

# Examining the Relationship Between Work Life Conflict, Stress and Turnover Intentions among Marketing Executives in Chennai

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**Abstract – This study examines the antecedents of turnover intentions among marketing executives in Chennai. Relationship between stress and work life conflict with turnover intentions was examined. The research data was collected from 248 marketing executives working in different organizations across Chennai. The results suggest that of work life conflict and stress have a significant positive relationship with turnover intentions. Recommendations and strategies are also discussed.**

**Keywords: Work life conflict, Turn over Intension, Stress**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Work–family conflict used in this research is based on the work of Kahn, *et al.* (1964). Kahn and colleagues (1964) proposed that work–family conflict is one type of inter role conflict in which role pressures from the work and family domains involve some level of mutual incompatibility. This definition of work–family conflict has been widely used by other researchers in this area (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus *et al.*, 1987; Higgins, Duxbury, & Irving, 1992; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Work–family conflict was originally operationalized as a one-dimensional construct. However, recent studies (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000; Frone *et al.*, 1992; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996; Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk, & Beutell, 1996) have asserted and validated that work–family conflict is multidimensional with effects occurring from the work domain (work interference with family; WIF) as well as from the family domain (family interference with work; FIW). Thus, to fully understand the role mentors can play on the work–family conflict.

Turnover at work place has received attention by many researchers (Richer, Blanchard & Vallerandi, 2002). Managers and researchers consider turnover a problem because of

costs associated with it (Lucas *et al.*, 1987 and Soon *et al.*, 2005). Kirshenbaum & Weisberg (2002) considers turnover inevitable. Similarly West (2007) found that the impact of turnover on a business can be quite costly in a number of different ways. “Replacing a long tenured manager is quite visible; however, replacing a manager, particularly a marginally effective one, has positive effects balancing the cost” (Mitchel, 1981). Ling & Phillips (2006) consider increased working hours a cause of work stress and turnover intentions. Chennai is a busy city (Aycan *et al.*, 2000) and social research in Chennai has to be established as a recognized field (Baig, 2006). Research becomes a backbone from the day multinational companies entered into our country. Along with other disciplines there has been no significant research on Marketing Executives in Chennai. The participants of this research Marketing Executives are considered to be the key people because they are so much involved in quitting if facing stress or having work life conflict. Marketing Executives encounter greater challenges due to competing market courses, both micro & macro levels. Marketing executives face more conflicts (Ikeda, Oliveira & Campomar, 2005). “Professionals are finding very difficult to balance professional commitments. So, stress-sufferers would be those with high responsibility high-pay jobs and better career profiles” (Leontaridi & Ward, 2002). Work Life Conflict has an imperative effect on turnover intentions because marketing executives feel difficult & complex to handle both the situations efficiently.

Stress contains good and bad aspects (Abushaikha & Sheil, 2006). Giga & Hoel (2003) & Sheridan & Abelson (1983) have related stress with reduced worker and organizational performance. Cropanzano, Rupp & Byrne (2003) found a positive relationship between emotional

exhaustion and turnover intentions while DeVries & Wilkerson (2003) consider stress a major cause of employee disability. "Difficulty of managing work and family demands has increased rapidly, and therefore many view family-friendly policies as an important attraction and retention strategy" (Batt & Valcour, 2003). "Those who attempt to leave stress at work or keep lingering stress to themselves; stress is likely to have a pernicious effect on the emotional balance" (Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Secret (2002) recommended a gap to identify the family, job and workplace characteristics associated with employees, governing its importance. "Organizations that want the turnover rate low are advised to pay close attention to their human resource management systems with perceived fairness" (Griffeth & Gaertner, 2001). Employee retention can be enhanced if they develop an emotional attachment with the organization. (Paré, Tremblay & Lalonde, 2000; Paré & Tremblay, 2000). "Stress management training may rapidly reduce stress symptoms; it also has the advantage of being inexpensive and easy to implement" (Sauter *et al.*, 1999). Thus, Otis & Pelletier (2005) consider it important to study harmful effects of stress.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to present the real meaning of information concerning to turnover intentions, work life conflicts, and stress experienced by marketing executives. "Organizations of all types are giving increased attention to a common problem of business today i.e. employee turnover" (Lucas *et al.*, 1987). Various factor correlate with turnover (West, 2007) while, Leontaridi & Ward (2002) consider stress the key factor. "Organizations must revisit current work processes, systems, structures, and practices to determine which ones lead to work inefficiencies, which in turn may create unnecessary stress and overwork for employees" (Thompson, Andreassi, & Prottas, 2003).

### A. Work-Life Conflict

Work-life conflict is defined as "...a form of inter-role conflict in which work and family demands are mutually incompatible, meeting demands of both the domains is difficult" (Higgins, Duxbury & Lyons, 2007). This conflict does affect psychological functioning (Schieman, McBrier & Gundy, 2003). Valcour & Batt (2003) suggest that employers who raise the importance of work-life policies send a signal throughout the organization that work-life issues are

important. "Work-life policies are artifacts or surface level indicators of an organization, prioritizing work over family or family over work" (Thompson, Andreassi, & Prottas, 2003).

Morrell, Clarke & Wilkinson (2004) & Glass & Riley (1998) consider turnover an important issue for organizations and Yu (2008) favours friendly work life policies to reduce turnover, Valcour & Batt (2003) also supports friendly policies for reduced turnover while Riley (2006) did not find a significant relationship between work life conflict and turnover intentions. Organizations are searching for policies which can be adopted to reduce turnover (Hom & Kinicki, 2001). In Chennai some researchers e.g. Bashir & Ramay (2008) have recently attempted to highlight the importance of work life policies. "Work-life programs are effective in reducing work-family conflict, and efficient in improving attitudes" (Konrad & Mangel, 2000).

Now companies are more conscious about work life balance and are offering more friendly work life policies (Yasbek, 2004). "High turnover rates disrupt continuity of care, and also harm workers' abilities to achieve critical case management functions" (Thaden, 2007). "Most effective organizational responses to work family conflict and to turnover are those that combine work family policies with other human resources practices including work redesign and commitment enhancing incentives" (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Abeysekera, 2007). "Work-Life harmony is a critical business strategy to reduce employee turnover, and to improve overall firm performance" (Soon *et al.*, 2005). More flexibility can address the problem of work life balance (Marks & Scholarios, 2001). "Because the objective of flexible work arrangements is to improve inter-role conflict, and it also seems reasonable to assume that flexible arrangements will be attractive to workers, especially those faced with competing demands" (Rau & Hyland, 2002).

Work-life balance policies help in reducing stress (Yasbek, 2004). While Hudson (2005) considers it an antecedent of organizational commitment. "Execute such changes in your organization which fulfil the basic policies & requirements of your employees' by which the turnover intentions ratio can be reduced easily. Organizations must design and put into practice those benefits and policies to help employees balance their work and lives (e.g., flexible work schedules, dependent care supports)" (Thompson, Andreassi, & Prottas,

200. "The more the physical/psychological symptoms, and turnover intention and the greater the work-family imbalance reported among participants" (Ling & Phillips, 2006).

H<sub>1</sub>: Work Life Conflict is significantly correlated with Turnover Intentions among Marketing Executives in Chennai.

### **B. Stress**

"Stress is defined as a nonspecific response of the body to a stimulus or event" (Kavanagh, 2005). In English, stress is defined as the "pressure or anguish resulting from difficult situations" (Alves *et al.*, 2004). "Stress refers to workers not being able to adapt to work and, therefore, involves some biological and psychological reaction" (Hsieh, Huang & Su 2004). Several studies on various occupations regarding stress have been conducted (Rusli, Edimansyah & Naing, 2006). "Stress on family life may arise from both the schedule and the content of work" (MacDermid *et al.*, 1994) while White, Wilson & Pfoutz, (2006) consider it unavoidable. It affects negatively the individual and organization both. (Leontaridi & Ward, 2002) it prepares body for defense (Sauter *et al.*, 1999). "Work overload has a strong influence on work exhaustion" (Moore 2000; Ahuja *et al.*, 2007) and sooner or later causes a number of diseases (Wofford, Goodwin & Daly, 1999). General Stress includes "three scales measuring general stress, emotional stress, and social stress with their consequences" (Davis, Orzeck & Keelan, 2006).

Conflict of expectations between the management and customers causes stress (Parkington & Schneider, 1979). Yasbek (2004) argues that reduction in stress enhances employee productivity. Stress can enhance turnover (Moore, 2000). Stress is basically a form of unpleasant emotion and as per Côté & Morgan (2002), it has got the potential to increase employee turnover. Sheridan & Abelson (1983) suggest that "increased withdrawal of retained employees would be obvious in job dissatisfaction moreover resulting low job commitment, or works stress as a result of increasing job tension, or a combination representing both dissatisfaction and stress". Thaden (2007) found that "work load increases due to large duties, insufficient staffing, and additional work handed down by management, workers became more stressed and therefore quit, especially during critical incidents".

Kemery, Mossholder, & Bedeian (1987) studied that, job-related tension has a causal impact on job satisfaction, which then influence turnover intentions. Otis & Pelletier (2005)

argue that emotional exhaustion leads to more turnover intention, whereas work satisfaction leads to less turnover intention. Leontaridi & Ward (2002) found significant relationship between stress levels and quitting intentions. "Job stress and its effects on psychiatric symptoms are also associated with an employee's propensity to leave the job" (Braaten, 2000). Higher stress leads to higher employee turnover intentions (Kavanagh, 2005; Cropanzano, Rapp, and Bryne, 2003). Job stress is positively related to intent to leave current employment (Williams, 2003). "The amount of stress has a significant positive effect on turnover intentions" (Layne, Hohenshil & Singh, 2001).

H<sub>2</sub>: Stress is significantly correlated with Turnover Intentions among Marketing Executives in Chennai.

### **C. Turnover Intentions**

"Turnover (actual exit) - intentions to exit are positively associated with turnover" (Brigham, Castro & Shepherd, 2007). Manger & Eikeland (1990) cites that job turnover research has focused on the relation between the intention to leave the organization and actual leaving. "Greater the complementarily, the effect on satisfaction and intentions to leave (turnover intentions) will be greater" (Shalley, Gilson, & Blum, 2000). Naumann (1992) defines turnover as it "typically refers to the separation of an employee from the firm". Birdseye & Hill (1995) have broadened the intent-to-turnover concept to include two internal turnover variables (intent-to-leave the location and intent-to-leave the job) as well as the more widely used external turnover measure (intent-to-leave the organization). "Focusing on the causes of employee intentions to stay or leave has been one of the recent research approaches in an organizational turnover literature" (Martin, 1979). Hochwarter *et al* (2001) elucidates that when employee performance is consistently poor, threats or punishment lead many individuals either to be dismissed (involuntary turnover), or threatened punished enough to leave (voluntary turnover). Similarly Lachman & Diamant (1987) found that "self-actualization, interpersonal relations, directly can influence employees' affective reactions to their job, which in turn influences their turnover intentions". "Turnover is an important issue for management, particularly in the tight labor markets prevalent at the turn of the twenty-first century" (Batt & Valcour, 2003). Attention given to the concept of organizational commitment signifies that it is related with turnover (Cohen, 1993). The turnover

traditional factors, organizational commitment and work exhaustion were related to turnover intention (Ahuja et al., 2007). “The goal of ‘effective management of turnover’ dictates that a high level of sophistication particularly needs to be achieved by organizations to selectively influence the turnover process” (Morrell, Clarke & Wilkinson, 2001).

Ingersoll (2001) considers turnover important due to its relationship with organizational performance. Leontaridi & Ward, (2002) concluded that the normal turnover of workers is beneficial to growth and development. Whereas other studies refers that the best performers were the most likely to leave because external opportunities would be plentiful (Jackofsky, 1984; Hochwarter *et al.*, 2001). Ahuja *et al.*, (2007) suggests “that turnover intention does not always result in turnover because a number of other factors enter the equation”. Turnover intentions were hypothesized to eventually translate into turnover behaviour over time by Richer, Blanchard & Vallerandi (2002).”Several behavioral consequences of reduced job involvement, weakened performance, and low job satisfaction would definitely lead to absenteeism and turnover” (Bhagat, 1983). Although the role of intentions in the turnover process was supported and even highlighted, the study questions the direct effect of personal and organizational variables on turnover or intentions (Mitchel, 1981). The above study reveals the importance of turnover intentions among various labor markets. Management styles vary and turnover issues are possible future topics for research (Birdseye & Hill, 1995).

**III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

300 personally administered questionnaires were randomly distributed to Marketing Executives across Chennai.

Questionnaire contained four main parts having a total of 22 items. Item were measured using Likert scale (1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree). Turnover intentions and work life conflict were measured using instrument developed by Pare, Tremblay, & Lalonde, 2001. The alpha values were 0.76 and 0.81 respectively. Job Stress was measured using instrument developed by Sosik and Godshalk (2000). The alpha value was 0.73. Questions were also asked about tenure, gender, age, qualification, native language & marital status.

Sampling is a fundamental method of inferring information

about an entire population without going into any trouble or expense of measuring every member of the population (White, Wilson & Pfoutz, 2006). The target population consists of marketing executives in Chennai. Questionnaires were sent to 300 respondents but 248 valid filled questionnaires were returned.

**IV DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

Research data was analysed using the SPSS. The results are given in the tables below:

TABLE I DEMOGRAPHICS

Description	Range	Frequency	%
Age	16-24	32	13
	25-33	211	85
	43-above	5	2
Education	Matric	15	6
	Inter	52	21
	Graduate	124	50.5
	Masters	57	22.5
Gender	Male	161	65
	Female	87	35
Language	Tamil	141	56.85
	English	55	22.1
	Hindi	31	13
	Urdu	02	0.8
	Telugu	18	7.25

In addition to the above statistics, these demographic variables were relatively important because of distressing the emotional & behavioural intentions of the labour to get involved in different positive prospects. Frequencies & percentages were also calculated for the exact responses of the respondents’. Executives’ average age is 26 years ranging from 25 years to 35 years To avoid any cultural & societal differences, we divided the part of demographic section; language into six types where the respondents initiated a friendly behaviour. Translation was also made where it was required to solve up the questionnaire. Of all the questionnaire survey, the standard education level Tamil (56.85) was middling to the majority graduates (50.5). Layne, Hohenshil & Singh (2001) found a significant relationship between gender and occupational stress.

Similarly this country carries male dominating societies therefore 65 % of male executives were surveyed & 35% of the female executives lied among the gender variable. The descriptive data can also be characterized in exploring the relationship of other different demographics with the research.

Our research covers three variables. The dependent variable, turnover intentions inclined by two independent variables work life conflict & stress. Data accumulation specified higher levels of Work life conflict (2.89) compared with turnover intentions & also experienced high level of interaction of stress (2.57) along with turnover intentions.

Table I represents the types of demographics added in our research, & their relative ranges, frequency, & percentages. Correlations among the variables are shown in Table II.

TABLE II CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Variables	Mean	S.D.	PEARSON CORRELATION		
			Turnover Intention	WLC	STRESS
Turnover Intention	2.9698	.87826	1	-	-
WLC	2.8958	.44718	.604(**)	1	-
STRESS	2.5701	.36336	.742(**)	.292(**)	1

N= 248, WLC= Work Life Conflict, S.D. = Standard Deviation  
 \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Correlation Analysis above shows a significant relationship between the variables with the description of their mean & Standard deviations. Turnover Intentions shows a high positive relation with Work life conflict 0.604(\*\*). While Paré & Tremblay (2000) found the Pearson coefficient of work-life policies to turnover intentions 0.136 (p<.01), initiating a normal positive relation in between each other. Riley (2006) found that turnover intentions were highly significantly related to family-to-work conflict (r=.30, p<.01), along with this indicating that most respondents experienced low levels of family-to-work conflict (skew = .80). Turnover Intentions is positively correlated with stress .742(\*\*). Whereas Layne, Hohenshil & Singh (2001) found that the only variable with statistically significant influence on turnover intentions was stress (.402), which is considered to have a large effect, these results indicate that as an individual's stress level increases, they are more likely to leave their position as a counsellor and seek alternative positions either within the field or in another industry.

TABLE III REGRESSION ANALYSIS

	B	t	Sig
WLC	.833	11.876	.000
STRESS	1.493	17.308	.000

R Square= .71, F= 306.5,  
 Sig. = 0.000, n= 248, Dependent  
 Variable: Turnover Intentions

The value of the R Square is .714 which indicates that almost 70 % of the variance in marketing executives is verified by only two independent variables, Work life conflict & Stress equally.

Valcour & Batt (2003) initiated from the Regression Analysis Table and presented the results (coefficients and overall model fit) of the regression analyses of work-family conflict, employee control over work, and turnover intentions for wives and husbands, respectively & proved a strong positive impact on each other. The two independent variables are flexible to this research.

### V. DISCUSSION

This study work life conflict & stress have positive relationships with turnover intentions. The findings & the data empirically proves the facts detailed in the literature review. "There is no-one-size-fits-all solution to the issue of work-life conflict, so different policies, practices and strategies will be needed to reduce work-life conflict examined in his study" (Higgins, Duxbury & Lyons, 2007). An organization would follow that strategy which will reduce the symptoms of work life conflict & the causes of stress. "Conflicts should be explored in future, for instance, in terms of styles and consequences in distinct functional areas and across different cultures and countries" (Ikeda, Oliveira & Campomar, 2005). Cultural differences in this society have met across abruptly. With this reason, policies, practices, organizational strategies differ from one organization to another. Riley (2006) stated that work overload and work-to-family conflict in his sample did not have a significant correlation with turnover intentions. However, our results from Table II, & the descriptive statistics; correlation analysis, regression analysis reveals that the community of marketing executives is very demanding that discloses work life conflicts. People do not want change in their on-going policies, time tables, daily schedules, & this leads to turnover intentions. Lack of awareness, lacking job satisfaction & commitment, leads an individual to have low job involvement which in the long run directs to turnover. Parkington and Schneider (1979) hypothesized that "perceiving oneself as more bureaucratic and management as more enthusiastic are related to positive employee outcomes because these views serve to increase an employee's feeling of integration with the organization". If every employee is provided with the built-in opportunity with himself & his work within the organization, there would an immense decrease of turnover ratio.

Stress also increases because the environment is dynamic (Huff, Huff & Thomas, 1992). Apparently hard business plans, organization new practices & programs usually encounters the marketing executives in to a stressful state. The potential for maintaining a substantial amount of resistance at every step by our marketing executives is not simple. Because if these individuals are stressed out of their tasks & duties then they will be no more satisfied to their job, to the environment of their organization, won't seek their own colleagues satisfyingly & so far affect the organizational culture. Those individuals reporting to experience at least some stress in their current position are 25% more likely to hold intentions to quit than those without, with the probability of intending to quit increasing with successively higher job stress (Leontaridi & Ward, 2002).

Marketing executives strive to remain competitive in the market because area of influence of marketing executives is large & wild. They design progressive and sustainable strategies to achieve customer satisfaction. Marketing executives are frequently required to re-design their schedules which affect their work & personal life. To be constantly active, progressive & competitive generates mental pressure & work stress on these people. If they can't generate desirable revenue, some become disappointed and frustrated. Then they get highly stressed from their work & turnover intentions increase. "The understanding of organizational environment and the relationship between the organization's members is vital for the effective functioning of the areas, including marketing" (Ikeda, Oliveira & Campomar, 2005). "If workers frequently exposed to job stress are associated with high turnover rates and absenteeism further research on the subject would allow for active stress management policies to be more beneficial for the individual and the economy as a whole" (Leontaridi & Ward, 2002).

## VI. CONCLUSION

This present research found supportive evidence proving the relationship among work life conflict & stress with turnover intentions. This study also carries some limitations, as all articles carry. It is not necessary that only these two independent variables would account with turnover intentions, a research study can focus more other variables relative to turnover intentions. Increasing the number of respondents in future studies would suggest the results more significantly. This study also recommends that Board of Governors (BOG) / Directors (BOD) should be sensitive to this issue and set

realistic quarterly targets for marketing executives. This study also recommends that marketing executives should be given periodic respite from their stressful routines and offered short leave abroad with their families at picturesque islands/ picnic spots. These measures will reduce turnover intentions and work life conflict. Compensation Management should also take in to account the stressful conditions/ environment in which marketing executives operate suitable monetary compensation. This empirical study examines that the intensity of these kinds of variables is greater in many organizations because of the work load. Furthermore, future researchers should analyse the importance of turnover. Continued research is required to understand the relationship of stress and turnover intentions. All these limitations point to the need for more research on the influence of flexitime and flex place on work and work and family balance (Hill *et al.*, 2001).

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