

Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations

Pushed out or Opting out? Integrating perspectives on gender difference in withdrawal attitudes during pregnancy

Samantha C. Paustian-Underdahl
scpaustian@gmail.com

Asia Eaton
Department of Psychology, Florida International University, aeaton@fiu.edu

Ashley Manderville
amandeville@fgcu.edu

Laura Little
lmlittle@terry.uga.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgg>



Part of the [Communication Commons](#), [Human Resources Management Commons](#), [Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons](#), [Political Science Commons](#), [Psychology Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Paustian-Underdahl, Samantha C.; Eaton, Asia; Manderville, Ashley; and Little, Laura (2018) "Pushed out or Opting out? Integrating perspectives on gender difference in withdrawal attitudes during pregnancy," *Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations: Vol. 2 : Iss. 2 , Article 1*. Available at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgg/vol2/iss2/1>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Pushed Out or Opting Out? Integrating Perspectives on Gender Differences in Withdrawal Attitudes during Pregnancy

Abstract

Motivated by recent research suggesting that mothers are more likely to withdraw from work than fathers, we assess the relative contributions of popular “pushed out” and “opting out” perspectives. As pregnancy is a pivotal time for the re-evaluation of work and life roles and attitudes, we examine gender differences in changes in perceived career encouragement and career motivation throughout pregnancy for expectant men and women. Specifically, we investigate changes in withdrawal attitudes across six time-points in a sample of heterosexual dual-career couples expecting a new baby. We also examine the reciprocal effects between career encouragement and career motivation over time. Using latent growth modeling, our results support the pushed out perspective; we find that gender (being female) indirectly predicts an increase in turnover intentions and a decrease in career motivation throughout pregnancy, due to changes in perceptions of career encouragement at work. We do not find evidence supporting an opting out explanation for gender differences in withdrawal attitudes. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: gender, work-family, career, turnover intention, pregnancy