



Work-Family Conflict, Transformational Leadership and Inter-Organisational Labour Mobility in Tanzania Public Sector: The Social Exchange Theory Perspective

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Abstract. We integrate the Social Exchange Theory to test the influence of work-family conflict on the external mobility of employees and the interaction effect of transformational leadership. The study used quantitative data from a survey of 333 public agency employees and analysed it with the help of Partial Least Square Structural Modeling. The study revealed that work-family conflict significantly and positively influences inter-organisational labour mobility. Furthermore, transformational leadership was found to be an important factor that moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and inter-organisational labour mobility. Under the foundations of the Social Exchange Theory, results reveal the significance of work-family conflict in explaining inter-organisational labour mobility.

Additionally, the study has proved the worthiness of transformational leadership behaviour in lessening the impact of work-family conflict on inter-organisational labour mobility to both managers and policy makers in the Tanzanian working environment. According to the findings, organisations should set up transformational leadership training courses to give managers the essential leadership capabilities they need to improve employee retention. The study gives new insights into existing labour mobility models and leadership theories by conceptually confirming that transformational leadership can interact with work-family conflict and reduce its impact on inter-organisational labour mobility under the influence of Social Exchange Theory. Nonetheless, due to the study limitations, the research calls for future study by considering different national contexts, such as cross-national studies focusing on the influences of cultural, institutional and macroeconomic factors in work-family conflict, which might produce additional knowledge.

Keywords: Work-Family Conflict, Transformational Leadership, Inter-Organisational Labour Mobility.

1 Introduction

Several researchers from a variety of disciplines, including organisational behaviour (OB) and human resources management (HR), have given the subject of employee mobility more attention. As such, the implications of different forms of employee mobility, such as intra-organisational mobility (i.e., lateral and vertical promotion) and external employee mobility (inter-organisational mobility), such as within and between industries, moves to competitors, employee entrepreneurship, and geographic mobility (i.e. the movement across geographical borders), have been the focus of scholarly works over the past few decades [1, 2]. The reasons could be attributed to inter- and intra-organisational mobility being essential to enhancing a better fit between the employee and the job, creating more value for both [3]. Mobility research was primarily concerned with labour economic constructs like migration, as previous mapping research has shown, and it was unable to differentiate this phenomenon from the modest employee turnover sufficiently; as such, this study has focused extensively on inter-organisational labour mobility (ILM) [1, 4].

New ideas and perspectives from new hires, avoiding stagnation, employing a more qualified candidate, social networks, and inter-organisational partnerships are some of the benefits of ILM [5, 6]. However, when turnover intention is excessive, it could have detrimental effects on working organisations. In particular, the loss of highly qualified workers may result in the loss of invisible expenses like lost implicit understanding, decreased efficiency, fewer qualified coaches, and lower staff morale, as well as tangible sunk costs like those associated with recruiting, hiring, and instructing new employees [5–7]. As such, in today's turbulent times, organisations are very conscious about maintaining their competitive advantages. Hence, competent managers know the importance of retaining their employees, especially for the top talented employees [6, 8].

Despite more than two decades of research on inter-organisational employee mobility (ILM), a comprehensive impression remains lacking because most of the evidence currently available on ILM is inconsistent and inadequate, emphasising the effects of mobility [1]. As such, [1, 9] call for future research on the determinants and the impacts of ILM at its various levels, which have not yet been fully and wholly studied in contrast to turnover literature.

For instance, scholars like [10–12] reveal that psychological factors for leaving, such as interference with work-family-lifestyle balance, co-workers' relationships, supervisory relationships, career orientation, work roles and working hours, role overload, unclear roles, disagreements over roles, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment are more explanatory of turnover intention (TOI)/ILM. According to some researchers, such as [13], the shift in demographic patterns makes it more difficult to balance work and family obligations for the majority of working employees, basically in every nation. However, the majority of earlier studies on work-family conflict (WFC) have mostly concentrated on developed countries, paying little attention to other national contexts [13, 14]. Therefore, this study's primary goal is to investigate how WFC affects ILM in Tanzanian governmental settings.

Researchers, including [15], assert that positive leadership behaviour plays a significant role as a moderator variable in the work-family literature by providing tools to help individuals deal with the effects of stressful events. Researchers opine that transformational leadership (TL) is a very essential pull-to-stay factor; however, much of the study concentrates on the highly developed nations like the United States of America (USA). Consequently, they call for further studies to increase its generalisation [16, 17]. Researchers posit that Social Exchange Theory (SET), due to its reciprocity nature, can provide positive resources to employees who experience WFC, and lessen their intention to quit [18, 19]. Therefore, in seeking to make a novel contribution, we found it vital to investigate the interplay between WFC, TL, and ILM in the Tanzanian setting. As such the study is considered valuable as it will add new contextual insights and more holistic perspectives in the manner in which how these consequences appear in the particular and distinctive setting of the workers who confront the WFC. Therefore, extend the existing labour mobility and leadership models, facilitating policymakers, HR practitioners, and managerial personnel on appropriate HR Policies, practices, and guidelines to overcome work family conflict and enhance employees retention.

2 Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

SET was the major foundation for this study due to its ability to explain the relationship of exchange referred to as mutual dependence [18]. According to a study by [20], turnover intention (TOI) as perceived by SET would occur as a result of employees' feelings and assessment of the standard of their interactions with their organisations, which are connected to their commitment to the organisation and general well-being. [18] contend that when employees feel that their organisations care for their family issues and help them feel secure, they will react favorably by being devoted to and faithful to their organisation. A study by [21] asserts that SET is evolving; it invites researchers to explore various related avenues as broad theories that can shadow many other theories under its umbrella. [19] believe that SET can explain the role of transformational leadership (TL) as a crucial "pull-to-stay" aspect through reciprocal behaviours from social relationships.

2.2 Conceptual Structure and Hypotheses Development

The conceptual framework illustrates how the outcome variable, ILM, and the moderating variable, transformational leadership (TL), and the predictor variable, work-family conflict, relate to one another. SET states that when workers encounter work-family issues, they will leave the organisation since the employer and employee have a trade relationship [18, 22].

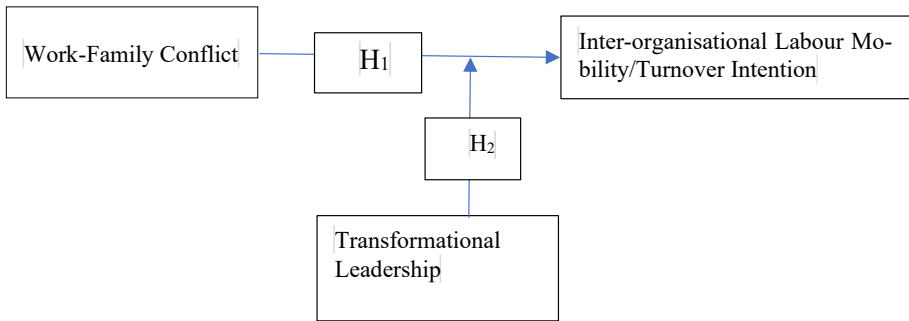


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model

Inter-organisational Labour Mobility

When employees migrate between their source and destination organisations, it's known as inter-organisational employee mobility (ILM) and goes beyond basic turnover behaviour [1]. Turnover intention (TOI) is discussed as a sign and an indicator of ILM, as well as a good predictor of behaviour and a stand-in for actual turnover behaviour. [2, 23, 24]. In this study, ILM and TOI were used interchangeably, which is well-defined as “a purposeful and intentional willfulness of Government workers to find another opportunity within public service organisations” [25] .

Inter-organisational Labour Mobility and Work-Family Conflict

Work-family conflict (WFC) is defined as a form of inter-role conflict, an explanation of either intrusion from family into work, or intrusion from work into family. WFC can result from time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based conflict [26] . According to [27], a major contributing element to an employee's turnover intention (TOI) is the detrimental overflow of work and family into one another. WFC happens when work-related activities interfere with family life, such as when there is a lack of flexibility, a heavy workload, stress, personal conflict, a lot of travel, job changes, unwelcoming bosses, or inadequate organisational assistance [26] . According to [28] , employee turnover intention levels will only decrease if employee WFC is decreased. Therefore, they recommended that policies be developed that examine ways to protect the effects of work-life conflict as well as the influence that dependent children have on employees' intentions to leave, thereby helping organisations retain their workforce. In light of the aforementioned, the research put forth the following hypothesis:

H1: Work-family conflict has a positive influence on inter-organisational labour mobility.

Moderating Role of Transformational Leadership

According to the theory, transformational leadership (TL) is characterised by actions that aim to create, communicate, and uphold a vision; as a result, it motivates staff members to put the needs of their organisation above their own [29]. TL is primarily used in current discussions on leadership theory because of its distinct characteristics in contrast to other theories of Leadership [16]. Scholars such as [30, 31], have shown that leadership, especially TL, has an advantage in reducing the intention to leave the organisation, as it makes followers want to stay within the organisation. These results indicate that the higher the application of the TL style, the lower the employee's intention to leave their job. The results show the importance of a TL style in retaining employees.

A study by [32] revealed that leadership has a major impact on lowering employees' intentions to leave or engage in ILM. According to additional research, employees' job happiness is increased, and turnover intention is negatively impacted by idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration.

This study uses TL as a moderator because researchers such [17, 19] argue that TL can produce powerful attraction-to-stay dynamics within the organisation because of the complementarity of interpersonal exchange ties. The following hypothesis is developed as a result of the previously described argument:

H2: Transformational Leadership moderates the impact of work-family conflict on inter-organisational labour mobility so that: The lower (stronger) the transformational leadership, the stronger (lower) the influence of work-family conflict on ILM.

3 Methodology

Following the researcher's need to test the causal relationship between WFC, TL and ILM, a cross-sectional research design with a survey strategy was suitable for our study. The survey strategy was used because data were collected once due to budgetary constraints [33]. The population of the study consisted of 27 operational government agencies and 8856 workers, provided by the Treasurer Registrar office <https://www.tro.go.tz/>. Yamane's formula was found to be relevant to calculate the sample size of 383 employees, which includes a buffer of non-response risk, which is 20% of management studies in Tanzania [34, 35]. To guarantee that every employee participated equally, methods for probabilistic sampling using a basic random sample were important [36]. A random number was generated using a spreadsheet, and respondents were counted from the relevant HR department list, which enabled the sample to be selected proportionally.

Data was gathered between May and July of 2021, utilising a questionnaire that was self-administered, which was dropped off and picked up [37]. A self-administered tool was relevant to gather the employee perception based on our study variables. Moreover, the issue of bias was taken care of by using procedural remedies by ensuring respondent

anonymity, minimising evaluation hardship, and the researchers used distinct scales for each issue [38]. Hence, a total of 389 questionnaires from a buffer of non-response were gathered, leading to an 84.6% response rate. A total of 56 were removed due to a lot of missing values. Thus, 333 were eligible for data analysis [39].

Partial least squares (PLS) path modeling was used to analyse the data due to its outstanding performance in explanation and prediction, hence theory building. Since the moderating effect is multiplicative, modeling it typically entails creating an interaction term that is appropriate to PLS-SEM and meets the theory's requirements [40].

3.1 Measurement of Variables

The work-family conflicts (WFC) were theorised as a kind of inter-role conflict where the demands of roles in the family and workplace are somewhat contradictory, as measured by six items [41]. An example of an item is "I am unable to spend as much time with my family as I would want because of my work". Transformational leadership was theorised as a leader who engages followers fully, looks for possible motivations in them, and tries to meet their greater needs, as measured by six items [29]. An example of an item question is "my leader lays forth a precise plan for the future of the organisation". The six items for TOI/ILM were adapted from [42, 43]. An example of an item is "I am now really thinking about switching to a different work". The independent and moderator variables were rated using a seven-point Likert (1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree). However, the TOI was rated on a five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

4 Results

4.1 Population Features

Research results showed that 209 (62.8%) of the respondents were men, while 124 (37.2%) were women. It implies that men predominate in the engineering, surveying, and aviation industries, which make up the majority of government agencies. Age groups were as follows: 33 (9.9%) were above 50, while 79 (23.7%) were in the 20–30 age range, 152 (45.6%) were in the 31–40 age range, and 69 (20.7%) were in the 41–50 years. Due to the nature of work of these organisations, the majority of employees are youth and those of early adult age, i.e. over 41 but below 50.

4.2 Evaluation of the Measurement Model

A series of analyses was carried out with the help of SmartPLS 4 to determine and confirm the reliability and validity of the proposed model [40]. Table 1 verifies the measurement model's latent variables' validity and dependability.

Table 1: The Assessment of Validity and Reliability of Reflective Latent Variables

Variable	Indicator	Internal consistency reliability		Discriminant validity				
		Loadings	AVE	CA	rho	CR	F&L	HTM
		>0.70	>0.5	>0.70		0.70-0.95		
Turnover intention/ ILM	TOI 1	0.912	0.707	0.890	0.928	0.921	YES	YES
	TOI3	0.532					YES	YES
	TOI4	0.873					YES	YES
	TOI5	0.915					YES	YES
	TOI6	0.908					YES	YES
Work-family conflict	WFC 1	0.746	0.580	0.853	0.858	0.892	YES	YES
	WFC 2	0.781					YES	YES
	WFC 3	0.841					YES	YES
	WFC 4	0.830					YES	YES
	WFC 5	0.671					YES	YES
	WFC 6	0.683					YES	YES
Transformational Leadership	TL 1	0.799	0.592	0.862	0.867	0.897	YES	YES
	TL 2	0.796					YES	YES
	TL 3	0.774					YES	YES
	TL 4	0.721					YES	YES
	TL 5	0.801					YES	YES
	TL 6	0.720					YES	YES

Notes: The Fornell-Lacker criterion relates the square root of AVE values to the latent variable correlation. All AVE values in this study exceeded the squared correlation with any other latent variable; HTMT, the heterotraitmonotrait ratio, was lower than 0.85 [44].

4.3 Structural Model Assessment

4.3.1 Main Model

The structural model’s evaluation adhered to all of the guidelines supplied by [44, 45]. They include the following: assessment of multicollinearity, the coefficient of determination (R2), the effect size (f2), statistical significance, path coefficient relevance and the PLSpredict. VIF value using the latent variable was first measured to ensure that the structural model findings are unbiased. The results reveal that multicollinearity was not a problem as all latent variables’ VIF values were below the specified conservative criterion, which is below three, i.e. WFC = (1.020) and TL = (1.020) [46].

The direct model’s explanatory power is confirmed, which shows that the R2 for the direct model is 0.249, which is a reasonable value. In contrast, the R2 for the main

effect model/interaction effect model was 0.338, which is modest. According to Ramayah et al. (2018), the R2 change of 0.089 shows that the addition of one interaction term has altered the R2 by roughly 8.9% (more variance), which is very crucial in moderation analysis.

The confidence intervals, t-value, and p-value all satisfy the requirements. Table 2 shows that the WFC has a higher effect on TOI/ILM ($\beta = 0.542$; $p < 0.05$). CI [0.466;0.601] [39]. The review shows WFC has a statistically significant positive effect on ILM, given its large effect size. [46] states that an external latent variable’s small, medium, and large impact sizes are represented by f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Significance Test Results

Hypothesis	Std.β	t-Values (>1.65)	p- Value	Sig. 5%	95%CI	f ²	Decisio
WFC→TOI/ILM	0.542	13.422***	0.000	YES	(0.466-0.601)	0.416	Support

Note: NS = Not significant; WFC= Work-family conflict; TOI = Turnover intention; ILM = Int organisational labour mobility *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

The model predictive power PLSpredict was tested using TOI and its five indicators to guarantee that the model is able to generalise its findings [47]. Q²predict for all five indicators were significantly more than zero, and the majority of the root mean square error (RMSE) values generated by the PLS path model were consistently lower than those of the linear model (LM), according to the assessment's threshold criteria for the model predictive power [47]. i.e., PLS-SEM RMSE Minus LM-RMSE are (-0.018, -0.023, 0.010, -0.029, and -0.015) for (TOI, TOI 3, TOI4, TOI5 and TOI6) respectively. Therefore, the model has medium predictive power.

4.3.2 The Interaction Effect Results.

The moderation results are displayed in Table 3. With regard to the loadings and significance test, all the criteria satisfy the requirements.

Table 3: Moderation Results

Hypothesis	Std β	t- value >1.65	p- value <0.05	Sig. level 5%	CI 5%-95%	f ²	Decision
WFC*TL→Turnover-intention (ILM)	0.101	2.374	0.009	YES	0.027-0.165	0.416	Supported

Hence, the interaction effect between work-family conflict and transformational leadership was significant ($\beta= 0.101$; $t= 2.374$, $p<0.05$, CI [0.027-0.165]). Therefore, the hypothesis was supported such that when transformational leadership increases, the effect of WFC on ILM decreases, and vice versa.

5 Discussion

The study looked at work-family conflict (WFC) as a determinant of ILM as an area of focus [1]. The second goal was to determine the moderating power of TL on the relationship between WFC and ILM, as proposed by different scholars [17, 19].

The results found that WFC was significant and positively related to ILM. Empirically, this implies that the higher the WFC, the higher the ILM. The results align with the findings from other scholars, such as [15] from their meta-analysis study of work-family conflict and turnover intention both domestically and internationally, revealed that all types of conflicts, such as work-family conflict and family-work conflicts, have a significant positive impact on Turnover intention/ILM. It was further revealed that female employees from the service sector in Lahore, Pakistan, are largely affected by the impact of WFC on TOI due to their family responsibilities [48]. In addition, [49] revealed a substantial positive relationship between WFC and TOI. They further asserted that WFC is associated with broadly adverse emotion-based outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction, higher demonstrative fatigue and exhaustion.

This study is consistent with the study by [15], who reported that WFC has a stronger effect than other forms of conflict in their meta-analysis study. They also claimed that when an employee's primary resources, time, energy, and emotion are consumed by work and family responsibilities, there will be a greater propensity for TOI in an attempt to reduce conflict while preserving resources. Employees who are unable to manage work and family obligations because of intense pressure and frequent overtime are more likely to develop leaving behaviours.

The indicators' findings align with studies by [50] Yildiz et al., who revealed that WFC endangers the physical and mental health of nurses, who are their crucial work resources. Managerial decisions from the findings imply that WFC should be handled with care as it is associated with several negative consequences, such as behavioural effects on staff members and the organisation, emotional weariness, and attitudinal consequences. The large effect size of WFC implies that employees of public organisations are being affected more by the role pressure from their working organisation, which prevents them from performing their family roles. This is consistent with the researchers who asserted that psychological factors such as WFC are the leading factors in explaining employees' ILM [51, 52].

Statistical results relating to Hypothesis H2 showed that 'Transformational Leadership positively moderates the influence of work-family conflicts on ILM. The higher the transformational leadership, the weaker the impact of work-family conflicts on ILM.

Further, empirical findings have indicated that the influence of WFC on ILM is minimised in the presence of TL. For managers, this study suggested that integrating WFC with a leadership style that is supportive, caring, and empathetic, such as TL, is likely to be more effective in enhancing employee organisational commitment and reducing ILM.

Based on theoretical prediction [53] and empirical studies [19, 24], these findings are meaningful because TL behaviour enables managers to retain their employees because it forms a fit with the WFC. So, a supportive leadership style, particularly TL, can help to suppress these negative factors [15]. Such leaders should be highly emphasised and trained across all managerial levels [54]. These findings are consistent with previous studies, which established the potential intervening role of TL [15, 17, 19, 55].

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The results of the current study extend the existing knowledge in the labour mobility model, WFC literature and leadership theories, TL in particular, by showing the WFC as the crucial determinant in ILM and how it can interact with TL to improve employee retention.

Many models have been established to forecast employees' external mobility /ILM [2, 11, 56]. However, none have integrated TL, WFC, as conceptualised and ILM. Hence, this study provided a theoretical framework that identifies WFC as the determinant of ILM moderated by TL. This has been an empirical progression in the labour mobility literature as several scholars have called attention to the study of both determinants and consequences of ILM since it has not yet been fully studied [1, 9, 17].

5.2 Practical Implications

Given the interlink between TL, WFC, and ILM, organisations must be aware of TL's effect on minimising employees' ILM. To help people in all managerial roles improve TL behaviours, they should set up leadership training programs, which can increase employee perceptions of their supervisors' TL, which is very crucial in fulfilling their obligations in the organization [55, 57]. These traits enable leaders to foster an atmosphere that balances work and family responsibilities. Fundamentally, TL must be aware of their impact in lessening the work-family conflict in an organisation. For example, [54] has released the innovative full-range leadership (FRL) paradigm, which is perhaps the most researched and validated leadership model which is still applicable. The model describes transformational styles and is highly correlated with leadership success.

These suggestions would be efficient in the Tanzanian public organisation, where employee retention is of crucial significance but very challenging given the boundary-less career world [58, 59].

6 Conclusion

The findings confirmed that TL moderates the relationship between WFC and ILM. Additionally, scholars have expressed dissatisfaction with the existing state of the field and lament the oversimplification or incompleteness of the study of leader behaviours in the work-family literature [15]. Hence, this study has been one of the first attempts to give an improved understanding of how TL theory and WFC interact to anticipate conduct related to work. It is worth it for public organisations to invest in TL

development for all managers to prevent employees from undertaking ILM due to the model's ability to be broadly generalised.

Like other studies in the field, this study also has some limitations. It is worth considering the integration of cultural, institutional and macroeconomic influences on WFC in cross-national studies [9].

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