

# The Relationship between Family Emotional Support, Psychological Capital, Female Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

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## ABSTRACT

In developing countries, the role of women in miscellaneous occupations has kept its importance over the decades. So, it seems necessary to examine factors that may affect female job response. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of family emotional social support on both job satisfaction and turnover intention, as well as examine the moderating role of psychological capital, namely, hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience as an internal factor. Using a self-report questionnaire, a sample of 210 female respondents was selected. Data was analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis and PLS structural equation modeling. The results indicated that family emotional support affected both job satisfaction and turnover intention positively. The partial mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between family emotional social support and job satisfaction was supported. This research considers the role of family emotional support and psychological capital on female employee job satisfaction and turnover intention. This research provides in-depth knowledge about the role of females in Iranian employment culture.

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, Family emotional social support, Psychological capital, Turnover intention, Job response, Female employee.

**JEL Classification:** J28; J63; D91.

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### **Highlights of this paper**

- This study investigates the effect of family emotional social support on both job satisfaction and turnover intention as well as examine the moderating role of psychological capital, namely, hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience as an internal factor.
- The results indicated that family emotional support affected both job satisfaction and turnover intention positively.
- This research provides in-depth knowledge about the role of females in Iranian employment culture.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Many studies have focused on the relationship between employee Job Response (JR), namely Job Satisfaction (JS) and Turnover Intention (TI); and internal factors, including personality, Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and emotional intelligence (e.g., Kaplan and Bickes (2013)) and external factors including working environment, company subculture, perceived support of family members and equal opportunity climate (e.g., (Ahmad & Omar, 2013; Estrada & Harbke, 2008; Park & Choi, 2009; Valentine, Greller, & Richtermeyer, 2006; Yang, 2010)). This study used positive psychological capital as an internal factor influencing JS (Kaplan & Bickes, 2013; Kwok, Cheng, & Wong, 2015) and TI (Chaudhary & Chaudhari, 2015; Gu, 2016; Lee, 2012; Zhao & Gao, 2014) as a job response (JR). PsyCap, goes beyond human ('what you know') and social ('who you know') capital, and is a takeoff from economic capital (where resources are invested and leveraged for a future return). It is more directly concerned with 'who you are' and 'who you are becoming' or developing one's actual self to become the possible self (Luthans et al., 2006). It is about hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience of any person. Serving as external factors, support from family, friends, coworkers, and supervisors influence JS and TI (Ahmad & Omar, 2013; Bakker, Emmerik, & Euwema, 2006; Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayan, & Schwartz, 2002; Kwok et al., 2015; Nohe & Sonntag, 2014; Park & Choi, 2009). Among all sources of support, family support is particularly effective in decreasing exhaustion and buffering the effects of work stress from burnout as negative work-related outcomes (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Karatepe, 2010).

Despite some research that show there are no gender differences in the magnitude of perceived support from family members (Rosario, Shinn, Mørch, & Huckabee, 1988; Soloman & Rothblum, 1986; Vaux, 1985) some studies confirm stronger correlations between family support and depression and heart attack for girls than for boys (Knoll & Schwarzer, 2002; Slavin & Rainer, 1990). Despite all this, gender, as it is considered in this study, seems a variable that may correlate with JR (JS and TI) (Campbell, 2011; Emiroğlua, Akova, & Tanriverdic, 2015; Negi, 2009; Watanabe, 2010). Because gender and the type of organization can play a role as moderator in many organizational relationships (Mauno, Kinnunen, & Feldt, 2012) the present study aims to measure the relationship between Family Emotional Social Support (FESS) and job response (job satisfaction and turnover intention) with the mediating role of PsyCap among the female staff in a university in the northeast of Iran.

### *1.1. Theoretical Foundations*

#### *1.1.1. Family Emotional Social Support (FESS)*

The present study was undertaken to complement existing research on work-family relationships. In particular, the emphasis was on the family-to-work direction of influence. Most work-family research is on social support and it is based on matching domain relationships, that is, social support in the family domain is related to family interfering with work conflict and social support in the work domain and is related to work interfering with family conflict (Selvarajan, Cloninger, & Singh, 2013). Moreover, the specific focus of the study was the variable of family

social support (King, Mattimore, King, & Adams, 1995). Two types of social support are: (a) emotional or socio-emotional, and (b) instrumental or tangible. Emotional social support is exemplified by sympathetic and caring behaviors (Beehr, 1985). Three primary sources of social support are: (a) from supervisors, (b) from coworkers, and (c) from extra-organizational sources, such as friends and family (Kaufmann & Beehr, 1986; King et al., 1995).

### *1.1.2. Job Response (JR)*

It is usual to define and measure positive job response by job satisfaction (JS) (Cheng, Yang, Wan, & Chu, 2013; Valentine., 2010). JS accounts for most work-related studies in the field of organizational and industrial psychology and organizational behavior (Jawahar & Hemmasi, 2006). It is defined as personal feelings about the job and its associated aspects (Zehir, Erdogan, & Basar, 2011). JS is an attitude towards ones' job while it is basically an affective, cognitive, and evaluative reaction towards a job (Jawahar & Hemmasi, 2006). JS could be measured at the individual or organizational level (Schneider, 1975). In this article JS is measured at the individual level. JS refers to the assessment of individual needs and value systems (Schneider, 1975) and includes individual development in response to people's understanding of the job (Zehir et al., 2011) as well as their feeling of the organizational climate (Tsai, 2014).

In addition to JS, another common component to define positive job response is intention to stay (Cheng et al., 2013; Valentine., 2010). Among various definitions of turnover intention, it is described as the employees' will and action for leaving an organization (Cho & Sung, 2011). Although there is often temporal separation between intention to leave and actual exit (Mai, Ellis, Christian, & Porter, 2016) one of the most powerful predictors of actual turnover is turnover intentions (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). Turnover intention is a cause of employee behavior with a casual model then leading to the actual turnover.

### *1.1.3. Psychological Capital (PsyCap)*

Psychological capital comes from the positive psychology movement that aims to shift the emphasis away from what is wrong to what is right with people and focuses on strengths instead of weaknesses, to be interested in resilience instead of vulnerability, and to be concerned with enhancing and developing wellness, prosperity and the good life instead of remediation of pathology (Luthans & Jensen, 2002; Luthans. & Youssef, 2007). In positive psychology, the term Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) intends to identify a newly arising focus on a positive approach to developing and managing human resources in today's workplace (Luthans. & Youssef, 2007; Luthans., Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). It was the way that formally integrates positive psychology to the workplace (Avey., Luthans, & Youssef, 2010). An important construct that has emerged from the POB movement is PsyCap (Culbertson, Fullagar, & Mills, 2010). Luthans. and Youssef (2007) characterized PsyCap as: " 1) Self Efficacy- having confidence to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; 2) Optimism- making a positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future 3) Hope- persevering towards goals and, when necessary redirecting paths to goals; and 4) Resiliency- when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond to attain success" (Luthans. & Youssef, 2007). In this research, these characteristics have been used.

## *1.2. Hypotheses Development*

Different studies have been conducted on the relationship between FESS and job response as well as the role of PsyCap in this relation. Reviewing some studies can help to understand the relationship.

### *1.2.1. Family Emotional Support, Psychological Capital and Job Satisfaction*

PsyCap is a core construct that predicts satisfaction (Luthans..., Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006). Ahanchian and Ganji (2017) suggest the psychological aspects of the organization are vital for female staff because these aspects determine job satisfaction. Apart from positive psychological capital, family factors may also influence workers' JS. Family often acts as the primary source of support, such as emotional sustenance and instrumental assistance (Adams, King, & King, 1996). Social support, in particular emotional support, helps reduce job dissatisfaction and workload dissatisfaction (Kaufmann. & Beehr, 1989). FESS has been especially important to JS in women employees (King et al., 1995). But the conceptual link between the FESS, as an external factor in the family domain, and job response as an individual factor may not be as simple and direct as some literature suggested. In order for an external factor to influence individual social attitudes, there may be an important role for a mediating variable that is specific to the individual (Kwok et al., 2015). PsyCap was also shown to be a mediator between transformational leadership and followers' job performance and satisfaction (Sui, Wang, Yue, & Fred, 2012). Lui (2011) demonstrate the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between positive emotions and JS. A supportive family may create the positive environment necessary for PsyCap to flourish and this consequently contributes to JS (Kwok et al., 2015). Drawing from all this, we hypothesize that:

*Hypothesis 1. FESS has a positive effect on PsyCap.*

*Hypothesis 2. FESS has a positive effect on JS.*

*Hypothesis 3. PsyCap has a positive effect on JS.*

*Hypothesis 4. PsyCap has a mediating role on the relationship between FESS and JS.*

### *1.2.2. Family Emotional Support, Psychological Capital and Turnover Intention*

Family is a great predictor of turnover intention (TI). Work–life conflict leads to deleterious health outcomes, absenteeism (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Wethington, 1989) and turnover (Timms et al., 2015). Nohe and Sonntag (2014) showed that family-to-work conflict is more important in predicting increases in TI than work-to-family conflict. On the other hand, a recent meta-analysis of 51 research studies showed significant relationships between PsyCap and employee attitudes such as JS, TI and employee behaviors such as job performance and citizenship behavior (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011). For TI, Avey. et al. (2010) suggested several reasons for how PsyCap could reduce job turnover intention. For example, resilience allowed individuals to bounce back when facing adversity and difficulty in work and performed positive coping and adaptation to the workplace environment instead of quitting. The component of hope helped widen one 's capacity in thinking of the pathways to achieve individual work goals successfully and reduced the needs to leave the job. As a result, PsyCap was negatively correlated with TI Avey. et al. (2010). Therefore, based on the arguments above and the available evidence, we hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis 5. PsyCap has a negative effect on TI.*

*Hypothesis 6. FESS has a negative effect on TI.*

*Hypothesis 7. PsyCap has a mediating role on the relationship between FESS and TI.*

### *1.2.3. Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention*

The relationship between JS and TI has been examined extensively in the literature and generally showed that higher JS results in reduced TI (Valentine..., Godkin, Fleischman, & Kidwell, 2011). Jaramillo, Mulki, and Solomon (2006); Jones, Katak, Futrell, and Johnston (1996) and Egan, Yang, and Bartlett (2004) concluded that JS is associated with decreased intentions to leave. Tett and Meyer (1993) conducted a meta-analysis of 155 relevant

studies when they suggested that JS is negatively associated with TI. Hence, we argue that JS will affect TI leading to the following hypothesis

*Hypothesis 8. JS has a negative effect on TI.*

The conceptual model, given these hypotheses, is shown in Figure 1.

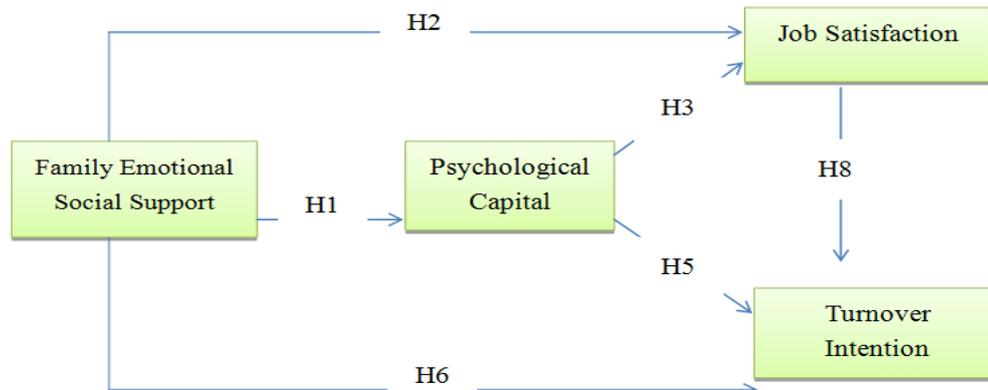


Figure-1. Conceptual model.

Source: Adopted and Modified from Kwok et al. (2015) & Ahanchian and Ganji (2017).

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1. Measurement Scales

We measured FESS using the 29-item emotional sustenance subscale within (King et al., 1995) Family Support Inventory. PsyCap was measured using the 24-item PCQ of Luthans. et al. (2007) that was used in many papers such as Hodges (2010). Sapyaprapa, Tuicomepee, and Watakakosol (2013) tested the validity of this scale where the Cronbach alpha for self-efficiency was .87, for hope was .84, .87 for resilience and .80 for optimism. JS and TI were measured using the scale of Cheng et al. (2013) that was obtained from Seasfore, Lawler, Mirvis, and Cammann (1982): (for JS) 1) In general, I don't like my job (reverse code); 2) I like working where I do.; 3) I am comfortable in my job; 4) I am satisfied with my job. and: (for TI) 1) I think about moving to another organization; 2) I will leave the company in the next few year; 3) I expect to be with another company soon. All the measurement scales were based on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree').

### 2.2. Questionnaire Design and Sampling

The sample data was collected using a paper-based questionnaire. The population for this research comprised of all 315 female staff members at one of the biggest universities in north-east Iran. Participants were requested to complete a questionnaire at their leisure and return it directly to the investigator within a designated period of time. The response rate was 65%. 210 usable responses were received with an age range of 20–60 years (M = 36.21, SD = 14.12) and work experience of 2–30 years (M = 6.21, SD = 11.25).

### 2.3. Validity and Reliability

The content validity of the scales was evaluated by an expert panel that consisted of 5 management professors who had over 5 years' experience of providing work-place counseling services. All panel members generally agreed that the test items were valid. We used Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, AVE and factor loadings for evaluating the questionnaire's reliability. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table-1. Reliability tests.

| Variables             | Cronbach's alpha | Composite reliability | AVE  |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------|
| FESS                  | 0.98             | 0.98                  | 0.72 |
| Psychological capital | 0.96             | 0.97                  | 0.90 |
| Job satisfaction      | 0.93             | 0.95                  | 0.83 |
| Turnover intention    | 0.88             | 0.91                  | 0.77 |

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values for all constructs were higher than 0.8 Table 1 and so met the criterion of strong reliability. All the composite reliability values were higher than 0.8 Table 1 meeting the criterion for strong reliability suggested by Chin and Gopal (1995). The loading values of all items were above 0.7. Because the number questions was 60, these are not shown. The average variance extracted (AVE) values of all constructs were above 0.6 Table 1 meeting the criterion of discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

2.4. Testing the Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to validate the measurement model. The fit indices for the confirmatory factor analysis model using AMOS 16.0 were as follows:  $\chi^2= 967.59$ ,  $df = 412$ ,  $GFI = .89$ ,  $AGFI = .84$ ,  $CFI = .93$ , and  $RMSEA = 0.05$ . These values show an adequate level of overall model fit. All items in the model had significant parameter estimates with standardized estimates greater than .50. These results also suggest that data reflect satisfactory convergent validity for each subscale which was able to explain the items it measured better than other subscales (Doll, Xia, & Torkzadeh, 1994; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006).

3. RESULTS

Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling by Smart-PLS. Basic statistics relating to the sample are given in Table 2.

Table-2. Variable means and correlations.

| Variables                          | Mean  | SD    | 1       | 2      | 3       | 4       |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 1. Family emotional social support | 3.120 | 1.075 | 1       | .951** | .944**  | .291**  |
|                                    |       |       |         | .000   | .000    | .017    |
| 2. Psychological capital           |       |       |         | 1      | .964**  | -.265*  |
| Self-efficiency                    | 3.233 | 1.137 | .951**  |        | .000    | .028    |
|                                    |       |       | .000    |        |         |         |
| Optimism                           | 3.194 | 1.144 | .932**  |        |         |         |
|                                    |       |       | .000    |        |         |         |
| Hope                               | 2.526 | 1.254 | .948**  |        |         |         |
|                                    |       |       | .000    |        |         |         |
| Resilience                         | 3.662 | .8678 | .755**  |        |         |         |
|                                    |       |       | .000    |        |         |         |
| 3. Job satisfaction                | 2.752 | 1.098 | .944**  | .964** | 1       | -.407** |
|                                    |       |       | .000    | .000   |         | .000    |
| 4. Turnover intention              | 3.023 | .9244 | 0.291** | -.265* | -.407** | 1       |
|                                    |       |       | .017    | .028   | .000    |         |

Note: \* p <.05 (two-tailed) \*\* p <.01 (two-tailed).

Among the variable's, turnover intention measures the negative aspect of the job response. For this variable the average above three is not good and shows that intention of the woman employees for leaving their job is higher than average (3).

### 3.1. Hypotheses Testing

Our study aimed at proposing and testing a research model [Figure 1](#) that examined the mediating role of PsyCap in the association between FESS and job response. For analyzing the model, we used smartPLS 2. Since in this research, psychological capital was introduced as the mediator variable, we need to determine if there is partial mediation or full mediation. Results of this estimation are shown in [Figure 2](#). All estimated paths are significant at the .01 level of significance except for the path from PsyCap to TI which is insignificant.

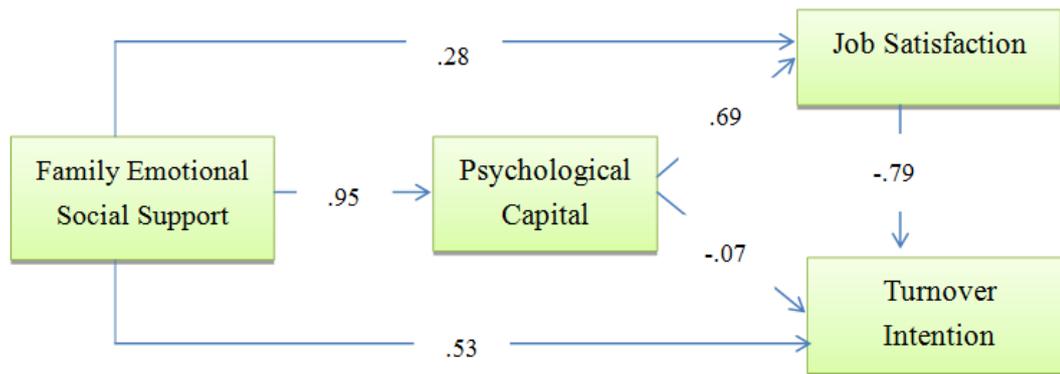


Figure-2. Estimated model.

The R<sup>2</sup> for PsyCap, JS and TI were 0.906, 0.938 and 0.161 respectively. According to the level of R<sup>2</sup> values, 90% of the variation in PsyCap are accounted for by the present model. This means that other variables also affect PsyCap that have not been addressed in the present study. However, FESS can be regarded as an important variable that affects psychological capital. 93% of JS variation are accounted for by the present model. This means FESS and PsyCap can be regarded as important variables that affect JS. Finally, 16% of TI variation are accounted for by the present model. This means that other variables also affect TI that have not been addressed in the present study.

## 4. DISCUSSION

According to the results of the structural equation model [Figure 2](#) the results illustrated that FESS is positively related to PsyCap. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported. PsyCap significantly influenced JS so hypothesis 2 is supported. This relationship was supported by the research of [Badran and Youssef-Morgan \(2015\)](#) and [Bergheim, Nielsen, Mearns, and Eid \(2015\)](#). Hypothesis 3 is supported because FESS had a positive relationship with JS, which was inconsistent with the findings of [Kwok et al. \(2015\)](#); [Luthans... et al. \(2006\)](#) and [Luthans.. et al. \(2007\)](#) showing that family emotional support was a direct predictor of job satisfaction. For testing hypothesis 4, we note that the paths from FESS to JS and from FESS to PsyCap and PsyCap to JS are all significant implying partial mediation. so hypothesis 4 is partially supported. Hypothesis 5 is not supported and PsyCap did not have an influence on TI. These results suggest that PsyCap doesn't play a mediating role in the relationship between FESS and TI. Hence, hypothesis 7 is not supported. Hypothesis 6 is also not supported, because FESS had a positive relationship with TI. This result shows that emotional support increases turnover intention in the female staff. This result is contrary to the findings of the [Kwok et al. \(2015\)](#) research. This contradiction may result from the employees' dissatisfaction with their workplace (2.752) in [Table 2](#). It may also cause low level of female university employees' hope with the average 2.526 as a part of psychological capital. This discrepancy may be due to the specific population, which is specifically restricted to the female employees of the university. Studies on the relationship between gender and turnover intention have led to conflicting results ([Hayes, 2015](#)). However, some

studies have confirmed such association. For instance, the number of female employees' turnover intention is twice the number of males (Cawmset, 2000). In contrast to these findings, some research like Wai and Robinson (1998); Miller and Wheeler (1992) and Berg (1991) found no relationship between gender and turnover rate. This contradiction result from Iranian culture, for example Iranian people culturally believe that it is the duty of the men, not the women's responsibility, to support the family financially. And perhaps because of such emotional support, women are more likely to leave their jobs if they received a high level of support from their family. Finally, Hypothesis 8 is supported because JS showed a negative relationship with TI. This result similar to the results of the study conducted by Lui (2011).

This study offered three major contributions. First, it answers the question of how family emotional support influences job response (JS and TI) by investigating the moderating role of PsyCap. Second, the study identifies and examines the effect of psychological capital as an internal factor and family emotional support as an external factor on JS and TI. Third, it provides evidence in Iran, a non-western cultural country, enriching the existing body of studies, which sample exclusively from western culture.

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