

## RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

# Support at Work, Capitalization at Home: The Interpersonal Effects of Family-Supportive Supervisor Behaviors

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## ABSTRACT

Family-supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSBs) have been widely recognized for helping employees navigate work–family demands. Yet, it remains unclear whether the benefits of FSSB extend beyond the workplace to enrich supervisors themselves and their partners at home. Drawing on work–family enrichment theory and family systems theory, we propose a spillover–crossover framework to examine how engaging in FSSB enhances supervisors' family role performance and, in turn, positively associates with their partners' family experiences. Using a weekly experience sampling method with data from dual-earner couples, we find that FSSB is positively related to supervisors' family role performance via work–family interpersonal capitalization. This enhanced family role performance subsequently crosses over to improve partners' family role performance. Contrary to expectations, the relationship between FSSB and interpersonal capitalization is stronger when family harmony is low, suggesting a compensatory effect. By shifting the lens beyond employees, our study highlights the broader relational reach of FSSB and offers new insights into its cascading impact across work and family domains.

## 1 | Introduction

The rise of dual-earner households and the increasing integration of work and family domains have made the pursuit of work–family balance both more essential and more complex (Ererdi et al. 2024; Kossek et al. 2023). In this evolving landscape, supervisors are expected to play a critical role in supporting employees as they navigate competing demands from work and home. One key form of such support is family-supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSBs), defined as supervisors' actions aimed at helping employees effectively manage their work and family responsibilities (Crain and Stevens 2018; Hammer et al. 2013).

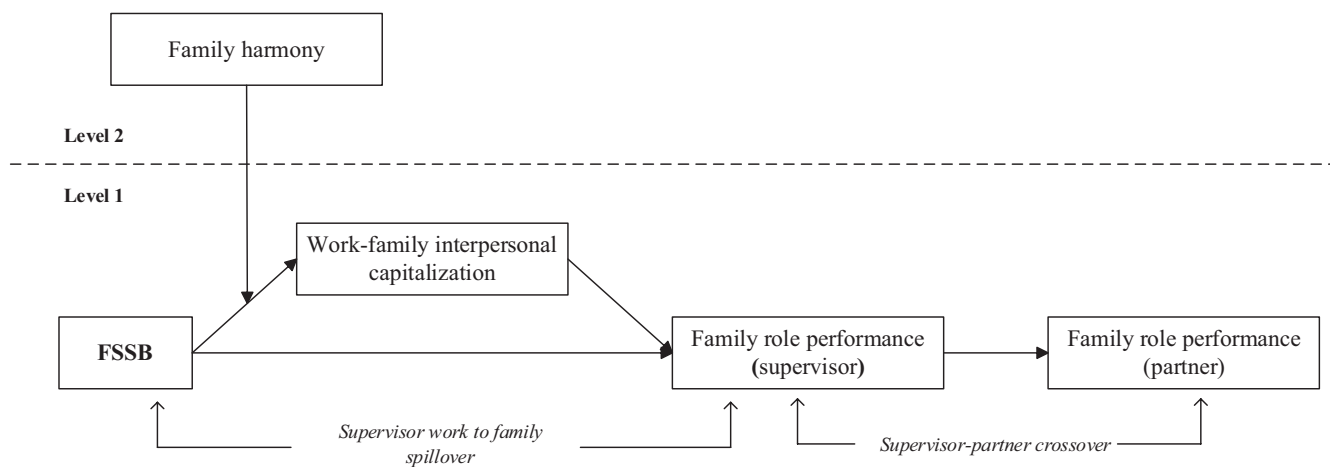
A growing body of research has established the benefits of FSSB for employees. For instance, FSSB has been shown to enhance work engagement, encourage organizational citizenship

behaviors (OCBs), and reduce work–family conflict (see review: Guo et al. 2024; Hao et al. 2025). These findings position FSSB as a vital relational resource that contributes to both employee well-being and organizational functioning.

However, despite these well-documented outcomes, the current literature on FSSB remains limited in two important ways. First, FSSB is inherently a dyadic behavior, it unfolds in the relational space between supervisors and employees. It is not a unidirectional act of support but rather a dynamic interpersonal exchange. Recent studies have begun to explore how employees and supervisors jointly co-construct the downstream effects of FSSB (Walsh et al. 2019; Yu et al. 2022). For example, Yu et al. (2022) demonstrate that employees perceive family-supportive supervisors as both competent and warm, enhancing supervisors' reputational standing in the workplace. Yet, we still

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**FIGURE 1** | Theoretical model.

know very little about how supervisors themselves are personally affected by the FSSB they enact, particularly in their non-work lives.

Second, emerging leadership research increasingly recognizes that the influence of leader behaviors is not confined to the workplace but also extends into the personal and relational domains of leaders' lives (Ferguson et al. 2016; Hu et al. 2023; Lin et al. 2024). For instance, occupying a leadership role has been shown to impact not only a leader's own well-being but also that of their romantic partner (Lin et al. 2024). This broader reach is especially relevant in the case of FSSB, which inherently sit at the intersection of work and family systems. Given this boundary-spanning nature, FSSB may carry implications beyond supervisors' professional roles, potentially enriching their personal lives, especially within dual-earner couples.

Yet, despite its relational and cross-domain character, it remains largely unclear whether enacting FSSB can yield enrichment benefits for supervisors themselves or for their partners at home. This represents a critical oversight. From a practical standpoint, dual-earner families face intensified demands and interdependence, making the spillover and crossover of supportive resources particularly relevant. From a theoretical perspective, examining FSSB through the lens of family systems theory and work–family enrichment offers a promising avenue for responding to recent calls to integrate leadership and work–family scholarship (Kossek et al. 2023). Understanding how FSSB shapes both leaders' and their partners' home lives can deepen our insight into the relational ripple effects of leadership across domains.

We address the above gaps by proposing a spillover–crossover model that theorizes how and when FSSB generates family-level benefits for supervisors and their partners. Given that FSSB fluctuates on a weekly basis (Ezerdi et al. 2024) and that family dynamics are continuously evolving (Day et al. 2009), we adopt a weekly diary design to capture the dynamic and temporal nature of these processes. Our theoretical model is grounded in work–family enrichment theory (Greenhaus and Powell 2006) and family systems theory (Bowen 1971; Bronfenbrenner 1977).

According to work–family enrichment theory, resources generated in one domain (e.g., work) can enhance functioning in another domain (e.g., family). This underpins the spillover process, conceptualized as an intraindividual transmission of experiences across role domains (Bakker and Demerouti 2012; Carlson et al. 2019).

Specifically, we investigate how FSSB fosters supervisors' family role performance via work–family interpersonal capitalization, a behavioral form of enrichment in which individuals actively share positive work experiences with their partners at home (Ilies et al. 2011, 2015). In addition, drawing on family systems theory, we examine how changes in one family member's behavior, in this case, the supervisor, can influence the experiences of another, namely, their partner (Hammer et al. 2003; Hu et al. 2023). This reflects the crossover process, defined as an interindividual contagion mechanism through which one person's resource gains or emotional states shape the well-being or behavior of another (Bakker and Demerouti 2012; Carlson et al. 2019). In our model, we propose that supervisors' enhanced family role performance, facilitated by FSSB, crosses over to improve their partners' family role performance, underscoring the interconnectedness of work–family experiences within dual-earner households.

Moreover, family harmony—defined as a family environment characterized by open communication, mutual support, and emotional warmth—is widely recognized as a key indicator of relational quality within families (Kavikondala et al. 2016). According to work–family enrichment theory, individuals are more likely to transfer resources from one role domain to another when they perceive the receiving domain as receptive to enrichment (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). In this context, a harmonious family context may provide the emotional and relational scaffolding necessary to activate and sustain the benefits of FSSB in the home domain. Building on this reasoning, we propose that family harmony moderates the spillover pathway—specifically, it enhances the positive effect of FSSB on supervisors' family role performance by fostering an environment where supportive workplace experiences can be meaningfully internalized and expressed at home. Figure 1 illustrates our proposed theoretical model.

Our study makes four key theoretical contributions. First, we advance the literature on FSSB by extending its scope beyond employee-centric outcomes to explore its impact on supervisors and their partners. Although existing research has largely focused on how employees perceive and respond to supportive or unsupportive leaders (e.g., Walsh et al. 2019; Yu et al. 2022), far less attention has been paid to how engaging in FSSB may enrich the personal and family lives of supervisors themselves. By adopting a systemic and relational perspective, we respond to recent calls to examine how leadership behaviors affect not only followers but also leaders' broader family systems (Richter-Killenberg and Volmer 2022). In doing so, we reposition FSSB as a potentially self-enriching leadership behavior, offering a more holistic view of its effects across both professional and domestic domains.

Second, we identify work–family interpersonal capitalization as a novel and central dyadic mechanism through which resources generated by FSSB spill over into the home domain and cross over to partners. Prior research has examined interpersonal capitalization primarily as a relational process that enhances well-being and relationship quality (Ilies et al. 2011, 2015), yet its role as a mediating mechanism within work–family enrichment processes has received limited attention. By positioning interpersonal capitalization as a behavioral conduit through which positive work experiences are shared with one's partner, we offer a more nuanced understanding of how FSSB-related gains extend beyond the workplace.

More specifically, we demonstrate that supervisors who engage in FSSB are more likely to discuss and reflect on these positive experiences at home, thereby externalizing work-based resources through interaction. These interactions not only reinforce the supervisor's own family role performance but also generate relational benefits that extend to their partners. Moreover, by embedding interpersonal capitalization within a spillover–crossover framework (Bakker and Demerouti 2012; Carlson et al. 2019), we offer a more dynamic and relationally embedded view of enrichment, one that moves beyond individual-level perspectives to highlight the co-constructed nature of work–family experiences within dual-earner couples (Hammer et al. 2003; Westman 2001). In doing so, our work speaks to broader calls for theorizing the interpersonal and communicative mechanisms by which work–family dynamics unfold (Maertz and Boyar 2011; Greenhaus and Powell 2006).

Third, we contribute to the literature on interpersonal capitalization by reframing its theoretical role within work–family research. Although prior studies have largely treated work–family interpersonal capitalization as an *outcome* of positive workplace experiences (e.g., Ilies et al. 2011, 2015), we instead position it as an active relational process within work–family enrichment dynamics. By conceptualizing interpersonal capitalization as a mechanism rather than solely an outcome, we extend its theoretical utility within work–family enrichment research and highlight its functional role in linking workplace experiences to family dynamics.

Fourth, we advance the study of work–life dynamics in dual-earner couples by concurrently examining within-person spillover and between-partner crossover processes. Whereas prior

studies have often focused on employees in isolation, we conceptualize dual-earner couples as interdependent systems in which workplace experiences reverberate across partners (Maertz and Boyar 2011; Shockley et al. 2017). By explicitly modeling both supervisors' and partners' experiences, we provide a more ecologically valid account of how leadership behaviors shape family functioning within contemporary dual-earner households. Our findings further highlight the interdependence that characterizes these partnerships, demonstrating how supportive leadership behaviors can foster benefits that extend beyond individual employees to their partners' family functioning and family experiences.

This contribution deepens our understanding of the relational infrastructure of dual-earner families, where both partners simultaneously face professional and domestic responsibilities and rely on one another's support to navigate daily demands (Ferguson et al. 2016; Hu et al. 2023). Our findings shed light on the interdependence and mutual influence that characterize these partnerships, emphasizing how supportive leadership can foster not just individual well-being, but also shared relational health at home. By integrating FSSB into a broader model of couple-level dynamics, we underscore the relational and systemic reach of workplace behaviors, advancing a more nuanced understanding of how support at work can ripple through families to foster more resilient and healthier home environments.

## 2 | Theory and Hypotheses Development

### 2.1 | Theoretical Foundation

To understand how FSSB extend beyond the workplace to affect supervisors and their families, we draw on three interrelated frameworks: the spillover–crossover model, work–family enrichment theory, and family systems theory.

### 2.2 | Spillover–Crossover Model

Bakker and Demerouti (2012) integrated the concepts of spillover and crossover in their spillover–crossover model, which suggests that experiences in one life domain (e.g., work) can spill over into another domain (e.g., family) and, in turn, cross over to influence the well-being of closely related individuals, such as a partner. Spillover refers to the transfer of stressors or resources across domains within the same individual (Bolger et al. 1989). This transfer can occur through various channels, including emotional arousal, attitudinal shifts, or behavioral changes (Carlson et al. 2019). For example, individuals who feel valued at work may carry that positive energy home, contributing to better interactions and performance in their family role.

Crossover, by contrast, describes how one individual's experiences impact the psychological states or behaviors of another individual in the same domain (Carlson et al. 2019). Crossover can occur in two primary ways: directly, through empathy and emotional contagion, or indirectly, through interpersonal exchanges and shared routines (Bakker and Demerouti 2012; Booth-LeDoux et al. 2020). These processes highlight how emotions and behaviors can ripple through both intra-individual and interpersonal systems.

## 2.3 | Work–Family Enrichment Theory

Building on the broader work–family literature examining connections between work and family domains, work–family enrichment theory (Greenhaus and Powell 2006) explains how resources gained in one domain, such as psychological well-being, social capital, or positive relational experiences, can enhance performance in another role. Grounded in a role accumulation perspective, this theory suggests that engagement in multiple life roles can be mutually beneficial. Importantly, enrichment is bidirectional: Work-to-family enrichment (WFE) occurs when work experiences improve functioning at home, whereas family-to-work enrichment (FWE) captures how family experiences support work performance (Carlson et al. 2006). In this way, the enrichment perspective provides a resource-based explanation for how experiences in one domain can positively influence functioning in another.

## 2.4 | Family Systems Theory

In addition to these individual-level perspectives, we draw on family systems theory (Bowen 1971) to understand how such experiences unfold within interdependent relational systems. This theory posits that family members are emotionally and behaviorally interconnected, such that changes in one person's experiences or behavior can significantly affect others in the family unit (Hammer et al. 2005). Family systems theory helps explain crossover effects in the family domain, where individual-level work experiences (e.g., support provided at work) may indirectly shape a partner's functioning through behavioral exchanges and emotional alignment (Hu et al. 2023). In dual-earner couples, this interdependence is especially salient—each partner's work and family roles are tightly intertwined, influencing each other's day-to-day experience and well-being (Bernier et al. 2023; Carlson et al. 2018; Watkins et al. 2012).

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives provide a useful basis for examining how FSSB may have implications not only for employees but also for supervisors and their families. Drawing from this integrative framework, we propose that enacting FSSB initiates a spillover process, whereby work-related experiences and state-like resources are transmitted into supervisors' family lives through work–family interpersonal capitalization. This family-domain functioning may then create a crossover effect, relating to partners' family role performance. By linking work–family enrichment theory with family systems theory, we provide a more comprehensive perspective on how FSSB operates as a relational resource whose implications may extend beyond the workplace and into the home.

## 2.5 | Hypotheses Development

### 2.5.1 | Supervisors' Spillover From Work to Family

The work and family domains are inherently interconnected, allowing experiences and resources generated in one role to influence functioning in another (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). Supervisors, in their professional roles, engage in FSSB by attentively listening to employees' needs, offering guidance, providing

emotional and instrumental support, modeling work–family balance, and generating creative solutions to family-related challenges (Hammer et al. 2009; Hammer et al. 2013). Through these interactions, supervisors enact perspective-taking, problem solving, and supportive communication regarding work–family issues.

Consistent with work–family enrichment theory, experiences in one role can generate psychological and relational resources that facilitate performance in another role (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). In the present study, however, we do not conceptualize these resources as long-term capability development. Rather, we argue that they can operate as proximal cognitive, affective, and relational states that fluctuate across short time periods. Importantly, prior scholars have explicitly called for research examining FSSB as episodic and dynamic phenomena rather than static leadership characteristics (Crain and Stevens 2018; Guo et al. 2024). Consistent with these calls, emerging empirical evidence suggests that FSSB and related support experiences fluctuate over time at both daily and weekly levels (Erederi et al. 2024; Walsh and Kabat-Farr 2022; Xu et al. 2020). For example, Xu et al. (2020) demonstrated that employees' perceptions of social support vary on a day-to-day basis, whereas subsequent research has documented meaningful within-person variation in FSSB across weeks (Erederi et al. 2024; Walsh and Kabat-Farr 2022). Thus, although supervisors may hold relatively stable orientations toward supporting employees, the extent to which they enact FSSB—and the state-like resources activated through these enactments—can fluctuate over time depending on situational demands and interactional opportunities. In particular, engaging in FSSB may heighten supervisors' awareness of family-related concerns, activate empathetic and supportive mindsets, and reinforce relational orientations that extend beyond the workplace.

Family role performance, defined as the extent to which individuals effectively fulfill their family responsibilities (Carlson et al. 2010), may therefore be positively related to supervisors' enactment of FSSB. For instance, when supervisors spend time during a given week helping employees navigate work–family conflicts, they may become more attentive to family-related concerns, more flexible in addressing competing demands, and more responsive in handling interpersonal issues (Junker et al. 2021; Siu et al. 2010). These heightened relational and problem-solving orientations may, in turn, be reflected in more effective engagement with their own family members during that same week. For example, a supervisor who spends the week actively supporting team members in managing personal obligations may carry this supportive and relationally attentive orientation home, resulting in more engaged and responsive behavior with their own family.

Furthermore, engaging in FSSB may be associated with supervisors' weekly sense of efficacy and psychological well-being, leaving them with greater psychological resources to devote to their family roles. Providing meaningful support to employees can generate feelings of accomplishment and purpose (Lanaj et al. 2016) while also contributing to more positive team climates and fewer workplace stressors, such as lower employee counterproductive behaviors and turnover intentions (Kossek et al. 2023; Russo et al. 2025).

In sum, during weeks when supervisors engage in higher levels of FSSB, they may experience greater relational awareness,

empathy, and psychological resources that facilitate more effective functioning in their family roles during that week.

Taken together, these arguments suggest that engaging in FSSB may generate short-term relational and psychological resources that facilitate supervisors' functioning in their family roles. Accordingly, we hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 1.** *FSSB is positively related to supervisors' family role performance at the weekly level.*

### 2.5.2 | Work–Family Interpersonal Capitalization as a Mediator

According to work–family enrichment theory, positive experiences and resources gained in one life domain can enhance functioning in another domain (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). In the context of supervisors engaging in FSSB, these experiences may be associated with positive psychological states that extend beyond the workplace. However, rather than assuming a direct transfer of these experiences into family functioning, we focus on the relational processes through which such transfer occurs. In particular, we propose that work–family interpersonal capitalization serves as a key behavioral mechanism linking supervisors' enactment of FSSB at work to their functioning at home.

Work–family interpersonal capitalization refers to a behavioral form of enrichment in which individuals actively share meaningful and positive work experiences with their partners (Ilies et al. 2011, 2015). Importantly, this construct captures a discrete communicative act, namely, the sharing of work-related experiences, rather than a general affective state or overall family functioning. As such, it represents a proximal, interaction-based mechanism through which work experiences may be transmitted into the family domain.

When supervisors engage in FSSB, they may experience positive psychological states such as pride, fulfillment, and a heightened sense of meaningfulness from supporting employees through work–family challenges (Hui et al. 2020; Lanaj et al. 2016; Siu et al. 2010). In addition, employees tend to perceive family-supportive supervisors as warm and competent (Yu et al. 2022), which may provide social validation that reinforces supervisors' positive self-evaluations. Research on work–family interpersonal capitalization suggests that individuals who experience positive events often seek to share them with close others in order to extend and reinforce the emotional benefits of those experiences (Ilies et al. 2011, 2015). Accordingly, when supervisors engage in higher levels of FSSB in a given week, they may be more likely to discuss meaningful or rewarding work experiences with their partners.

Importantly, work–family interpersonal capitalization represents an active relational process rather than merely an emotional spillover (Ilies, Liu, et al. 2024). By sharing positive work experiences, individuals invite their partners into the interpretation and meaning-making of those events, which can strengthen intimacy, emotional connection,

and mutual understanding within the relationship (Ilies et al. 2017; Voydanoff 2005). Through this communicative process, work-based experiences become integrated into the family context, shaping how partners interact with one another. This process may, in turn, be associated with supervisors' family role performance.

Whereas interpersonal capitalization reflects a specific communicative behavior, family role performance captures a broader evaluation of task and relational functioning within the family (Carlson et al. 2010; Ilies et al. 2011). Sharing positive work experiences may foster more engaged and responsive interactions with partners, creating opportunities for supervisors to demonstrate attentiveness, support, and involvement in their family relationships. For example, during weeks when supervisors engage in higher levels of FSSB, they may be more inclined to disclose meaningful work experiences, which may coincide with greater involvement in household responsibilities and family support during that same week. In this way, interpersonal capitalization functions as a relational pathway through which workplace-generated experiences are associated with more effective functioning in the family domain.

Given the dynamic nature of supervisors' work experiences and behaviors, these processes are likely to fluctuate across short time frames (Ererdi et al. 2024). Our weekly diary design allows us to capture how within-person variation in supervisors' engagement in FSSB relates to variation in their work–family interpersonal capitalization, which in turn may be associated with variation in their family role performance during that week.

Taken together, these arguments suggest that work–family interpersonal capitalization serves as an important mechanism linking supervisors' family-supportive behaviors at work to their functioning within the family domain. Therefore, we propose:

**Hypothesis 2.** *Work–family interpersonal capitalization mediates the positive relationship between FSSB and supervisors' family role performance at the weekly level.*

### 2.5.3 | Crossover of Supervisor's Family Role Performance to Partner's Family Role Performance

According to family systems theory, dual-earner couples operate within a mesosystem in which the behaviors, emotions, and experiences of one partner are closely linked to those of the other (Hammer et al. 2005). In such interdependent dyadic relationships, crossover occurs when one partner's experiences are associated with the psychological states or behavioral patterns of the other (Carlson et al. 2018). This transmission can unfold through various channels, including verbal communication, shared routines, and emotional contagion (Watkins et al. 2012). In the context of our model, we propose that supervisors' family role performance is positively related to their partners' family role performance.

One form of crossover involves direct behavioral and affective transmission, wherein the partner observes and responds to

the supervisor's behaviors and emotional cues at home. Given the emotional proximity inherent in romantic relationships, partners are highly responsive to each other's family engagement and expressions (Watkins et al. 2012). When a supervisor exhibits higher levels of involvement and responsiveness to family needs, their partner may be more likely to mirror or adapt to these behavioral patterns, resulting in increased engagement in their own family role (Carlson et al. 2019). For example, if a supervisor demonstrates greater involvement in household tasks during a given week, their partner may respond with a similar level of participation, reinforcing shared norms of engagement. In addition, when supervisors experience a sense of fulfillment or effectiveness in their family roles, they may display more positive affect, which may be associated with partners' own well-being and motivation to contribute to family responsibilities (Bowen 1971; Las Heras et al. 2017; McNall et al. 2015).

In addition to these direct processes, crossover may also occur indirectly through interpersonal interaction and communication. As dual-earner couples regularly coordinate and negotiate family responsibilities, one partner's level of engagement may shape the tone and content of these interactions (Barnett and Hyde 2001). For instance, when supervisors are more actively involved in family responsibilities, discussions around household tasks and caregiving may become more collaborative, which may encourage partners to increase their own involvement. Research suggests that such relational dynamics, particularly those tied to role engagement and affect, are associated with reciprocal participation in family tasks (Carlson et al. 2018).

Our weekly diary design allows us to examine how these crossover processes unfold over time. We propose that during weeks when supervisors report higher levels of family role performance, their partners will also report higher levels of family role performance. This week-to-week variation reflects the dynamic nature of family systems, in which partners continuously adjust their behaviors in response to one another. For example, a supervisor who takes on more childcare responsibilities or contributes more actively to household management during a particular week may create a context that is associated with greater partner engagement during that same period. Conversely, lower levels of supervisor engagement may coincide with reduced partner involvement, highlighting the contingent nature of crossover processes.

Taken together, these arguments suggest that supervisors' family role performance may function as a relational input within the family system, with implications for their partners' functioning via both behavioral alignment and affective processes. Accordingly, we hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 3.** *Supervisor's family role performance is positively related to partner's family role performance at the weekly level.*

#### 2.5.4 | Spillover–Crossover Process

Drawing on work–family enrichment theory (Greenhaus and Powell 2006) and family systems theory (Bowen 1971), we propose a sequential spillover–crossover process through which

FSSB are associated with a supervisor's partner's family role performance. This integrated framework emphasizes the cascading nature of these processes as they unfold through both intra-individual and inter-individual pathways.

Specifically, during weeks when supervisors engage in higher levels of FSSB, they may experience positive work-related states such as elevated positive affect, relational satisfaction, and a sense of meaningfulness that are activated through these interactions. Consistent with a WFE perspective, we conceptualize these as proximal, state-like resources rather than accumulated or enduring gains. These experiences may then be transmitted into the home environment through work–family interpersonal capitalization, a behavioral mechanism through which supervisors share positive work experiences with their partners (Ilies et al. 2011, 2015).

This act of sharing represents a key link in the spillover process. By communicating positive work experiences, supervisors may invite their partners into the interpretation and meaning-making of these events, which may be associated with stronger emotional and relational connection. At the same time, such interactions may coincide with supervisors' own engagement in their family roles, as reflected in their family role performance during that week.

Following family systems theory, supervisors' family role performance may, in turn, relate to their partners' family role performance through crossover processes. These processes may operate through behavioral alignment, shared routines, and affective exchanges (Hammer et al. 2005; Hu et al. 2023). In this way, work-related experiences associated with FSSB may be linked to partner outcomes through a sequential process that unfolds first within the individual (spillover) and then across partners (crossover).

Taken together, this integrative model positions FSSB not merely as a workplace behavior, but as a relationally embedded process with implications that may extend into the family domain through interconnected pathways. Accordingly, we propose the following serial mediation hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 4.** *The relationship between FSSB and partners' family role performance is serially mediated by supervisors' work–family interpersonal capitalization and supervisors' family role performance.*

#### 2.5.5 | The Moderating Role of Family Harmony

Family harmony, defined by mutual respect, cooperation, emotional intimacy, and open communication among family members, represents a central feature of supportive family relationships (Kavikondala et al. 2016). In this study, we focus on supervisors' perceptions of family harmony, as prior research has identified harmonious family dynamics as an important contextual factor shaping work–family processes (Kwan et al. 2025).

Drawing on work–family enrichment theory (Greenhaus and Powell 2006), one perspective suggests that individuals are more likely to transfer resources from the work domain to the family

domain when they perceive the home environment as receptive to enrichment. From this facilitation perspective, higher levels of family harmony may strengthen the relationship between FSSB and work–family interpersonal capitalization, as supportive and open family environments may make it easier for supervisors to share and elaborate on positive work experiences.

Specifically, when supervisors perceive high levels of harmony in their families, they may be more likely to share work-related experiences with their partners. Harmonious families tend to foster open communication and mutual understanding, which can facilitate the disclosure and processing of work experiences in emotionally supportive ways (Ip 2014; Kavikondala et al. 2016). In such environments, discussing meaningful acts such as supporting employees with family-related concerns may be both encouraged and positively received (Kwan et al. 2025). Moreover, harmonious family contexts are associated with psychological safety, which promotes self-expression without fear of judgment or conflict (Umrani et al. 2020; Vincent et al. 2022). Supervisors who feel emotionally secure at home may therefore be more inclined to engage in interpersonal capitalization (Wang et al. 2025). In addition, strong family bonds may reinforce a sense of relational responsibility and role integration, increasing the likelihood that supervisors share and reflect on their workplace experiences within the family context (Demirci 2022; Eddleston et al. 2018).

At the same time, an alternative perspective suggests that individuals may be particularly motivated to share positive work experiences when the family context is less supportive, as a way of compensating for relational deficits. In lower-harmony family environments, where communication may be more strained or limited, positive work experiences may become especially salient and may serve as a means of fostering more constructive interactions. From this compensation perspective, the relationship between FSSB and work–family interpersonal capitalization may be stronger when family harmony is lower.

Taken together, these complementary perspectives suggest that family harmony functions as a boundary condition shaping the relationship between FSSB and work–family interpersonal capitalization. Although these perspectives point to different directions, we initially draw on the facilitation logic derived from work–family enrichment theory to propose the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 5.** *Family harmony moderates the positive relationship between FSSB and supervisors' work–family interpersonal capitalization, such that the relationship is stronger when family harmony is high rather than low.*

## 3 | Method

### 3.1 | Procedure and Sample

#### 3.1.1 | Participants

Data for this study were collected in China and focused on urban dual-earner couples, with one partner occupying a supervisory position within their organization. Over 80% of participants resided in provincial capital cities economically developed and

highly urbanized areas that reflect China's rapid modernization and the increasing integration of work and family roles.

Supervisors typically held formal management positions involving responsibilities such as team leadership, coordination, and performance oversight. Their partners were also employed full-time, primarily in white-collar occupations, although they did not necessarily hold supervisory roles. This sample reflects a growing demographic in urban China, dual-earner households navigating intensifying job demands alongside evolving family responsibilities.

Prior to data collection, we distributed recruitment forms to approximately 300 supervisors from a range of industries through MBA courses and the research team's professional networks. The recruitment materials outlined the study's objectives, procedures, and ethical safeguards. Participation was strictly voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in reporting.

Supervisors who agreed to participate were asked to invite their partners to join the study, consistent with the dyadic research design. To enable accurate matching of responses across partners and over time, each participant was assigned a unique identification code, constructed by combining the first initial of their last name with the last four digits of their mobile phone number (e.g., “Z7748”). Participants were instructed to enter this code at the beginning of each survey, allowing the research team to link supervisor and partner responses across waves. To enhance data quality, participants were encouraged to complete the surveys independently and to provide thoughtful and accurate responses. As an incentive, participants received personalized feedback reports based on their survey responses.

To ensure the relevance of the sample to the study's focus on work–family dynamics and supervisory roles, we applied several eligibility criteria. Participants were required to: (a) be employed full-time, (b) co-reside with their partner, (c) possess at least 6 months of managerial or supervisory experience, (d) have a partner who was also employed full-time, and (e) confirm that both partners were willing and available to complete repeated surveys over the study period. These criteria ensured that participants were actively engaged in both work and family roles, thereby providing an appropriate context for examining spillover and crossover processes.

#### 3.1.2 | Justification for Weekly Diary Design

To examine within-person fluctuations in FSSB and its consequences, we employed a weekly experience sampling methodology (ESM). A weekly rather than daily interval was selected based on both theoretical considerations and methodological appropriateness for capturing the type of processes central to our study.

First, our conceptualization of FSSB focuses on its episodic enactment rather than a stable dispositional tendency. Although supervisors may hold relatively enduring orientations toward supporting employees, the extent to which they enact FSSB behaviors depends on situational demands, interactional contexts,

and employees' work–family needs. These enactments are therefore not necessarily expressed consistently on a day-to-day basis, but rather fluctuate across short periods of time. A weekly time frame is well-suited to capturing such within-person variation in enacted behavior, as it reflects a meaningful aggregation of interactional experiences without assuming that these behaviors occur with sufficient frequency to be reliably observed on a daily basis.

Second, FSSB is conceptualized as an extra-role, discretionary behavior that extends beyond formal job requirements (Straub 2012). As such, it is inherently episodic and contingent, emerging in response to specific employee needs rather than occurring as a routine daily activity. Daily measurement may therefore be too granular to capture meaningful variability in FSSB enactment and may introduce noise due to the absence of relevant events on a given day. In contrast, a weekly interval allows for the accumulation of relevant interactions, providing a more reliable representation of supervisors' enacted support behaviors.

Third, the downstream processes examined in this study, namely, work–family interpersonal capitalization and family role performance, are also better conceptualized as unfolding over short but not instantaneous time frames. Sharing positive work experiences with one's partner and adjusting engagement in family roles are processes that are likely to occur over the course of several days, rather than within a single day. A weekly design therefore provides an appropriate temporal window to capture the spillover of work-related experiences into the family domain and their translation into behavioral engagement at home.

Fourth, a weekly interval strikes an appropriate balance between temporal sensitivity and data quality. Although shorter intervals (e.g., daily designs) may capture more immediate fluctuations, they can also increase participant burden and reduce compliance, particularly in dyadic designs requiring repeated responses from both partners. Weekly measurement enables participants to reflect on salient experiences over the past several days, thereby enhancing ecological validity while maintaining response quality and retention (Breevaart and Zacher 2019).

Taken together, these considerations suggest that a weekly diary design is theoretically and methodologically appropriate for capturing fluctuations in the enactment of FSSB and their associated spillover and crossover processes across work and family domains.

### 3.1.3 | Data Collection Procedure

Given that the original measurement instruments were developed in English, we employed a rigorous translation and back-translation procedure to ensure linguistic equivalence and conceptual accuracy in Mandarin Chinese (Brislin 1986). This process helped preserve the integrity of the constructs across cultural and linguistic contexts.

All data were collected via a secure online survey platform. One week prior to the experience sampling phase, participants completed a baseline survey. This survey captured demographic

information, general working conditions for both supervisors and their partners, and supervisors' perceptions of family harmony.

During the 6-week experience sampling phase, both supervisors and their partners received one survey per week, administered on the same weekday to ensure temporal consistency. Each weekly survey included repeated measures of the focal study variables: FSSB, work–family interpersonal capitalization, and family role performance. This repeated-measures design enabled us to capture both within-person and within-dyad variation in work–family dynamics over time.

### 3.1.4 | Final Sample

A total of 224 participants (112 dual-earner couples) completed the baseline survey. To ensure data quality, we applied several exclusion criteria.

First, we excluded participants who completed the baseline survey but did not complete any weekly surveys. Sixteen couples met this criterion and were removed, resulting in 96 couples who provided both baseline and weekly data. Second, we excluded eight couples who completed fewer than two weekly surveys, consistent with recommendations that each Level-2 unit should include at least two Level-1 observations for multilevel analyses (Nezlek 2011). Third, following established guidelines for identifying careless responses (Meade and Craig 2012), we excluded participants who failed attention check items embedded in either the baseline or weekly surveys (e.g., instructed-response items such as "Please select response option 1"). A total of three attention checks were included, and participants were excluded if they failed any of these checks. This resulted in the removal of two additional couples.

After applying these quality control procedures, the final dataset consisted of 441 matched weekly observations from 86 couples, yielding an average of 5.13 weekly responses per supervisor across the 6-week period. Participants were drawn from a diverse set of industries, including technology and manufacturing, services and education, finance and real estate, government and public utilities, and resources and energy.

In the final sample, 54.65% of supervisors were male, with an average age of 36.12 years ( $SD = 6.33$ ), whereas their partners had an average age of 37.03 years ( $SD = 8.41$ ). Supervisors reported an average of 3.79 years of managerial experience ( $SD = 3.20$ ). In terms of education, 96.51% of supervisors held a bachelor's degree or higher, and 90.70% of partners held at least a college degree. Additionally, 87% of supervisors reported having one or two children under the age of 18. These characteristics reflect a relatively experienced and professionally stable dual-earner population, well-suited for examining dynamic work–family processes.

## 3.2 | Measures

To balance measurement reliability with the need to minimize participant fatigue in a weekly experience sampling design,

we used shortened versions of validated scales, in line with Beal's (2015) recommendations for diary studies. These abbreviated scales allowed us to capture the core dimensions of each construct while maintaining participant engagement across multiple survey waves. Unless otherwise indicated, items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

### 3.2.1 | FSSB

Supervisors reported their FSSB using a four-item short form (FSSB-SF) developed Hammer et al. (2013). Consistent with our weekly experience sampling design, the items were adapted in two ways. First, the wording was modified to reflect a weekly timeframe (i.e., "this week") rather than a general behavioral tendency. Second, because the original scale is designed for subordinate reports, items were reworded into a self-referent format (e.g., "I ..."). A sample item is: "This week, I demonstrated effective behaviors in juggling work and non-work issues with my employees." These adaptations are consistent with prior experience sampling research (e.g., Nezlek 2017), where measures are commonly adjusted in timeframe and referent to capture within-person variability while preserving the conceptual meaning of the construct. Over the 6-week period, Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranged from 0.66 to 0.89, with an average reliability of 0.74. Although the reliability of FSSB was somewhat lower in certain weeks, it remained within a commonly observed and acceptable range in experience sampling research, where within-person variability and a limited number of items may attenuate internal consistency estimates (Nezlek 2017).

### 3.2.2 | Work–Family Interpersonal Capitalization

We measured work–family interpersonal capitalization using three items from Ilies et al. (2017), assessing the extent to which supervisors shared positive work experiences with their partner. Although the original measure refers to "spouse," in this study, the referent was specified as "family member (i.e., the partner who participated in the survey)" to ensure inclusivity while maintaining a consistent focal interaction partner across participants. Thus, all items referred to interactions with the same partner within the dual-earner couple. A sample item is: "This week, I shared some interesting work events with my family member (i.e., the partner who participated in the survey)." Over the 6 weeks, Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranged from 0.70 to 0.90, with an average weekly reliability of 0.83.

### 3.2.3 | Family Role Performance

We assessed both supervisor and partner family role performance using eight items originally developed by Chen et al. (2013). Participants rated their partner's family role performance weekly using a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *to a large extent*), introduced by the prompt: "This week, to what extent do you think your partner fulfilled what is expected of him or her in relation to the following aspects of your current family life?"

Four items assessed task performance (e.g., "complete household responsibilities"), and four items assessed relationship performance (e.g., "keep family members connected with each other"). Over the 6-week period, Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranged from 0.92 to 0.95, with an average reliability of 0.93 for supervisors, and from 0.93 to 0.95, with an average reliability of 0.94 for partners.

### 3.2.4 | Family Harmony

Supervisors' perceptions of family harmony were assessed using 24 items from Kavikondala et al. (2016). A sample item is: "Family members express their care and concern to each other directly." Responses were collected in the baseline survey, and the scale demonstrated high internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.96$ ).

### 3.2.5 | Control Variables

Following prior research, we controlled for several demographic and contextual variables. Specifically, we controlled for supervisors' and partners' age, as prior research suggests that age is associated with life stage and family-related responsibilities that may influence work–family processes (Greenhaus and Powell 2012). We controlled for gender, as work–family dynamics are often shaped by gendered role expectations (Kelly et al. 2020; Shockley et al. 2025), particularly in contexts such as China where traditional divisions of family responsibilities may persist. In addition, we also controlled for education, as these variables reflect differences in access to job resources and family-related resources that may shape work–family experiences (Moen 2011). We also controlled for supervisors' managerial experience, measured with the item: "How many years have you been in a managerial or supervisory position?"—as leadership experience may influence the manner in which supervisors handle employee family issues (Lanaj and Jennings 2020). Finally, we included the number of children under 18 as a proxy for family responsibilities, given prior evidence that such responsibilities influence FSSB enactment (Hammer et al. 2009).

## 3.3 | Analytic Strategy

To test our hypotheses, we employed multilevel structural equation modeling (MSEM) using Mplus 8.3 (Muthén and Muthén 2017), which is well-suited to the nested structure of our weekly diary data—multiple weekly observations nested within individuals. This analytic framework allowed us to simultaneously examine Hypotheses 1–4, which include main effects, mediation, and serial mediation pathways, within a single comprehensive model.

Following recommendations from Preacher et al. (2010), we partitioned the observed variance in our key weekly variables—FSSB, work–family interpersonal capitalization, and family role performance—into within-person (Level 1) and between-person (Level 2) components. This multilevel decomposition reduces the risk of conflating within- and between-level effects, enhancing the precision of parameter estimates and theoretical interpretations (Stollberger et al. 2019).

To estimate mediation and serial mediation effects, we used a Bayesian estimation procedure with 1 000 000 iterations, treating the mean as the point estimator. Bayesian methods offer several advantages for multilevel mediation analysis, including greater accuracy and robustness in estimating indirect effects, particularly in complex and unbalanced designs (Depaoli and Clifton 2015). Statistical significance was determined by inspecting the 95% Bayesian credibility intervals (CIs): Effects were considered significant if the CI did not include zero.

For Hypothesis 5, which proposed a cross-level moderating effect, we conducted a multilevel path analysis. Consistent with Ohly et al. (2010), we grand-mean centered the Level 2 moderator—family harmony—and allowed the within-level path from FSSB to work–family interpersonal capitalization to vary randomly (i.e., specified a random slope). We then tested the moderation by including a Level 2 interaction term and conducted simple slope analyses to probe the nature of the interaction effect.

This analytic strategy allowed us to rigorously test both the within-person dynamics and cross-level interactions that underpin our spillover–crossover framework.

### 3.4 | Construct Validity

Prior to testing our hypotheses, we performed a multilevel confirmatory factor analysis (MCFA) to ensure that our study variables are conceptually distinct. Specifically, we included FSSB, work–family interpersonal capitalization, and family role performance at the within-person level. We incorporated family harmony at the between-person level. Our proposed five-factor model had a good fit to the data ( $\chi^2(472) = 1106.76, p < 0.001, CFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR_{within} = 0.07, SRMR_{between} = 0.08$ ) than an alternative four-factor model with FSSB and work–family interpersonal capitalization loading on a single factor ( $\chi^2(475) = 1389.72, p < 0.001, CFI = 0.87, TLI = 0.85, RMSEA = 0.07, SRMR_{within} = 0.09, SRMR_{between} = 0.08$ ) or a three-factor model with supervisor and partner family role performance also loading on a single factor ( $\chi^2(477) = 3139.04, p < 0.001, CFI = 0.62, TLI = 0.58, RMSEA = 0.11, SRMR_{within} = 0.23, SRMR_{between} = 0.08$ ) or a two-factor model where all within level variables loaded on a single factor ( $\chi^2(478) = 3474.61, p < 0.001, CFI = 0.57, TLI = 0.53, RMSEA = 0.12, SRMR_{within} = 0.20, SRMR_{between} = 0.08$ ). Taken together, these findings demonstrate the distinctive factor structure of our study variables.

## 4 | Results

To determine the appropriateness of multilevel modeling, we first estimated two-level null models for each of the focal variables. These models included no predictors and were used to partition the total variance into within-person (Level 1) and between-person (Level 2) components.

Results from the null models indicated substantial within-person variability, confirming the suitability of a multilevel

analytic approach. Specifically, the proportion of variance at the weekly level ranged from 29.14% for supervisors' family role performance to 54.12% for FSSB. These results underscore the dynamic, week-to-week fluctuations in the key constructs central to our theorizing.

Descriptive statistics, within-person variances, and within- and between-person correlations for all study variables are presented in Table 1.

### 4.1 | Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 stated that FSSB would positively predict the supervisors' family role performance. Figure 2 showed that the relationship between FSSB and supervisors' family role performance was insignificant ( $Estimate = 0.09, p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. Furthermore, as can be seen in Figure 2, work–family interpersonal capitalization mediated the positive relationship between FSSB and supervisors' family role performance ( $Estimate = 0.045, 95\% CI = [0.012, 0.088]$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported. Supporting Hypothesis 3, we found that the supervisors' family role performance was positively related to partners' family role performance ( $Estimate = 0.15, p < 0.001$ ) (Figure 2).

Hypothesis 4 predicted a sequential indirect effect (FSSB → work–family interpersonal capitalization → supervisors' family role performance → partners' family role performance). The indirect effect of FSSB on partner's family role performance through work–family interpersonal capitalization and supervisors' family role performance was significant ( $Estimate = 0.007, 95\% CI = [0.001, 0.016]$ ) (Figure 2). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that supervisors' perception of the family harmony enhanced the positive relationship between FSSB and work–family interpersonal capitalization. Our results showed that family harmony did exhibit a cross-level moderating effect ( $Estimate = -0.26, SE = 0.13, p < 0.05$ ). However, contrary to our expectations, we found an opposite-direction moderating effect of the family harmony. Figure 3 shows a plot of this interaction. Furthermore, our slope test showed that the relationship between FSSB and work–family interpersonal capitalization was stronger when supervisors perceived low family harmony ( $Estimate = 0.34, SE = 0.09, p < 0.01$ ) than when supervisors perceived high family harmony ( $Estimate = 0.08, SE = 0.14, p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

### 4.2 | Supplementary Analyses

To assess the robustness of our findings, we conducted two additional sets of analyses:

1. by removing control variables from the original model, and
2. by estimating multilevel lagged models in which the core weekly variables—FSSB, work–family interpersonal capitalization, and family role performance—at Week T were modelled while controlling for their corresponding values

**TABLE 1** | Means, standard deviations, percentage of within-individual variance, and correlations among study variables.

Variables	M	SD	Variance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
L1 variables																
1. FSSB	3.95	0.51	54.12%		0.32**	0.50***	0.18	0.29**	-0.08	0.07	-0.06	-0.05	0.10	-0.03	-0.07	-0.14
2. WFIC	3.67	0.76	37.50%	0.23***		0.55***	0.13	0.28**	-0.09	-0.04	0.02	0.03	0.06	-0.14	0.04	0.01
3. FP_supervisor	3.35	0.86	29.14%	0.37***	0.48***		0.11	0.34**	0.19	0.06	0.08	0.00	0.20	0.11	-0.06	-0.18
4. FP_partner	3.79	0.79	31.48%	0.12*	0.09	0.14**		0.18	0.06	0.04	-0.08	-0.07	0.10	0.10	-0.04	-0.23*
L2 variables																
Supervisor																
5. FH	4.39	0.49		0.23***	24***	0.33***	0.14**		0.15	0.10	0.05	0.01	0.14	0.04	-0.10	0.14
6. Age	36.12	6.33		-0.04	-0.07	0.15**	0.08	0.14**		-0.12	-0.14	0.08	0.30**	0.48***	0.12	-0.06
7. Gender	1.45	0.50		0.06	-0.02	0.05	0.05	0.11*	-0.14**		0.14	-0.14	-0.05	0.12	-1.00***	0.12
8. Education	4.45	0.57		-0.05	0.02	0.07	-0.07	0.04	-0.14**	0.13**		0.05	-0.06	0.01	-0.14	0.22*
Partner																
9. Children	0.93	0.72		-0.06	0.03	-0.01	-0.07	-0.02	0.08	-0.12*	0.03		0.19	-0.05	0.14	0.04
10. Experience	3.79	3.20		0.09	0.03	0.18***	0.07	0.11*	0.29***	-0.00	-0.06	0.15**		0.24*	0.05	-0.17
Education																
11. Age	37.03	8.41		-0.01	-0.12*	0.08	0.11*	0.01	0.45***	0.11*	0.02	-0.04	0.25***		-0.12	-0.34**
12. Gender	1.55	0.50		-0.06	0.02	-0.05	-0.05	-0.11*	0.14**	-1.00***	-0.13**	0.12*	0.00	-0.11*		-0.12
13. Education	3.91	0.92		-0.12*	0.02	-0.15**	-0.21***	0.13**	-0.08	0.13**	0.22***	0.06	-0.17***	-0.39***	-0.13**	

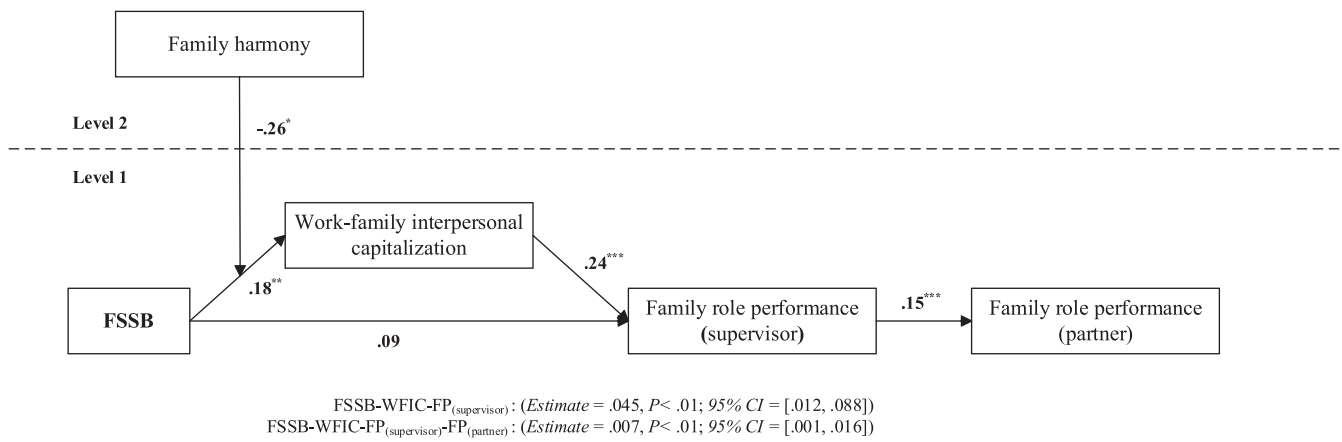
Note: Gender, 1 = male, 2 = female; Education, 1 = middle school and below; 2 = high school; 3 = college; 4. bachelor; 5 = master and over. Variance means within-variance which is based on results of the intercept-only model. Sigma-squared ( $\sigma^2$ ) represents within-person variance, tau ( $\tau_{00}$ ) represents between-person variance, and  $\sigma^2/(\sigma^2 + \tau_{00})$  equals the percentage of within-person variance. Correlations below the diagonal represent within-individual correlations ( $N$  at Level 1 = 441). Correlations above the diagonal represent between-individual correlations ( $N$  at Level 2 = 86). For Level 1 variables, means and standard deviation values are based on within-person scores. For Level 2 variables, means and standard deviations are based on between-person scores aggregated from Level 1 variables.

Abbreviations: Children = the number of children under 18; Experience = managerial experience; FH = family harmony; FP = family role performance; WFIC = work-family interpersonal capitalization.

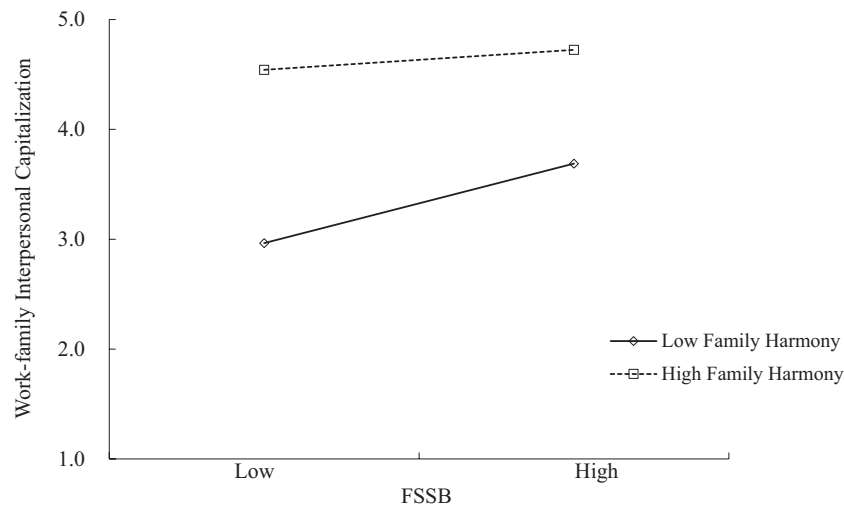
\* $p < 0.05$ .

\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .



**FIGURE 2** | Results for testing hypotheses.



**FIGURE 3** | Moderating effect of family harmony.

at Week T-1. This approach allows us to account for prior levels of the constructs and to examine whether week-to-week deviations in the predictor are associated with changes in the outcome over time.

The results remained largely consistent across both specifications, reinforcing the reliability of our conclusions.

First, FSSB was not directly related to supervisors' family role performance, neither in the model without controls (*Estimate* = 0.08,  $p > 0.05$ ) nor in the lagged model (*Estimate* = 0.09,  $p > 0.05$ ). However, as hypothesized, work-family interpersonal capitalization significantly mediated this relationship: Without controls: *Estimate* = 0.044, 95% *CI* = [0.008, 0.086]; Lagged model: *Estimate* = 0.042, 95% *CI* = [0.012, 0.079]. These results support our argument that the benefits of FSSB unfold indirectly, rather than through a direct path to family role performance.

Second, we found evidence for the crossover effect: Supervisors' family role performance was positively associated with partners' family role performance in both models (*Estimate* = 0.14,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Moreover, we tested the serial indirect effects proposed in our spillover-crossover process. The sequential mediation from

FSSB to partner's family role performance—via work-family interpersonal capitalization and supervisors' family role performance—was significant across both model versions: Without controls: *Estimate* = 0.007, 95% *CI* = [0.001, 0.015]. Lagged model: *Estimate* = 0.006, 95% *CI* = [0.001, 0.014]. These findings provide strong empirical support for the cascading effects of FSSB across individual and dyadic family dynamics.

Next, we examined the moderating role of family harmony on the relationship between FSSB and work-family interpersonal capitalization. Interestingly, although the effect was statistically significant, it emerged in the opposite direction than anticipated: Without controls: *Estimate* =  $-0.25$ , *SE* = 0.12,  $p < 0.05$ . Lagged model: *Estimate* =  $-0.28$ , *SE* = 0.11,  $p < 0.05$ .

This pattern suggests a compensatory effect, such that FSSB has a stronger influence on work-family interpersonal capitalization in lower-harmony families, where such support may be especially meaningful.

Finally, to rule out the possibility of reverse causality, we tested an alternative model in which supervisors' family role performance predicted FSSB. This reversed path was not statistically significant (*Estimate* = 0.08, 95% *CI* =  $[-0.007,$

0.159]), further reinforcing the directional assumptions of our theoretical model.

Taken together, these additional analyses confirm the stability and validity of our core findings and highlight the intricate, indirect, and context-sensitive ways in which FSSB shapes both supervisor and partner outcomes within the family domain.

## 5 | Discussion

This study theorized and empirically examined how and when FSSB are associated with supervisors' and their partners' family experiences through a spillover–crossover framework. Drawing on work–family enrichment theory and family systems theory, we employed a weekly diary design to capture the dynamic and within-person nature of these processes in dual-earner couples.

Our findings support a sequential, multi-stage process linking workplace behavior to family outcomes. Specifically, during weeks when supervisors reported higher levels of FSSB, they were more likely to share positive work experiences with their partners, an instance of work–family interpersonal capitalization. This intra-individual process was, in turn, associated with higher levels of supervisors' family role performance, which related to their partners' family role performance through a crossover mechanism. In this way, our findings suggest that the implications of FSSB extend beyond employee outcomes and may be embedded within broader relational systems that connect work and family domains.

Importantly, the absence of a direct relationship between FSSB and supervisors' family role performance offers a more nuanced view of how supportive leadership behaviors operate across domains. Drawing on conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll 1989), this pattern may reflect the coexistence of resource gain and resource depletion processes. On the one hand, engaging in FSSB may be associated with positive psychological and relational states, such as increased positive affect, a sense of purpose, and relational validation, which can facilitate family functioning through mechanisms such as interpersonal capitalization. On the other hand, enacting FSSB may require time, effort, and self-regulatory investment, potentially limiting the resources available for direct engagement in family roles. When considered together, these competing processes may offset one another at the direct level, resulting in a non-significant association between FSSB and family role performance while still allowing for indirect effects through relational mechanisms. This finding underscores the importance of examining not only whether resources are transferred across domains but also how they are enacted and transmitted.

With respect to boundary conditions, we found that the relationship between FSSB and work–family interpersonal capitalization was stronger when family harmony was lower, contrary to our initial prediction. One way to interpret this finding is through a compensation perspective (Edwards and Rothbard 2000), which suggests that individuals may seek to offset deficits in one life domain by investing more heavily in another. In lower-harmony family contexts, where

communication may be more limited or strained, positive work experiences associated with FSSB may become particularly salient. As a result, supervisors may be more motivated to share these experiences with their partners as a way of fostering more constructive interactions or rebalancing relational dynamics. In this sense, interpersonal capitalization may serve a compensatory function, becoming more strongly linked to FSSB when the family context is less supportive.

At the same time, it is important to distinguish between the *strength of the relationship* and the *overall level* of interpersonal capitalization. Although the association between FSSB and capitalization is stronger in lower-harmony contexts, the absolute level of capitalization remains higher in more harmonious families. As illustrated in Figure 3, individuals in high-harmony households report consistently higher levels of sharing, suggesting that supportive family environments provide a stronger baseline for work–family resource transmission. Taken together, these findings indicate that family harmony operates as a boundary condition that shapes how work-derived experiences are translated into relational behaviors at home—both by enabling higher baseline levels of interaction and by altering the marginal impact of work experiences.

Overall, these findings contribute to the broader literature on the work–family interface, leadership spillover, and crossover dynamics by demonstrating that the implications of FSSB are not confined to the workplace but are embedded within interconnected relational systems. By highlighting both intra-individual (spillover) and inter-individual (crossover) processes, as well as the contextual conditions under which these processes are more or less pronounced, our study provides a more nuanced understanding of how leadership behaviors are associated with family functioning across domains.

### 5.1 | Theoretical Contributions

#### 5.1.1 | Contributions to FSSB Research

First, our study contributes to the FSSB literature by advancing a more systemic and relational understanding of its implications. Prior research has predominantly examined the downstream effects of FSSB on employees (Crain and Stevens 2018; Guo et al. 2024), with comparatively limited attention to those who enact these behaviors and the broader systems in which they are embedded. As Walsh et al. (2019) note, FSSB does not occur in isolation; however, existing work has largely overlooked how supervisors themselves and their close relational partners are implicated in these processes.

By integrating work–family enrichment theory and family systems theory, we develop and test a spillover–crossover model that traces how FSSB is associated with supervisors' and their partners' family experiences. Importantly, our findings suggest that the implications of FSSB for supervisors are not direct, but are transmitted through relational mechanisms and unfold across domains. In doing so, we reposition FSSB not simply as a leader behavior with employee-focused outcomes, but as a relationally embedded process whose implications extend across interconnected work and family systems.

Second, we contribute by extending the scope of FSSB research beyond the supervisor–employee dyad to incorporate the supervisor–partner dyad. Although recent studies have begun to explore dyadic reciprocity within the workplace, such as how employees respond to supportive or unsupportive supervisors through leader–member exchange (LMX), OCBs, or social evaluations (Bagger and Li 2014; Choi et al. 2018; Yu et al. 2022), this line of work remains largely confined to organizational contexts. As a result, the potential for work-derived experiences to extend into employees' and supervisors' personal lives, particularly within close relationships, remains underexplored.

Our findings address this gap by demonstrating that experiences associated with FSSB are linked to relational processes that extend into the family domain. Specifically, we show that these processes unfold through work–family interpersonal capitalization and are associated with both supervisors' and partners' family role functioning (Hu et al. 2024; Marescaux et al. 2020). In doing so, we respond to recent calls to broaden theorizing on the cross-domain and multi-stakeholder implications of leadership (Stollberger et al. 2022), highlighting that the reach of FSSB extends beyond the workplace and into the relational systems in which leaders are embedded.

### 5.1.2 | Advancing Research on Interpersonal Capitalization

Our study also contributes to the literature on interpersonal capitalization by refining its theoretical role within the work–family interface. Prior research has largely conceptualized work–family interpersonal capitalization as an outcome of positive work experiences, with implications for individual well-being and relationship quality (Ilies et al. 2011, 2015; Ilies, Liu, et al. 2024). In contrast, we conceptualize interpersonal capitalization as a central behavioral mechanism through which work-related experiences are transmitted into the family domain.

By positioning interpersonal capitalization as a mediating process linking FSSB to family role performance, we move beyond treating it as a byproduct of positive experiences and instead highlight its functional role in resource transmission. Specifically, interpersonal capitalization captures a discrete communicative behavior through which individuals share and co-construct the meaning of work experiences with their partners. This reframing shifts attention from internal resource accumulation to interactional processes through which resources are externalized and enacted within relationships (Ilies, Bono, and Bakker 2024).

In doing so, our study extends the theoretical utility of interpersonal capitalization by embedding it within a broader spillover–crossover framework. This perspective emphasizes that work–family enrichment is not solely an intra-individual process, but is also shaped by communicative exchanges that connect partners and enable the movement of experiences across domains. As such, our findings contribute to a more relational and process-oriented understanding of how work-derived experiences are translated into family outcomes (Ilies, Liu, et al. 2024).

### 5.1.3 | Enriching Research on Dual-Earner Couples' Work–Life Dynamics

Finally, our study contributes to the work–family literature by advancing a more dyadic and dynamic perspective on dual-earner couples. Although prior research has increasingly acknowledged the importance of examining partners' experiences jointly (Booth-LeDoux et al. 2020), much of the literature continues to treat individuals as analytically independent. This limits our understanding of how work-related experiences unfold within interdependent relational systems.

By employing a weekly dyadic design and integrating spillover and crossover processes, we provide a more ecologically valid account of how work and family domains are interconnected within dual-earner households. Our findings suggest that supervisors' work-related experiences are linked not only to their own family functioning but also to that of their partners through relational processes that unfold over time. In this way, we highlight the importance of considering both within-person variation and between-partner interdependence when examining work–family dynamics.

More broadly, our study underscores that work–family processes are inherently relational and temporally embedded, shaped by ongoing interactions between partners rather than static individual characteristics. By capturing these dynamics, we contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how workplace behaviors are associated with family functioning and how these processes unfold across interconnected domains.

Taken together, these contributions advance the conceptual and empirical boundaries of research on FSSB, interpersonal capitalization, and dual-earner family systems. By emphasizing relational mechanisms, cross-domain processes, and dyadic interdependence, our study offers a more integrated framework for understanding how leadership behaviors are associated with outcomes that extend beyond the workplace and into the family domain.

## 5.2 | Practical Implications

Our findings offer important insights for organizational leaders, HR practitioners, supervisors, and dual-earner couples, highlighting the broader relevance of FSSB beyond employee outcomes. Specifically, this study demonstrates that FSSB not only improves the well-being and functioning of employees but also generates significant personal and relational benefits for supervisors and their partners. These insights underscore the need for organizations to actively promote, institutionalize, and reward FSSB in the workplace.

### 5.2.1 | Organizational Practices: Building Capability, Motivation, and Opportunity

Drawing on Michie et al.'s (2011) framework for behavior change, organizations can enhance supervisors' engagement in FSSB through three levers: capability, motivation, and opportunity.

**Capability:** As FSSB is a learnable and developable behavior (Hammer et al. 2011), organizations should invest in training and mentoring programs that enhance supervisors' skills in offering emotional and instrumental support, role modeling work–life balance, and creatively addressing family-related challenges. Peer mentorship and scenario-based learning can be particularly effective in cultivating these competencies.

**Motivation:** Supervisors are more likely to engage in FSSB when they recognize its broader benefits—not only for their teams but also for themselves and their families. Organizations should implement awareness campaigns, workshops, and leadership seminars that emphasize the role of FSSB in fostering productivity, employee engagement, and relational well-being. Sharing case studies or testimonials from leaders who have benefited personally from FSSB may further enhance intrinsic motivation.

**Opportunity:** Embedding FSSB into organizational structures and processes is crucial for sustaining supportive leadership. This includes aligning FSSB with corporate culture, integrating it into performance evaluations, and reflecting it in HR policies and leadership competency models. FSSB indicators can also be included in recruitment and selection through behavioral interviews that assess candidates' tendencies to provide emotional support, problem-solving, and work–family balance facilitation.

### 5.2.2 | Supervisor Self-Development and Family Spillover Awareness

For supervisors, our findings highlight the dual benefits of FSSB—supporting employees while also enriching their own family role performance and partner well-being. Supervisors should be encouraged to recognize that their leadership behaviors at work have tangible effects at home. Engaging in FSSB can foster a sense of purpose, build positive affect, and generate transferable skills—such as empathy, adaptability, and interpersonal sensitivity—that enhance their roles within the family.

Critically, sharing positive work experiences with partners—a process termed *work–family interpersonal capitalization*—serves as a key bridge between work-based resource generation and family enrichment. Supervisors are advised to make intentional efforts to communicate about their work achievements and meaningful interactions, especially in weeks when they provide high levels of employee support.

Importantly, this behavior is especially consequential for those experiencing lower levels of family harmony, where sharing work successes can play a compensatory role. In such contexts, proactive communication may reinforce emotional bonds and serve as a counterbalance to relational strain.

### 5.2.3 | Implications for Dual-Earner Couples

From a broader family systems perspective, dual-earner couples should recognize that individual well-being and functioning are interdependent and relationally constructed. Our findings suggest that partners are not merely passive recipients of

work–family dynamics but active participants in resource exchanges that cross role and domain boundaries.

Couples can benefit by embracing a systemic lens—viewing work and family as interconnected rather than siloed. By fostering open communication, mutual support, and resource sharing, dual-earner partners may better navigate the blurring of work–family boundaries and co-construct a relational climate that promotes both professional achievement and family cohesion.

## 6 | Limitations and Future Directions

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that present valuable opportunities for future research.

First, the study was conducted exclusively in China, with participants drawn from urban, dual-income households employed in the formal sector, where one partner held a supervisory position. This represents a specific demographic: middle-class families working in stable and professional contexts. As such, the generalizability of our findings may be limited. In precarious, informal, or rural labor markets—where supervisory roles are less structured and FSSB may be less feasible—the observed spillover and crossover effects may operate differently. Moreover, cultural context plays a critical role. Chinese society, shaped by Confucian traditions, places a strong emphasis on collectivism, familial obligation, and harmony (Ip 2014), which may amplify the salience and effectiveness of FSSB in ways that diverge from Western, individualistic cultures. Indeed, prior work suggests that family dynamics exert a more pronounced influence on well-being in collectivistic contexts (Kavikondala et al. 2016; Poulin et al. 2012). Future studies should examine whether and how these mechanisms replicate across occupationally and culturally diverse samples to better understand how labor environments and cultural norms shape work–family dynamics.

Second, although our study identified *family harmony* as a key moderator of the spillover process, other individual and contextual boundary conditions remain underexplored. For instance, supervisors' segmentation preferences—their inclination to separate or integrate work and family roles—may affect their likelihood of engaging in FSSB and sharing these experiences with their partners (Lee and Kim 2023). Likewise, employee-specific characteristics, such as the extent of their work–family conflict, may prompt greater supervisory support, particularly when such strain is visible or acute (Epstein et al. 2015). Future research should explore these and other dispositional or situational variables to better understand when and for whom FSSB is most effective. In addition, although gender was included as a control variable rather than a focal construct given our focus on within-person processes, it is often considered an important factor in work–family dynamics (Shockley et al. 2025). As times change, although the division of family labor among Chinese couples has changed a lot, shifting from the traditional “the man is the breadwinner and the woman is in charge of housekeeping” to jointly sharing family responsibilities, future research could examine the important role of gender as a potential boundary condition.

Third, as we explained earlier, we found that the direct effect of FSSB on supervisors' family role performance is not significant, indicating that there may be a competing effect process. Although we focused on the positive implications of FSSB, future research should also consider its potential costs. Although FSSB is often viewed as a prosocial and desirable behavior, it may come with unintended burdens for supervisors. For example, Lin et al. (2024) find that leadership role occupancy can elevate health risks, including for leaders' spouses, raising questions about whether engaging in FSSB could lead to emotional exhaustion, role overload, or blurred boundaries that undermine supervisors' own work–family balance. These possibilities are particularly relevant in high-demand contexts where supervisors may feel stretched across their personal and professional roles. Future studies should examine these *potential downsides*, including the conditions under which FSSB might result in burnout, reduced job satisfaction, or negative spillover effects.

Fourth, although our 6-week experience sampling method (ESM) enabled us to capture short-term fluctuations in FSSB and family role performance, it does not address longer-term dynamics. Work–family relationships are cumulative and evolve over time. Future research could extend these insights using longer time horizons or advanced longitudinal techniques such as latent growth modeling, which can uncover how supportive behaviors either build or erode family functioning across weeks, months, or even years. This would allow for a deeper understanding of the developmental trajectories of enrichment and strain in dual-earner households.

Fifth, although supervisors may enjoy greater autonomy and flexibility in enacting FSSB, their subordinates often operate within more constrained roles, with limited control over their schedules and work demands. Even in contexts where supervisors are supportive, structural inequalities in the workplace may inhibit employees from fully benefiting from FSSB (Kossek and Lautsch 2018). This asymmetry may constrain the reach and equity of work–family initiatives. Future research should examine how organizational infrastructure—such as flexible work arrangements, caregiving policies, and role autonomy—conditions the effectiveness of FSSB across hierarchical levels. We further encourage the use of multilevel and longitudinal designs to explore how broader institutional support interacts with supervisor behavior in shaping family outcomes.

Finally, another potential limitation of this study is the use of supervisors' self-reports to assess FSSB. Although the FSSB scale was originally developed for subordinate ratings (Hammer et al. 2013), we adapted it to a self-referent format and a weekly timeframe to capture within-person fluctuations in supervisors' enacted behaviors. Such adaptations are consistent with experience sampling methodology, where measures are often modified to reflect dynamic processes (e.g., Nezlek 2017). However, self-reports may be subject to biases such as social desirability or self-enhancement, which could inflate the observed relationships and limit conclusions about the absolute level of FSSB. Future research should incorporate multi-source data (e.g., subordinate or peer ratings) to further strengthen the validity of these findings.

Taken together, these limitations underscore the need for future studies to examine FSSB in a broader set of cultural, organizational, and structural contexts while also addressing the complex interplay of enrichment and strain that may arise from these behaviors. By exploring these avenues, future research can develop a more comprehensive, nuanced understanding of how FSSB operates across systems—and with what consequences for employees, supervisors, and their families.

## 7 | Conclusion

Leadership plays a vital role in organizational effectiveness, and serving as a supervisor not only benefits employees but can also have positive repercussions for supervisors themselves and their partners. By developing a spillover–crossover model that integrates work–family enrichment theory and family systems theory, our study provides compelling evidence of the far-reaching effects of FSSB. Specifically, our findings demonstrate that supervisors who engage in FSSB experience improved family role performance through a spillover mechanism. Furthermore, this enhanced family role performance crosses over to positively influence their partners' family role performance.

These findings underscore the broader implications of being family-supportive in the workplace, extending beyond employees to include supervisors and their families. By demonstrating the cascading benefits of FSSB, our study reinforces the value of fostering family-supportive leadership within organizations. Moreover, our research highlights the interdependent nature of work and family systems, suggesting that behaviors enacted in the workplace can create a chain reaction that enhances overall well-being and productivity across multiple domains.

It is our hope that this study inspires future research to further explore the downstream effects of FSSB, delving into additional contextual and individual factors that may shape these processes. By advancing our understanding of how supervisors' family-supportive behaviors influence not only employees but also their own lives and their partners' experiences, this research contributes to a more holistic perspective on leadership and work–family dynamics.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### Data Availability Statement

Data can be provided upon request. This manuscript has not utilized CHAT GBT or any related AI programs. The underlying raw data is

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