

## Walking a double-edged sword: Examining the moderating role of family structure in the work–family conflict–turnover intention relationship



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### ABSTRACT

Based on Conservation of Resources Theory, this study examines whether family structure (married vs. divorced, separated, or widowed) moderates the indirect effects of Work–Family Conflict (WFC) and Family–Work Conflict (FWC) on intentions to leave (ITL), with employee attitudes (job satisfaction and organizational commitment) acting as mediators. Data were collected from 365 full-time women architects who have caregiving responsibilities for children, elderly individuals, and/or family members with disabilities. The data were analyzed using a moderated mediation approach in SPSS. The results indicate that both WFC and FWC have significant positive effects on ITL, and these effects are fully mediated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Furthermore, the indirect effects of WFC and FWC on ITL are significantly weaker among married women, suggesting that spousal support serves as an important resource that buffers the negative impact of conflict. In contrast, these indirect effects remain strong and significant for divorced, separated, or widowed women, identifying them as a higher-risk group for turnover. From a theoretical perspective, the findings extend COR theory by showing that the impact of resource loss depends on the availability of social resources. Future research should investigate whether formal institutional support, such as family-friendly policies, can provide similar benefits to employees without partners.

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### 1. Introduction

Although organizational policies like diversity, equity, and inclusion are aimed at offering more opportunities to women and minorities in full-time jobs, it is also paradoxical, as women have a dilemma in pursuing high-demand positions and at the same time attending to their families. Such a dual role frequently results in work-family conflict, a phenomenon in which the requirements of one area disrupt the role in the other (Kim et al., 2025). This is especially so in the male-dominated architecture profession. The nature of the architectural profession, with its strictness, extended working hours, and project-oriented nature, only worsens these conflicts, which is why such a field is especially relevant to this investigation. The field of architecture has also seen a growing presence of

women in the workforce, as well as high levels of attrition by women, particularly in mid-career (Finkel et al., 2017). With seniority and the growing career imperative, women tend to also encounter a rise in the need to care, especially to young children or elderly parents (DeSimone, 2020; Williams and Dempsey, 2014). The combination of professional growth and the expansion of family roles leads to a major source of work-family strain, which adversely influences job satisfaction, organizational commitment (Allen et al., 2003), and turnover intentions in the workforce. Moreover, the existing literature has demonstrated that a positive partner, the quantity and age of children, and the severity of caregiving responsibilities are all key contextual variables with the potential to either mitigate or intensify the stress of work-family conflict (Javed, 2019).

The body of knowledge on work-family conflict (WFC) in Pakistan has continued to grow over the last decade. Much of the attention has been centered on how the patriarchal socio-cultural context of the country contributes to the tension between work-related commitments and family-related tasks. Literature is highly concentrated in the service and education fields, most of the time in female

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university faculty, in healthcare practitioners, and in the banking and manufacturing industry employees (Akram et al., 2022; Elahi et al., 2022; Khurshid et al., 2023).

Regardless of this accumulating literature, there are still gaps in the research. First, the literature on the general service sectors is abundant, whereas the literature on specific technical and creative jobs is notably limited. Indicatively, the distinct experiences of WFC among female architects in Pakistan are almost unexplored. The work of architects is characterized by high-pressure factors such as strict visits to construction sites and strict timeframes of projects, and must be reconciled with household needs. Second, empirical evidence on family structure as a moderating variable is severely lacking. Although a demographic change is being observed in Pakistani society between joint and nuclear family lifestyles, specifically in the nuclear family setups, the specific effect of these varied living arrangements on the extent of work-family interference on employee well-being has not been investigated. These gaps need to be filled to have a more detailed interpretation of the contemporary Pakistani workforce.

This paper, therefore, argues that there is an urgent need to investigate the work-family conflict among women architects in Pakistan and the consequent effect on their job attitudes and decisions to remain at or quit full-time employment. Moreover, this research seeks to explore the important moderating role that family structure may have in this relationship. It accomplishes this by considering a professional group that is not yet adequately investigated, yet is at the heart of a global industry, and whose experiences hold deep implications when it comes to gender equity.

This study, therefore, makes an important contribution to existing literature by exploring a profession that is most prone to work-family conflict. In doing this, it not only broadens the generalizability of work-family conflict theory to a new context but also presents family structure as a crucial moderating variable. This method enables us to deepen our understanding of the conditional processes in the work-family interface.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Work-family and family-work conflict

WFC refers to a type of conflict between work and family roles in which the requirements of both work and family roles become mutually exclusive (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). There are two major directions of this conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985): the work-to-family conflict (WFC) and the family-to-work conflict (FWC). WFC happens when the work demands conflict with the family role demands (e.g., long working hours in the office result in a lack of time to attend to family needs), and FWC happens when the family demands conflict with the work demands (e.g., family needs prevent attending

work requirements). Role Theory, the Spillover theory, and social exchange theory can provide the fundamental explanation of the relationships between WFC and FWC and the key employee outcomes. Based on the notions of Role Theory, individuals have limited pools of resources (e.g., time, energy, attention) that can be distributed among various roles in life, including work and family, among others, some of which may conflict (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011; Pattusamy and Jacob, 2017). Employees may experience role strain in situations where the obligations of the work conflict with the demands of other roles. Role strain causes subsequent emotional and physical exhaustion that triggers the Spillover mechanism, in which the negative psychological state (e.g., stress, fatigue, frustration) experienced in one domain is transferred to the attitudes in other domains (Thomas and Ganster, 1995). In particular, the emotional exhaustion caused by continuous WFC or FWC exhausts the psychological resources that are needed to be involved in and content with the job role, which directly causes a decrease in job satisfaction. Moreover, based on the Social Exchange Theory, the role strain weakens the psychological contract with the organization and reduces the employees' sense of obligation and emotional attachment towards the organization, subsequently resulting in reduced organizational commitment (Javed, 2022). The lack of commitment, together with job dissatisfaction and resource drainage, leaves the individual highly vulnerable to withdrawing cognitions, which in turn intensifies his/her Intentions to quit, to escape the source of role strain that has not been alleviated (Thomas and Ganster, 1995).

The consequences of this conflict stretch beyond personal stress, directly affecting an individual's professional life. A vast body of research has demonstrated a clear relationship between work-family conflict and decreased job satisfaction, organizational commitment (Amstad et al., 2011), and increased intentions to quit jobs (Aboobaker et al., 2017; Ajaz et al., 2015; Mansour and Tremblay, 2018; Porter and Ayman, 2010). Job satisfaction, which refers to a person's overall evaluation of their job, is undermined when the demands of work consistently interfere with family time, making it difficult to attend to family demands. Similarly, organizational commitment, which refers to an employee's psychological attachment and loyalty to their organization, is weakened when individuals feel that their employer is indifferent to their efforts to achieve a work-life balance (Allen et al., 2003).

In the case of women architects, the constant experience of being forced to choose between their work and family life may result in the gradual loss of their professional identity and a sense of belonging in their companies, which eventually causes them to quit the profession altogether (Sang et al., 2007; Singh et al., 2018). The results of many studies have shown a negative correlation between WFC and FWC and job satisfaction, as employees with high-level

inter-role conflicts are less likely to be more satisfied and content with their work (Javed, 2022; Valcour, 2007). Likewise, the presence of high role conflict is linked to lower organizational commitment, leading them to have higher intentions to leave their jobs (Javed, 2019; Thomas and Ganster, 1995).

The literature indicates a complex and asymmetrical association between the two types of conflict and their work-related consequences. A strong body of research suggests that having Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC) exerts a greater negative effect on job satisfaction, whereas Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC) has an even greater negative effect on organizational commitment. The direct consequence of the impact of the job on an individual is WFC, which is a result of work-related demands impacting family life. The workplace provides sources of stressors such as extended working periods, working stresses, and unbalanced schedules, and the direct effect of these stressors on the family domain may result in direct job dissatisfaction (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011). Here, the conflict is viewed because of job design, leading the employee to feel discontent and unhappy with their work, resulting in reduced job satisfaction (Yucel, 2017).

Conversely, FWC, where family-related demands interfere with work, is usually perceived as a difficulty in balancing personal demands. Though it might bring stress to the workplace, it has a main psychological effect on the relationship of the employee with his/her employer. At times when family demands like childcare or taking care of elderly family members make it hard to deliver at work, the employees may end up feeling that the organization is not flexible or friendly towards their personal lives. This sense of insufficient organizational support/flexibility undermines the emotional and psychological attachment of the employee to the organization and causes a loss in organizational commitment as opposed to a direct decrease in the level of satisfaction with the job activity per se (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011). This difference is essential to comprehend the extent of the work-family conflict. Although both WFC and FWC are detrimental, recognizing their specific antecedents allows for more precise and effective interventions. For instance, organizational policies aimed at reducing WFC (e.g., flextime, reduced hours) would be most effective for boosting job satisfaction, whereas those intended to reduce FWC (e.g., on-site daycare, supportive supervision) would be more instrumental in fostering organizational commitment (Javed, 2022).

The relationship between employee attitudes and withdrawal behavior is rooted in the Social Exchange Theory (SET). This theory posits that the relationship between the employee and the workplace is a continuous series of exchange transactions, initiated by the organization's treatment and support of its employees (Blau, 1964). Organizations offer resources, support, and policies for work-life balance with the expectation of reciprocity in the form of employee loyalty and

positive behaviors. Employees view their own attitudes and behaviors as acceptable commodities for this exchange (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2003). Therefore, when employees perceive that the organization is providing necessary resources and support that helps them balance their work and family demands (Higgins et al., 1992), they reciprocate by enhancing their Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment. On the other hand, the organization's failure to provide adequate support to balance work and family roles is seen as a breach of reciprocity. Therefore, when employees perceive work demands as excessive and interfering with family life, they perceive it as a violation of the exchange relationship. To mitigate the resulting strain and psychological depletion, employees engage in counter-exchange attitudes such as decreasing job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Greenhaus et al., 2001). Low job satisfaction and diminished organizational commitment represent the psychological manifestation of a failed exchange, acting as powerful proximal precursors to the decision to voluntarily leave the organization. The employee may conclude that the only viable solution is to sever the exchange entirely by finding a new job that better supports their need for balance.

The extant literature has consistently supported job satisfaction and organizational commitment as proximal precursors to withdrawal behavior. Findings from various meta-analyses consistently demonstrated that both job satisfaction and organizational commitment are two of the strongest, most reliable predictors of turnover intentions (Griffeth et al., 2000). This discussion, therefore, brings about the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Job satisfaction and organizational commitment mediate the relationship between both WFC and FWC and intentions to leave.

## 2.2. The moderating role of family structure

It has been demonstrated in the literature that women experience WFC more intensely because of well-established societal norms that impose most of the childcare and domestic management on women (Owoo and Lambon-Quayefio, 2021; Byron, 2005). This has a dual burden on women who are also in the labor force (Jamshed et al., 2024). The architectural studio, and late-night deadlines, as well as the project-based nature of the work, collide directly with the inflexible nature of the school pickups, family meals, family time, and other family commitments, thereby putting women architects at an especially high risk of having conflict in work and in family lives (Aydin and Erbil, 2022).

WFC does not affect all women similarly; the influence that it has is highly contextual, with family structure being the most significant. The existing body of literature tends to assume that family life is a monolith, but the reality between the life of a woman who has never been married and has no family ties,

the life of a woman who has a partner who can provide support and share household responsibilities, and the life of a woman with children is quite different (Javed, 2022). Therefore, family roles and duties of an employee, including the number and ages of children, eldercare duties, and having a supportive partner, can change the level to which conflict influences job-related attitudes and behavior. For instance, married women can get the support of a partner in childcare and home duties, which can mitigate the adverse effects of WFC or FWC on employee attitudes and behavior. Single mothers with caring responsibilities, on the other hand, might experience a stronger effect of WFC or FWC since the support of a partner is absent, and they might be more susceptible to dissatisfaction and lack of commitment (Javed, 2019).

This study, therefore, argues that family structure is an important moderator in the correlation between WFC, FWC and job attitudes and behavior. It is suggested that the adverse impact of WFC and FWC on job satisfaction and organizational commitment will be much less pronounced in women whose family structures are more supportive and flexible. On the other hand, this correlation will be further worsened in the case of women who lack

support structures, such as single women or those who have partners with equally demanding occupations. This research will attempt to go beyond an oversimplified cause-and-effect type of explanation to offer a more sophisticated, realistic, and theoretically rich conceptualization of how family structure can either mitigate or exacerbate the adverse impact of professional demands on personal well-being. The underlying potential mechanism involves a two-step process. (1) Both WFC and FWC increase female architects' intentions to leave their jobs via their effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (a mediating effect). (2) The family structure determines how strong the overall impact of WFC and FWC is on their intentions to leave their job (a moderating effect).

**H2:** Family structure moderates the relationship between WFC, FWC, and job satisfaction and organizational commitment of female architects.

**H3:** The mediating effect of WFC and FWC via job satisfaction and organizational commitment on female architects' intentions to leave would be stronger for divorced, separated, and widowed females. The proposed moderated mediation model in the present study is given in Fig. 1.

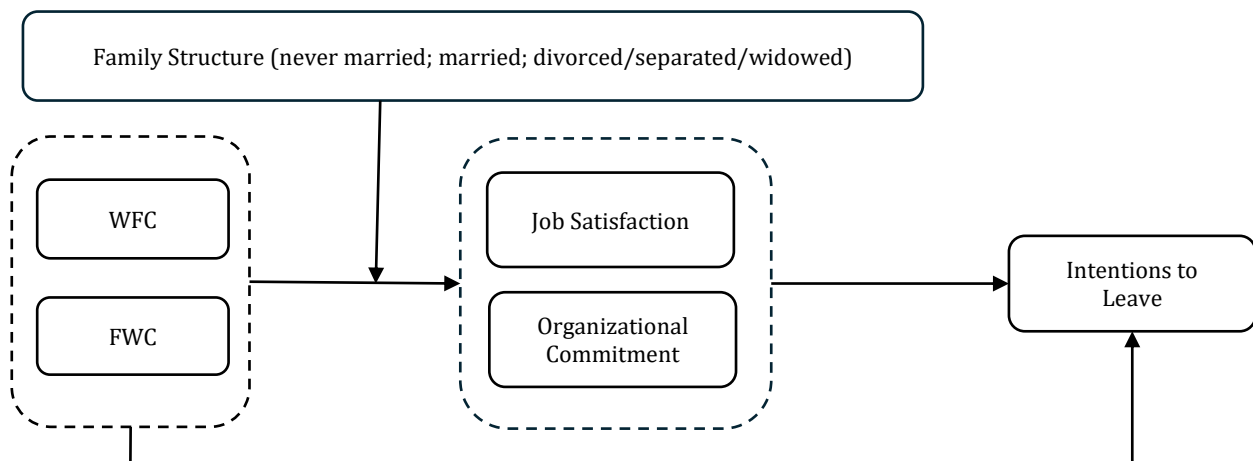


Fig. 1: The proposed moderated mediation model

### 3. Materials and methods

#### 3.1. Participants and procedure

This was a cross-sectional study conducted among women architects in Pakistan. A list of Women architects was obtained from the Pakistan Engineering Council. A total of 500 women architects, working full-time, were recruited. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. An electronic survey was distributed to these participants, and data were collected over a three-month period, from June to August 2025. Participants had to complete all questions before they could submit the response. All participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and informed consent was obtained for their participation on the first page of the survey. Of these women architects, 365 completed the survey.

Most of the architects were in the age group of 35-45 years (67%), had a tenure of over 10 years (59%), were married (59.6%), had at least two dependent children under the age of ten (84.2%), and had caring responsibilities for elder family members (77.8%).

#### 3.2. Measures

Work-family conflict was assessed using the five-item measure of Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC) and the four-item measure of Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC) from the scale developed by Carlson et al. (2000). Responses for both measures were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with higher scores representing higher levels of conflict. Job satisfaction was measured using an eight-item short form of the Job Satisfaction Survey (Warr et al., 1979; Sang et al.,

2009). This widely used scale assesses an employee's overall satisfaction with their job. Participants indicated their agreement with each item on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Organizational commitment was assessed using a four-item version of the Affective Commitment subscale, a well-established measure developed by Meyer and Allen (1991). Intentions to quit the job were measured by using a single item (Treglown et al., 2018) that asked responders the extent to which they agree or disagree that they often think about quitting their job. Participants responded to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Wanous et al. (1997) indicated that single-item measures are suitable where the research variable is narrow, unambiguous, and has high face validity, just like the conscious decision of a respondent to leave an organization.

Family structure was measured by asking respondents to indicate if they were never married, married and living with the spouse, or single (i.e., divorced/separated/widowed). Family structure was transformed into two dummy variables: married (1 if the participant indicated that they were married and 0 otherwise) and single (1 if participant indicated that they were either divorced, separated, or widowed and 0 otherwise).

### 3.3. Statistical analysis

Data analyses were conducted using SPSS v 31.0. First, descriptive and correlation analyses were

conducted among study variables. Second, a simple mediation analysis of job attitudes mediating the relationship between both WFC and FWC and intentions to leave was tested using Hayes's (2017) PROCESS macro (Model 4). Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was used to test for the significance of the indirect effects. Lastly, the moderated mediation hypotheses were examined using the Hayes (2017) PROCESS Macro (Model 9) (Hayes, 2017). This robust analytical approach was employed as it facilitates the simultaneous estimation of direct, indirect, and conditional indirect effects of WFC, FWC on intentions to leave via Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment for married and single (divorced/separated/widowed) women.

## 4. Results

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for the study variables, including bivariate correlations, mean/SD, and reliability. The results show that all the variables are moderately correlated with each other in the expected direction. Internal reliability was established via Cronbach's alpha. All the constructions displayed values well above the accepted threshold of 0.8. Both WFC and FWC were negatively correlated with job satisfaction ( $r = -0.21, p < 0.01$ ;  $r = -0.14, p < 0.01$ ) and organizational commitment ( $r = -0.11, p < 0.05$ ;  $r = -0.16, p < 0.01$ ) and positively correlated with intentions to leave ( $r = 0.14, p < 0.05$ ;  $r = 0.10, p < 0.05$ ). Both job satisfaction and organizational commitment were negatively associated with intentions to leave ( $r = -0.41, p < 0.01$ ;  $r = -0.26, p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 1:** Descriptive analysis

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1. Work-to-family conflict	0.89					24.98	3.83
2. Family-to-work conflict	0.31**	0.81				18.71	3.08
3. Job satisfaction	-0.21**	-0.14*	0.90			28.07	4.03
4. Organizational commitment	-0.11*	-0.16**	0.55**	0.87		15.05	3.03
5. Intentions to leave	0.14*	0.10*	-0.41**	-0.26**	-	2.47	1.12

\*\* : Significant at 0.01; \* : Significant at 0.05 level; reliability given in diagonal

### 4.1. Mediating analysis

Direct and indirect effects are evaluated with the help of a simple mediation model (Model 4) in SPSS (Fig. 2). The observed effect of WFC and FWC on job satisfaction and organizational commitment is shown by a1, a2, a3, and a4. The observed effect of WFC and FWC on Intentions to leave is shown by c'1 and c'2. Whereas the observed effects of job satisfaction and organizational commitment on intentions to leave are shown by b1 and b2.

The results of the mediation analysis (Table 2) showed that WFC and FWC had a significant negative effect on job satisfaction ( $a1 = -0.98, p < 0.01$ ;  $a2 = -0.63, p < 0.01$ ) and organizational commitment ( $a3 = -0.47, p < 0.01$ ;  $a4 = -0.45, p < 0.01$ ). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment had a significant negative effect on intentions to leave ( $b1 = -0.11, p < 0.01$ ;  $b2 = -0.10, p < 0.01$ ). The results of the bootstrapped 95% confidence interval (Table 3) confirmed that the indirect effect of WFC via job

satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.16, CI$  does not contain zero) and organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.05, CI$  does not contain zero) on the intentions to leave was significant. Furthermore, the indirect effect of FWC via job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.11; CI$  does not contain zero) and organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.05; CI$  does not contain zero) on the intentions to leave was significant. These results indicate full mediation. This finding substantiates H1.

### 4.2. Moderated mediation

Moderated mediation analysis was performed using Model 9 of the PROCESS macro with bootstrapping by Hayes (2017) to examine whether the mediating process—the indirect effect of WFC and FWC on intentions to leave through job satisfaction and organization—is contingent upon the family structure. This analysis specifically investigated: (a) family structure moderates the relationship between WFC, FWC, and job satisfaction

and organizational commitment (Table 4); (b) the conditional indirect effect of WFC and FWC on intentions to leave via job satisfaction and organization, moderated by family structure (Table 5).

The results (Table 4) suggested that family structure moderates the relationship between WFC and FWC and job satisfaction and organizational commitment. For instance, WFC had no consequence

on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of married women ( $\beta = 0.09, p > 0.05$ ;  $\beta = 0.04, p > 0.05$ ) but had a significant negative impact on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of divorced/separated/widowed ( $\beta = -0.57, p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta = -0.49, p < 0.01$ ) women. These results show that being married buffers the negative consequences of WFC on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

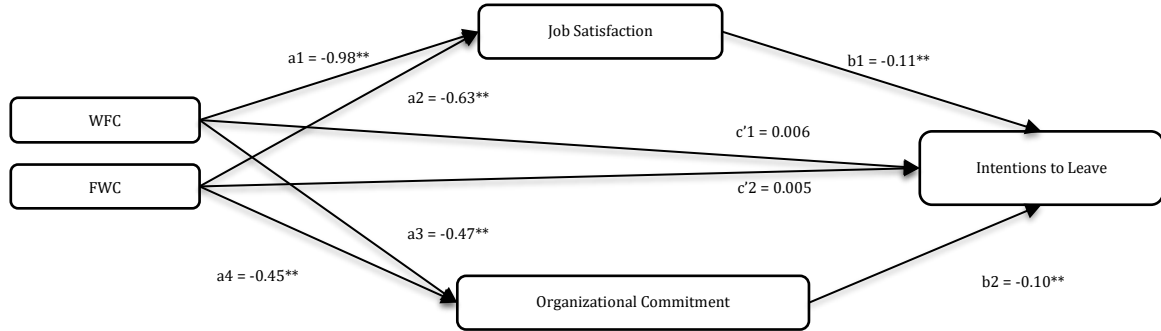


Fig. 2: Simple mediation using PROCESS macro (Model 4), direct and indirect relationships between WFC, FWC, and intentions to leave

Table 2: Mediation analysis

Independent variables	Job satisfaction (M1)		Organizational commitment (M2)		Intention to leave the job (Y)	
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE
WFC	-0.98**	0.04	-0.47**	0.02	0.006	0.007
FWC	-0.63**	0.05	-0.45**	0.02	0.005	0.009
Job satisfaction					-0.11**	0.001
Organizational commitment					-0.10**	0.003

\*\* Significant at 0.01; \* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 3: Bootstrap results for Indirect effects

Variables	$\beta$	SE	LLCI	ULCI
WFC → JS → ITL	0.1666	0.016	0.1352	0.1979
WFC → OC → ITL	0.0564	0.013	0.0309	0.0818
FWC → JS → ITL	0.1071	0.011	0.0855	0.1287
FWC → OC → ITL	0.0534	0.012	0.0298	0.0769

On the other hand, FWC had no consequence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of married women ( $\beta = 0.17, p > 0.05$ ;  $\beta = -0.04, p > 0.05$ ) but had a significant negative impact on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of divorced/separated/widowed ( $\beta = -0.64, p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta = -0.42, p < 0.01$ ) women. Thus, being married buffers the negative consequences of FWC on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This

finding substantiates H2. Table 5 shows the results of the conditional indirect effect of WFC and FWC on intentions to leave via both job satisfaction and organization for divorced/separated/widowed women. The results suggest that WFC and FWC have a significant positive impact on intentions to leave via both job satisfaction and organizational commitment for divorced/separated/widowed women only. This finding supports H3.

Table 4: Moderator analysis

Variables	Job satisfaction		Organizational commitment		Intentions to leave	
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE
WFC	-0.98**	0.08	-0.47**	0.04	0.008	0.014
FWC	-0.82**	0.11	-0.45**	0.06	0.021	0.017
Married	-0.08	0.32	0.44**	0.16	0.107	0.054
Divorced/separated/widowed	0.41	0.51	0.69**	0.25	0.112	0.071
WFC x married	0.09	0.09	0.04	0.05	0.005	0.016
WFC x divorced/separated/widowed	-0.57**	0.14	-0.49**	0.07	-0.007	0.025
FWC x married	0.17	0.13	-0.04	0.07	0.026	0.023
FWC x divorced/separated/widowed	-0.64**	0.21	-0.42**	0.10	0.071	0.035
Job satisfaction					-0.17**	0.001
Organizational commitment					-0.12**	0.003

\*\* Significant at 0.01; \* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 5: Conditional indirect effects of the moderator

Moderator: Divorced/separated/widowed	$\beta$	SE	LLCI	ULCI
(WFC → JS → ITL)	0.2635	0.049	0.1675	0.3595
(FWC → JS → ITL)	0.1152	0.024	0.0682	0.1622
(WFC → OC → ITL)	0.2482	0.039	0.1718	0.3246
(FWC → OC → ITL)	0.1044	0.022	0.0613	0.1475

## 5. Discussion

The results support the established organizational behavior theory that the influence of both WFC and FWC on Intentions to Leave is fully mediated by Job Satisfaction (JS) and Organizational Commitment (OC). Thus, the adverse effects of work-family conflicts are not immediate but rather are fully mediated by the loss of an employee's affective and cognitive attachment to an organization. The primary theoretical lens through which these results can be justified is the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989). COR theory suggests that individuals seek to acquire, protect, and build resources (such as time, energy, and emotional capacity). Both WFC and FWC are essentially resource-depleting processes. The burden of maintaining a multitude of incompatible role demands (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) causes the person to consume precious personal resources.

Resources are depleted when an employee is forced to use a certain amount of energy every time to balance the tensions between work and family life. This depletion has a direct effect on their job satisfaction as the job itself turns into a chronic stressor instead of a source of fulfillment (Byron, 2005). In addition, the depletion of resources reduces the ability of the employee to respond in extra-role behaviors or to invest psychologically, which causes a breach in the reciprocal relationship required to build a strong organizational commitment (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). The non-significant direct path from WFC and FWC to ITL attests the fact that not only is the presence of conflict not enough to develop the intention to leave, but the conflict must first effectively reduce the positive work attitudes of the employee (JS and OC) before the withdrawal cognitions are developed.

Full mediation enables the validation of the existing turnover process models, which have put the affective and attitudinal variables as the closest predictors of turnover intentions. Thus, low Job Satisfaction and decreased Organizational Commitment become the precursors to the intentions to leave. For instance, when WFC/FWC renders the work experience unpleasant and exhausting, the resultant low level of job satisfaction causes the initial cognitive actions of the withdrawal process, i.e., intentions to leave. Conversely, when resource loss through FWC/WFC is considered as a failure of the organization to facilitate its employees, the feeling of loyalty and emotional attachment suffers. This diminished affective commitment eliminates the psychological contract that prevents employees from looking for another job (Allen and Meyer, 1990). These findings imply that any intervention designed to control WFC/FWC must target the negative impact of these factors on job attitudes. Reducing the frequency of the conflict might not be sufficient alone; instead, the management should actively rebuild and maintain employee resources to restore satisfaction and commitment, which, in turn, will reduce turnover

intentions. The finding that the detrimental effects of WFC/FWC are completely buffered in married women who live with a partner is well supported by the Social Support Theory (SST) and the Conservation of Resources (COR) perspective (Hobfoll, 1989; Viswesvaran et al., 1999). Marriage or partnership is the main source of social and instrumental support available to an employee (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). When high WFC is encountered, a supportive spouse can provide instrumental (e.g., childcare, cooking dinner, household logistics) and emotional (e.g., listening, reassurance) resources to offload the resulting strain. Such mobilization of resources serves as a buffer, as it ensures that conflict does not harm the psychological attachment of the employee to the job (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), and the job may not be seen as the main source of stress. The partnership structure itself absorbs the strain and thus mitigates the negative effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

On the other hand, the finding that the adverse effects of WFC and FWC have a considerable effect on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to leave in women who are divorced, separated, or widowed is explained by the Resource Scarcity theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Among non-partnered women, the main resource buffer is eliminated. They are expected to play the role of parent, breadwinner, and the only household manager. This situation results in extreme role overload since the demands are high, and the resources are low. In the absence of partner resources, the stress resulting from WFC/FWC is not alleviated and passed across the work domain, resulting in adverse effects on both job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Byron, 2005). The loss of satisfaction and commitment eliminates the psychological desire to remain. In the case where the job has become a stressful experience without a partner to help them cope with the consequences, the employee has higher motivation to find another less stressful or less conflicting job.

The family structure plays a moderating role through a resource pool. In the case of married women, the pool is available to counteract the depletion of negative resources of conflict, safeguarding their attitudes. In non-partnered women, the pool does not exist, and thus, the resources deplete freely, resulting in an even stronger and detrimental effect on job satisfaction and commitment, which culminates in intentions to leave.

The findings are especially important in the Pakistani socio-cultural context, where marriage frequently forces women to negotiate their professional identities in a complicated manner. Much of this tension stems from the fact that there is an overall expectation that women will be the primary, and often the only, caregivers in the family unit. These kinds of expectations are a daunting challenge in the architecture profession, which is a profession of unpredictable hours, hard site visits,

and an overwork culture. Since society highly values a woman based on her perceived ability to ensure domestic harmony, professional goals are often pushed to the margin in favor of keeping the marriage intact. That is why a certain number of female architects do not successfully transform into a long-term professional practice (Faiza et al., 2023). Furthermore, the moral stigma of seeking outside assistance in elderly care puts a huge physical and emotional burden on women. The motherhood penalty could be spatial since the inability to be present on a construction site due to breastfeeding or taking care of a child often places women on the periphery of large-scale projects (Ali et al., 2025; Sharif and Sabir, 2025). These challenges are often compounded for divorced, separated, and/or widowed women as they lack the patriarchal protection and become solely responsible for economic provision as well as caring for their families. For these women, the motherhood penalty is not merely spatial but also economic, often without a partner's financial or social buffer. Ultimately, the cumulative weight of these systemic forces, intensified for those navigating the profession without spousal support, compels many women to make a choice between their caregiving responsibilities and their professional longevity (Ajaz et al., 2015).

These results have several important implications. First, it requires a change in universal and one-size-fits-all family-friendly policies to a stratified, need-based intervention strategy depending on the family structure of employees. For married employees with partners, the spouse is a critical social support, providing a buffer against the resource drainage of WFC and FWC (Hobfoll, 1989; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), which needs to be strengthened. Flextime should be a priority in organizations to help couples manage their schedules and divide labor at home (Javed, 2019). This facilitative provision makes the partnership a dependable resource pool that maintains job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the employees. Second, the findings confirm that the divorced, separated, or widowed employees are a high-risk turnover segment. In this segment, organizational interventions should offer instrumental resource replacement to bridge the support gap. Practical measures may involve subsidized or on-site childcare facilities, working at or from home, paid leave to care for dependents and flextime to manage household tasks (Javed, 2019). Because the adverse impact on intentions to leave is completely mediated by job attitudes (Byron, 2005; Meyer and Allen, 1991), management must focus on frequent and non-evaluative check-ins to assess well-being and proactively organize workloads to avoid role overload. By acting as a direct source of the resources needed to balance competing demands, the organization substitutes the missing buffer, therefore, balancing attitudes amongst the employees and reducing the likelihood of turnover.

The key contribution of this study is that it refines the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) by defining family structure as a dominant boundary condition, which determines resource loss in the workplace-family interface. The presence of a life partner is a significant protective barrier to workplace stress. In cases where partnered employees are experiencing job conflict that is exhausting their personal resources, their spouse offers a direct and significant source of external support, by which the loss of resources does not harm the core job satisfaction and commitment. Employees without a partner, on the other hand, do not have this structural buffer. In their case, the depletion of resources is rapid and contributes to dissatisfaction and lack of commitment, thereby motivating them to quit. In such a way, this paper advances the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by demonstrating that the adverse effect of work strain is not always equal, but it is contingent upon the availability of high-level social resources, such as a partner, to alleviate stress.

The result of the study creates a critical point of investigation in further research. As an example, the research can explore whether institutional support (i.e., family-friendly policies, paid childcare, flexible working hours, etc.) can be used to replicate the effect of personal support by substituting the informal source of support (i.e., the social support) with the organizational one (Javed, 2022). This study is necessary to test whether organizational interventions may act as an institutional replacement of a lost social resource, especially for the non-partnered workers. Although the regression analysis identifies significant statistical associations, these findings must be characterized as correlational rather than causal. Although this design (cross-sectional design) is effective in establishing prevalence and developing associations, it does not have the temporal precedence necessary to meet the conditions of causal inference (Taris, 2000). It is suggested that further studies could be done with longitudinal data to confirm these relationships and whether they remain stable over time (Maxwell and Cole, 2007).

### List of abbreviations

a1, a2, a3,	Paths from independent variables to mediators in mediation model
a4	Paths from mediators to dependent variable
b1, b2	Conservation of resources
COR	Conservation of resources
c'1, c'2	Direct effects of independent variables on dependent variable
FWC	Family-work conflict
ITL	Intentions to leave
JS	Job satisfaction
LLCI	Lower limit of confidence interval
Model 4	Simple mediation model in process macro
Model 9	Moderated mediation model in process macro
OC	Organizational commitment
p	Probability value
PROCESS	Process macro for mediation, moderation,

macro	and conditional process analysis
r	Correlation coefficient
SD	Standard deviation
SE	Standard error
SET	Social exchange theory
SPSS	Statistical package for the social sciences
SST	Social support theory
ULCI	Upper limit of confidence interval
WFC	Work-family conflict

## Compliance with ethical standards

## Ethical considerations

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of human research. Participation was voluntary, and the respondents were told that they could withdraw at any time. The participants were guaranteed that the information would be kept confidential and were given informed consent. The study adopted a non-monetary compensation, closed-response questionnaire to ensure that participation was not influenced by any external factors or pressure.

## Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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