Linking supervisor's and subordinate's negative work-family experience: The role of family supportive supervisor behavior

By: Su-Ying Pan, Aichia Chuang, and Ying-Jung Yeh

Abstract:

In the past decade, family supportive supervisor behavior (FSSB) has emerged as an important factor that can help employees manage work–family needs. Although the existing literature has documented the benefits of FSSB, we know little about the emerging process of FSSB. Drawing on the conservation of resources theory, we propose that supervisor engagement in FSSB is influenced by the extent to which the supervisor has sufficient resources for work. This study uses the joint effect of supervisors' family–work conflict (FWC) and organizational work–family culture to predict the time supervisors spend on core tasks, FSSB, and subordinates' work–family conflict (WFC), in sequence. Data were collected from paired supervisor–subordinate dyads among 83 supervisors and 276 subordinates. The results indicate that supervisors with high FWC spend more time on core tasks and display less FSSB, which ultimately result in higher subordinates' WFC, especially in organizations with a lower level of organizational work–family culture. In contrast, supervisors' FWC does not result in any negative influences on the supervisors themselves or their subordinates at work in organizations with a higher level of organizational work–family culture. Therefore, the theoretical model provides evidence that supervisors' negative work–family experience cascades down to their subordinates.

Keywords: supervisors' family–work conflict | time for core tasks | organizational work–family culture | family supportive supervisor behaviors | subordinates' work–family conflict

Article:

Introduction

As maintaining a good balance between work life and family life has become the top concern for most contemporary employees (Kröll et al., 2018), organizations are expected to offer an increasing variety of work–family practices to help employees manage their work and family responsibilities. A recent review by Michel et al. (2011) found that, among the various kinds of organizational resources, family supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSB) is the most powerful predictor of a reduction in employees' work–family conflict (WFC). Existing research has focused mainly on the positive impacts of FSSB on subordinates' outcomes (e.g., low WFC,

turnover intention, and withdrawal behaviors, as well as high job satisfaction, job performance, and work engagement, and better sleep quality and quantity; Aryee et al., 2013; Crain et al., 2014; Hammer et al., 2009; Rofcanin et al., 2017). Typically, supervisors have been assumed to be the support providers. Although both scholars and practitioners realize the important role of the supervisor in implementing work–family friendly policies, little is known about the antecedents of FSSB (Straub, 2012), especially in terms of the conditions under which supervisors become less family supportive.

The current study addresses this issue by proposing that supervisors' family–work conflict (FWC) may explain why supervisors sometimes fail to provide work–family support. We base our hypotheses on conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989). COR proposes that an individual's resources are lost in the process of juggling work and family roles (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). To minimize the deleterious impacts of FWC on work, supervisors must spend more time to achieve a sufficient level of task-related performance, which crowds out discretionary behaviors at work (Kisamore et al., 2014), including FSSB. Recent research has indicated that supervisors tend to view FSSB as an extrarole behavior, and, as such, the expectation of being family supportive is considered to be above and beyond the job description (Straub, 2012; Toegel et al., 2013). Accordingly, supervisors experiencing FWC are expected to extend their work hours to compensate for lost time caused by family disruptions during normal work hours, further diminishing the time available for FSSB. That is, the time supervisors spend on core tasks will mediate the relationship between supervisors' FWC and FSSB.

Nevertheless, COR also proposes that people can regain resources from other areas. For example, work–family research has suggested that a supportive work–family culture can supplement the resources lost by individuals (Witt & Carlson, 2006). A supportive work–family culture creates extra resources, above and beyond the resources individuals inherently have, fosters individuals' resilience in the face of FWC, and helps reduce the negative impact of FWC on the work domain. Thus, we investigate whether supervisors' FWC (which results in resource loss) and organizational work–family culture (which facilitates resource gain and prevents resource loss) interact to predict supervisors' work behaviors. Namely, we expect that organizational work–family culture mitigates the negative influence of supervisors' FWC on FSSB via the time supervisors spend on core tasks. Last, to take a further step to broaden our understanding of how supervisors' negative work–family experience further cascades to influence subordinates, we examine subordinates' WFC as a distal outcome variable in our theoretical model, shown in Figure 1.
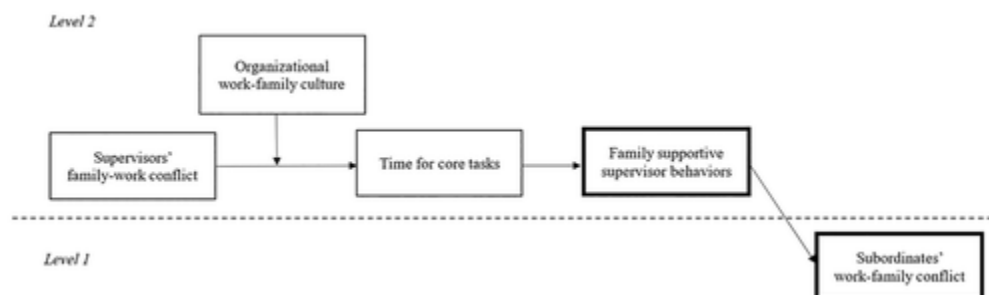

Figure 1. Theoretical model.
Note. Variables with bolder outline were rated by subordinates.

The present study contributes to the literature on WFC in several ways. First, we add to the existing literature on FSSB by identifying FWC as a determinant of FSSB. The main stream research seems to have overemphasized the organizational influences on supervisors' behaviors (Hammer et al., 2011; Odle-Dusseau et al., 2016) but underestimated the internal forces such as supervisor's own ability and willingness to display FSSB. Therefore, the present research focuses on a potential internal barrier that renders supervisors less family supportive. Second, although COR theory is one of the most widely used theories in studies on work–family issues, rarely have such studies empirically tested the resource arguments and measured those resources. Time is a limited resource, which, once spent, is not available for other tasks (Hobfoll, 1989). In our examination of why supervisors with higher FWC are less likely to engage in a specific form of extrarole behavior (i.e., FSSB), we build on and expand the literature on organizational citizenship behavior by proposing that the time supervisors spend on core tasks acts as a mediator. Testing the time for core tasks expands our understanding of how supervisors allocate their time among family activities, core tasks, and extrarole behaviors. Third, we delineate the process by which supervisors' work–family experience (i.e., FWC) cascades down to subordinates' work–family experience (i.e., WFC). The extant literature on the crossover effect focuses primarily on how one spouse's negative work–family experience crosses over to the other spouse (Bakker et al., 2008; Hammer et al., 2003; Westman & Etzion, 2005). In response to Westman's (2001) call for research on the crossover effect in the work domain, our theoretical model investigates the mechanisms and a contextual factor underlying the occurrence of such a crossover effect in a supervisor–subordinate dyad.

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

The Influences of Supervisors' FWC on Supervisors' Behaviors at Work: A Conservation of Resources Perspective

WFC is believed to be directional in nature. WFC refers to demands from work interfering with functions at home; likewise, FWC refers to demands from the family interfering with functions at work (Frone & Yardley, 1996). WFC and FWC have been found to have their own unique antecedents and outcomes. WFC is primarily caused by work-related stressors and predicts family-related outcomes; in contrast, FWC is primarily caused by family-related stressors and predicts work-related outcome (Frone et al., 1997). Since the present research aims to investigate how supervisors' negative work–family experiences spread to influence others in the workplace, we focus on supervisors' FWC only. Understanding how supervisors react to FWC is important, as work–family research indicates that most supervisors are at the stage of life (i.e., middle age) in which they experience the highest level of FWC (Demerouti et al., 2012; Erickson et al., 2010).

The core idea of COR theory is that individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources. Stress ensues from the threat of resource loss, an actual resource loss, or the failure of an expected gain in resources to arrive (Hobfoll, 1989). Work–family scholars agree that juggling family and work roles taxes a person's resources (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). However, to protect prolongation of resource depletion, people may take action to protect the threatened resource. Work–family research asserts that people often have a lower tolerance when their family domain

infringes the work domain and seek to protect the work domain more often than they do for the family domain (Bulger et al., 2007). Thus, when people are aware that their family domain deprives the attention, energy, and time they should spend on work, they would dedicate themselves to fix the impaired work situation to prevent prolonged resource depletion. Accordingly, we suggest that the higher the level of FWC experienced by supervisors, the longer time they may spend on task-related activities. There are two reasons for this. First, COR indicates that individuals must invest some resources to prevent future resource losses (Halbesleben et al., 2014). We argue that extending work hours (i.e., investing more time on core tasks at work) is a coping strategy intended to protect supervisors against potential future resource losses (i.e., losing one's job) caused by FWC. Family infringements on work distract individuals' attention away from work and impede work progress. After experiencing distractions from the family domain, individuals spend more time and effort to resume their work (e.g., retrieving job-related information; Baethge et al., 2015). According to Noe et al. (2016), after individuals are distracted by an interruption, they require 10 to 20 times the duration of the interruption time to return their attention and readjust themselves to the primary task. Moreover, the amount of resumption time required depends on task complexity. Therefore, supervisors' work tasks, which are usually more complex and entail a significant amount of cognitive and mental resources, require more time to resume following a distraction. Previous research has found that FWC intensifies the perception of the workload and increases time pressure (Post et al., 2009), and work role overload further results in longer work hours (Ng & Feldman, 2008). Thus, we suggest that supervisors with higher FWC usually feel a more urgent need to devote themselves back to work immediately, and must invest more time to complete their assigned job duties.

Second, as indicated by COR, once supervisors experience FWC, they will take action to diminish the negative state of being. For example, prior research has found that after individuals experience WFC, they may cope with WFC by reducing their work hours and spending more time on family activities (Boyar et al., 2005; Hammer et al., 2003), because quitting the work role can help individuals conserve resources from being consumed by work activities (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Given that stressors resulting in FWC originate from the family domain, supervisors may choose to quit the family role and spend more time at work to cope with FWC.

Although supervisors' FWC may result in longer work hours, there are circumstances in which supervisors do not rely on extending their work hours to resolve the negative influence of work–family issues. It is likely that the positive relationship between supervisors' FWC and their time for core tasks may vary depending on contextual settings. One such moderator may be supervisor's perceived organizational culture regarding work–family issues. According to COR, the level of resources that individuals possess may influence how they react to stressors. We suggest that some supervisors are more capable of minimizing resource losses caused by stressors. Particularly, Hobfoll and Shirom (2001) mentioned that social support is a critical resource that facilitates the preservation of valuable resources. Research has indicated that, with social support, individuals are more likely to adopt effective coping strategies (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003). That is, when supervisors have a bigger resource pool (i.e., a higher level of social support) on which they can capitalize when facing FWC, they will feel less threatened by resource loss, because they are more capable of coping with it without having to extend their work hours. Thompson et al. (1999) defined organizational work–family culture as a

multidimensional construct, composed of three components: organizational time demand (the extent to which the organization expects individuals to prioritize work above family), negative career consequences (the extent to which individuals receive negative career consequences when they devote their time to family or use work–family benefits), and managerial support (the extent to which managers are sensitive to or attentive to employees' family needs).

We surmise that the positive relationship between supervisors' FWC and their time for core tasks will be less pronounced among supervisors working in a high organizational work–family culture. A work–family supportive organization is empathetic regarding employees' family responsibilities. This kind of organizational culture is more tolerant and accepting of talking about family matters at work, and mangers are more willing to adjust the supervisor's job content (e.g., job sharing, job rotation, flexible work hours, compressed work hours, or telecommuting) to accommodate family-related needs (Thompson et al., 1999). More specifically, supervisors working in a family supportive organization will not be alone when facing problems caused by FWC. Most of the organizational members show understanding and support for supervisors' work–family dilemmas, and supervisors may receive more effective suggestions to address their family stressors through the process of experience sharing among coworkers. Additionally, a family supportive organizational culture also places less emphasis on supervisors' office hours, encouraging the use of a more flexible work schedule and allowing supervisors to work from home (Lapierre et al., 2008). When supervisors are allowed to work remotely, they can fulfil family obligations while ensuring satisfactory work progress. That is, organizations with high work–family culture would provide alternatives for supervisors to solve FWC; thus, when they encounter FWC, supervisors in such organizations do not have to spend as many work hours on core tasks as those working in a low organizational work–family culture. Similar to our argument, Witt and Carlson (2006) regarded organizational support as an additional resource that can replenish the resources individuals may have lost because of FWC, and found that organizational support ameliorates the negative impact of FWC on job performance.

In contrast, for supervisors working in a low organizational work–family culture, due to insufficient resources and assistance provided by their organizations, spending longer time on core tasks would be the most common strategy to cope with FWC. Hence, the positive relationship between supervisors' FWC and their time for core tasks would be more pronounced in organizations with low organizational work–family culture. Based on the theoretical reasoning and empirical findings noted above, we propose the following:

> **Hypothesis 1:** Supervisor's perceived organizational work–family culture will moderate the relationship between supervisors' FWC and their time for core tasks, such that the positive relationship between supervisor's FWC and time for core tasks will be stronger among supervisors who perceive the organizational work–family culture as low, compared with those who perceive the organizational work–family culture as high.

We further suggest that when supervisors with high FWC have to spend additional time to fulfill their core job requirements, they are less likely to engage in the extra role behavior (i.e., FSSB). Resource allocation theory posits that individuals often make decisions about how to allocate resources such as time among different activities (Hockey, 1997). For example, in the work context, individuals strategically consider how to allocate their time for in-role behaviors and

extrarole behaviors. Since time is a finite resource and all job activities compete for the limited number of work hours, time will be spent on in-role behaviors at the expense of extrarole behaviors (Bergeron, 2007). Research has shown that time devoted to in-role behaviors predicts less time for extrarole behaviors (Rapp et al., 2013; Rubin et al., 2013). As alluded to earlier, supervisors may extend their work hours to catch up on work progress that has been delayed by family interruptions during regular work hours. Since supervisors must use additional hours to accomplish their core tasks, the time left for extrarole behaviors (e.g., FSSB) is limited.

FSSB is defined as supervisor behaviors that indicate care for subordinates' work–family well-being, demonstrated by showing respect and understanding with regard to subordinates' family responsibilities, offering resources and services to help subordinates manage day-to-day conflicts, providing examples of strategies and behaviors leading to desirable work–life outcomes, and initiating innovative solutions in response to subordinates' work–family problems (Hammer et al., 2009). Family supportive supervisors spend ample time listening to subordinates' work–family problems and figuring out the best solution for them to balance their work and family responsibilities. For example, a housekeeping employee might ask to leave work 2 hours early to attend a parent–teacher meeting at her child's school. Based on the conversation with the employee, the supervisor knows that this employee's child has emotional control issues, and the supervisor understands that this meeting is important for the parent to understand her child's school life. A family supportive supervisor will most certainly approve this request. However, on approval, the supervisor must reschedule the work by finding a substitute to take over the employee's tasks. If the supervisor cannot find a suitable replacement, their may need to take over the tasks directly. However, FSSB is usually not formally rewarded by organizations (Straub, 2012). Since displaying FSSB is time consuming and cannot be directly tied to compensation or career advancement, it is reasonable to assume that supervisors will withhold FSSB (in the case above, reject the employee's request) when they are under pressure to maximize time efficiency. Indeed, prior research has found that when individuals have difficulty meeting performance goals because they are preoccupied with the family, they are more likely to focus on the core tasks formally required by the organization and reserve little time for voluntary behaviors benefiting the well-being of others (Amstad et al., 2011; Bragger et al., 2005; De Clercq et al., 2019).

The prediction that supervisors who spend more time accomplishing the core tasks are less likely to engage in FSSB is based on the assumption of time constraints. One way to avoid this trade-off is to increase individuals' ability to control their own time. Thus, organizational work–family culture is expected to moderate the relationship between supervisor's FWC and FSSB mediated by supervisor's work hours. As aforementioned, employees working in a work–family supportive organization feel comfortable taking time to address family issues when necessary (Lapierre et al., 2008). Control over work time is a crucial resource that can improve individuals' ability to manage their work and family demands, attenuate strain resulting from incompatibility between work and family domains, and enhance individual functioning (Valcour, 2007). Hence, when supervisors are empowered to decide how, when, and where to complete the assigned tasks, they can schedule the work based on their personal needs. In so doing, time will be allocated in the most effective way without sacrificing the supervisors' performance at work. This notion is in line with Aryee et al. (2013) who demonstrated that a family supportive

organization can enhance individual's control over work time, which in turn leads to high contextual performance.

>**Hypothesis 2:** Organizational work–family culture will moderate the indirect relationship between supervisors' FWC and FSSB via time for core tasks, such that the negative indirect relationship will be stronger when organizational work–family culture is low compared with when organizational work–family culture is high.

Linking the Relationship Between Supervisors' FWC and Subordinates' WFC

We have discussed how supervisors' FWC influences the supervisors themselves. In this section, we will discuss how it further affects subordinates by linking it to subordinates' WFC. Linking supervisors' FWC to subordinates' WFC is especially important because we can then examine how supervisors' work–family experience is related to subordinates' work–family experience. Research has confirmed that positive work–family experience can cross over from supervisors to subordinates (Carlson et al., 2011), but we know little about the crossover effect of negative work–family experience in supervisor–subordinate dyads. Ten Brummelhuis et al. (2014) examined the influence of supervisors' family matters on subordinates. They found that supervisors' FWC intensifies supervisors' feeling of burnout, and that burned-out supervisors tend to engage in less generally supportive behaviors, which in turn leads to higher burnout rates among subordinates. However, their study did not examine the crossover effect of negative work–family experience between supervisors and subordinates. Given that FSSB was found to be a crucial predictor of subordinates' WFC (Michel et al., 2011), we address this issue by formulating the last hypothesis, which specifies the overall mediating and moderating effects predicted by the theoretical model.

>**Hypothesis 3:** Supervisors' FWC will be more positively related to subordinates' WFC as mediated through time for core tasks and FSSB when organizational work–family culture is low compared with when organizational work–family culture is high.

Method

Sample and Procedure

We contacted executive MBA students in a university in northern Taiwan to generate a list of supervisor participants. We introduced the research purpose in the class and invited supervisors to participate in this survey. All supervisor participants had full-time jobs and supervised at least two subordinates. We asked them to provide the number of subordinates who reported to them directly. Each supervisor was then given a set of questionnaires: one copy of the supervisor's questionnaire and multiple copies of the subordinate's questionnaire, in accordance with the number of employees reporting directly to that supervisor. Completed questionnaires were individually returned to us in prepaid envelopes via the local postal service. Although the surveys were anonymous, a numerical code was created to match supervisors to their subordinates after survey completion. Each participant received a convenience store voucher (approximately US$1.70) as a token of appreciation.

Of the 100 supervisor questionnaires and 400 subordinate questionnaires distributed, 83 supervisor (83%) and 276 subordinate (69%) questionnaires were returned and matched. Participants worked full-time in a variety of industries including the service (25.3%), financial (24.1%), manufacturing (18.1%), high-tech (12%), and educational (8.4%) industries and the public sector (3.6%). On average, each supervisor was matched with 3.33 subordinates. The average age for the supervisors was 41.86 years old. Among them, 56% were males, and 68.8% were married. On average, supervisors had 1.1 children. The average organizational tenure was 10.72 years. Among the subordinates, 69.2% were female, the average age was 36.72 years old, and 56.1% were married. On average, subordinates had 0.95 children. The average of subordinates' organizational tenure was 6.5 years.

Measures

Since the distributed surveys were in Mandarin Chinese, and all the measures were originally developed in English, we adopted Brislin's (1980) back-translation procedure to ensure the item meanings were equivalent in both languages. Unless otherwise noted, items were measured using 5-point Likert-type scales (anchors: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

Supervisors' FWC

The five-item measure by Netemeyer et al. (1996) was adopted to assess supervisors' FWC. Supervisors were required to rate the degree to which they experienced home responsibilities interfering with work responsibilities. A sample item was "Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties." Cronbach's α for the scale was .85.

Time for Core Tasks

The time supervisors spent on core tasks was rated by a single item. Supervisors were asked to indicate, on average, the number hours they spent completing core tasks a day.

Organizational Work–Family Culture

Supervisors were required to provide the rating of the overall perception about the organizational work–family culture using a 20-item scale by Thompson et al. (1999). There are three dimensions of organizational work–family culture: managerial support, negative career consequences, and organizational time demands. Eleven items were used to measure managerial support (e.g., "In general, managers in this organization are quite accommodating of family-related needs"); five items measured negative career consequences (e.g., "Many employees are resentful when men in this organization take extended leave to care for newborn or adopted children"); four measured organizational time demands (e.g., "Employees are often expected to take work home at night and/or on weekends"). A good organizational work–family culture will be one high in managerial support but low in both negative career consequences and organizational time demands. Thus, nine items measuring negative career consequences and organizational time demands were reverse coded, so that a higher total rating score represents a better organizational work–family culture. Cronbach's α for this scale is .91.

FSSB

Subordinates were requested to indicate the extent to which their immediate supervisors were family supportive using the five-item scale by Kossek and Nichol (1992). A sample item was "My supervisor makes it easy for me to deal with scheduling problems during work hours." Cronbach's α for the scale was .90.

Subordinates' WFC

The five-item scale by Netemeyer et al. (1996) was adopted to assess the degree to which subordinates experienced WFC. A sample item was "The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life." Cronbach's α for this scale was .90.

Control Variables

We included supervisor gender, subordinate gender, the number of family members living with the subordinate, subordinate marital status, subordinate workload, and dyadic tenure as control variables in our hypothesis testing, because those variables have been found to influence the endogenous variables of the theoretical model. Work–family studies have indicated that gender roles shape the behavioral decision between work and family (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010). Female supervisors tend to invest more time in family activities at the expense of work time and tend to be supportive of employees' work–family needs (Straub, 2012). To account for these confounds, we controlled for the effect of supervisor gender (1 for male, 2 for female) on the time supervisors spend on core tasks and FSSB. In addition, while a meta-analysis by Byron (2005) revealed that gender (1 for male, 2 for female), marital status (1 for single, 2 for married), the number of family members living in the household, and workload (using four items developed by Kirmeyer & Dougherty, 1988) have a robust relationship with an individual's WFC, we controlled for the effects of these factors on subordinates' WFC. Finally, dyadic tenure was also controlled since it can influence the score subordinates use to rate their supervisors. Dyadic tenure was reported by subordinates, measured by the number of months the subordinate had worked with his or her immediate supervisor.

Level of Analysis and Aggregation Strategy

Because the data in this study had a nested structure, we adopted M*plus*7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) to examine our hypotheses. We specified a two-level model, where subordinate's WFC was specified at the subordinate level (Level 1), and supervisors' FWC, organizational work–family culture, time for core tasks, and FSSB were specified at the supervisor level (Level 2). Results from one-way analysis of variance showed that the between-group variances were significant for subordinates' WFC, $F(82, 193) = 1.423$, $p < .05$. The substantial variances in outcome variables at the between-group level warranted the use of multilevel modeling to analyze the data.

Aggregation for FSSB is justified from both the theoretical and statistical perspectives. For theoretical purposes, Straub (2012) proposed that FSSB can be understood as an overt supervisor behavior that is influenced by the supervisor's experience and attitude toward work–family

issues. Similarly, Hammer et al. (2007) also advocated the following scholars should examine FSSB as a supervisor level construct. Therefore, subordinates managed by the same supervisor are likely to have a shared experience of FSSB to the extent that the supervisor engages in overtly family supportive behaviors. This refers to the direct consensus model in Chan's (1998) typology. Although there is a lack of empirical evidence for studying FSSB as an aggregated construct, some indirect evidence can be derived from the literature on supervisor support. For example, Ten Brummelhuis et al. (2014) found that a supervisor's feeling of burnout is negatively related to that supervisor's supportive behaviors, which is measured by aggregating the subordinates' ratings. Statistically, we assessed the degree of within-group agreement by calculating the interclass correlation coefficient (ICC[1]) and the average within-group interrater reliabilities (r_{wg}). The ICC(1) value was .35, and the mean and median of r_{wg} for FSSB were .98 and .99, respectively. Together, all values indicate adequate agreement to justify the aggregation for FSSB. Thus, we operationalized FSSB as a supervisor level variable.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and correlations among the variables of this study. At the subordinate level, gender ($r = -.12$, $p < .05$), marital status ($r = -.16$, $p < .01$), workload ($r = -.20$, $p < .01$), and dyadic tenure ($r = -.18$, $p < .01$) were negatively related to FSSB, while workload ($r = .60$, $p < .01$) and FSSB ($r = -.20$, $p < .01$) were also found to have a significant relationship with subordinates' WFC. At the supervisor level, both FWC ($r = .26$, $p < .05$) and organizational work–family culture ($r = -.24$, $p < .05$) were significantly related to time for core tasks.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Correlation Coefficients Among Study Variables.

	n	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level 1 variables										
Subordinates' gender	276	1.71	0.50							
Number of family members subordinates living with	273	2.90	1.83	.13*						
Subordinates' marital status	276	1.56	0.50	.02	.08					
Subordinates' workload	271	3.35	0.71	.05	.09	.03	(.85)			
Dyadic tenure	274	42.12	43.28	.08	.19**	.31**	−.06	—		
FSSB	276	3.20	0.73	−.12*	−.09	−.16**	−.20**	−.18**	(.90)	
Subordinates' WFC	276	2.85	0.80	−.04	.06	.05	.60**	−.11	−.20**	(.90)
Level 2 variables										
Supervisors' gender	83	1.43	0.50							
Supervisors' FWC	83	2.38	0.70	−.07	(.85)					
Organizational work-family culture	83	3.39	0.43	−.06	−.24*	(.87)				
Time for core tasks	83	9.97	1.97	−.15	.26*	−.24*	—			
FSSB (aggregated)	83	3.32	0.58	.06	.03	.23*	−.19	—		

Note. Cronbach's alphas appear in the parentheses along the diagonal. FSSB = family supportive supervisor behaviors; WFC = work–family conflict; FWC = family–work conflict. *p< .05. **p< .01.

Prior to hypothesis testing, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm the discriminant validity of the study variables. Since subordinates' data were nested within supervisors rather than independent, it is necessary to conduct multilevel CFA to examine whether the study variables exhibit good psychometric properties at both supervisor and subordinate levels simultaneously. Accordingly, we conducted multilevel CFA for the two

variables rated by subordinates (i.e., FSSB and subordinates' WFC). Results showed that the two-factor model (χ^2 = 136.368, comparative fit index [CFI] = .96, Tucker–Lewis index [TLI] = .95, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06, standardized root mean square residual [SRMR]$_{(within)}$ = .04, SRMR$_{(between)}$ = .14) fit the data better than the one-factor model (χ^2 = 606.045, CFI = .70, TLI = .69, RMSEA = .06, SRMR$_{(within)}$ = .23, SRMR $_{(between)}$ = .35; $\Delta\chi^2$ = 467.677, change in degrees of freedom [Δdf] = 2, $p < .05$). Furthermore, we conducted another set of CFA for the variables rated by supervisors. Because of the small sample size at the supervisory level, we adopted the parceling strategy to maintain an adequate indicator-to-sample size ratio (Piccolo et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2009). Given that the construct of organizational work–family culture is multidimensional, we created three parcels for it using the internal-consistency approach (Little et al., 2002). Thus, supervisors' FWC, organizational work–family culture, and time for core tasks were also found to be distinct, such that the three-factor model (χ^2 = 53.46, df = 25, CFI = .91, normed fit index [NFI] = .85, nonnormed fit index [NNFI] = .87, RMSEA = .11, SRMR = .07) provided a better fit than did the one-factor model (χ^2 = 94.53, df = 27, CFI = .79, NFI = .73, NNFI = .71, RMSEA = .18, SRMR = .12; $\Delta\chi^2$ = 41.07, Δdf = 1, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis Testing

Table 2 presents the multilevel modeling parameter estimates of the model. Hypothesis 1 proposed that organizational work–family culture will moderate the relationship between supervisors' FWC and time for core tasks. Results indicated that the interaction term of supervisors' FWC and organizational work–family culture was significantly associated with time for core tasks (γ = −2.09, $p < .05$). Furthermore, simple slope test indicated that the simple slope for low organizational work–family culture was positive and significant (simple slope = 1.14, $p < .01$), while the slope for high organizational work–family culture was nonsignificant (simple slope = −0.65, ns). To visualize the pattern of interaction, we draw the interaction plot in Figure 2 using the values of one standard deviation above and below the mean on organizational work–family culture (Aiken & West, 1991). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 were examined via the Monte Carlo simulation procedure. Hypothesis 2 posited that the negative indirect effect of supervisors' FWC on FSSB through time for core tasks would be strengthened when organizational work–family culture is low. Using the Monte Carlo simulation method in the RMediation package (Tofighi & MacKinnon, 2011), we found that when organizational work–family culture was low, the indirect effect was −.07 (90% CI [−0.161, −0.011]), whereas when organizational work–family culture was high, the indirect effect was .04 (90% CI [−0.019, 0.132]). These two indirect effects differed significantly (difference = .12, 90% CI [0.01, 0.269]). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported. Hypothesis 3 posited that for low (as opposed to high) organizational work–family culture, supervisors' FWC will exhibit a stronger positive indirect effect on subordinates' WFC, as mediated through time for core tasks and FSSB, in sequence. The Monte Carlo method in RMediation also allows researchers to test multiple-mediator models. Our results showed that the multiple mediation path was .02 (90% CI [0.001, 0.037]) when organizational WFC was low, whereas the multiple mediation path was −.01 (90% CI [−0.029, 0.004]) when organizational work–family culture was high. The difference between the two serial mediation paths was also significant (difference = −.024, 90% CI [−0.006, −0.001]). This provided supporting evidence for Hypothesis 3.

Table 2. Unstandardized Coefficient Estimates of Theoretical Model in M*plus*.

Paths	Estimate	SE
Direct effects at Level 1		
Dyadic tenure → Subordinates' WFC	–0.00**	–.00
Subordinates' gender → Subordinates' WFC	–0.15	.08
Number of family members → Subordinates' WFC	0.01	.02
Marital status → Subordinates' WFC	0.02	.08
Workload → Subordinates' WFC	0.61*	.06
Direct and moderating effects at Level 2		
Supervisors' gender → Time for core tasks	–.57	.39
Supervisors' gender → FSSB	0.05	.13
Supervisors' FWC → Time for core tasks	0.24	.31
Organizational work-family culture → Time for core tasks	–1.26**	.49
Supervisors' FWC organizational work-family culture → Time for core tasks	–2.09*	.87
Time for core tasks → FSSB	–0.07*	.03
FSSB → Subordinates' WFC	–0.20**	.07
Supervisors' FWC → Subordinates' WFC	0.01	.07
Simple slope test		
Low organizational work-family culture	1.14**	.34
High organizational work-family culture	–0.65	.58

Note. SE = standard error; FSSB = family supportive supervisor behaviors; WFC = work–family conflict; FWC = family–work conflict. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.
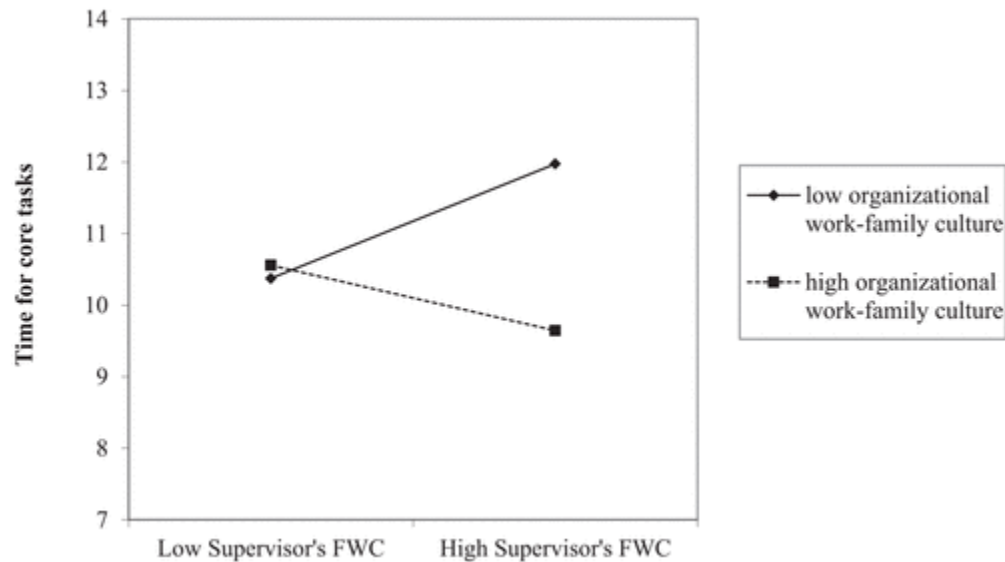

Figure 2. The interaction effect of supervisors' FWC and organizational work–family culture on time for core task.
Note. FWC = family–work conflict.

Discussion

While prior research has identified the positive subordinate-related outcomes of FSSB, a more critical question yet to be answered is why supervisors sometimes behave unsupportively toward subordinates. Our study is therefore designed to answer this question. We proposed and found

that, among supervisors who perceived a low organizational work–family culture, their FWC was related to more time spent on core tasks, which resulted in reduced engagement in FSSB. Ultimately, the reduction in FSSB was related to an increase in subordinates' WFC. In contrast, we did not find any negative influence of supervisors' FWC on the supervisors, themselves (i.e., greater time spent on core tasks, with a reduction in FSSB) and their subordinates (i.e., increased WFC) among supervisors who perceived organizational work–family culture was high. Thus, our research findings highlight the importance of organizational work–family culture, a key factor that prevents supervisors' negative work–family experiences from spreading down through the organization to influence subordinates. Below, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

Theoretical Implications

First, our study contributes to the literature on FSSB by explicating conditions that constrain the emergence of FSSB. A recent review by Crain and Stevens (2018) found that only nine articles have examined the antecedents of FSSB. Our use of COR theory allows us to extend the theory on FSSB by broadening the domain of its antecedents. The mainstream of FSSB study has proposed that FSSB is heavily shaped by the organization's family supportive policies and culture (Allen, 2001; Hammer et al., 2007; Las Heras et al., 2015). Scant research has focused on how supervisor-related factors affect FSSB (e.g., Epstein et al., 2015; Pan, 2018, for exceptions). To our knowledge, none of the extant literature has linked supervisors' work–family experience and FSSB, or shown that FSSB fluctuates with the supervisors' resource capacity.

Second, although work–family researchers have reached a consensus that juggling work and family roles depletes an individual's resources, few studies have examined how individuals allocate their limited resources and maximize the utility of the resources left, or have measured those resources directly. COR has been widely used in work–family research, but the resource mechanism in most such studies is defined equivocally. Resource is a broad term comprising the tangible resources as well as the psychological and physical resources that an individual possesses (Hobfoll, 1989). The lack of different types of resources will result in different outcomes because the action individuals take to cope with resource depletion depends on the type of resource being depleted. For example, Courtright et al. (2016) indicated that supervisors' FWC reduces the individual's self-regulation resource, and thus these supervisors are more likely to express aggressive impulses by performing abusive supervisory actions. We focus on a specific form of resource—time, and find that supervisors adopt the tactic of extending their work hours to cope FWC when there is a lack of external resources. Furthermore, the time spent on core tasks depletes the time available for FSSB. Few studies have directly measured time as a resource (see Bergeron et al., 2013; Lin et al., 2017, for exceptions). Indeed, the resource depletion/generation process cannot be understood clearly without specifying which resources are in play.

Third, our findings contribute to the literature on the crossover effect by showing that supervisors' negative work–family experiences are indirectly related to subordinates' negative work–family experiences. For the most part, existing studies on the crossover effect have examined the transmission process of the same perception between two intimate persons, such as romantic partners (Bakker et al., 2008; Bakker et al., 2005; Westman et al., 2001) or supervisor–

subordinate dyads (Huang et al., 2016; Li et al., 2016; Pan & Yeh, 2019). Nevertheless, given that (a) individuals' work and family domains are interconnected, and (b) the work domain is a shared environment between supervisors and subordinates, we demonstrated that supervisors' FWC exerts an indirect influence on subordinates' WFC. Although Bakker et al. (2008) argued similarly and found that individuals' WFC fostered social undermining behaviors at home, which in turn increased partners' home demands and FWC, our study is the very first to examine how different forms of negative work–family experiences are transferred in supervisor–subordinate dyads via a different mechanism. While the existing literature on the antecedents of employees' WFC has focused mainly on work characteristics, this current study adds to our knowledge by showing that supervisors' FWC may have indirect influence on employees' WFC.

Practical Implications

Our research revealed that supervisors' FWC has detrimental effects on not only the supervisors themselves but also on their subordinates. Such findings underscore the fact that having a healthy family life helps supervisors fulfill their management roles. This raises the need for organizations to recognize and address supervisors' FWC. In fact, most supervisors are at the age in which they have greater caregiving responsibilities for both children and the elderly, along with increased career building demands (Straub, 2012). Organizations should understand that supervisors and subordinates may encounter different forms of family problems and work problems, and provide them with individualized work–family support. This highlights the importance of organizational work–family culture. Unlike family–friendly policies which specify certain practices, organizational work–family culture involves unwritten ways of thinking and informal rules and norms that guide people's reactions to work–family problems. Organizations are encouraged to spend time and effort implementing a wider range of organizational culture change, rather than simply focusing on policy implementation (Bayazit & Bayazit, 2019). However, up till now, only a limited number of companies has embraced work–family culture, and these companies vary significantly in terms of size, occupation, industry, and owner characteristics (Adkins et al., 2013; Andreassi & Thompson, 2008). Although making a fundamental cultural change requires an organization to restructure its human resource management systems and invest additional resources, there is evidence that such changes bring greater returns in the future (Cegarra-Leiva et al., 2012; Ngo et al., 2009).

In addition to *enabling* supervisors to be family supportive, organizations may also enhance supervisors' *willingness* to engage in FSSB. We found that supervisors are reluctant to engage in FSSB when they have difficulty fulfilling their family and work responsibilities. Regardless of whether performing FSSB is entirely at the supervisor's discretion, most organizations only promote the benefits of FSSB but do not establish a clear reward-punishment system for such behaviors. This is especially true when organizations adopt an outcome-based performance appraisal system, such as management by objective, under which supervisors are evaluated and rewarded based on the percentage of goals attained (Bergeron et al., 2013; Wright et al., 1993). Thus, we suggest that companies consider FSSB as one of their performance criteria. For example, companies can use performance techniques that rate behaviors (e.g., the critical-incident method) to overcome the deficiency of the outcome-based performance appraisal approach. That is, managers will be required to observe and record supervisors' daily behaviors which are not directly related to supervisors' performance but may improve the effectiveness of

the organization overall (e.g., FSSB). Alternatively, companies may also use recognition-based incentives to praise family supportive supervisors. More specifically, subordinates might be allowed to nominate supervisors who sincerely care about their subordinates' work–family problems as candidates for an award for "excellence in family supportiveness." The winner of such an award would then receive a one-time bonus and be recognized in the award ceremony. The organization could further post this news on the bulletin board and the company website for promotion purposes. In so doing, an organization could take this opportunity to promote the organizational value to its employees and reinforce the organizational work–family culture.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Some limitations of this study should be recognized. First, there are some concerns with regard to data collection. The relatively small sample size at both levels might be of concern. Even with this small sample size, we still observed different behavioral patterns between supervisors working in organizations with a low versus high organizational work–family culture. This finding highlights the important role of organizational work–family culture. However, given that the small sample size may limit the statistical power of analysis, future research is encouraged to test the robustness of our research results using a larger sample size. In addition, although data were collected from multiple sources, the cross-sectional research design makes the causal relationships among supervisors' FWC, time for core tasks, and FSSB less clear. Nevertheless, the adverse relationships are less likely from the theoretical perspective. For instance, it is less likely that the time supervisors spend on core tasks and enacting FSSB will result in supervisors' FWC because FWC is rooted from family-related factors (Frone et al., 1997; Michel et al., 2011). Nevertheless, future research is still encouraged to use time-lagged or longitudinal designs to better address causality among the study relationships.

The second concern lies in the measurement of time for core tasks. Supervisors' time for core task was measured using one item asking supervisors to report their average work hours for core tasks per day. We reason that having supervisors directly report their work hours for core tasks is appropriate because supervisors know their work hours better than others do. However, it is preferable to use a multi-item measure. The current literature is in lack of a proper scale to measure time for core tasks; we call for future research to develop a valid measure. Third, while we hypothesized and found a negative indirect relationship between supervisors' FWC and FSSB based on the tenets of COR, Straub (2012) proposed a positive relationship. She argued that supervisors facing negative work–family experiences are more sensitive to work–family issues and are more likely to be aware of the beneficial roles of family supportive organizational resources. Therefore, a sense of responsibility may act as a mediator in the relationship between supervisors' negative work–family experience and FSSB. However, to our knowledge, this proposition has not yet been empirically tested. An integrated model is needed for future research to explore different mechanisms and moderators before the contingent relationship between FWC and FSSB can be fully understood.

Conclusion

The present study aims to develop a better understanding of the antecedents of FSSB. Specifically, we found that supervisors' FWC was positively associated with supervisors' time

for core task in organizations where organizational work–family culture is low, and ultimately resulted in fewer FSSB. By connecting FSSB to subordinate's WFC, our theoretical model further delineates the crossover effect of negative work–family experience between supervisors and subordinates. Therefore, organizations should be aware of the negative impacts of supervisors' FWC on themselves and their subordinates, and realize that creating a work–family culture is effective in preventing such undesirable transmission.

Author Biographies

Su-Ying Pan is an associate professor in the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Macau University of Science and Technology. Her research interests mainly focus on work-family issues and leadership. She has published on these topics in journals including *Organizational Behavioral and Human Decision Processes* and *Journal of Business Ethics*.

Aichia Chuang is a professor in the Bryan School of Business and Economics at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her research interests center on leadership, inclusion (person-environment fit and diversity), cross-cultural management, and service climate/performance. She was a past Associate Editor of *Human Relations* and serves or has served on the editorial boards of *Academy of Management Journal, Human Resource Management Review, and Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes*. Her papers appeared in journals such as *Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes, and Harvard Business Review*.

Ying-Jung Yeh is an associate professor in the Department of Business Administration at National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST). Her research areas include work-family balance and the impact of technology on employees' behaviors and well-being.

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