

# The Crossover of Work-family Experiences among Supervisor-subordinate Dyads in India

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*Experiences such as work-family conflict (WFC) and work-family facilitation (WFF) not only spillover from one role domain to another but also crossover from one role occupant (e.g., a partner in a dual-earner couple or a supervisor in a work setting) to the other member in the dyad (e.g., other partner in a dual career couple or subordinate in a work setting). Rarely studies have applied crossover models while examining positive work-family experiences (WFF) and have considered supervisor-subordinate dyad as units of analyses in work-family literature. This study integrates crossover research of WFC and WFF among supervisor-subordinate dyads in the workplace setting. A significant crossover path was found from supervisor's WFC and WFF to his/her respective subordinate's WFC and WFF, job satisfaction and performance.*

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## Introduction

Contemporary socio-demographic landscape, increased number of dual earner couples in the workforce, technological and market changes which demand 24/7 business hours and pressure on individuals for sufficient financial stability have squeezed the distinction between the work and family role domains of an individual. This has significant implications for work-family balance (Nair, 2013; Nayeem & Tripathy, 2012; Pandu, Balu & Poorani, 2013). Researchers have applied various frameworks to study the link between the two integral spheres of life, work and family. Among these, the conflict framework has occupied a respectable space in the literature of work-family balance/interaction. Conflict framework (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) assumes that work and family are two different role domains. They have different sets of demands and responsibilities. Investment of more time and energy in one role will make it difficult to perform efficiently in the other, leading to WFC. Studies on WFC have extensively used spillover and crossover models which suggest that demands or strains from one role domain are carried over to the other

role domain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2013; Van Emmerik & Peeters, 2009; Westman, 2001, 2005; Zhang, Foley & Yang, 2013). Spillover is a within-person across domains transmission of strain from one area of life to another whereas crossover involves transmission across individuals, where the demands and their consequent strain crossover between closely related individuals (e.g., from one partner to another partner in a dyad) (Westman, 2001).

Along with the conflict framework, 'role expansion' framework (Marks, 1977) has also received sufficient attention in the literature. The underlying assumption of role expansion framework is that work and family do not always interfere with each other; rather they may overshadow the negative effects and benefit of each other leading to work-family facilitation (WFF). Several synonymous terms are used to describe the positive interaction between work and family such as positive spillover, work-family facilitation, work-family synergy and work-family enrichment (Allis & O'Driscoll, 2008; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Masuda, McNall, Allen & Nicklin, 2012; Wayne, Musisca & Fleeson, 2004). WFF is defined as the extent to which an individual's engagement in one life domain (i.e., work/family) provides gains (i.e., developmental, affective, capital, or efficiency) which contribute to enhanced functioning of another life domain (i.e., family/work) (Carlson et al., 2006; Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson & Kacmard, 2007). Impacts of WFF on individuals have been widely studied using the spillover model and application of cross-

over model in WFF research is scarce (Carlson et al., 2011).

Studies using crossover models majorly have been conducted in the Western context which provides impetus to examine the same in the socio-cultural context of India. Also, studies have mostly focused on crossover of stress, strain, burnout and engagement. Rarely attempts have been made to integrate both WFC and WFF in a research model and examine the crossover of the same in supervisor and subordinate dyads in a workplace setting. Given the rise of jobs involving team work (Carlson et al., 2011; Van Emmerik & Peeters, 2009), examination of crossover of work-family experience between supervisors and subordinates requires attention from researchers.

### **Work-Life Balance & Supervisor-subordinate Relationships**

Research has considerably highlighted the importance of work-life balance for organizational and individual performance (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011). With the increase in WFC, there is decrease in work-life balance (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011) and job satisfaction (Baral, 2016) and increase in turnover intention and burnout levels (Nayeem & Tripathy, 2012). Indians, being a part of a collectivist culture, give high priority to fulfill their family and social responsibilities (Hofstede, 2001; Rathi & Barath, 2013). Unlike the West, where work occupies a central position in an individual's life (Snir & Harpaz, 2006), work is not considered central to

the being of an individual in India (Gopinath, 1998; Sharma, 2015). This detachment does not imply poor performance or indifference towards learning or growth. In India, work is viewed as a duty and a way to support the family (Sharma, 2015). While spending quality time with the family members, neighbors, friends and relatives is considered important to employees, they face several demands from both family and job (Rathi & Barath, 2013). Most individuals in India ignore many a times the key aspects in life which is the work- life balance (Pandu et al., 2013). Compared to the Western culture, Indian culture perceives work and family domains as an integrated one, hence, the balance between these domains is considered important (Hassan, Dollard & Winefield, 2010).

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Supervisor-subordinate relationship is also unique in Indian culture. India differed considerably from USA and UK on the dimensions of power distance and individualism/ collectivism (Hofstede, 1997). While, US organizations follow a highly individualist culture, in India, each and every decision is made with the consent of the supervisor (Varma et al., 2005). Indian organizations are collectivist in nature at the same time there is a strict hierarchical structure between the supervisor and his/her subordinates and the

relationship is that of a guru-shishya (teacher – student) (Krishnan, 2011; Ranjan Kumar & Sankaran, 2007). Here, employees look for supportive environment that helps them manage their multiple roles (Baral, 2016). Superior in a collectivist culture acts as a father or mother, who not only takes care of the work related issues but also personal issues (Varma et al., 2005). These leaders support, nurture, guide and care for their subordinates. These findings suggest the unique and close relationships between subordinates and their supervisors in the Indian work context which needs further exploration.

With this background, the first objective of the current study is to examine the crossover of work-family experiences from supervisors to subordinates affecting their work-family experiences such as WFC and WFF. The second objective is to explore the extent to which supervisor's work-family experience affects their subordinates' job satisfaction and performance.

### **Work-family Conflict (WFC) & Facilitation (WFF)**

Investment of time and energy in one role domain (e.g. work) usually influences the other role domain (e.g. family) in terms of effectively carrying out the responsibilities and resulting in work-family conflict or WFC (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). WFC has been conceptualized as bi-directional in nature, where work roles may interfere with family roles (work-to-family conflict) and vice

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versa (family-to-work conflict) (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992). Individuals with higher levels of WFC have less positive feelings and are less emotionally attached to their organization (Pandu et al., 2013). WFC affects individuals' health, personal lives, and performance (Mete, Ünal & Bilen, 2014; Van Emmerik & Peeters, 2009).

When involvement in work results in a positive emotional state or attitude helping an individual to perform better as a family member, it results in a positive work-family experience called work-family facilitation (WFF) (Balmforth & Gardner, 2006; Wayne et al. 2004). WFF is also considered to be bi-directional (work-to-family facilitation and family-to-work facilitation) in nature. Experiences created by paid employment can benefit an individual's family life; likewise, family experiences can benefit an individual's work life (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Carlson et al., 2011). WFF has been found to be positively related to individual's mental health (Allis & O'Driscoll, 2008), family functioning (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000), family satisfaction (Wayne et al., 2004), job outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, citizenship behavior and intention to leave (Balmforth & Gardner, 2006; Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Wayne et al., 2004).

For the purpose of the current study, conflict and facilitation from work-to-family direction have only been considered. Understanding work-to-family interface may have greater practical significance because empirical research indicates that the family domain is more permeable than the work domain, making work more likely to impact family than the reverse (Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000; Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992).

### **Theoretical Foundations**

The theoretical foundation behind work-family experiences and their spillover and crossover is based predominantly on two theories namely, role stress theory and broaden and build theory. WFC is based on role stress theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964) which says inter-role conflict is the result in which the role demands of one sphere (e.g., work) are incompatible with the role demands of another sphere (e.g., family). Role conflict occurs because of the role demands, role expectations, and role pressures from either or both of the role domains. Broaden and build theory, (Fredrickson, 2001; Bakker, Demerouti & Dollard, 2008) fundamentally argues that positive emotions broaden the way individuals think about and act upon, which is referred as 'thought-action repertoire'. Positive emotions encourage individuals to show outward orientation wherein they respond more readily and favorably to others (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). This theory has been applied to understand the crossover of WFF from one partner to the other in a dyad (Carlson et al., 2011).

### Crossover of WFC & WFF

Crossover is the term used to describe the interpersonal process where one's psychological stress and positive feeling affect the level of strain or positive feelings respectively of another partner/colleague (Westman, 2001). Studies are limited mostly to crossover of strain and stress (Bakker et al., 2009; Westman & Etzion, 1999), negative experiences and emotions (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000), job demands and emotional exhaustion within teams (Westman et al., 2011), between spouses and among team members (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2005). Some studies highlight the crossover of WFC from one partner to another (Westman, 2005; Zhang et al., 2013), among teachers (Erdamar & Demirel, 2014), from team level to individual level (Van Emmerik & Peeters, 2009). There are some evidences that positive events such as job engagement crossover in a dyad (Bakker et al., 2005; Bakker, Emmerik & Euwema, 2006; Carlson et al., 2011; Demerouti, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2005) and positive attitudes, positive experiences crossover at the workplace among the team members (Bakker et al., 2006). Carlson et al. (2011) conducted a study among 161 subordinates and their immediate supervisors and found significant crossover effect of supervisor's positive work-family experiences on subordinate's experience and job performance. The review of above literature suggests that crossover of both positive and negative events/experiences from one partner to the other in a dyad is possible. Hence,

Hypothesis 1a: Supervisor's WFC will be positively related to subordinate's WFC.

Hypothesis 1b: Supervisor's WFF will be positively related to subordinate's WFF.

**Supervisors struggling with higher WFC may spend lesser time with the subordinates creating anxiety, stress and less control over work schedules by the subordinates.**

Supervisors struggling with higher WFC may spend lesser time with the subordinates creating anxiety, stress and less control over work schedules by the subordinates which are detrimental to their performance and job satisfaction. Similarly, when the supervisor experiences positive emotions, his/her thoughts, and actions towards his/her subordinates will also be positive. As a result, the subordinates may reciprocate the same in their work related activities and higher work performance, creativity and better decision making (Carlson et al., 2011; Fredrickson, 2001). When supervisors experience higher levels of WFF, their subordinates will get more support, flexibility and time from the supervisors which will help them to be satisfied and perform better. Thus,

Hypothesis 2a: Supervisor's WFC will be negatively related to subordinate's job satisfaction and performance.

Hypothesis 2b: Supervisor's WFF will be positively related to subordinate's job satisfaction and performance.

## Sample & Procedure

We collected data from a matched sample of 54 (supervisors) and 118 (subordinates) through a structured questionnaire from employees of software/ information technology and banking organizations situated in South India. Supervisors and their subordinates were contacted using snowballing technique. Unique codes were provided to the supervisor-subordinate dyads to obtain the matched sample for analyses. The conditions for participation include: the participant must have been working under the immediate supervisor for at least 6 months (if he/she is a subordinate), and they must be willing to give the name of at least one subordinate (if he/she is a supervisor) and subordinate (if he/she is a subordinate). Participants were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. We followed a cross-sectional data collection design and got around 64 supervisors and 150 subordinates, out of which we used 54 (supervisors) and 118 (subordinates) complete and valid responses reflecting 84 percent and 79 percent response rates respectively. In the final supervisor sample ( $n = 54$ ), 72.2 percent were males and had an average age of 33.37 years ( $SD = 10.50$ ). About 59.3 percent were married and 37 percent had at least one child living at home. In the final subordinate sample ( $n = 118$ ), 64.4 percent were males, 39 percent were married and 23.7 percent had at least one child at home. The mean age of the respondents was 30.22 years ( $SD = 10.46$ ) and mean tenure with the current supervisor in the organization was 3.95 years. Average working hours per week was 41.42 ( $SD = 10.76$ ; range 30-60 hours).

## Measurements Completed by the Supervisors

*Work-Family Conflict (WFC)* was measured using the four-item scale developed by Grzywacz and Marks (2000). A sample item from the scale is "Stress at work makes you irritable at home." Participants were requested to rate their WFC experiences using 5 point anchor scale ranging from 'Never' (1) to 'Always' (5). Cronbach's alpha was 0.75.

*Work-Family Facilitation (WFF)* was measured using the four-item scale developed by Grzywacz and Marks (2000). A sample item from the scale is "The things you do at work make you a more interesting person at home." Participants were requested to rate the extent to which they are influenced by positive experiences using a 5 point anchor scale ranging from 'Never' (1) to 'Always' (5). Cronbach's alpha was 0.93.

## Measurements Completed by Subordinates

*Work-Family Conflict (WFC)* was measured using the same four-item conflict scale developed by Grzywacz and Marks (2000) as described above. Cronbach's alpha was 0.84.

*Work-Family Facilitation (WFF)* was measured using the same four-item facilitation scale developed by Grzywacz and Marks (2000) as described above. Cronbach's alpha was 0.91.

*Performance:* Subordinates were asked to evaluate their performance by

a four-items scale developed by Wayne and Liden (1995) capturing quality of work, quantity of work, technical competence and overall job performance. A sample item is: "The overall level of performance I observe for myself is excellent". Rating was made on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). Cronbach's alpha was 0.91.

*Job satisfaction:* Job satisfaction was measured using 5 items scale developed by Lund (2003). A sample item is: "All in all, I am satisfied with my co-workers." Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they were satisfied in their job, using 5 point anchor scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). Cronbach's alpha was 0.92.

*Control Variables:* We controlled four of the demographic variables (gender, marital status, tenure with the supervisor and number of children at home) as supplied by the subordinates in our analyses.

## Results

Prior to testing our hypotheses, we conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on the items of both supervisors and subordinates, in order to confirm if each of the constructs are independent and produces the expected factor structures. After suppressing the values at 0.40, EFA resulted in two factors for the supervisor: supervisor's WFC and supervisor's WFF and four factors for the subordinates: subordinate's WFC, subordinate's WFF, job

satisfaction and performance. Only one item on job satisfaction (All in all, I am satisfied with the work of my job) was cross-loading with performance, hence, was removed from the final analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed based on the pattern structure identified in EFA, to check the model fit and to ascertain the construct validity of the scales used. The overall model fit statistics (Figures 1 and 2) indicate that measurement model is moderately fit after allowing for some of the error terms to correlate. The results of model fit indices such as comparative fit index (CFI), goodness of fit index (GFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) are noted as ( $\chi^2=19.617$ , degree of freedom [df] = 17,  $p>.05$ , CMIN/df = 1.154, CFI=0.995, GFI = 0.921, AGFI = .832, RMR = 0.085, RMSEA = 0.054). Results for the subordinates were noted as ( $\chi^2=145.974$ , degree of freedom [df] = 83,  $p<.001$ , CMIN/df = 1.759, CFI=0.958, GFI = 0.874, AGFI = .818, RMR = 0.034, RMSEA = 0.081). Values were found beyond their respective thresholds such as 0.9 for CFI, and around 0.85 for GFI, and RMSEA = 0.05-0.08 which suggest a moderate fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). All the standardized loadings were significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 1 contains the mean values, standard deviations, and correlations for all of the measured variables in the study. Supervisor's WFC and WFF are positively correlated with subordinate's WFC ( $r = 0.56$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and WFF ( $r = 0.42$ ;  $p < .001$ ) respectively. Supervisor's WFC is significantly but negatively correlated with subordinate's job satisfaction ( $r = -0.48$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and performance ( $r$

Fig. 1 CFA (Basic Model) for Supervisor's Work-family Conflict (WFC) and Work-family Facilitation (WFF)

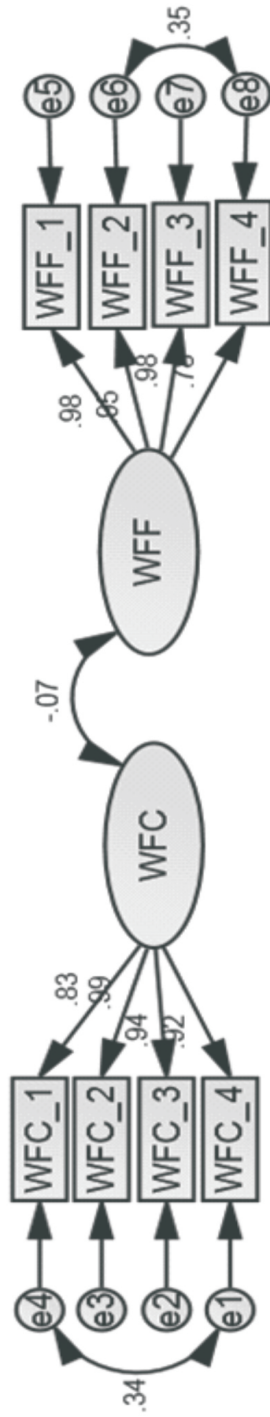


Fig. 2 CFA (Basic Model) for Subordinate's WFC, WFF, Job Satisfaction & Performance

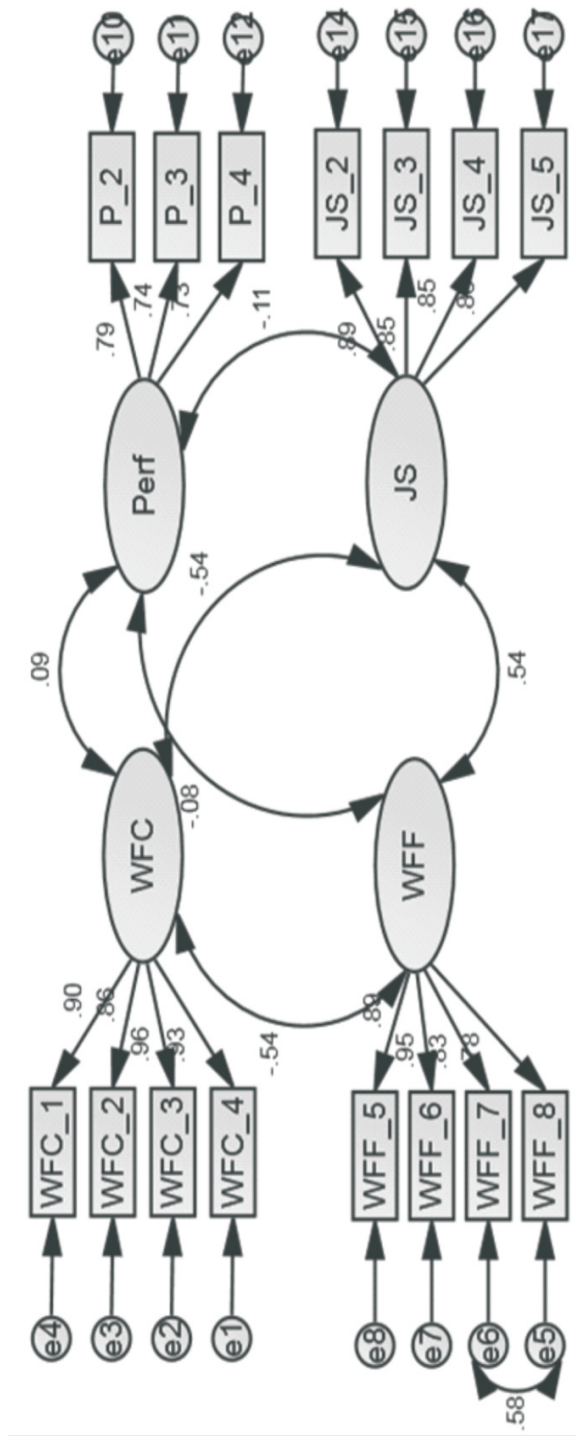


Table 1 Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities and Inter-correlations among Variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Predictor Variables													
1 Supervisor's WFC	1.88	0.42	(0.75)										
2 Supervisor's WFF	4.63	0.49	-0.62***	(0.93)									
Criterion Variables													
3 Subordinate's WFC	1.97	0.57	0.56***	-0.47***	(0.84)								
4 Subordinate's WFF	4.77	0.62	-0.50***	0.42***	-0.98***	(0.91)							
5 Subordinate's Performance	4.71	0.69	-0.51***	0.42***	-0.94***	0.95***	(0.72)						
6 Subordinate's Job satisfaction	4.74	0.75	-0.48***	0.41***	-0.94***	0.95***	0.96***	(0.92)					
Control Variables													
7 Gender	—	—	0.08	0.08	0.03	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.001				
8 Marital Status	—	—	-0.05	-0.10	-0.02	0.01	-0.01	-0.03	0.031				
9 Age	30.22	10.46	-0.06	-0.17	-0.08	0.09	0.08	0.06	-0.08	0.61***	1		
10 Child living at home	—	—	0.03	-0.21*	-0.09	0.10	0.08	0.06	-0.08	0.65***	0.62***	1	
11 Tenure with supervisor	3.95	3.16	0.01	0.11	-0.03	-0.05	-0.06	-0.04	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.07	1

Note: \* p<.05, two-tailed; \*\* p<.01, two-tailed; \*\*\* p<.001, two-tailed. Chronbach's Alphas are reported in the parentheses. WFC – Work-family conflict, WFF – Work-family facilitation

**Table 2 Regression Analyses: Effect of Supervisor’s WFC & WFF on Subordinate’s WFC, WFF, JS & Performance**

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables							
	Subordinate’s WFC		Subordinate’s WFF		Subordinate’s JS		Subordinate’s Performance	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Gender	0.01	-0.04	0.02	-0.01	0.02	0.07	0.02	0.04
Marital Status	0.10	0.15	-0.14*	-0.18*	-0.16	-0.20	-0.16	-0.22
Age	-0.08	-0.02	0.09	0.13	0.09	0.04	0.09	0.08
Have child at home	-0.10	-0.19	0.15	0.25	0.11	0.19	0.14	0.25*
Tenure with supervisor	-0.02	-0.02	-0.06	-0.13	-0.05	-0.05	-0.07	-0.10
Supervisor’s WFC		0.57***				-0.35**		-0.37***
Supervisor’s WFF				0.49***		0.23*		0.24*
R <sup>2</sup>	0.02	0.33	0.03	0.25	0.02	0.32	0.03	0.33
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	-0.30	0.30	-0.02	0.21	-0.03	0.27	-0.02	0.29
Total F	0.33	9.27***	0.58	6.22***	0.43	6.35***	0.57	7.65***
R <sup>2</sup> Change	0.02	0.32	0.03	0.23	0.02	0.27	0.03	0.30
F Change	0.33	53.21***	0.58	33.58***	0.43	20.77***	0.57	24.76***
Dfs	5,112	1,111	5,112	1,111	5,112	2,110	5,112	2,110

**Note:**\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; Values in the table are standardized beta coefficients. WFC – Work-family conflict, WFF – Work-family facilitation and JS – Job satisfaction

= -0.51;  $p < 0.001$ ). Supervisor’s WFF is significantly and positively correlated with subordinate’s job satisfaction ( $r = 0.41$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and performance ( $r = 0.42$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

Separate multiple regression analyses were used to analyze the data and to test the hypotheses. In each regression equation, demographic variables were used as control variables. Table 2 reports the regression results.

**Effect of on Subordinate’s WFC & WFF**

Hypothesis 1a stated that supervisor’s WFC would be positively

related to subordinate’s WFC. Supervisor’s WFC is positively correlated with subordinate’s WFC ( $\beta = 0.57$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). It means, higher the WFC of the supervisor, higher is the subordinate’s WFC. Hence, hypothesis 1a is supported. Similarly, supervisor’s WFF is positively correlated with subordinate’s WFF ( $\beta = 0.49$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This supports hypothesis 1b.

Hypothesis 2a stated that supervisor’s WFC would be negatively related to subordinate’s job satisfaction and performance. We found that supervisor’s WFC negatively affect subordinate’s job satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.35$ ,

$p < 0.01$ ) and performance ( $\beta = -0.37$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Supervisor's WFC accounted for 27% and 30% variance ( $\Delta R^2$ ) in subordinate's job satisfaction and performance respectively. Hence, hypothesis 2a is supported. Similarly, supervisor's WFF passes on to affect subordinate's job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.23$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and performance ( $\beta = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This supports hypothesis 2b.

## Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine the crossover effect of supervisor's WFC and WFF on their subordinates' WFC and WFF, job satisfaction and performance. Results suggest that the supervisor's work-family experiences are highly correlated with the subordinate's work-family experiences. These findings are consistent with the previous research suggesting that positive (Carlson et al., 2011) and negative (Westman & Etzion, 1999) experiences of supervisors can crossover and affect the subordinates. These findings also support the model of crossover developed by Westman (2001) and assumptions of role stress theory and broaden and build theory. Hence, crossover effect which is found in particularly among couples in a family setting seems to be applicable in the workplace. Probably, subordinates' sensitivity towards their supervisors may account for their apparent greater sus-

ceptibility to the supervisors' work-family experiences. Our results extend earlier studies (e.g., Carlson et al., 2011) since we focused on both WFC and WFF.

Results of our study suggest that higher the reported level of WFF by the supervisors, higher was the job satisfaction and performance of subordinates and higher was the conflict of the supervisor, lower was the level of job satisfaction and performance of the subordinates. It means when supervisors experience negative or positive emotions such as WFC or WFF they pass that on to their subordinates influencing their job outcomes. These findings contribute to the field by extending previous findings linking within-individual WFC (Greenhaus, Bedeian & Mossholder, 1987) and WFF (Carlson et al., 2011) to affective responses of the partner in a dyad.

## Conclusion & Implications

The present study contributes to theory by broadening crossover research to include transmission of positive and negative events especially in the work-family context to supervisor-subordinate dyads in the Indian work setting. Results have provided a better understanding of the influence of supervisor's work-family experiences on subordinates' work-family experiences and job outcomes. Supervisors should be made aware of their influence on their subordinates and should be trained to transfer less of WFC and more of WFF. Since, India is one among those countries whose workforce has significant difficulty in balancing their work and family lives this study certainly brings

**Supervisor's work-family experiences are highly correlated with the subordinate's work-family experiences.**

insights on the add-on effects of supervisor's work-family experiences.

However, the study is based on survey data with self-report measures. Therefore, the true associations between variables might be weaker than the relationships observed in this study. Another limitation is that most of our respondents are from organizations based in a metro city of India which might limit the generalizability of the study results. Further research is needed with larger sample size to generalize these findings to other areas and other countries. Future research is needed to clarify the crossover process of how supervisor's experience of WFC and WFF affects his/her subordinate's work-family experiences and other variables of importance such as psychological health etc.

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