

Antecedents and Consequences of Family Motivation: A Qualitative Exploration

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Purpose-- Motivated employees are the source of sustainable competitive advantage and family is a major work motivation for employees. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the phenomenon of family motivation and work outcomes associated with it. *Research Methodology*-- Qualitative data was collected from a diverse sample using structured interviews. The thematic analysis was performed using NVIVO 10. *Findings*-- The results of the study show that family motivation is an identified phenomenon which enhances positive outcomes like work engagement and OCBs and decreases turnover intention and workplace deviance. *Implications*-- These results can be used to develop a model specifying antecedents and consequences of family motivation for empirical testing. *Originality*-- This study aims to investigate the phenomenon of family motivation in South Asian Culture using the inductive approach to collect qualitative data. This helps in developing the themes and patterns to specify constructs.

Key words: *family motivation, qualitative study, thematic analysis, positive work outcomes*

INTRODUCTION

Interesting jobs allow autonomy and offer skill variety; employees enjoy the work and are intrinsically motivated to perform better (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Alternatively, money, fame or grades extrinsically motivate employees towards work (Vallerand, 1997). But still there are jobs in manufacturing and service industries which involve routine and repetitive tasks, provide little discretion over tasks and are not highly paid (Davis, 2010). Moreover, there are many factors that add to job stress like high demands, insufficient resources, fierce competition (Jacobs, 2016), workplace bullying and inappropriate working conditions (Malik, Bjorkqvist & Osterman, 2017). In the developing countries, job opportunities are also limited so people are forced to do the underpaid jobs they are offered (Asadullah, 2006). All

these factors devoid the employee of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Therefore, the question arises as to what keeps the employees working and why they show positive attitudes and behaviour towards an organisation? We argue that family motivation plays an important role in this situation. Employees usually do not work for themselves only but also for the support of their families (Bernard, 1981; Menges et al., 2017). Therefore, it may be a strong motivational force that keeps them engaged with the organisation. Nevertheless, little attention has been paid to the family as a motivational force to work (Lapierre, Kwan, Greenhaus, DiRenzo, & Shao, 2018; Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). Existing literature mainly focuses on work-family conflict (Li, Bagger, & Cropanzano, 2017; Vignoli, Guglielmi, Bonfiglioli, & Violante, 2016) and identify family as a meddling factor in an employee's work life. Only a few studies recognise the role of family that supports and energises work life (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and enhances job performance (Menges et al., 2017). Family motivation is a nascent positive construct. Literature shows that positivity is culturally sensitive, so U.S. based positive models are required to be tested in other cultures for better understanding of the positive constructs (Youssef & Luthans, 2012). Furthermore, inductive theory-building strategies are more effective in exploring and developing an emergent and relatively new area of investigation (Ketokivi & Mantere, 2010; Locke, 2007; Youssef & Luthans, 2012) rather than the deductive theory testing approach. Family motivation as an emerging concept requires theoretical and empirical research. As Menges et al. (2017) reported, "... and this raises an important question to explore: Can motivation be simultaneously identified (supporting my family is a guiding principle in my life, and I see myself as a breadwinner and good provider) and/or introjected (my self-esteem depends on supporting my family, and I will feel guilty if I don't serve them well.) ?

Keeping in view the above gaps, this study aims to investigate the phenomenon of family motivation in South Asian Culture using the inductive approach to collect qualitative data. This helps in developing the themes and patterns to specify constructs. Specifically, the objectives of the current qualitative study are to investigate 1) if family motivation is introjected or identified? 2) to identify the main themes associated with family motivation.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Menges et al. (2017) define family motivation as the "desire to expend effort to benefit one's family." It is a type of prosocial motivation where the beneficiary is one's own family. Prosocial motivation—the desire to expend effort to benefit others (Grant, 2007) —has remained the focus of researchers' attention in the last two decades. The existing literature on prosocial motivation emphasises co-workers and customers as the beneficiaries (Hu & Liden, 2015) and only a couple of studies have focused on family as the driver of motivation (Menges et al., 2017; Tariq et al., 2018; Zhang & Liao, 2018). Family included people who are related biologically, socially and/or through marriage and adoption (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Hence, an employee's family does not only include the spouse and children, but also

grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts and cousins (Burnstein, Crandall, & Kitayama, 1994). Menges et al. (2017) consider family as a perceptual unit based on employees' distinctive situations and involves everyone who is considered as kin by the employee (Burnstein et al., 1994). This definition of family is probably more applicable in eastern regions where collective culture generally prevails and an employee has many dependent members.

Family becomes the main reason to work for many people (Morling & Kitayama, 2008) because of two main reasons. First, due to kinship reasons (Burnstein et al., 1994) and emotional bonding (Korchmaros & Kenny, 2001), employees are more concerned about facilitating their family members than any other group of beneficiaries. Secondly, employees have direct and frequent contact with their families and can directly see the impact of their work with families (Grant, 2008b; 2012) which further fuels their desire to support their family.

According to Aristotle's concept of eudemonism and hedonism (Fowers, 2016), family motivation is eudemonic in nature as it is concerned with taking responsibility of supporting one's dependent family members as opposed to hedonic aspirations which involve seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. From a theoretical perspective, we argue that family motivation is an identified phenomenon. In psychoanalysis, identification is a process by which the subject adopts behaviours, attributes of the surrounding world/people because he/she recognises these as part of their value system (Knight, 1940). This is especially true in an Eastern collectivist culture where children grow up watching their parents working for their family benefit/support. Eastern cultures are characterised with examples like fathers working to support their families financially and non-working mothers benefiting their families by looking after household responsibilities and working mothers doing both. So, the children adopt these values to take up the same responsibilities when they grow up.

Family motivation was introduced as a special form of prosocial motivation where the beneficiaries of one's work is his/her family (Menges et al., 2017). Menges and his colleagues presented family motivation to substitute low intrinsic motivation using action identification theory (AIT) (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987, 1989). According to AIT, a person creates a given activity in accordance with its low level process or high level purpose. Existing literature provides empirical evidence for family motivation as a significant predictor of energy and job performance (Menges et al., 2017), productivity (Zhang & Liao, 2018) and self-efficacy, and affective commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour (Erum et. al., 2020). The negative effects or dark side of family motivation like increasing stress (Menges et al., 2017), decreasing creativity (Zhang & Liao, 2018) and causing burnout (Hameed & Ghaffar, 2019) are also empirically validated in the literature. Moreover, family motivation plays a contingent role in the relationship between abusive supervision and work behaviours like job performance and turnover intentions (Tariq & Ding, 2018). As regards to antecedents, family financial pressure is supported by the literature as a driver of family motivation (Zhang & Liao, 2018).

age and 4 participants aged between 36 and 40. In the responded sample, 6 participants were university faculty members and 8 were private job holders. The detailed description of the sample is mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Profile

Sample	Count	Percentage
Gender		
Male	13	57%
Female	10	43%
Marital Status		
Single	4	23%
Married	19	77%
Age		
Below 30 years	5	22%
31 -- 35 years	8	35%
36 – 40 years	4	17%
Above 40 years	6	26%
Job Sector		
Faculty Members	6	26%
Private Job Holders	8	35%
Re-employed Retired Officials	5	22%
Govt./Semi-govt. Officials	2	8.5%
Journalists	2	8.5%

3. MAJOR FINDINGS

All the 23 interviews were manually coded to generate 17 nodes, including social support, family motivation, self-motivation, family's financial benefit, family's non-financial benefit, family's pride, calling, OCB, work engagement, turnover intention, deviance, learning and thriving, co-worker's conduct, job resources, job characteristics, leadership, and self-attitude (Figure 2). These nodes were placed under four broad themes naming social support, family motivation, work attitudes and behaviors and facilitation factors.

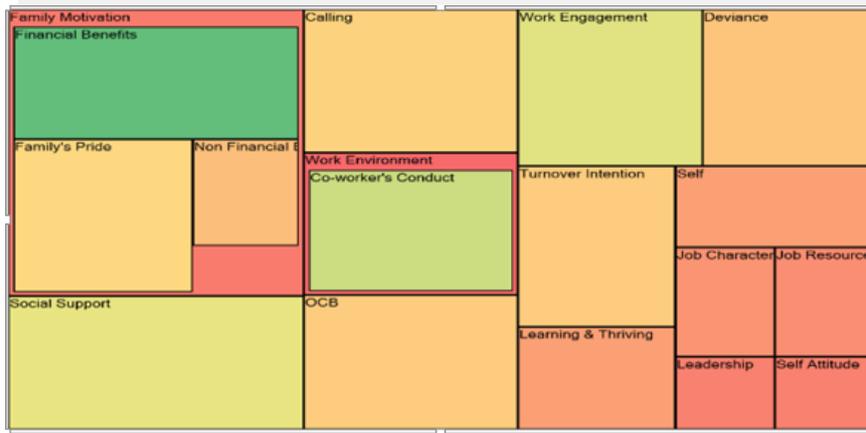


Figure 2: Nodes compared by number of items coded

3.1. Family Motivation as a Key Work Drive

To understand if family drives an employee to work, we asked the interviewees “what motivates you to work?” The answers included many reasons like *knowledge utilisation*, *enjoy work*, *contribution to society* and *helping family*. Then we asked a second question from all respondents: “In what ways, your jobs helps your family?” A total of 20 out of the 23 participants stated that family, in one way or the other, is the major reason to work. The majority, i.e. 20 interviewees expressed that they work to support the family financially, 7 participants said that their job helps their family both financially and non-financially and 17 interviewees confided that their work is a source of pride for their family which motivates them to work (See Figure 3). There were 6 participants who mentioned that they primarily work for their own self (like utilising their skills and knowledge, learning and/or payback to society) and any financial benefit to the family are supplementary.

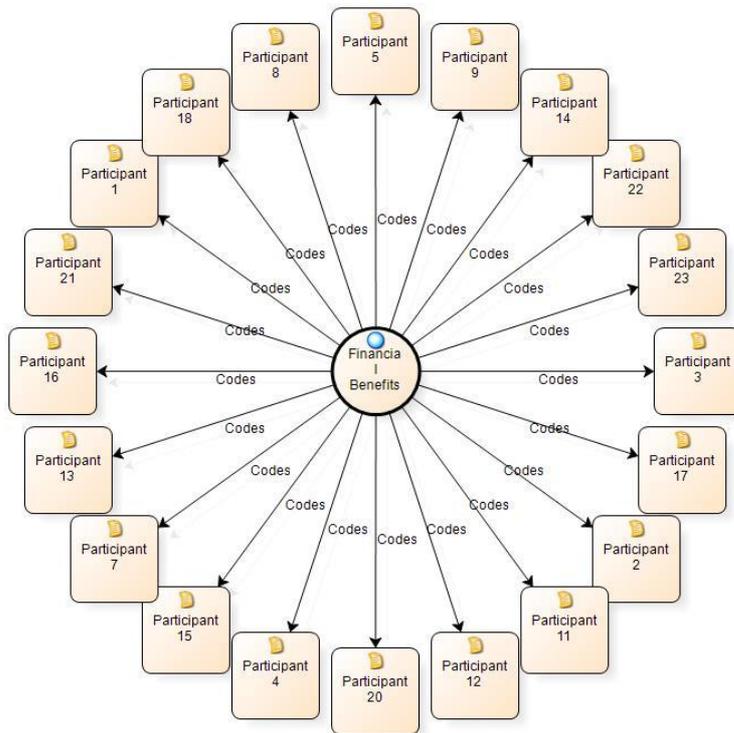


Figure 3: Supporting family financially as a motivation to work

In response to the question “what is your motivation to work?” and “In what ways you help your family through your job?” 4 major categories were identified which included financial benefits to family, non-financial benefits to family, giving a sense of pride to family and one’s own self.

A Total of 20 interviewees stated that they primarily work to support the family financially like:

“My motivation to work is to bear my own and family expenses. My major source or only source of income is my job so it helps 100% in meeting my family responsibilities” [Participant 1]

“It’s my foremost responsibility to earn for the family. I am being paid a handsome salary, moreover, I have also been allotted with a house from my organization. The reason of my joining is to make the both ends meet as my children are school going and needed a job where their studies must continue unabatedly” [Participant 9].

In addition, 7 interviewees said that their job provides both the financial and non-financial benefits like:

“My kids are everything to me. I want to give them the best and also want to be the role model for them. I want to teach them that one should take his responsibility and earn a respectable living. This particular job allows me to fulfil my family duties along with my work because of timings benefits” [Participant 13].

“It always acted as a support to mainstream income of my husband. Apart from this, my job makes me a disciplined individual who is better at time and relationship management- a pre-requisite in fulfilling family responsibilities” [Participant 18].

17 out of 23 participants confided that their job provides a sense of pride for the family and it acts as a motivating agent for them to do the job.

“My family is actually proud of the fact that I can earn a respectable living for myself and support my family” [Participant 1] and

“My family feels pride in my work, my earning capabilities and my growth in my career. It is the encouragement and backing from my family that motivate me to grow more” [Participant 3].

Based on the above quotes, we can say that family motivation is the primary reason for people to work.

3.2 Family Motivation is Identified

When asked “Why do you think you should work for your family.” Among the males group of 13 participants, 11 participants replied that they take “earning and supporting the family” as their religious and social responsibility. The following quotes show that males consider themselves as the bread winners of the family and fully understand and identify with the religious, societal and cultural value of supporting the family.

“Primarily to bear the expenses of my family and provide them with good living. I firmly believe that earning for family is my first and foremost responsibility given to me by Allah and our culture” [Participant 7 -male]

“As the bread earner of the family, my prime reason to work is to financially support my family. I feel myself 100 % responsible in fulfilling the requirements of my family and I take it as my “First Obligation and Responsibility” [Participant 12 -male]

“Supporting my family and providing them with the best is my motivation to work. My parents have done a lot for me. Now it’s my time to do something for

them. I feel this is my religious and social responsibility to take care of my parents and provide for their needs. Job is the basic source of earning and yes it makes me feel so good while doing my work to provide for family. ”

Although, the group of female participants do not consider themselves as prime bread winners but they supplement family income and are fully aware of their financial and non-financial responsibilities towards their family.

“I am not providing for the family’s financial needs directly. But yes, my income supplements family income to have a better living standard and enjoy leisure. Off course, you work for the urge to do the best for your family because of love and belongingness.” [Participant 5 -female]

“I have no reason for not utilizing my skills and capabilities for the betterment of my family. Who else should I work for?” [Participant 18 - female]

“Similarly, towards family too, I fulfill the demands of the family to the maximum possible extent. I get my daughter ready for school, teach her in the afternoon, and listen to her long stories of school and her friends. Spent good time with them at the weekend. I cook for them myself. I pick and drop my daughter to school. I manage my home.” [Participant 14 -female]

Based on the above quotes, we conclude that people take supporting and providing for family as their religious and social responsibility and are willing to fulfil it happily. So family motivation being autonomous in nature, is adopted as part of one’s value system. This makes family motivation an identified motivation.

3.3 Family Motivation enhances positive attitudes and behaviours

In order to understand the work outcomes of family motivation, three questions were asked. First, “Does the view “I work for my family” affect your attitude and/or behaviour at work place?/If yes, how”? Then to further clarify the workplace behaviours two more questions were asked including “Elaborate your relationship with your co-workers in terms of trust, compassion, knowledge sharing, communication, helping, supporting and guiding each other?” and “How do you feel at your job?”

16 interviewees agreed that their work behaviours do change keeping in mind that they work for their family. These changes in attitudes and behaviours were identified as lower turnover intention, more compliance with rules and norms, maintaining good relations with co-workers and more focus towards the job. These four categories are supported by following quotes.

“The fact that “I work for my family” keeps me going despite the workplace hardships. I want to continue my job and progress so I put in my best efforts, work efficiently and effectively, meet deadlines, follow boss instructions and organizational norms and keep good relationship with colleagues.”
[Participant 8]

“When you have to work for your family, you do not want to lose a good job whether it is of your interest or not. You try to keep a good relationship and avoid anything which is against the rules regulations or culture. You work more enthusiastically and perform better and more effectively.”[Participant 4] and

“Definitely yes, As I said, job is a compulsion for me and I do not want to lose it rather I want to be in the good books of management so I religiously follow rules and regulation, meet deadlines, put more effort in work, do not mind sitting late if required etc” [Participant 3]

All the participants expressed that they enjoy a cordial relationship with colleagues and 20 participants felt happy, energetic and alert most of times like they mentioned:

“I feel positive energy through work. I do look forward for the next day and plan my lectures. I feel I have learned a lot and still learning from my job. I do my work responsibly, diligently and with full dedication. I always try to be helpful and cooperative for my colleagues and do not feel hesitant in sharing knowledge. Sometimes, I do go out of the way to help my friends at work. For most of them, it is a trustful, compassionate relationship with mutual respect and dignity.” [Participant 13].

Similarly, Participant 18 confided

“I am energetic, quick to adapt, delegate and execute my tasks most of the day. I am good at sharing knowledge and listen to others’ problems. Helping others in all my possible capacity comes naturally to me, therefore, people seek my advice. I have a friendly relation with my co-workers, teammates and seniors. They discuss their personal as well as job related issues with me and we mutually come up with an amicable solution. I have mentored a number of individuals at work. However, when it comes to train a junior, I am a difficult person to deal with as I push them to their limits to make them polish their technical skills. Therefore, for that particular time, I am a tough supervisor”

3.4 Family Motivation Compensates Calling

Next, to seek out calling orientation among participants, one question was asked “Is it your dream job and do you feel destined to this job/work? Why did you choose this profession/job?” 14 out of 23 participants responded that they do not feel destined to the job they are doing and they joined whichever job they got or despite the fact it is not dream job they are still satisfied as their job is financially rewarding.

As participant 17 responded:

“It’s kind of satisfying. Being the head of a family, I have to fulfil my family responsibilities which is not possible without a job. This is the job which I got and I started off.” Similarly, participant 23 said, *“I won’t say that it’s my dream job, but it is a job that I am well suited for and am skilled in. I joined this job this was a well-paying job with benefits, so I thought it to be ideal.”*

Additionally, 3 participants specifically mentioned that they joined their particular profession (teaching) just because it is manageable with family responsibilities.

“No, I do not feel destined to this profession or job. Had I been a male, I won’t be in this profession. I chose this job as it is most manageable. I can manage family responsibilities with this job more easily.” [Participant 10].

Likewise, participant 15 stated,

“Not exactly, I chose teaching because of its flexibility in terms of timings and holidays. Corporate jobs are too demanding and time consuming. It’s not my cup of tea. I try my work timings do not clash with my household responsibilities because family comes first.”

3.5 Family Support is Pivotal for Work-life.

To understand the antecedents of family motivation, we asked the interviewees, “To what an extent do you consider that social/family support is essential for work life and how?” All the 23 participants, stated that family and friends’ support is pivotal for smooth work life. Three major categories were identified as moral support, physical support and stress management.

There were six participants who said that family provides both moral and physical support. 11 participants indicated that only moral support is provided by family to work smoothly.

5 participants were of the view that their families and friends help them in work related stress as shown by following statements:

“I don't see myself being a functional unit if deprived of family support. I draw all my support and inspiration from family, without them I am not anything. My family is a blessing. Parents and wife both are trustworthy allies and they help and assist me in whatever way they can, not only by listening to my issues and worries, but also doing their bit to lessen my burden.” [Participant 20];

“My family and friends help me a lot in managing. My husband is very cooperative and so are my colleagues and peers. I can discuss my work related problems with my husband and he guides me whenever and wherever required. It is the most important thing, especially for a female. It is not only emotional and social support that your family members provide like help and guiding in work related problems, but also the physical support like baby-sitting kids, cooking if I am busy with my work, giving pick and drop to kids is done by my parents or spouse.” [Participant 15]

and participant 19 stated that:

“Social support and family, both are pivotal to one life as they are extremely useful stress relievers. A good conducive environment at home work like medicine, and enable a person to go to work free of negative energy and perform to be best of his abilities. A tense employee cannot be a good team player, nor he can constantly perform well and is likely to affect his surroundings and himself fall sick. My family facilitates me in great deal at home that directly affects my performance at job in a very positive way. My friends at my workplace are also a great source of work related help, inspiration and motivation. However, friends outside my professional sphere do not directly influence my job, but definitely provide good company that help, relax after a tiring day.”

4. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study aimed to investigate two research questions: 1) if family motivation is introjected or identified and 2) to identify main themes associated with family motivation. Results of the study show that in South Asian culture, providing for one's family is the key motivation. It drives the employee to work and results in positive work outcomes at the workplace. There are many jobs that provide little intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivation to carry on the job and show positive attitude and behaviours at the workplace due to lack of autonomy, skill variety, high job demands, less compensation etc. Furthermore, in developing countries, due to the availability of limited job opportunities, people usually



take up whatever jobs they are offered without considering their calling. In such a scenario, family motivation keeps people going. The results are supported by the existing literature as different scholars noted that family is a key driver of motivation and the main reason to work for many people (Menges et al., 2017; Tariq & Ding, 2018; Zhang & Liao, 2018).

Family support has a starring role in employees' motivation by providing guidance in work-related matters, by counselling and guiding during stressful work phases and providing physical support especially to female workers by looking after the kids and helping in household chores. These findings of the current study are supported by existing literature (Bagci, 2018; Chan, Kalliath, Chan, & Kalliath, 2019; Pérez-Fuentes, Molero Jurado, Barragán Martín, & Gázquez Linares, 2019). Furthermore, this qualitative study also indicated that the employee's job assists him/her in helping the family both financially and non-financially and this fact changes their workplace attitudes and behaviours. First of all, they do not want to leave the job so they comply with organisational norms and requirements, that is, their turnover intention and deviant behaviour is low; secondly, they want to have good relationships with their colleagues so they often assist them and reciprocate their good gestures. This shows that family motivation enhances organisational citizenship behaviour which is in accordance with existing literature (Erum et al., 2020). Third, the results also indicated that keeping in mind the fact that the employee's job is beneficial for his/ her family, the employee feels energised and tries to perform more effectively and efficiently; that means, family motivation increases employee's energy, performance (Menges et al., 2017) and productivity (Zhang & Liao, 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, this study highlighted that family motivation is an identified phenomena that results in positive workplace outcomes. Our participants, especially the males, recognised working and providing for family as their prime and foremost religious and social responsibility, whereas females felt that although earning for family is not their prime responsibility but still it helps to add to the family income and is beneficial for the family. They all confided that they take up this responsibility happily and willingly. So, we conclude that family motivation is autonomous regulation as per SDT. These findings provide the reason to think that family motivation is identified motivation. Self-determination theorists suggest that in *identified motivation*, an individual is motivated to perform an action when he/she perceives that the action identifies with his/her value system and develops an understanding for it. Alternatively, the form of motivation characterised simply by preservation or boost of positive self-image is referred as *introjected* motivation, resulting from the psychological process where the individual quickly assumes social criteria of validation and self-worth without completely identifying with them. The findings of our research study contradict existing empirical literature. Zhang and Liao (2018) argued that family motivation has a controlling regulation and is

actuated by the family's financial pressure. Similarly, Menges et al. (2017) confirmed that family motivation causes stress. Family motivation is also associated with self-efficacy (Erum et al., 2020). These findings of existing literature point out that family motivation is introjected in nature triggered by extrinsic aspiration. This finding needs further investigation and empirical validation.

From an empirical perspective the results of this study can be used to develop the model specifying antecedents and consequences of family motivation and understand its mechanism. The strength of this research is that it used an inductive approach and qualitative data which is highly recommended (Ketokivi & Mantere, 2010; Locke, 2007; Youssef & Luthans, 2012) to investigate a novel and emergent construct. Moreover, the current study is conducted in South Asian culture, responding to the call of Youssef & Luthans, (2012) to extend the boundaries of positive constructs in different cultures.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The current study is an attempt to explore the phenomenon of family motivation in the South Eastern culture so qualitative data was taken from a couple of major cities so results have limited generalisation. Moreover, gender specified comparison of results was not performed as it is beyond the scope of this research. Future researchers may take these points into consideration.

The future researchers may also consider to explore the different dimensions of the construct of family motivation like apart from financial benefits, how the employee's job help the family non-financially. Advancing further, new scale development which can accommodate non-financial help and/or feeling of pride and encouragement may be considered by researchers to enhance the depth of the construct. Furthermore, other theoretical lenses like gender role theory or identity theories may be used to widen the span of the construct. Another contributing avenue for future researchers is to investigate family motivation at the task and/or situational level as the current study investigated family motivation at a contextual level (the reason for action).

CONCLUSION

To investigate the phenomena of family motivation and workplace attitudes and behaviours associated with it, this study used an inductive approach through structured interviews. The results show that in South Asian culture, family motivation is an introjected phenomena that is associated with enhancing positive workplace outcomes like work engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour and lessens the negative outcomes like work deviance and turnover intention. Moreover, social support is integral for the smooth work life of an employee.



Disclosure statement

The authors declare that they have no competing financial, professional or personal interests from other parties.



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