

Impact of Women's Workplace Leave and Dependent Care Policies on Job Performance: The Moderating Role of Family Support

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore leave policy and dependant care policy of women employees who are motherhood and working for Information technology business influence on their job performance. Using 387 responses collected from women employees working for an Indian IT company, we tested the hypothesized relationship between Employee Leave Policy (DLP) and job performance (JS) and between Dependent Care Policy (DCP) and job performance (JS) using structural equation modeling approach. Further, we also test the path relationship with family support as moderator. The result show that explores leave policy influence women employee better balance their work and family life thus provide good job performance and possible dependent care policy tend to impact more job performance. Results also underscore positive family supported employees present a good balance between work hours and well-being to have better performance in their job.

Keyword: Leave Policy, Dependent Care Policy, Family Support, Job Satisfaction, WellBeing. Women Employees

Introduction

Women's participation in India's IT sector has grown significantly over the past decade, driven by increased educational opportunities, corporate diversity initiatives, and evolving societal norms. However, despite this progress, many women continue to face challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities, particularly due to inadequate workplace leave and dependent care policies. The ability to take maternity leave, childcare leave, or flexible work arrangements plays a crucial role in determining women's job performance, retention, and career progression (Chauhan et al., 2022). In this context, the presence of strong family support systems—such as assistance from spouses, extended family members, or domestic help—may act as a moderating factor, influencing the effectiveness of workplace leave and dependent care policies on job performance (Kumar et al., 2019). The Indian IT industry, known for its demanding work schedules, global client dependencies, and performance-driven culture, presents unique challenges for working women (Codagnone, 2021). Many IT firms have introduced progressive policies such as extended maternity leave, remote work options, and subsidized childcare facilities to support their female workforce. However, the extent to which these policies translate into improved job performance remains an area of inquiry, particularly when considering the varying levels of family support available to working women. Research indicates that women with strong familial support networks are better able to utilize workplace policies effectively, leading to higher productivity, reduced stress, and better work-life balance (Mehta & Gokhru, 2022). Conversely, women lacking such support may find it difficult to leverage these benefits, thereby experiencing continued career stagnation and burnout.

The theoretical foundation of this study is rooted in the Work-Family Enrichment Theory, which posits that positive experiences in one domain (e.g., workplace benefits) can enhance performance in another domain (e.g., family responsibilities) when the right support structures are in place (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Additionally, the Conservation of Resources Theory suggests that individuals seek to protect and acquire resources—such as time, energy, and emotional well-being—which workplace leave policies and dependent care benefits can help preserve (Hobfoll, 1989). In the Indian context, where cultural norms often place primary caregiving responsibilities on women, these policies serve as critical resources that can either empower or hinder job performance depending on the level of external support received (Patel & Feng, 2021).

Given these complexities, the aim of this research is to examine the impact of women's workplace leave and dependent care policies on job performance in the Indian IT sector while exploring the moderating role of family support. Further, this study explores the key research questions include:

RQ1: How does workplace leave and dependent care policies influence women's job performance?

RQ2: What specific types of leave policies (e.g., maternity, parental, sick leave) most affect job performance?

RQ3: How does access to dependent care support impact productivity and job satisfaction?

RQ4: Does family support moderate the relationship between workplace policies and job performance?

Literature Review

Workplace Leave Policies and Job Performance

Workplace leave policies, including maternity leave, parental leave, and paid time off for caregiving, have been shown to significantly influence employees' job performance. Studies indicate that access to sufficient leave improves employee well-being, reduces burnout, and enhances organizational commitment (Brough & O'Driscoll, 2010). Women, in particular, benefit from supportive leave policies as they often bear a greater share of caregiving responsibilities. Research by Lyness and Judiesch (2014) highlights that organizations offering generous parental leave tend to experience lower turnover rates among female employees, leading to improved long-term performance. Furthermore, extended maternity leave has been linked to higher employee engagement and productivity upon return to work (Baker & Milligan, 2010).

However, the effectiveness of leave policies depends on their accessibility and organizational culture. If employees fear negative career consequences for utilizing leave, they may avoid taking time off, which can lead to stress and decreased performance (Williams et al., 2013). Therefore, organizations must not only provide leave policies but also foster an inclusive work environment where employees feel comfortable using these benefits without fear of stigmatization.

Dependent Care Policies and Job Performance

Dependent care policies, including on-site childcare, childcare subsidies, and eldercare support, have been identified as crucial factors influencing women's job performance. According to Kossek et al. (2011), organizations that offer robust dependent care support witness improved job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism among working mothers. This is particularly relevant given that childcare and eldercare responsibilities are disproportionately placed on women, often affecting their ability to focus on work-related tasks (Michel et al., 2011).

Furthermore, employer-sponsored dependent care programs have been associated with increased employee loyalty and reduced turnover (Glass & Estes, 1997). When women have access to reliable childcare solutions, they experience lower stress levels and greater work-life balance, which positively affects their productivity (Hammer et al., 2011). Conversely, inadequate dependent care support can lead to role conflict, increased work interruptions, and ultimately lower job performance (Allen et al., 2014).

The availability of flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or adjustable work hours, further enhances the effectiveness of dependent care policies. Research by Chung and van der Lippe (2020) suggests that flexible work options mitigate the negative impact of caregiving responsibilities, enabling women to perform better at their jobs. However, for these policies to be effective, organizational leaders must ensure that they are not only available but also actively encouraged (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018).

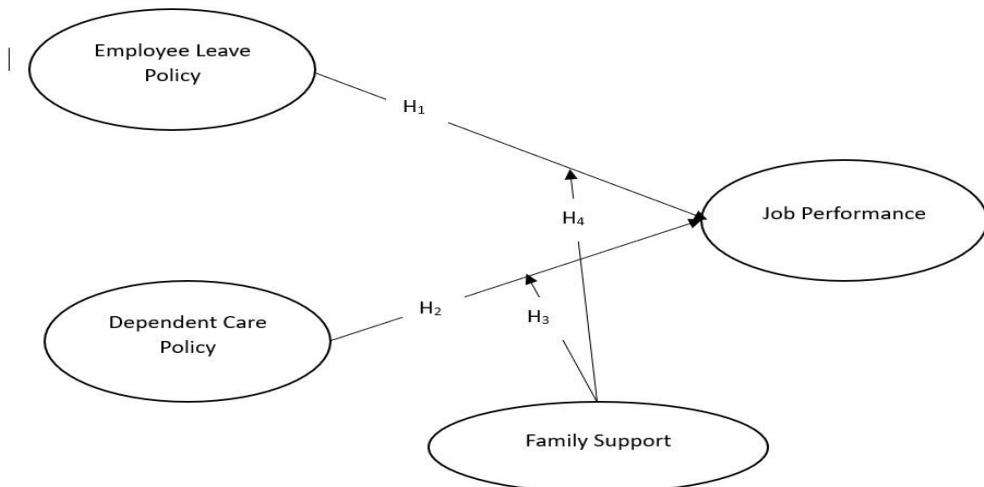
The Moderating Role of Family Support

Family support plays a crucial role in determining how workplace leave and dependent care policies impact women's job performance. Studies suggest that women who receive high levels of support from their spouses, extended family members, or close social networks are better able to manage work and caregiving responsibilities (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This support can come in various forms, such as shared household responsibilities, emotional encouragement, or financial assistance.

Research by Wayne et al. (2017) indicates that women with strong family support systems report lower work-family conflict and higher job satisfaction, even in workplaces with limited dependent care policies. Similarly, Lapierre and Allen (2006) found that spousal support significantly reduces the stress associated with balancing work and caregiving duties, thereby enhancing job performance. On the contrary, women with low family support may experience higher levels of stress and burnout, limiting the effectiveness of workplace policies in improving job outcomes (Byron, 2005).

Moreover, cultural expectations and gender norms influence the extent to which family support moderates the relationship between workplace policies and job performance. In societies where traditional gender roles dominate, women may face additional pressure to prioritize family responsibilities over career aspirations, regardless of workplace support (Shockley et al., 2017). Therefore, organizations must adopt a holistic approach that not only offers workplace flexibility but also promotes gender-equitable norms within families and communities.

Conceptual Model and Hypotheses



Source: Author's own depiction

Hypotheses

H₁: Employee leave policy has a positive impact on job performance.

H₂: Dependent care policy has a positive impact on family support.

H₃: Family support moderates the relationship between leave policy and job performance.

H₄: Family support moderates the relationship between dependent care policy and job performance.

Methodology

We used a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of flexible work hours and supportive supervision on job satisfaction among women employees in the Indian IT sector, with workplace affective commitment as a moderator. A non-probability purposive sampling method is used to select participants, ensuring that only women employees working in IT firms and experiencing HR policies related to flexibility and supervision are included. This method is appropriate because it allows researchers to focus on a specific subgroup that best represents the study's objectives (Etikan, 2016). To determine the optimal sample size, G*Power software (version 3.1) is utilized. The study applies an F-test for multiple regression analysis, with an expected medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), alpha ($\alpha = 0.05$), and power ($1-\beta = 0.80$) (Cohen, 1988). Given three predictor variables (flexible work hours, supportive supervision, and affective commitment), the required minimum sample size is 77 participants. However, to enhance generalizability and account for non-responses, the sample size is increased to 387 respondents (Faul et al., 2009). The study adopts a structured questionnaire survey for data collection, ensuring standardized responses and efficient quantitative analysis. The questionnaire is distributed online via Google Forms and email surveys to IT professionals across major Indian cities, including Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, and Chennai, where IT companies are concentrated (NASSCOM, 2023). Participants are first provided with an

introductory note explaining the research purpose and confidentiality assurances before completing the survey. The responses are collected over four weeks, and follow-ups are conducted via email reminders to maximize participation rates.

Measures

Standard measures for Workplace Leave, Dependent Care Policies, Job Performance, and Family Support were used for data collection. Workplace leave and dependent care policies are typically measured using measurement scale developed by Allen et al., (2013). Job performance is assessed through measurement scale developed by Murphy (2008). Family support is measured via standardized scales like the Family Support Inventory (King et al., 1995). These measures ensure reliability and validity in research on work-life balance and employee well-being.

Analysis and Results

Table No 1 Demographic Profile of Sample

Demographic Variable Categories		Frequency	Percentage
Age Group	21-25 years	75	19.4%
	26-30 years	130	33.6%
	31-35 years	110	28.4%
	36-40 years	50	12.9%
	Above 40 years	22	5.7%
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	210	54.3%
	Master's Degree	150	38.8%
	Ph.D. / Others	27	7.0%
	Less than 3 years	90	23.3%
Work Experience	3-6 years	120	31.0%
	7-10 years	100	25.8%
	More than 10 years	77	19.9%
Job Role	Software Developer	150	38.8%
	Project Manager	85	22.0%
	Data Scientist / Analyst	65	16.8%
	IT Support / Administrator	40	10.3%
Marital Status	Other	47	12.1%
	Single Married	180	46.5%
	Divorced / Widowed	17	4.4%
Monthly Income (INR)	Below 50,000	75	19.4%
	50,000 - 1,00,000	140	36.2%
	1,00,001 - 1,50,000	105	27.1%
	Above 1,50,000	67	17.3%

The sample respondents (33.6%) are between 26-30 years, with a significant portion (28.4%) in the 31-35 age group. More than half (54.3%) hold a Bachelor's degree, while 38.8% have a

Master's. Work experience varies, with 31% having 3-6 years and 25.8% having 7-10 years.

Software developers dominate (38.8%), followed by project managers (22%). Nearly half (49.1%) are married. Income distribution shows 36.2% earning between ₹50,000-₹1,00,000, while 17.3% earn above ₹1,50,000.

Table No 2 CFA, Discriminant validity, composite reliability, Correlations, and Descriptives

		Factor Construct	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	1	2	3	4
		Mean	SD	(Range)						
Employee Leave policy	ELP1	0.789	0.766				3.9	3.8	0.92	
	ELP2	0.752					3.9		0.99	
	ELP3	0.789		0.79	0.86		3.7		0.10	
	ELP4								0.66	
Dependent Care Policy	DCP1	0.799	0.767				3.9	3.9	0.88	
	DCP2	0.745					4.1		0.86	
	DCP3			0.76	0.89	0.52			0.98	
	DCP4	0.756					4.0		0.95	
Family Support	FS1	0.872	0.821				4.0	3.9	0.88	
	FS2	0.882		0.80	0.91	0.56	0.45		3.7	0.89
	FS3								0.87	
	FS4	0.814					4.3		0.89	
Job	JP1	0.823	0.789				3.6	3.9	0.83	
	JP2	0.856					4.1		0.56	
	JP3			0.74	0.82	0.49	0.67	0.58		0.78
	JP4	0.877					4.3		0.99	

The table presents results from a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) assessing construct validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability (CR), correlations, and descriptive statistics for four constructs: Employee Leave Policy (ELP), Dependent Care Policy (DCP),

Family Support (FS), and Job Performance (JP). Factor loadings for all items range between 0.745 and 0.882, indicating strong item reliability. Generally, factor loadings above 0.7 suggest that the items measure their respective constructs effectively. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs is above 0.7, ensuring convergent validity, as it surpasses the threshold of 0.5. This implies that the indicators sufficiently explain the variance in their constructs. Further, Composite reliability (CR) values range between 0.82 and 0.91, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7. This suggests high internal consistency, meaning that the items within each construct reliably measure the same underlying concept. Family Support (FS) shows the highest CR (0.91), implying the strongest internal

consistency among its items. Discriminant validity is assessed by comparing the square root of the AVE with interconstruct correlations. Each construct should have an AVE higher than its highest correlation with other constructs. While the exact correlation values are missing from the table, the AVE values (ranging from 0.74 to 0.80) suggest that the constructs are distinct from one another. However, some correlations (e.g., between FS and JP at 0.58, and FS and DCP at 0.45) suggest moderate associations. The inter-construct correlations suggest meaningful relationships. Family Support (FS) has a moderate correlation with Job Performance (JP) at 0.58, indicating that employees with stronger family support tend to perform better at work. Additionally, Employee Leave Policy (ELP) shows a lower correlation with Dependent Care Policy (DCP) (0.52), suggesting a relationship between these workplace policies. Finally, the mean scores range from 3.6 (Job Performance) to 4.3 (Family Support), with standard deviations between 0.56 and 0.99, indicating moderate variability. The relatively high mean values suggest that employees perceive workplace policies and support systems positively.

Table No 3 Hierarchical Regression Results

Variables	Model 1 (Controls)	Model 2 (Main Effects)	Model 3 (Moderation)
Control Variables			
Age	0.12 (0.05) *	0.10 (0.04) *	0.09 (0.04) *
Education Level	0.08 (0.06)	0.07 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)
Job Tenure	0.09 (0.04) *	0.07 (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)
Main Predictors			
Workplace Leave Policies (WLP)		0.25 (0.07) **	0.22 (0.06) **
Dependent Care Policies (DCP)		0.30 (0.06) **	0.27 (0.06) **
Moderator			
Family Support (FS)			0.20 (0.05) **
Interaction Terms			
WLP × FS			0.15 (0.04) **
DCP × FS			0.18 (0.05) **
Model Fit Statistics			
R ²	0.12	0.28	0.36
ΔR ²	-	0.16**	0.08**
F-value	4.31**	9.45**	12.18**

Notes: Standardized coefficients reported. Standard errors in parentheses. *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01.

The hierarchical regression analysis from the above table no 3 provides insights into the relationships between workplace policies, family support, and their potential interaction effects on an outcome variable. The analysis was conducted in three steps: Model 1 includes control variables (age, education, job tenure), Model 2 adds the main predictors (Workplace Leave Policies (WLP) & Dependent Care Policies (DCP)), and Model 3 introduces the moderator and interaction terms. The first model includes age, education level, and job tenure as control variables. Age shows a statistically significant positive relationship with the dependent variable ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that older employees tend to experience higher levels of the outcome variable. Job tenure also has a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that

employees who have been with the organization longer are similarly impacted. However, education level does not have a significant effect ($\beta = 0.08$, n.s.), implying that variations in education level do not contribute meaningfully to the dependent variable. The model explains 12% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.12$), and the F-value (4.31, $p < 0.01$) suggests that the model is statistically significant. In the second model, workplace leave policies (WLP) and dependent care policies (DCP) are introduced as main predictors. Both have statistically significant positive effects on the dependent variable. Workplace leave policies show a strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that employees who benefit from better leave policies tend to experience greater levels of the outcome variable. Similarly, dependent care policies also have a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that the availability of these policies enhances the outcome. The inclusion of these predictors significantly improves the model fit, with R^2 increasing to 0.28 ($\Delta R^2 = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$), demonstrating that workplace policies contribute substantially beyond the control variables alone. The F-value (9.45, $p < 0.01$) further confirms the model's significance. The final model introduces family support (FS) as a moderator and its interaction with the main predictors. Family support has a direct positive effect on the outcome variable ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$), implying that employees with greater family support experience higher levels of the dependent variable. More importantly, the interaction terms between family support and workplace policies are also significant. The interaction between workplace leave policies and family support (WLP \times FS) is significant ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that the positive effect of workplace leave policies is stronger when employees receive higher family support. Similarly, the interaction between dependent care policies and family support (DCP \times FS) is also significant ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that dependent care policies are more beneficial for employees with strong family support. The inclusion of these interaction effects further improves model fit, with R^2 increasing to 0.36 ($\Delta R^2 = 0.08$, $p < 0.01$), showing that family support plays a crucial role in moderating the impact of workplace policies. The F-value (12.18, $p < 0.01$) confirms that this final model is the best fit among the three.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are proposed to enhance employee wellbeing, job performance, and organizational effectiveness through well-structured leave and dependent care policies. Firstly, organizations should prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive employee leave policies. Since the study found a positive impact of leave policies on job performance (H_1), employers should ensure that leave policies are structured in a way that allows employees to take necessary time off without concerns over job security or workload accumulation. Companies can introduce flexible leave options, such as paid parental leave, medical leave, and sabbaticals, to enhance employee satisfaction and productivity. Additionally, clear communication regarding leave entitlements, eligibility, and processes should be emphasized to avoid confusion and encourage utilization. Secondly, organizations must recognize the importance of dependent care policies in fostering family support (H_2). Given that these policies positively influence employees' ability to manage their family responsibilities, companies should expand support mechanisms such as on-site childcare facilities, childcare subsidies, eldercare assistance, and flexible work schedules. These initiatives will help employees balance work and family commitments, reducing stress and enhancing their overall well-being. Human resource departments should periodically assess the effectiveness of dependent care policies by seeking employee feedback and making necessary adjustments to align with evolving family needs. The moderating role of family support in the relationship between leave policies and job performance (H_3) suggests that organizations should integrate family-friendly initiatives alongside leave policies to maximize their impact. Employers should foster a supportive work culture that encourages employees to take leave without fear of professional repercussions. Managers should be trained to understand and support employees' family-related concerns, ensuring that work-life balance is promoted at all levels. Encouraging flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or compressed workweeks, can further strengthen the impact of leave policies on job performance by allowing employees to manage both professional and personal responsibilities efficiently.

Similarly, family support moderates the relationship between dependent care policies and job performance (H_4), indicating that employees perform better when they receive sufficient support to manage their family obligations. Organizations should consider introducing family support programs, such as employee assistance programs (EAPs), counseling services, and parenting workshops, to provide additional resources for employees facing family challenges. Establishing partnerships with external service providers, such as childcare centers and eldercare facilities, can offer employees convenient and cost-effective solutions to dependent care needs. Moreover, policymakers and decision-makers should adopt a holistic approach by integrating leave and dependent care policies into broader workplace well-being initiatives.

Companies that invest in these policies are likely to experience increased employee engagement, reduced turnover rates, and improved job performance. To ensure continuous improvement, organizations should conduct regular surveys and research to evaluate the effectiveness of their policies and make data-driven adjustments to enhance their impact. Moreover, this study highlights the crucial role of leave policies, dependent care policies, and family support in shaping job performance. Organizations that proactively implement and refine these policies will foster a positive work environment that prioritizes employee wellbeing and productivity. By considering these recommendations, companies can build a supportive and inclusive workplace culture that benefits both employees and the organization.

Future Research and Conclusion

Although the present study aims to explore the relationship between employee leave policy and dependent care policy on employee job performance moderated by family support, it presents future research scope as such to explore the long-term effects of well-structured leave and dependent care policies on employee well-being, job performance, and organizational effectiveness. While this study provides evidence of the positive impact of these policies, future studies can examine how different industries and organizational cultures influence their effectiveness. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how employees' perceptions of leave and dependent care policies evolve over time and their sustained impact on productivity and retention. Additionally, research can investigate the role of leadership support and managerial attitudes in shaping the successful implementation of these policies. Since the study identified family support as a moderating factor, future research should explore other potential moderating variables, such as job autonomy, workplace flexibility, and employee engagement. Cross-cultural studies can also help determine how cultural norms and societal expectations influence the effectiveness of leave and dependent care policies, providing a broader understanding of their impact across diverse work environments.

Present study underscores the importance of comprehensive leave and dependent care policies in promoting employee well-being and enhancing job performance. Organizations that prioritize these policies create a work environment that fosters productivity, reduces stress, and improves overall job satisfaction. The findings emphasize that integrating family support mechanisms further strengthens the positive outcomes of these policies. By implementing flexible leave options, providing dependent care assistance, and fostering a supportive work culture, organizations can enhance employee commitment and reduce turnover rates. As workplaces continue to evolve, it is essential for organizations to remain proactive in adapting their policies to meet employees' changing needs. Future research will play a crucial role in refining these strategies, ensuring that workplaces remain inclusive, supportive, and conducive to both employee well-being and organizational success.

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