the researchers at maternity/fertility clinics in the cities of Chennai, Bangalore and Vellore. These participants were working women from the IT sector who were visiting the clinics for consultation for treatment for infertility, pregnancy or were new mothers). A few other participants were referrals given by these initial participants who altogether formed the final sample of 203 participants' usable data collected between May and June of 2018.

Operational Definitions of Variables:

Family-Supportive Organisational Perception (FSOPs). The nine-item version of Shockley & Allen, (2007) of the family-supportive organisation perceptions measure developed by Allen (2001) was included with higher scores indicating that the employees perceived greater levels of organisational support.

Supervisory Support Perceptions (SSPs). The perception of the immediate supervisor's support was assessed using the six-item, five-point scale used by Cook, 2009. Higher scores of the scale reported meant greater supervisory support perceptions.

Work-Family Conflict (WFC). A ten-item scale was adapted from Netemeyer *et al*, (1996) which consisted of five items each to measure work interfering with family and family interfering with work conflicts. A five- point scale was used to measure the extent to which they agreed with the statement on work and family environments with higher scores reported suggesting greater work-family conflict.

Job Satisfaction (JS). The three-item overall job satisfaction scale from the Michigan Organisational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979) was used to measure job satisfaction. Higher scores indicated a greater degree of job satisfaction.

Turnover Intentions (TI). The intention to turnover was measured with three items used by Colarelli, (1984). Higher scores indicated greater intentions to leave the organisation.

Control Variables. Age, monthly income, work experience and position category were chosen as control variables. The demographic profile of the participants is given in **Table 1**.

DATA ANALYSIS

Since the scales used are well tested scales the validity and reliability of the scales were tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) through SPSS 21.0. SEM, AMOS 22.0 was then used to test the hypotheses and interrelationships of the variables under study along with regression for moderation using SPSS 21.0

Validity and Reliability

Table 2 shows the internal consistency and reliability of the constructs with the Cronbach’s alpha that ranges from .959 to .995, a satisfactory range as it exceeds the minimum cut-off point of 0.6 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Further, the composite reliability also has been achieved as seen in the Table 2 with values that exceed the cut-off value of 0.6 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The mean score and standard deviation of all items are listed in Table 2.

Table 1.
 Survey participants demographic profile (n=203)

Demographic Measures	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Life Stage of Participants	Women undergoing treatment for infertility	79	39
	Pregnant women	68	33
	Mothers who had just given birth	56	27
Age Group	25 to 34 years	151	74
	35 to 44 years	52	25
Work Experience	0 to 10 years	176	87
	11 to 20 years	27	14
Job Category	Entry level	137	67
	Middle level	66	33
Monthly Income	below Rs 25000	13	7
	Rs 25000 to 49999	153	75
	Rs 50000 to 74999	37	18
Organisation Type	MNC/large IT Companies	30	15
	mid-sized companies	35	17
	small companies	35	17
	Did not provide data	90	44

Table 2.
Statistics of construct/variable items

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha (CA)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Mean	Standard Deviation
FSOP	FSOP1	0.978	0.995	0.995	0.956	3.57	1.671
	FSOP2	0.978				3.58	1.6
	FSOP3	0.973				3.55	1.589
	FSOP4	0.982				3.56	1.629
	FSOP5	0.964				3.5	1.555
	FSOP6	0.977				3.59	1.606
	FSOP7	0.979				3.55	1.623
	FSOP8	0.984				3.54	1.642
	FSOP9	0.984				3.61	1.614
	Average	0.98				3.55	1.57
SSP	SSP1	0.972	0.991	0.991	0.949	2.91	1.704
	SSP2	0.977				2.91	1.738
	SSP3	0.975				2.94	1.724
	SSP4	0.964				2.8	1.669
	SSP5	0.983				3.01	1.759
	SSP6	0.974				2.91	1.714
	Average	0.974				2.91	1.68
WFC	W1F1	0.979	0.989	0.989	0.896	3.23	1.779
	W1F2	0.969				3.23	1.715
	W1F3	0.969				3.24	1.793
	W1F4	0.972				3.24	1.701
	W1F5	0.967				3.18	1.749
	F1W6	0.936				2.98	1.729
	F1W7	0.929				2.97	1.596
	F1W8	0.918				3.03	1.653
	F1W9	0.916				2.98	1.624
	F1W10	0.907				2.93	1.607
	Average	0.95				3	2
JS	JS1	0.973	0.98	0.979	0.939	2.86	1.739
	JS2	0.969				2.8	1.709
	JS3	0.965				2.85	1.697
	Average	0.969				2.83	1.68
FS	FS1	0.965	0.959	0.959	0.922	3.08	1.666
	FS2	0.955				3.22	1.627
	Average	0.96				3.14	1.61
TI	TIS1	0.96	0.971	0.971	0.917	3.16	1.666
	TIS2	0.96				3.24	1.666
	TIS3	0.953				3.22	1.66
	Average	0.958				3.2	1.61

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A CFA was run using AMOS 22 to establish convergent and discriminant validity using maximum likelihood estimation method for analysis. According to Blanco, Blasco, & Azorín (2010), convergent validity is achieved when the indicators for a given construct are moderately correlated among themselves at the least. According to Steenkamp and Geyskens (2006), the factor loadings of the confirmatory model should be statistically significant (level of 0.01) and more than 0.5 points and average should be more than 0.7. Average variance extracted (AVE) values for all the six constructs are above the minimum cut-off point of 0.5 confirming the convergent validity (Hair et al., 2006).

Discriminant validity is achieved when the indicators for different constructs are not highly correlated such that the lead one may conclude that they measure the same thing (Blanco et al., 2010). Discriminant validity is also achieved as the square root of the AVE (the diagonal values in the Table 3 (a) and 3 (b)) for the constructs are found to be greater than or equal to (somehow in two cases) the correlations with other constructs (off diagonal values) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, the assumption of common method bias and linearity were examined, and it was found that they were not violated.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The causal relationships of the conceptual research model proposed were tested for the goodness of fit, and the significance of the path coefficients were estimated and tested using AMOS. Overall, the data provided a good model fit, which was verified by estimating a few model fit test statistics, The absolute fit index of Chisq was used along with incremental fit indices such as the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and Normed fit index (NFI), as also Chisq/df was used as the parsimonious fit index. Table 4 shows the fit statistics of the research model and the recommended values or the cut-off points. As per the recommended criterion, the fit indices provide a good model fit for the data, and model is appropriate for hypothesis testing (Steiger & Lind, 1980; Seyal, Rahman, & Rahim, 2002). In order to test the different model interrelationships and for testing the hypothesis, three criterions have been used such as the regression coefficients, their degree of significance (p -value < 0.001) and critical ratio ($CR > 1.96$). On the basis of this, the hypothesis has

Table 3(a).
 Discriminant validity

Construct	FSOP	SSP	WFC
FSOP	0.978		
SSP	0.803	0.974	
WFC	-0.772	-0.963	0.947

Notes: The bold numbers on the diagonal are the square roots of the AVE and non-diagonal values are correlation between variables.

Table 3(b).
 Discriminant validity

Construct	TI	JS	FS	WFC
TI	0.958			
JS	-0.970	0.969		
FS	-0.840	0.856	0.960	
WFC	0.965	-0.972	-0.893	0.947

Notes: The bold numbers on the diagonal are the square roots of the AVE and non-diagonal values are correlation between variables.

been supported or rejected. The results of the hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5a, and H5b are shown in Table 5. Figure 2 gives the standardized path coefficients of the theoretical model from the results of the SEM analyses and moderation through regression results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the listed indicators in Table 5, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5a, and H5b were found to be supported statistically by the results. The results mean that in the context of organisations making available family-supportive policies and benefits such as flexible work options, the employees' perception that both the organisation and the immediate supervisor are friendly have a significant impact and greatly lowers the work family conflict of the employee. The results also mean that lower the work-family conflict higher is the job and family satisfaction which thereafter reduces the intention to turnover.

While H6a, shown in Table 6(a) was not supported which means that FSOPs have no moderating impact on the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job satisfaction (JS), H6b, shown in Table 6(b) was supported which means supervisory support perceptions (SSPs) had a significant ($p < .001$) moderating impact on the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job satisfaction (JS). H7a, shown in Table 7(a) also was supported with family-supportive organisational perceptions (FSOPs) significantly ($p < .001$) moderating the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and family satisfaction (FS). H7b, shown in Table 7(b) also found statistical support with supervisory support perceptions (SSPs) moderating with a significant $p < .01$, the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and Family Satisfaction (FS).

Table 4(a).
Fit indices for the research model (FSP-SSP-WFC)

Name of the Category	Name of Index	Level of Acceptance	Index Value
Absolute Fit	Chisq	$P < 0.05$	0.000
Incremental Fit	CFI(Confirmatory Fit Index)	> 0.9	0.949
	TLI(Tucker Lewis Index)	> 0.9	0.943
	NFI(Normed Fit Index)	> 0.9	0.929
Parsimonious Fit	Chisq/DF	< 5	3.381

Table 4(b).
Fit indices for the research model (WFC -JS-FS-TI)

Name of the Category	Name of Index	Level of Acceptance	Index Value
Absolute Fit	Chisq	$P < 0.05$	0.000
Incremental Fit	CFI	> 0.9	0.921
	TLI	> 0.9	0.908
	NFI	> 0.9	0.907
Parsimonious Fit	Chisq/DF	< 5	5.696

Figure 2.
 Structural model test results

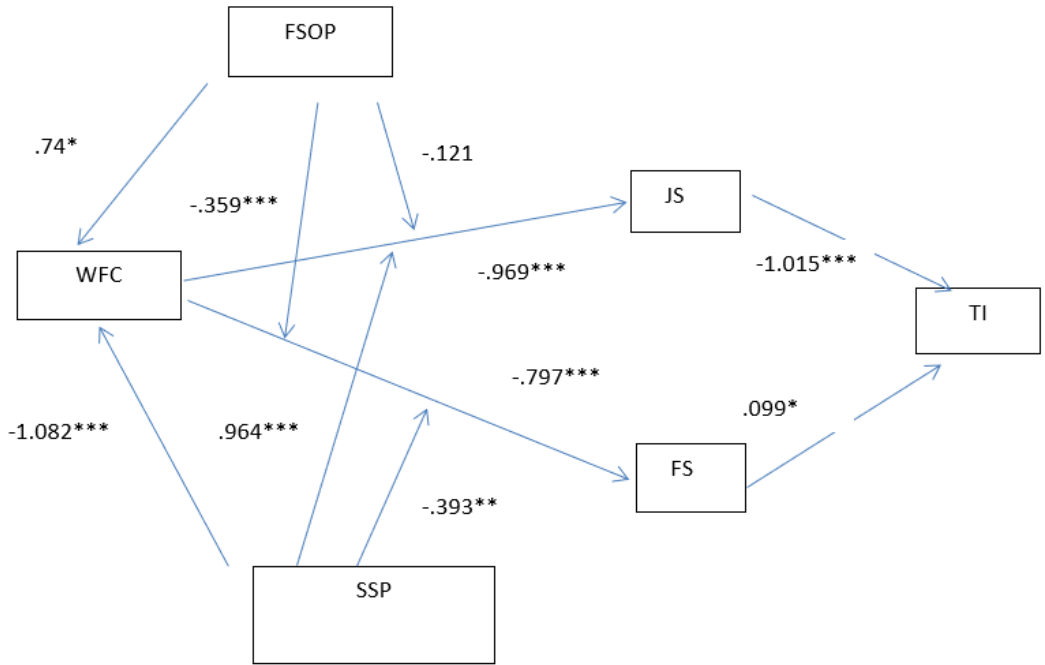


Table 5.
 Summary of the hypotheses test results

Hypotheses	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Estimate	SE	Critical Ratio (CR)	P Value	Hypotheses Decision
H1	FSOP	WFC	.074	.030	2.464	*	supported
H2	SSP	WFC	-1.082	.036	-30.161	***	supported
H3	WFC	JS	-.969	.022	-43.734	***	supported
H4	WFC	FS	-.797	.036	-22.019	***	supported
H5a	JS	TI	-1.015	.041	-24.741	***	supported
H5b	FS	TI	.099	.036	2.748	*	supported

* significant at $p < 0.05$ level.
 ** significant at $p < 0.01$ level.
 ***significant at $p < 0.001$.

Table 6a.
Hypothesis 6a: Family supportive organizational perceptions (FSOP) moderates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job satisfaction (JS). Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction (JS)

	Independent Variable	β	R	R ²	n
Without moderation	Work-family Conflict(WFC)	-0.972***	0.972	0.945	203
Moderation	Work-family Conflict(WFC)* Family Supportive Organizational Perceptions (FSOP)	-0.121	0.084	0.007	203

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 6b.

Hypothesis 6b: Supervisory support perceptions (SSP) moderates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job satisfaction (JS). Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction (JS)

	Independent Variable	β	R	R2	n
Without moderation	Work-family Conflict(WFC)	-0.972***	0.972	0.945	203
Moderation	Work-family Conflict(WFC)* Supervisory support Perceptions (SSP)	0.964***	0.454	0.206	203

*p<0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7a.

Hypothesis 7a: Family supportive organizational perceptions (FSOP) moderates the relationship between work-life conflict (WFC) and family satisfaction (FS). Dependent Variable: Family satisfaction (FS)

	Independent Variable	β	R	R2	n
Without moderation	Work-family Conflict (WFC)	-0.893***	0.893	0.797	203
Moderation	Work-family Conflict (WFC)* Family Supportive Organizational Perceptions (FSOP)	-0.359***	0.284	0.080	203

*p<0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7b.

Hypothesis 7b: Supervisory support perceptions (SSP) moderates the relationship between work-life conflict (WFC) and family satisfaction (FS). Dependent Variable: Family satisfaction (FS)

	Independent Variable	β	R	R2	n
Without moderation	Work-family Conflict (WFC)	-0.893***	0.893	0.797	203
Moderation	Work-family Conflict (WFC)* Supervisory support Perceptions (SSP)	-0.393**	0.193	0.037	203

*p<0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p<0.001

DISCUSSION

The present study makes an important contribution to the demands of interplay of work and family domains in the Indian IT sector with respect to career salience or break of young working women at a crucial life stage of impending motherhood.

These women under study are at a life stage where there is increased demand over their time in their current work role and impending family role as they undergo treatment for infertility where the results could be uncertain, or spend the period of pregnancy with a lot of anticipation and angst over the demands that a new born might have over their time and new mothers who might be anxious about how they would be able to get back to their career and manage both work and family with the added responsibility of the new-born. Overall, the results of the study suggest that the availability and use of flexible work options as a policy increases the favourable perceptions (about the organisation and supervisor as family-supportive) of the employee and therefore these support perceptions lower the work-family conflict that these employees might face at this crucial life stage. The study reiterates the results of previous researches such as Mustapha et al, (2011) that examined the relationship between organisational time demands, work-family facilitation and turnover intention and reported that a family- supportive work culture, organization support (usage of family-friendly benefits), and work-to-family facilitation helped reduce turnover intention and increased job and family satisfaction.

The important role of the supervisor in providing the family-supportive work environment is underscored by this study as has been reiterated by many previous studies (Allen, 2001, Cook, 2009, Billing et al 2014). While FSOPs do not seem to moderate the relationship between WFC and job satisfaction, supervisory support perceptions (SSPs) seem to have a moderating impact on the WFC and job satisfaction relationship. This only goes on to prove results of previous studies which state that the willingness of the supervisor to allow employees to avail the various family-friendly benefits have a critical influence on family, job satisfaction and intention to turnover. Therefore, supervisors need to be sensitised to be the flag bearers of the family-friendly policies as they are the administrators of the well-meaning policies that the organisation might have formulated. If employees perceive that organisation or supervisor are indicting that an usage of family friendly benefit such flexible work options are not appreciated, the employees might hesitate to use those options and may develop negative job outcomes and attitudes resulting in high intention to turnover and the crucial life stage of impending motherhood they are in might accelerate their intention to leave the organisation.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study relies on self-reported responses; therefore, the results may not yield to generalised conclusions of the causal model. Nevertheless, a follow up study of the same set of respondents after they have passed this life stage could provide a meaningful understanding of the long-term effects of family-supportive work environment on career salience, work-family conflict and favourable career outcomes. Also, the same study can be replicated in other sectors that offer flexible work options in India.

Many studies as mentioned in this article have identified work-family balance as a key driver for considering an organisation to be family-supportive and therefore is one of the key retention strategies. This study too reiterates the importance of family-supportive work environment and a sensitive and supportive supervisor to reassure the employees and help them juggle their responsibilities of both home and work at a very crucial life stage. Through this study, the researchers reiterate the need for organisations to offer specific policies for greater flexible work options that would allow young working women who are at the crossroads of motherhood to be able to continue in their careers as they go through this important life stage. To ensure implementation of these family-supportive benefits, the study underscores the need to train and sensitise of supervisors who are the key to facilitate a family-supportive work environment.

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