

The Moderating Role of Mindfulness in the Relationship Between Psychological Distress, Work–Life Conflict, and Turnover Intention among IT Employees

¹Dr. Subin Thomas, ²Dr Preeti Singh, ³Dr. Ashwini Basavaraju, ⁴Prof. Jyoti Gupta, ⁵Dr. Hakalyah Palaparthi, ⁶Dr. Shailaja A Akkur

¹Professor, Department of Management Studies, Girideepam Business School, Kottayam, Kerala,

²Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Jagannath International Management School, South Delhi, Delhi

³Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce and Management, Dayananda Sagar College of Arts Science and Commerce, K.S. Layout, Bengaluru -560111

⁴Assistant Professor, School of Management Studies, REVA University, Yelahanka Bangalore 560064

⁵Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Telangana University, Telangana

⁶Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Nitte Meenakshi Institute of Technology, NITTE (Deemed to be University), Yalhanka, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Abstract:

The information technology (IT) sector is characterized by rapid technological change, demanding workloads, extended working hours, tight deadlines, and continuous performance expectations. These conditions can create psychological distress and work–life conflict, which may increase employees' intentions to leave their organizations. In this context, mindfulness may serve as an important personal resource that enables employees to manage stressful experiences more effectively and maintain psychological balance. This article examines the proposed moderating role of mindfulness in the relationships between psychological distress, work–life conflict, and turnover intention among IT employees. Psychological distress is considered a condition involving emotional strain, anxiety, and difficulty coping with workplace demands, while work–life conflict refers to incompatibility between work responsibilities and personal or family roles. Turnover intention represents an employee's conscious consideration or willingness to leave the current organization. Mindfulness, characterized by attentive and non-judgmental awareness of present experiences, may weaken the adverse effects of psychological distress and work–life conflict on turnover intention. The article develops a conceptual framework explaining these relationships and discusses implications for IT organizations, managers, and employees. It argues that integrating mindfulness-oriented interventions with organizational strategies addressing workload, flexibility, and employee well-being may contribute to employee retention and healthier work environments.

Keywords: Mindfulness, psychological distress, work–life conflict, turnover intention, IT employees, employee well-being and employee retention.

Introduction

The information technology sector has emerged as a significant driver of economic growth, job creation, innovation, and digital evolution. Nonetheless, the swift expansion of the industry has also generated significant difficulties for workers. IT specialists often operate under stringent time constraints, elevated performance standards, challenging assignments, evolving technology, unpredictable work hours, and prolonged durations of computer-related tasks. In multinational corporations, personnel would also need to collaborate with teams functioning in several time zones.

These traits can obscure the distinctions between work and personal life, heightening employees' susceptibility to psychological stress.

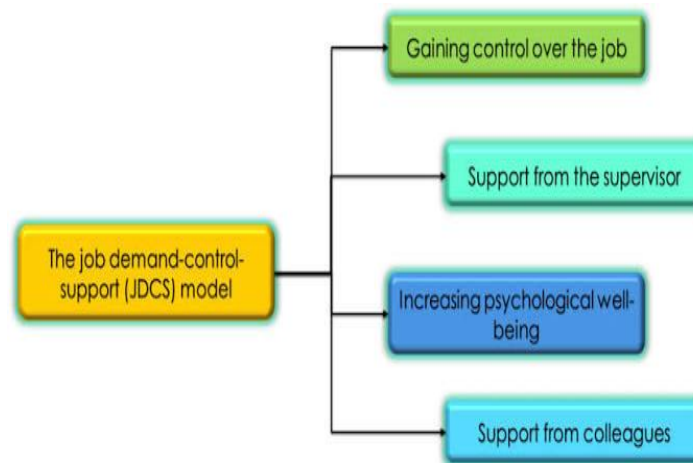
Psychological anguish has become a significant issue in modern work environments. Ongoing occupational stress, unpredictability, overwhelming tasks, insufficient recuperation periods, and challenges in managing conflicting obligations may lead to worry, emotional fatigue, irritation, and diminished mental health. When such circumstances persist, employees could start viewing their organisations as continual sources of stress and may contemplate resigning.

Work-life conflict constitutes a significant element influencing employee perspectives and conduct. Work-life conflict arises when professional obligations disrupt personal, familial, or social duties, or conversely, when personal commitments hinder work responsibilities. For IT professionals, telecommuting, adaptable work hours, after-hours correspondence, and the demand for perpetual accessibility can exacerbate this tension.

Employee turnover intention of special significance as it might incur substantial expenses for IT organisations. Recruitment, selection, training, information dissemination, and productivity declines can influence organisational efficacy. Comprehending the elements that affect employees' propensity to depart is hence crucial.

Mindfulness has garnered growing interest as a possible psychological tool for managing workplace stress. Attentive employees could possess a greater capacity to recognise unpleasant thoughts and feelings without instantaneously responding to them. As a result, mindfulness could diminish the degree to which psychological pain and work-life conflict lead to intentions to depart. The current paper examines mindfulness as a mediator in the connections between psychological discomfort, work-life imbalance, and intentions to leave among IT professionals.

Figure: 1



Psychological Distress among IT Employees

Psychological distress encompasses a wide range of negative psychological feelings, including anxiety, emotional strain, sorrow, impatience, and challenges in managing perceived expectations. In professional environments, anxiety may arise when workers feel that job expectations beyond their psychological or personal capacities.

IT professionals may encounter several origins of psychological strain. Project timelines, software development phases, client anticipations, technological challenges, ongoing organisational transformations, and the necessity for perpetual education can generate considerable stress. Workers may also encounter ambiguity due to the fast evolution of technology and job specifications. Furthermore, labouring outside of standard workplace hours may diminish chances for mental recuperation.

Psychological turmoil might affect workers' views about their workplace connections. Workers enduring prolonged stress may exhibit decreased job satisfaction, less emotional connection to their organisations, and an increased propensity to seek other employment. Consequently, it is anticipated that psychological suffering would correlate positively with turnover intention.

Work–Life Conflict and Turnover Intention

Work-life conflict arises when engagement in professional and personal responsibilities becomes challenging due to the demands of one position obstructing the other. The issue is especially pertinent to IT professionals since technology facilitates work outside conventional office limits. Employees could get job-related communications during nights, weekends, holidays, or family engagements. Remote and hybrid work setups may hinder one's ability to mentally detach from work obligations. While adaptable work structures might offer advantages, a lack of defined limits may lead to extended working hours and increased encroachment of work into personal life. Ongoing work-life discord may result in irritation, emotional fatigue, decreased familial contentment, and weakened organisational allegiance. Workers who feel that their employment hinders them from meeting significant personal obligations may increasingly contemplate altering their workplaces or professions.

Concept of Mindfulness

Mindfulness often denotes intentional focus on current events with a disposition of receptiveness and impartiality. In organisational settings, mindfulness may be regarded as an individual psychological asset. It might assist employees in identifying difficult circumstances without resorting to avoidance, rumination, or emotional outbursts. A conscientious individual engaged in a challenging project may recognise sensations of stress while focusing on the current assignment and choosing a positive reaction. Mindfulness can also enhance emotional control. Enhancing awareness of thoughts and emotions, mindfulness aids employees in differentiating between a genuine workplace issue and their immediate emotional response to it. This ability might be particularly advantageous in demanding IT settings. Mindfulness does not inherently eradicate workplace pressures. Conversely, it might affect the manner in which employees interpret, analyse, and react to such pressures.

Moderating Role of Mindfulness

A moderating variable affects the strength or direction of the relationship between two other variables. In the present framework, mindfulness is proposed to moderate the relationships between psychological distress, work–life conflict, and turnover intention. Employees with low levels of mindfulness may respond to psychological distress through rumination, emotional reactivity, avoidance, or negative interpretations of workplace experiences. Under such circumstances, psychological distress may have a stronger effect on turnover intention. Conversely, employees with higher mindfulness may be more capable of recognizing distress without immediately translating it into negative judgments about their employment. Consequently, the relationship between psychological distress and turnover intention may be weaker among highly mindful employees. A similar mechanism may apply to work–life conflict. Employees experiencing conflict between work and personal responsibilities may become preoccupied with competing demands and perceive their employment situation as unsustainable. Mindfulness may enable employees to maintain awareness of the present situation, regulate emotional responses, and establish clearer psychological boundaries between work and personal life.

Literature review

Abdelrahman and Emam (2022) investigated the moderating influence of organisational agility on the connection between talent management and organisational ambidexterity within Egyptian tourist enterprises. The research examined if proficient personnel management enhances organisations' capacity to use current competencies while investigating fresh prospects. It also examined if organisational agility enhances this connection. Data were gathered via a survey conducted among managers and supervisors employed in Category A tourist firms in Cairo. Out of the

612 questionnaires disseminated, 474 legitimate replies were examined with SPSS. The results indicated that talent management exerted a considerable beneficial influence on organisational agility and ambidexterity. Organisational agility demonstrated a notable beneficial impact on organisational ambidexterity. Crucially, organisational agility had a substantial role in moderating the connection between talent management and organisational ambidexterity. The research underscores the need of cultivating skilled personnel while ensuring organisational adaptability and responsiveness in a fluctuating tourist landscape.

Agarwal, Brooks, and Greenberg (2020) examined the influence of peer support in the workplace on alleviating occupational stress using the Sustaining Resilience at Work (StRaW) intervention. The research was founded on the idea that collegial social support can enhance psychological resilience and bolster individuals' capacity to manage difficult work situations. The investigators examined the viewpoints of trained peer supporters who engaged in the StRaW initiative. Nine individuals from various public and commercial entities were subjected to semi-structured interviews, and the gathered data were analysed by inductive theme analysis. The research elucidates how trained peers may enhance employee mental well-being by providing support, promoting coping mechanisms, and enabling access to suitable resources. The results highlight that peer-driven initiatives can enhance formal organisational strategies for managing occupational stress. The research is especially pertinent to workplace well-being studies as it highlights the significance of social support in enhancing resilience and coping with stress.

Agina et al. (2023) investigated the impact of employees' views on distributive unfairness on job disengagement within the tourist and hospitality sector, using workplace bad gossip and organisational cynicism as mediating factors. The survey was performed among full-time staff working in Category A travel firms and five-star hotels in Egypt. Data from 656 valid replies were analyzed using WarpPLS 7.0 and partial least squares structural equation modelling. The data demonstrated that views of distributive unfairness were positively connected with job disengagement, workplace bad gossip, and organizational cynicism. The study also identified strong positive connections between bad workplace gossip, organizational cynicism, and work disengagement. Importantly, both workplace bad gossip and organizational cynicism mitigated the association between distributive unfairness and job disengagement. The findings imply that perceived injustice might promote poor social communication and cynical attitudes, which subsequently lower employees' involvement with their work. The study underscores the relevance of organizational justice and effective working connections.

Hussain et al. (2020) evaluated the influence of abusive supervision on employees' psychological well-being and turnover intention, with intrinsic motivation examined as a mediating variable. The research was based on Social Exchange Theory, which posits that the attitudes and behaviours of employees are shaped by the quality of their relationships and interactions with supervisors and organisations. The researchers utilised a quantitative study strategy and collected data from full-time employees working in service-based firms in Pakistan. Of 300 surveys issued, 225 usable replies were gathered and evaluated using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The data demonstrated substantial correlations between abusive supervision, psychological well-being, and turnover intention. The study also indicated that intrinsic motivation had a substantial mediation role in the links between abusive supervision and both psychological well-being and turnover intention. The findings underscore the relevance of supportive supervisory techniques and a healthy workplace environment. The study is significant to turnover research because it reveals how unpleasant supervisory experiences might impact employees' psychological outcomes and their propensity to quit a company.

Jasiński and Derbis (2022) explored the link between workplace stresses and employees' desire to quit their current job and profession, focusing specifically on the mediation function of negative affect at work. The research investigated four primary elements: organisational limitations, interpersonal disputes, workload, and adverse emotions. A quantitative cross-sectional study methodology was utilised, and data were gathered from 306 full-time midwives employed in the Polish public health care. Structural equation modelling was employed to evaluate the suggested associations. The findings indicated that workload and bad affect had strong positive direct correlations

with intention to leave both the current employment and the profession. Organizational restrictions and interpersonal disputes were found to impact turnover intention indirectly through unpleasant affect at work. Among the assessed stressors, workload was the biggest direct predictor of desire to leave, whereas interpersonal conflict was the strongest predictor of poor affect. The research highlights that workers' emotional reactions to challenging job environments might serve as a crucial link between work-related pressures and the desire to leave.

Kashdan and Rottenberg (2010) explored psychological flexibility as a critical component of psychological wellness. Instead of just considering psychological well-being via the lens of good emotions, psychological strengths, or the fulfilment of psychological requirements, the authors highlighted the ability of individuals to adapt proficiently to evolving, challenging, and occasionally contradictory situations. The paper provided an extensive examination of research about psychological flexibility and its connection to psychological functioning. The authors explained that psychological flexibility involves recognizing changing situational demands, adapting behavioral and cognitive responses when existing strategies are ineffective, maintaining balance across important areas of life, and remaining aware and open to experiences while acting in accordance with personally meaningful values. The review also related psychological flexibility with emotion management, mindfulness, acceptance, resilience, and adaptive functioning. The writers contended that diminished psychological flexibility correlates with challenges in psychological functioning and several types of psychopathology. This study is particularly relevant to studies on mindfulness since mindfulness and acceptance are regarded as crucial processes involved with psychological flexibility. It provides a theoretical framework for understanding how individuals may respond differently to psychological discomfort and difficult job circumstances.

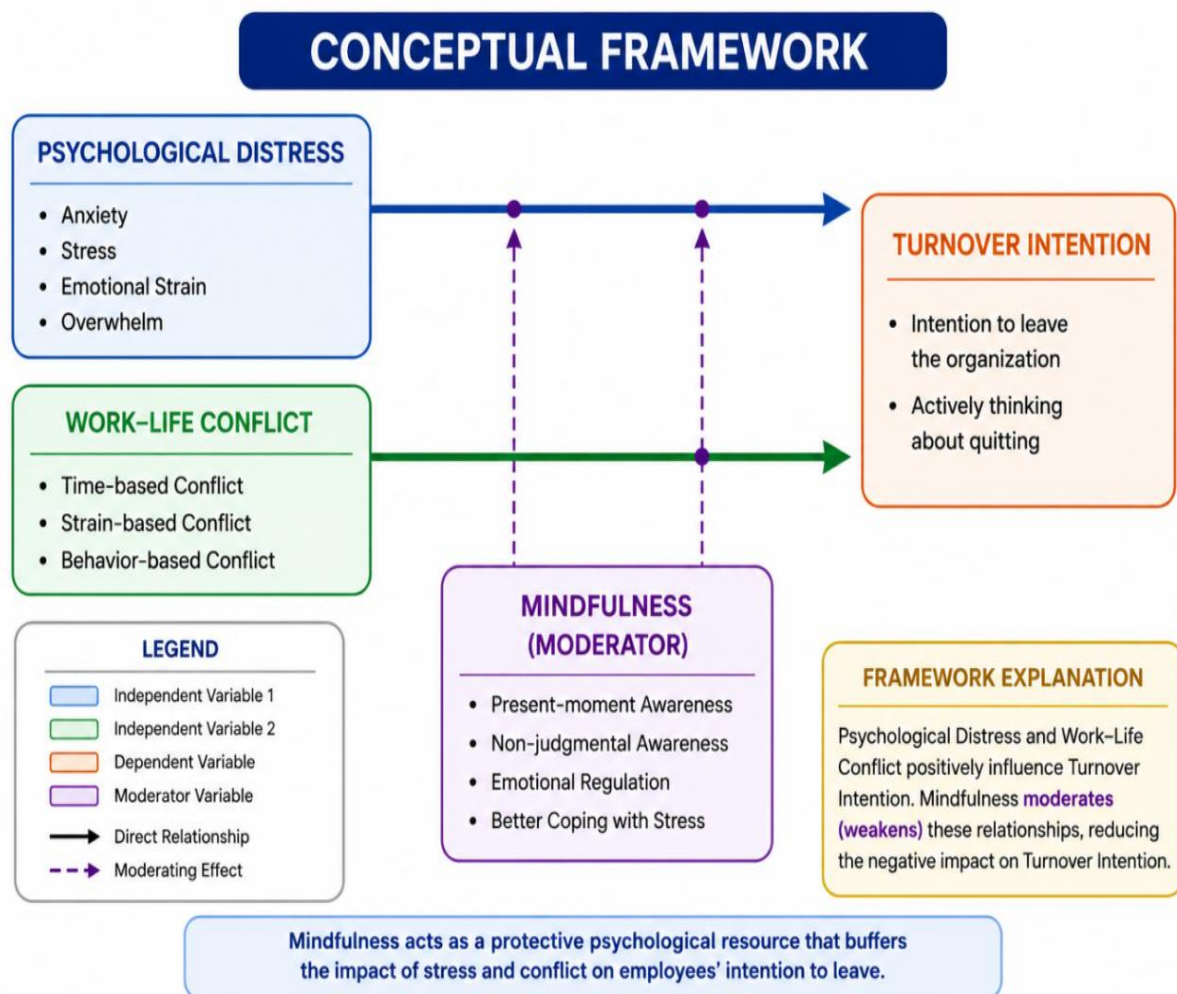
Labrague and de Los Santos (2021) evaluated the impact of fear of COVID-19 on psychological discomfort, work satisfaction, and turnover intention among frontline nurses. The study was undertaken in the Philippines during the COVID-19 epidemic, when frontline healthcare personnel were subjected to substantial occupational and psychological stress. Using a cross-sectional research methodology, the researchers collected data from 261 frontline nurses working in five hospitals designated as COVID-19 referral hospitals. Five standardised tools were employed to evaluate the research variables. The results indicated that an increased fear of COVID-19 correlated with diminished job satisfaction, elevated psychological discomfort, and a heightened intention to depart from both the organization and the nursing field. The job position and involvement in COVID-19-related training were correlated with fear levels. The investigators determined that alleviating employees' anxiety and psychological turmoil might enhance job-related results and diminish turnover intentions. They suggested using organisational strategies like peer and social assistance, psychological support services, pertinent training, and consistent dissemination of factual information. The research, albeit concentrating on nurses instead of IT personnel, offers significant proof that psychological suffering may be strongly linked to employees' desire to exit their organization or field.

Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework consists of three major constructs: psychological distress, work–life conflict, and turnover intention, with mindfulness functioning as a moderator.

The conceptual relationships can be represented as follows:

Figure: 2



Psychological Distress → Turnover Intention

Work-Life Conflict → Turnover Intention

Mindfulness → Moderates both relationships

The framework assumes that psychological distress and work-life conflict are important predictors of employees' intention to leave. Mindfulness is expected to reduce the strength of these relationships by enabling employees to respond more adaptively to stressful experiences. The framework can be further examined using interaction effects in regression analysis or structural equation modelling. Psychological distress × mindfulness and work-life conflict × mindfulness interaction terms can be used to determine whether the strength of the relationships changes at different levels of mindfulness.

Research Gap

Current research has predominantly examined psychological distress, occupational stress, work-life conflict, and turnover intention either in isolation or via direct and intermediary connections. Moreover, a significant portion of the existing research has been on healthcare, hotel, and general service-sector workers, whereas relatively less focus

has been directed on IT professionals who function in highly dynamic, technology-driven, and demanding work settings. The distinctive features of IT employment, such as extended hours, swift technical advancements, stringent deadlines, and indistinct work-life demarcations, necessitate thorough examination. Consequently, this research investigates the extent to which mindfulness mitigates the effects of psychological distress and work-life conflict on turnover intention among IT professionals.

Importance of the Study

Concerns about employee happiness and retention have grown in importance for IT companies in the face of fierce competition for talented workers, making this study all the more relevant. Employees' happiness, productivity, dedication, and intention to stay with a company might take a hit when they're experiencing psychological suffering or work-life conflict. Organisations may gain a new perspective on these difficulties by understanding the function of mindfulness. Organisations might think about adding mindfulness-based practices to health and HRD programs if research shows that it lessens the negative impact of psychological distress and work-life conflict on intention to leave. In addition to assisting with work-life balance and employee resilience, the results may also be useful for managers in creating more supportive workplaces. The study adds to the current body of knowledge by developing a unique conceptual framework that brings together IT workers' psychological discomfort, work-life conflict, mindfulness, and desire to leave into a cohesive whole..

Statement of the Problem

The IT sector is characterized by demanding workloads, tight deadlines, continuous technological changes, extended working hours, and increasing expectations of employee availability. These conditions may contribute to psychological distress and difficulties in balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Persistent psychological distress and work-life conflict may subsequently increase employees' intention to leave their organizations, creating challenges related to employee retention, organizational performance, and human resource costs. Although previous research has examined the effects of workplace stress and work-life conflict on turnover intention, insufficient attention has been given to the factors that may reduce or buffer these relationships among IT employees. Mindfulness may serve as a psychological resource by promoting present-moment awareness, emotional regulation, and adaptive responses to stressful experiences. Therefore, the present study investigates whether mindfulness moderates the relationships between psychological distress, work-life conflict, and turnover intention among IT employees.

Analysis and findings

The modern IT environment offers substantial prospects for career advancement while also subjecting individuals to notable mental and work-life stressors. Psychological turmoil and work-life imbalance may influence employees' desire to depart from their organisations, especially when enduring stressors exist and people see little chances for recuperation and equilibrium. Mindfulness presents a possibly significant psychological asset in this connection. By fostering present-moment awareness, impartial observation, and emotional control, mindfulness might mitigate the degree to which psychological suffering and work-life imbalance contribute to turnover intentions. . A sample size of 150 respondents is selected using **convenience sampling technique**.The required primary data has been collected from the respondents using Google forms

Table 1 Results of the Chi-square Test for Association between Monthly Income and Turnover Intention among IT Employees

Monthly Income	Turnover Intention			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Below ₹25,000	23	19	20	62
	37.1%	30.6%	32.3%	100.0%
	52.3%	32.8%	41.7%	41.3%
₹25,001–₹50,000	8	12	6	26
	30.8%	46.2%	23.1%	100.0%
	18.2%	20.7%	12.5%	17.3%
₹50,001–₹75,000	6	10	16	32
	18.8%	31.3%	50.0%	100.0%
	13.6%	17.2%	33.3%	21.3%
Above ₹75,000	7	17	6	30
	23.3%	56.7%	20.0%	100.0%
	15.9%	29.3%	12.5%	20.0%
Total	44	58	48	150
	29.3%	38.7%	32.0%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chi-square value	12.498			
df	6			
p	0.052*			

The table presents the results of the Chi-square test examining the association between monthly income and turnover intention among 150 IT employees. The findings indicate that employees with different income levels show varying degrees of turnover intention. Among employees earning below ₹25,000, 37.1% reported low turnover intention, 30.6% reported moderate turnover intention, and 32.3% reported high turnover intention. Among those earning ₹25,001–₹50,000, the largest proportion (46.2%) reported moderate turnover intention. Employees earning ₹50,001–₹75,000 showed a comparatively higher level of high turnover intention, with 50.0% reporting high turnover

intention. In the above ₹75,000 income group, 56.7% reported moderate turnover intention, while 23.3% reported low and 20.0% reported high turnover intention.

The Chi-square value is 12.498 with 6 degrees of freedom, and the significance value is 0.052. Since the p-value is slightly greater than the conventional 0.05 level, the association between monthly income and turnover intention is **not statistically significant at the 5% level**. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant association between monthly income and turnover intention among IT employees. However, the p-value being close to 0.05 suggests a marginal relationship, and income may have some practical influence on employees' intention to leave their organisation.

Implications for IT Organizations

The proposed framework has important implications for human resource management in IT organizations. First, organizations should regularly assess employee well-being. Employee surveys can identify excessive workload, psychological strain, work–life difficulties, and intention to leave before these problems result in actual turnover.

1. Second, organizations can introduce mindfulness-based employee development initiatives. Short mindfulness sessions, meditation programs, breathing exercises, attention-management training, and structured recovery practices may help employees develop greater awareness and emotional regulation.
2. Third, organizations should address the structural causes of work–life conflict. Flexible working arrangements, realistic project deadlines, workload distribution, adequate staffing, leave policies, and clear expectations regarding after-hours communication can help employees maintain healthier boundaries.
3. Fourth, managers play an important role. Supportive supervisors can encourage employees to communicate workload concerns and take appropriate breaks without fear of negative evaluation. Managers should also avoid creating a culture in which constant availability is treated as evidence of commitment.
4. Finally, organizations should recognize that retention requires more than individual-level interventions. Mindfulness can strengthen employees' psychological resources, but organizational practices must simultaneously reduce unnecessary sources of stress.

Research Implications

The proposed study provides opportunities for empirical research in the IT sector. Future researchers may collect data from IT employees working in different organizational settings and examine whether mindfulness significantly changes the strength of the relationships between psychological distress, work–life conflict, and turnover intention.

Researchers may also consider demographic and occupational factors such as age, gender, organizational tenure, job position, working arrangement, managerial responsibility, workload, and experience. Comparative research between remote, hybrid, and office-based employees could provide further insight into the relationship between work–life conflict and turnover intention. Longitudinal studies would be particularly valuable because psychological distress and turnover intention may change over time. Experimental or intervention-based studies could also examine whether mindfulness training produces measurable improvements in employee well-being and retention-related outcomes.

Conclusion

The primary assertion of this study is that mindfulness might serve as a protective moderator in the connection between workplace pressures and employees' intents to resign. Nonetheless, mindfulness ought to enhance rather than supplant organisational measures. IT firms looking to enhance retention should combine employee-focused well-being programs with realistic workloads, supportive leadership, flexible work arrangements, clear work–life boundaries, and effective employee help channels. A complete strategy that addresses both individual psychological resources and organizational working environments is more likely to improve employee well-being, dedication,

productivity, and long-term retention. Analysing mindfulness as a moderator provides a valuable framework for understanding why individuals exposed to equal levels of psychological distress and work–life conflict may behave differently in terms of their desire to quit. This approach can contribute to the establishment of healthier, more resilient, and sustainable IT workplaces.

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