

# Work-family conflict, support and intention to quit among Kenyan female teachers in urban public schools

**Author:**

Gladys Muasya<sup>1</sup>

**Affiliation:**

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, Arizona State University

**Corresponding author:**

Dr G Muasya  
[gmuasya@asu.edu](mailto:gmuasya@asu.edu) or  
[gladysmuasya5@gmail.com](mailto:gladysmuasya5@gmail.com)

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Teaching is characterised by high reported levels of turnover and occupational stress. This study examined the nature of the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC), supervisor's and colleagues' support, and intention to quit among female teachers with young children in Kenyan urban public schools. The specific objectives were to: 1) compare the intention to quit of female teachers working in the city of Nairobi vis-à-vis those working in secondary urban centres; 2) examine the relationship between intention to quit and WFC; 3) examine the relationship between support and turnover intention; and 4) assess whether support moderates the relationship between WFC and intention to quit. Data were collected by means of 375 self-administered questionnaires and analysed using t-test and hierarchical regression. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers in primary and secondary schools in secondary urban centres and in the Nairobi city. Results show that intention to quit was statistically higher among secondary school teachers, and teachers working in the city. There was a positive relationship between WFC that originates from work and intention to quit, but not between WFC that originates from family and intention to quit. There was a negative relationship between supervisor's support and intention to quit but not between colleagues' support and intention to quit. Supervisor support did not moderate the relationship between WFC and intention to quit. Practical and theoretical implications of the study are also provided.

**Keywords:** colleagues' support, employer's support, female teachers, urban public schools, work-family support, turnover, Kenya

## 1 Introduction

Teacher turnover is a predominant problem in sub-Saharan countries. High rates of intention to quit among teachers have been reported in Malawi (Kayuni & Tambulasi 2007), South Africa (Mampane 2012), Uganda (Gyezaho 2014), Ghana (Cobbald 2015) and Kenya (Orina 2014; Waititu 2013). In Kenya, a leading media source reported that 45% of Kenyan public teachers did not plan to work until retirement, but instead planned to quit their jobs (Oduor 2015). In any organisation, the cost of replacing experienced staff, along with the disruption caused by the departure of employees, can be destructive to service delivery (Samuel & Chipunza 2009). However, employees who perceive their workplace as being well run and fair develop a high level of emotional attachment and loyalty, which reduces their intention to quit (Ronnie 2016). In employee turnover studies, intention to quit is taken as a proxy for actual turnover (e.g. Blomme, Van Rheede & Tromp 2010).

Studies in various parts of the world indicate that one of the antecedents to quitting is work-family conflict. The areas in which such studies were conducted include Europe (Blomme et al 2010; Nohe & Sonntag 2014), the U.S.A. (Carr, Boyar & Gregory 2007; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux & Brinley 2005; Netemeyer, Boles & Mcmurrian 1996) and New Zealand (Haar 2004). Women generally have higher turnover levels, especially those with young children, particularly when they find conditions in the workplace incompatible with the needs of the family, and are forced to opt out of work (Stone 2007). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985:77) define work-family conflict as "a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect".

However, organizational support enables employees to meet the demands of work and family, as it makes the workplace family-friendly, and may reduce intention to quit (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly 2002; Blomme et al 2010). Organisational support can be a resource for employees who do not have alternative forms of work-family support. This study sought to determine whether a relationship exists between work-family conflict and turnover intentions on the one hand, and the role of support among females with young children working in urban public schools in Kenya on the other.

### **1.1 Background to the study**

Many female teachers in Kenya are part of a dual-career couple and have to handle the demands of both work and family. Women working in the rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa have access to collectivist support from the extended family (Tsikata 2009; Mokomane 2014), but urban female teachers leave this form of support behind when they move to the cities. These women often supplement or replace this help with domestic workers. Research shows that domestic worker support is not always available and the poor relationship between domestic workers and their employers can lead to conflict in the home (Muasya & Martin 2016). Studies have found that female teachers in urban areas do indeed experience high levels of work-family conflict (Combat 2014, Muasya 2016b).

Despite the challenges that female teachers with dependants face, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology in Kenya has not devised measures to cater for work-family balance needs (Muasya 2016b). Teachers rely on informal arrangements with school principals and their own social networks, and in general there are few organisations in Kenya with formal work-family balance measures in place (Strathmore Business School 2011). Clark (2000:751) defines work-family balance as "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with minimum role conflict". Massive enrolment in schools against a backdrop of low staff capacity has exacerbated the workloads of teachers (Sifuna 2007). Another feature of urban schools is that their work schedules are fairly inflexible, coupled with transport difficulties. This forces teachers to leave very early in the morning and return very late, especially in Nairobi, to beat the traffic jam (Muasya 2016a).

Studies have sought to find the underlying causes of high turnover rates among Kenyan teachers, (see Chepkemboi, Nyangechi & Iravo 2012; Muthune 2013; Orina 2014; Waititu 2013). However, no study has examined the extent to which WFC contributes to turnover. Additionally, it has not been determined whether WFC is more prevalent in cities than in secondary urban centres, and whether access to support moderates the problem. Another limitation of Kenyan turnover studies is that they are country-wide and cover both rural and urban areas, all genders and demographics. This may overlook some subpopulations that may be experiencing higher work-family conflict than others, for example female teachers in urban areas with young children, hence the importance of segmenting employees' genders and demographics. This study chose one stratum of the teacher population – urban female teachers with young children. This group is perceived to have fewer resources for work-family support, which is more readily found in the communal areas (Mokomane 2014). Moreover, these women's spouses are equally engaged at work.

## **2 Theoretical and literature review**

This section presents the theoretical framework for this study; how work-family conflict contributes to intention to quit, and how support from the workplace may reduce intention to quit. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) contend that strains and time pressures cause work-family conflict in the domain of work and family, which are viewed as bi-directional. Thus, work interferes with family (WIF) and family interferes with work (FIW) (Netemeyer et al 1996). This study used the conservation of resources theory developed by Hobfoll (1989) to explore how WFC leads to intention to quit, and how organisational support serves as a resource and may mitigate its effects.

### **2.1 Conservation of resources theory**

Conservation of resources theory (COR) is robust and is one of the leading theories in the study of stress-related issues (Golden, Kirby & Jorgen 2006; Halbelesben 2006). Unlike spillover theory, which focuses on the affective domain (Staines 1980), COR encompasses both the affective and the non-affective domain. Spillover theory assumes that negative or positive feelings from work can spill over to the family and vice versa. Spillover theory focuses on the affective aspects of work and family and has been criticised for ignoring the meso- and macro-environment in which the individual lives and works – the effects of culture (Golden et al 2006). As Hobfoll (2001) has further pointed out, COR examines "the cultural interpretations of environmental difficulties that lead to stress" (Hobfoll 2001:362).

Conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll 1989) assumes that if individuals have sufficient resources they will not experience stress. According to Hobfoll (1989:15), stress is caused by "a reaction to the environment when there is a threat of loss of a resource, the net loss of resource or a lack of resources gain following the investment of resources". Resources consist of objects, personal characteristics

conditions, and energies. Object resources are tangible things such as houses and cars. Personal characteristics include attributes such as self-efficacy and self-esteem. Conditions include marriage, seniority at the place of work, and tenure, which gives a sense of job security. Energies consist of resources such as time, knowledge and money. This theory assumes that when individuals juggle the demands of home and work, they lose resources. When individuals find that family roles are not being satisfactorily performed owing to work demands, they may decide to quit work to give more time to the family.

Hobfoll (2001) identifies two important principles that underpin COR. "The loss of resources is considered more salient than the gain of resources, and people invest in resources in order to protect against resource loss, recover from losses, and gain resources" (Hobfoll 2001:349). The theory further asserts that people with larger resource reservoirs are less vulnerable to resource loss and can easily marshal more resources compared to those with fewer resources. Thus, social support helps to acquire and maintain a reservoir of resources, which enables an individual to resist stress. Hobfoll's lists "understanding from my employer boss", "support from co-workers", "help with tasks at work", and "help with childcare" as examples of resources (Hobfoll 2001:342).

Women with young children experience more work and time pressures compared with women without children or those with grown-up children (Higgins, Duxbury & Lee 1994; Huffman, Culbertson, Henning & Goh 2013). Women may seek support from their employer or from colleagues who form part of their social capital at work (Ciabattari 2007). Nohe and Sonntag (2014) have reported that sources of social support match the domain in which the conflict arose. That is, support from home mitigates stress/conflict originating from home. Similarly, support from work mitigates stress/conflict originating from work.

Along the same lines, this study assumes that WFC that arises from work may be mitigated by support from the work domain. Thus, if a teacher has enough resources from work, that teacher would not need to experience the negative consequences from work-related WFC. This may mitigate intention to quit. COR can thus be used to explain the role of social support and stressors, and how they relate to WFC and intention to quit. In the following sections, the hypotheses are discussed.

## **2.2 Intention to quit**

Intention is taken as a predictor of actual behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). Intention to quit has been found to mediate the relationship between most turnover antecedents and actual turnover (Hom & Kinicki 2001). Teaching is one occupation with high reported levels of turnover, as it is perceived to have high levels of occupational stress (Shernoff, Mehta, Atkins, Torf & Spencer 2011). Several studies have explored intention to quit among Kenyan teachers in public schools (Chepkemboi et al 2012; Muthune 2013; Orina 2014).

These Kenyan studies have identified the following antecedents of intention to quit among teachers: posting to remote areas, conflict of teachers with their supervisors, lack of promotion, joining their spouses, pursuing higher education, lack of support from their supervisor, and heavy workloads which may lead to job dissatisfaction and hence turnover. Unfortunately, the broad focus on these studies on both male and female teachers seems to ignore the gendered nature of the problems identified; female teachers disproportionately bear the brunt of the majority of the challenges. Moreover, these studies tend to aggregate teachers from both rural and urban settings, indicating that similar experiences are shared across these areas. For instance, Muthune (2013) and Orina (2014) explored only high schools at county level. Yet within a county in Kenya, some schools are located in secondary urban centres, while others are found in mainly rural areas. This discounts the heterogeneous nature of the cost of living and access to resources between these two areas.

My study investigates differences in WFC faced by female teachers with small children in schools located in Kenya's capital compared to WFC faced by those teaching in smaller urban secondary urban centres. Nairobi is considered one of the most economically competitive cities in Africa, with a population of more than 3.5 million people. The other secondary urban centres, Eldoret, Machakos and Wote, are county capitals with approximate populations of 280 000, 150 000 and 50 000 respectively (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2009). Big cities with large populations such as Lagos and Nairobi tend to pose unique challenges for the people who work there. These cities experience traffic congestion as a result of bad roads, leading to longer commuting times, which eat into family time, hence leading to work-family conflict (Epie & Ituma 2014). Given this context, several hypotheses are tested in this paper:

Hypothesis 1: The level of intention to quit among female teachers with young children working in urban areas will vary between schools in secondary urban centres and those in the city.

Furthermore, a number of turnover studies tend to aggregate all schools together, whether they are primary or secondary schools, assuming that they have the same turnover experiences (Kayuni & Tambulasi 2007; Mampane 2012). As a researcher, I disagree and propose that these aggregates mask differences between primary and secondary (high) schools. Thus, I propose the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The level of intention to quit among female teachers with young children working in urban areas will vary between primary and secondary schools (school type).

Studies have further sought to establish whether intention to quit can be influenced by other factors beyond actual teaching-related factors. For instance, employee intention to quit has been related to work-family conflict among university workers in Pakistan (Chaman, Ahmed, Naqvi & Sándor 2014), and among hospitality workers in the Netherlands (Blomme et al 2010). However, other studies have not established this relationship. For instance, Grandey and Gropanzano (1999) did not find a relationship between work-family conflict and intention to quit when they controlled for other work-family variables. Moreover, the Kenya turnover studies tend to make rather obvious recommendations, such as that pay should be increased and working conditions improved (Chepkemboi et al 2012; Muthune 2013; Orina 2014).

However, some of these “working conditions” may mask work-family conflict. The same can be said about “conflict with the supervisor” and “lack of support from the supervisor”. For example, Muasya (2016b) found that WFC led to conflict with supervisors, especially if a teacher failed to meet the school deadlines due to work-family related pressures. And some schools were more supportive than others, enabling female teachers with young children to cope with the demands of work, housework and childcare. Furthermore, some studies on the reasons why women are not promoted in Kenya cite WFC as one of the factors (Wangui 2012). This scenario has been reported in South Africa (April, Dreyer & Blass 2007). Teachers who face high levels of work-family conflict will quit in order to conserve their resources in line with conservation of resources theory. Hence the need to find out the extent to which work-family conflict contributes to intention to quit, leading to the third research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between work-family conflict and intention to quit among female teachers with young children working in urban schools.

### **2.3 Organisational support**

Social support takes the form of interpersonal relations and social interactions that are available to an individual to manage stressful events (Kessler, Price & Wortman 1985). Xu and Burleson (2001:535) define social support as “the assistance that people provide others when helping them cope with life challenges and situational demands”. There are two processes through which support is beneficial to wellbeing (Cohen & Wills 1985). Support can be the main effect, irrespective of whether the person is under stress or not, and there is no interaction between stress and support (support interaction X stress). The other alternative is the indirect effect (buffering model), where “support is related to wellbeing primarily for someone under stress” (Cohen & Wills 1985:310) and support buffers someone from the effects of stress. The stress-buffering hypothesis (model) was developed by epidemiologist John Cassel and psychiatrist Siddy Cobb. Both scholars saw strong social ties having the ability to protect a person from potentially pathogenic effects caused by stressful events (Cohen & Pressman 2004).

According to the stress buffering hypothesis, the availability and levels of social support make an individual appraise potential stressors as less or more threatening (Cohen, Underwood & Gottlieb 2000) and support sources act as a buffer against work-family conflict experienced (Eby et al 2005; Amah 2016). This study focused on support from the workplace from the supervisor and colleagues. Support from work and family enables employees to mitigate negative emotions and maladaptive strategies that they may have resorted to when the demands of the two domains clash (Wang, Liu, Zhan & Shi 2010).

House (1981) identified four types of support, namely appraisal, informational, instrumental and emotional support. At work, support from managers may take the form of direct support and advice (instrumental) on managing stressful events, or the form of interpretation of work-family policies (Eby et al 2005). Informational support means supplying information to enable a person to resolve his or her own personal and environmental issues. Appraisal support can take the form of positive job feedback and compliments on work well done. Supervisors and colleagues can empathise with employees who are going through difficult times (Frone, Yardley, & Markel 1997; House 1981).

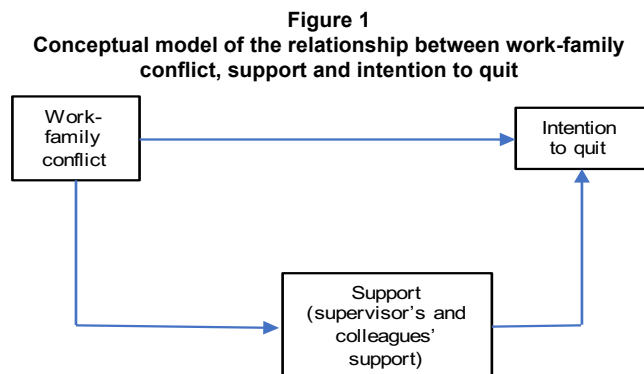
Indeed, (Anderson et al 2002) have reported that managers can reduce the work-family conflict experienced by their subordinates. Emotional support is expressed when managers and colleagues empathise with an employee who is facing work-family conflict challenges, i.e. a family crisis (Cohen & Wills 1985; Eby et al 2005; Frone et al 1997). Support from managers and colleagues has been found to moderate the strain-burnout relationship (Etzion 1984). Furthermore, supportive managers encourage their staff to make use of family-friendly policies. In Pakistan, Chaman et al (2014) found that supervisor support, as well as the support of colleagues, moderated the relationship between WFC and intention to quit. However, teacher turnover studies in Kenya have not shown that organisational support can reduce intention to quit (Chepkemboi et al 2012; Muthune 2013; Orina 2014). Organisational support is, however, a broad concept and employees may require support for various matters, such as progress in their careers as well as managing work-family conflict.

Supervisors could be more understanding at times when employees need time to resolve family crises. Anderson et al (2002) have reported that supervisors could reduce employees' levels of work-family conflict. Supportive supervisors encourage the use of work-family-friendly policies (Kirby & Krone 2002). Incidentally, studies conducted in Kenya have failed to connect supervisor support with intention to quit and work-family conflict among female urban teachers. This suggests a need to explore the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4: There is a negative relationship between supervisor support and turnover intention among urban female teachers with young children.

Hypothesis 5: There is a negative relationship between colleagues' support and turnover intention among urban female teachers with young children.

Hypothesis 6: Support moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and intention to quit among urban female teachers with young children. See the conceptual model (Figure 1).



### **3 Method**

#### **3.1 Study design**

This study used a quantitative descriptive design. Urban schools were stratified by urban area type (city or secondary urban centres) and by school type (primary or secondary/high school). The secondary urban centres and the city were purposively chosen; however, the schools were randomly chosen within these strata. A survey questionnaire was distributed to 472 female teachers in public primary and secondary schools working in secondary urban centres (Machakos, Eldoret and Wote in Makeni) and also in Nairobi city. The target population was female teachers with at least one child at primary school or below. Arizona State University Institutional Review Board and Kenya's National Council of Science and Technology approved the study. At each school, the researcher sought the consent of the school administration and individual teachers. A contact person was identified at each school who distributed the questionnaires to the female teachers and collected them after completion. The study was reported on in a PhD thesis and included both qualitative and quantitative questions. Only some of the findings are described in this article.

#### **3.2 Measures**

##### **3.2.1 Work-family conflict**

The researcher used Carlson, Kacmar and Williams' (2000) work-family conflict constructs. Carlson et al developed measures to study the three dimensions of WFC outlined by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) in their work-family conflict theory, namely: time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based WFC. The study focused on two dimensions, namely time-based and strain-based WFC, which have gained more empirical support than behaviour-based WFC (Carlson et al 2000). Each of the two dimensions has two subconstructs. Work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW). This leads to four subconstructs, each with three items, namely:

- i Strain-based work interference with family (strain WIF). The following question serves as an example: "When I get home from school I am often too tired to participate in family activities/responsibilities."
- ii Time-based work interference with family (time WIF). This is exemplified by the following question: "The time I have to devote to my teaching job keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities."
- iii Strain-based family interference with work (strain FIW), as exemplified by the following question: "Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at school."

- iv Time-based family interference with work (time FIW), as exemplified by the following question: "I have to miss school activities due to the amount of time I have to spend on family responsibilities."

These questions were measured on a five-point Likert scale where 1 signified "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree". The items exhibited the following internal consistency reliabilities: (strain WIF  $\alpha = .62$ ; time WIF  $\alpha = .83$ ; strain FIW  $\alpha = .87$ ; and time FIW  $\alpha = .74$ ).

### **3.2.2 Intention to quit**

There are three items on this scale. It measures the intention of the participant to quit work. The scale was adapted from Jenkins (1993), and Krausz, Koslowsky, Shalom and Elyakim (1995). A specimen question was, "Right now, I am actively searching for another job." These questions were measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree." The items exhibited an internal consistency reliability of  $\alpha = .79$ .

### **3.2.3 Support scales**

There were two support variables, namely supervisor support and support from colleagues. Both of these scales measured the extent of social support the participant received from the supervisor and from colleagues. This scale was adapted from Haynes, Wall, Bolden, Stride and Rick (1999) and has been used by Nohe and Sonntag (2014). The scale has three items which are measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1 – "not at all" to 5 – a "great deal". A specimen question is, "To what extent can you count on your supervisor/colleagues to back you up when you have difficulty combining work and family?" The items exhibited an internal consistency reliability for supervisor support of  $\alpha = .90$ , and support from colleagues of  $\alpha = .89$ .

## **3.3 Participants**

Out of 472 women, 375 completed the questionnaire in full. Primary school teachers made up 54.9% of the sample (206) and secondary school teachers 45.1% (169). Married teachers represented 84.3% of the sample (316) and single, widowed, or divorced teachers 15.7% (59). Of the married women, 76.6% had a full-time working spouse. Women from secondary urban centres represented 48.8% of the sample (183) and those from Nairobi city 51.2% (192). The mean age of the youngest child was approximately 6 years ( $M = 6$ ;  $SD = 4.25$ ). These women had worked for an average of 12 years ( $M = 12.3$ ;  $SD = 7.69$ ), and approximately 65% (237) employed domestic workers. On average, these teachers reported moderate levels of intention to quit ( $M = 2.62$ ;  $SD = 1.12$ ).

## **3.4 Statistical analysis**

The survey included both open- and closed-ended questions. Data from questions that generated information concerning the hypotheses mentioned were analysed and reported on in this paper. Data were analysed using t-test and hierarchical regression models. For hypotheses 1 and 2, t-test was used. The test variable was intention to quit; the grouping variables were urban category type (city or secondary urban centres), and school type (primary or secondary) in the two hypotheses respectively. In hypotheses 3–5, intention to quit was the dependent variable and work-family, supervisor support and support from colleagues were the independent variable.

In hypothesis 6 WFC was the independent variable, intention to quit was the dependent variable and support was the moderator. The specific measures and their internal consistency reliabilities as obtained in this study are described below. The study used hierarchical regression analysis. In all the analyses, the predictor variables were centred so as not to inflate the standard error. The specific steps are outlined along the hypotheses.

# **4 Results**

## **4.1 Overview of data analysis and descriptive statistics**

The means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlational data are provided in Table 1.

### **4.1.2 Correlations and t-test**

Results show that the location of the school – whether located in the secondary urban centre or the city – was positively correlated with intention to quit ( $r = .11$ ,  $p < .01$ ); time FIW ( $r = .15$ ,  $p < .01$ ); strain WIF ( $r = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ); strain FIW ( $r = .12$ ,  $p < .05$ ); supervisor support ( $r = -.18$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and support from colleagues ( $r = -.11$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The school type, whether primary or secondary, was correlated with intention to quit ( $r = .226$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

A two-sample independent t-test was conducted to determine whether the school type influenced intention to quit. Intention to quit was the dependent variable, with school type as the grouping variable.

Results show that secondary female teachers ( $M = 2.90$ ;  $SD = 1.12$ ) had higher levels of intention to quit work, compared to primary female teachers ( $M = 2.40$ ;  $SD = 1.07$ ),  $t(370) = -4.46$ ,  $p < .001$ . Likewise, when the urban area was used as a grouping variable with intention to quit as the dependent variable, teachers in the city ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) had a higher intention to quit than those in secondary urban centres ( $M = 2.49$ ;  $SD = 1.09$ )  $t(370) = -2.19$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Table 1**  
Study variables, means standard deviations and intercorrelations

Study variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Urban area	-	-	1								
2 School type	-	-	.02	1							
3 Intention to quit	2.62	1.12	.11*	.23**	1						
4 Time WIF	3.48	.90	-.06	.01	.16**	1					
5 Time FIW	2.32	.90	.15**	.09	.10	.08	1				
6 Strain WIF	3.15	.93	.13*	-.02	.23**	.44**	.24**	1			
7 Strain FIW	2.25	.91	.12*	.03	.13*	.12*	.51**	.36**	1		
8 Supervisor Sp.	3.36	1.13	-.18**	-.09	-.19**	.02	-.01	-.12*	-.02	1	
9 Colleagues Sp.	3.40	1.05	-.11*	-.03	-.04	-.01	.06	-.13*	-.03	.46*	1

\*\*  $P < .001$ ; \* $p < .05$

### 4.1.3 Regression analysis

To test hypotheses 3–5, a hierarchical regression was conducted. The criterion was *intention to quit*, and the predictor variables were the four sub constructs of WFC, namely *time WIF*, *time FIW*, *strain WIF* and *strain FIW*, *colleagues' support* and *supervisor support*. In step 1, the researcher entered the control variables – the age of the participant, marital status, and number of children, school category, and urban area – in the model. In step 2, the four WFC sub constructs, colleagues' support and supervisor support were entered in the regression model.

The first model was significant:  $R^2 = .07$  adjusted  $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(5, 350) = 5.22$ ,  $p < .001$ . The second model added significant influence over and above that of model 1:  $R^2$ -change = .06,  $F$ -change (4, 346) = 6.39,  $p < .001$ . The third model added significant variance over and above the second model:  $R^2$ -change = 0.03,  $F$ -change (2, 344) = 5.47,  $p < .05$ . The overall regression model was significant,  $R^2 = .16$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .13$ ,  $F(11, 344) = 5.97$ ,  $p < .001$ . Among the control variables, only the category of the school (whether a primary or secondary school) was significant with intention to quit. ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $t = 4.96$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In the second model, time WIF ( $\beta = .11$ ,  $t = 1.99$ ,  $p < .05$ ); strain WIF ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $t = 2.82$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were significant, time FIW ( $\beta = .03$ ,  $t = -5.22$ ,  $p = .60$ ), and strain FIW ( $\beta = .05$ ,  $t = .89$ ,  $p = .37$ ) were not.

In the third model, only supervisor support was significant, ( $\beta = -.18$ ,  $t = -3.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ); support from colleagues was not ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $t = 1.44$ ,  $p = .15$ ). Thus hypothesis 3 was partly confirmed. There was a positive relationship between work-family conflict and intention to quit work among urban Kenyan teachers in regard to time WIF and strain WIF but not in regard to time FIW and strain FIW. Hypothesis 4, namely that there is a negative relationship between supervisor support and intention to quit, was confirmed. However, hypothesis 5, namely that there is a negative relationship between support from colleagues and intention to quit, was not supported.

A second hierarchical regression was conducted to find out whether supervisor support moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and intention to quit. In the first model control variables were entered; in the second model time WIF, strain WIF, and supervisor support were entered. In the third model, supervisor support x time WIF, and supervisor support x strain WIF were entered. Model 1 was significant  $R^2 = .07$  adjusted  $R^2 = 0.06$ ,  $F(5, 352) = 5.17$   $p < .001$

Model 2 added significant influence to model 1,  $R^2$  change = .08  $F$  change (3, 349) = 11.40  $p < .001$ . Model 3 did not add significant influence to the overall model,  $R^2$  change = .01,  $F$ -change (2, 347) = 1.09,  $p = .34$ . The overall model was significant,  $R^2 = .16$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .13$ ,  $F(10, 347) = 6.46$ ,  $p < .001$ . In the second model, the following regression coefficients were significant: time WIF ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $t = 2.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ); strain WIF ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $t = 2.81$ ,  $p < .05$ ); supervisor support ( $\beta = -.15$ ,  $t = -2.97$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In the third model the following coefficients were significant: time WIF ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $t = 2.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ); strain WIF ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $t = 2.94$ ,  $p < .05$ ), supervisor support ( $\beta = -.14$ ,  $t = -2.74$ ,  $p < .05$ ); supervisor support x time WIF ( $\beta = -.04$ ,  $t = -.78$ ,  $p = .44$ ); supervisor support x strain WIF ( $\beta = -.05$ ,  $t = -.89$ ,  $p = .37$ ).

Thus, supervisor support does not moderate time WIF and strain WIF. This implies that supervisor support does not buffer teachers when they are experiencing high levels of work-family conflict from work. Thus, hypothesis 6, which states that support moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and intention to quit among urban female teachers with young children, was not supported.

## **5 Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between work-family conflict and intention to quit; whether support moderated the relationship between work-family conflict and intention to quit; and whether the location and the school type at which the teachers taught influenced their intention to quit work among female teachers in urban Kenyan schools. A recap of the results showed that teachers in the city (Nairobi and its suburbs) had a higher intention to quit than those in secondary urban centres. Similarly, high school teachers had a higher intention to quit than primary school teachers. These results, unlike the results of studies that aggregate teacher turnover intention on a county level, (see Orina 2014, Muthune 2013) indicate that there are subpopulations, some of which have a higher intention to quit than others.

In the same vein, high school teachers have a higher tendency to quit than primary school teachers. Thus, studies aggregating teacher intention to quit such as those of Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) and Mampane (2012) may fail to identify populations that are at a higher risk of quitting work. The study found a positive relationship between WIF (time WIF and strain WIF) and intention to quit. This study agrees with research from other parts of the world, such as Germany (Nohe & Sonntag 2014) and the Netherlands (Blomme et al 2010), which show that work-family conflict predicts intention to quit. After controlling for confounding variables, strain FIW ceased to be significant although it had correlated with intention to quit.

In addition, there was a negative relationship between intention to quit and supervisor support but the same was not observed in the case of support from colleagues. Research has shown that colleagues do have an influence on family-friendly policies (Kirby & Krone 2002), and the support of colleagues enables their peers to balance the demands of work and family (Muasya 2016b). However, when it comes to deciding whether to remain in employment or quit, it is a different scenario. Only supervisor support is salient.

This study differs partly from that of Chaman et al (2014), who found a negative relationship between supervisor support and intention to quit and a negative relationship between support from colleagues and intention to quit. Additionally, Nohe and Sonntag (2014) argue that there is a matching effect between the source of support and the domain-specific strain. This study augments this finding, as supervisor support is required to mitigate strain WIF and time WIF. Work-conflict that originates from work and interferes with family is mitigated by supervisor support.

Surprisingly, supervisor support did not moderate the relationship between time WIF and strain WIF and intention to quit. This study differs from that of Chaman et al (2014), who found that colleagues' support and supervisor support moderated the relationship between work-family conflict and intention to quit among university employees in Pakistan. The current study shows that supervisor support cannot buffer teachers experiencing excessive work-family conflict and prevent them from quitting their jobs.

### **5.1 Theoretical and practical implications of the study**

The COR theory postulates that if an individual has a sufficient reservoir of resources, then he or she will not experience stress (Hobfoll 1989). However, stress can be very general in nature, as can resources. One limitation of the COR theory is that resources are defined in very abstract terms, which could imply anything beneficial (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman 2014). This study implies that the type of stress experienced by teachers that leads to the decision to quit is very specific. That is why it cannot be mitigated by just any type of support. Support from colleagues has been shown to mitigate work-family conflict (Muasya 2016b; Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness 1999). However, when it comes to decisions to quit, supervisor support is more salient.

This is despite studies that indicate colleagues' support is of great assistance to an individual who is emotionally exhausted, and is able to mitigate stress (Albar-Marin & Garcia-Ramirez 2005). In addition, support from colleagues has been found to be more appropriate in relieving work-specific stress than non-work support such as family support (Lindorff 2001). A second possible explanation why support from colleagues did not mitigate intention to quit, could be the fact that resources are contextual. Certain types of support are interpreted differently in different cultures and contexts (Halbesleben et al 2014). Muasya (2016b) found that some teachers thought the burden of balancing the demands of home and family was a personal affair. Interestingly, some supervisors were ignorant about what their subordinates were experiencing as they attempted to balance work and family; they may have been under pressure to meet work targets or their schools may have been understaffed.

In addition, the study did not support the buffering hypothesis, which states that social support buffers individuals against stress (Cohen & Wills 1985; Cohen, Underwood & Gottlieb 2000). The current research reveals a direct relationship between support and work-family conflict. Thus, if a teacher is experiencing high levels of work-family conflict, he or she might still quit work. Support would not mitigate this decision.



This study shows that teachers from different locations do not have the same levels of intention to quit, and the same can be said of primary and secondary teachers. Policymakers should take cognizance of this fact when designing measures to mitigate work turnover. Such measures should be tailored to different employees' work scenarios. Further, these policies should differentiate between primary and secondary schools. Secondly, high levels of work-family conflict may cause teachers to leave their jobs. This suggests that policymakers should devise other measures to reduce work-family conflict. In Kenya, there are no formal family-friendly policies in schools; the decision to support employees' work-family balance in relation to needs is left purely to the discretion of the school principals (Muasya 2016b; Combat 2014, Strathmore Business School 2011).

Though this study was designed for female teachers with very young children, the findings can be applied to other contexts – geographical areas outside sub-Saharan Africa and other caregiving contexts. This research shows that young mothers who are teachers in the urban areas experience high levels of work-family conflict. There are also other groups that experience high work-family conflict, depending on the nature of their work or family structures. For example, a study in U.S.A. showed that firefighters who are single fathers with children under the age of 18 years experience high levels of work-family conflict. Moreover, fathers with a high fatherhood salience experienced higher levels than those with lower salience (Shreffler, Meadows & Davis 2011). Similarly, single parents with young children in the Canadian military experienced high levels of work-family conflict as well. This is due to the nature of their work, which involves constant mobility and long separations from their families (Skomorovsky n.d). Moreover, a study of African immigrant families in the U.S.A with young children reported high levels of WFC (Muasya 2016c). However, these high levels of work-family conflict can be reduced with adequate social support. Thus, we cannot generalise by stating that all single working parents experience high levels of work-family conflict. Minnotte (2012) opines that family structure does moderate the relationship between key resources, and work-family conflict. Thus, even working parents with no other adult in the house experience high levels of work-family conflict, whether they are single parents or partnered parents. Similarly, single parents living with other adults or older children may experience lower work-family conflict than partnered parents.

Apart from child care, employees who are caring for elderly parents may experience high levels of work-family conflict. Taking care of elderly parents can be more stressful than taking care of children as the caretakers may not be prepared to take care of their parents if they fall ill suddenly. Furthermore, the strain and emotional issues are greater for people residing with an elderly parent than if the parent is domiciled elsewhere. Work-family conflict is exacerbated if the elderly parent is suffering from dementia or a physical disability (Calvano 2013).

## **5.2 Limitations and recommendations for future study**

This study used one-time self-reported measures, which may suffer from common-method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff 2003). The study also focused on a few secondary urban centres and one city, making it difficult to generalise it to other cities and secondary urban centres in Kenya. Longitudinal and experimental designs could be incorporated in future studies. In spite of these limitations, the results revealed that intention to quit varies with school type, whether primary or secondary, and with location. Teachers in cities have a greater propensity to quit than those in smaller secondary urban centres. In addition, work-family conflict is a factor that contributes to intention to quit, and schools need other measures to alleviate work-family pressures in addition to supervisor support.

There is a need for more studies to establish which type of supervisor support could ameliorate WFC and intention to quit, as supervisor support as a construct is too general. Future studies should find out which type of support female teachers in urban areas require to mitigate WFC. Moreover, there is a need to include more secondary urban centres, cities and male teachers in the study of WFC and turnover intention, to find out if gender has an effect on turnover intention.

## **5.3 Declaration of conflict of interest**

The researcher has no conflict of interest.

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