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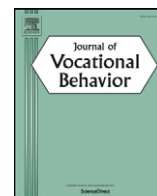
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## Job level, demands, and resources as antecedents of work–family conflict

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### ABSTRACT

Although substantial research has examined the conflict that employees experience between their work and family roles, the literature has not investigated the prevalence and antecedents of work–family conflict for individuals who work at different levels of an organization. This study examines differences in work–family conflict (work interference with family and family interference with work) for lower-level and higher-level employees, the factors that might explain these differences, and the differential effect of resources on conflict across job levels. Results indicate that higher-level workers experience greater conflict in both directions than lower-level workers, and that work- and home-based resources are differentially related to the conflict experienced by employees who hold lower-level and higher-level jobs.

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Substantial research has been conducted on the interface between work and family roles over the past several decades (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). Much of this research has been dominated by a conflict perspective (Barnett, 1998; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999) that is based on the premise that the demands associated with participation in one role can interfere with an individual's participation in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Numerous antecedents of work–family conflict—in particular, work and nonwork pressures and personal characteristics—have been identified in the literature (Byron, 2005), thereby enhancing our understanding of the negative interdependencies between employees' work and family lives.

Nevertheless, a number of factors limit our understanding of the work–family interface and constrain the continued development of the literature. Of particular concern to the present study is the relative lack of diversity within research samples (Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood, & Lambert, 2007; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). A substantial amount of the work–family research has been conducted on middle- to upper-level employees. Nearly 70% of the work–family studies that reported sample characteristics focused on managers and professionals, whereas only 6% of the studies incorporated employees in such lower-level specialties as production, operations, and laborers (Casper et al., 2007).

The restricted variation in job level in much of the work–family literature is a concern for several reasons. First, because the nature of work is different at varying levels of an organization, managers and professionals may experience different pressures and resources than lower-level employees (Lambert & Henly, 2007) and hence different connections between their work and family lives. Therefore, the factors that contribute to or ameliorate work–family conflict may vary as a function of an employee's location in an organization's hierarchy. It is instructive that Byron's (2005) comprehensive meta-analysis of the antecedents of work–

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family conflict did not examine job level either as an antecedent or a moderator because fewer than five studies were located that included job level, providing further evidence of a gap in the literature. It is fair to say that lower-level workers represent an understudied population in work–family research.

Second, the omission of job level in research on work–family conflict is a concern because it ignores the role of context in organizational behavior research (Johns, 2006; Rousseau & Fried, 2001). Johns (2006, p. 386) has defined context as “situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behavior as well as functional relationships between variables.” It is likely that the three dimensions of discrete context identified by Johns (2006)—the task, the social environment, and the physical environment—are substantially different for higher-level and lower-level employees (Heymann, Boynton-Jarrett, Carter, Bond, & Galinsky, 2002). Therefore, examining the role of job level in work–family conflict can provide a more nuanced appreciation of the role of context at the work–family interface.

To our knowledge, prior research has not attempted to examine and explain job-level differences in work–family conflict. To address this gap in the literature, the present study addressed three questions: (1) do lower- and higher-level employees experience different degrees of work–family conflict, both work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW)? (2) what factors explain or mediate the effect of job level on the two directions of work–family conflict? (3) do work and family resources have different effects on work–family conflict for lower- and higher-level employees?

## Theory and hypotheses

Two factors that produce high levels of WIF are the time requirements associated with work and the stressfulness of the job, which can produce time-based conflict and strain-based conflict respectively (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Substantial research has indicated that long work hours (Byron, 2005; Eby et al., 2005; Greenhaus, Bedeian, & Mossholder, 1987; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000) and work-related stressors (Byron, 2005; Carlson & Perrewe, 1999; Eby et al., 2005) are associated with high levels of WIF.

We suggest that because work hours and job demands increase as one rises in an organization’s hierarchy, higher-level employees are likely to experience more WIF than lower-level employees. First, higher-level employees spend substantially more time involved in work-related activities than lower-level employees (Brett & Stroh, 2003; Drago, 2007). Whereas management and professional positions commonly comprise at least a sixty-hour work week (Hill et al., 2006), lower-level employees may be affiliated with labor unions that have negotiated for comparatively fewer work hours (Berg & Frost, 2005), and much low-level labor often consists of part-time work (Pocock, Buchanan, & Campbell, 2004).

In addition to working long hours, managers and professionals are often responsible for the successful direction, coordination, and implementation of departmental and organizational strategy. Higher-level positions involve overseeing complex problems and orchestrating lower-level workers to meet the organization’s strategic goals. In contrast, lower-level work is typically associated with relatively little responsibility or ambiguity and is often characterized by monotonous and routine work (Berg & Frost, 2005; Heymann et al., 2002). Because higher-level employees are likely to work longer hours and experience greater job demands than lower-level employees, we predict that:

**Hypothesis 1a.** WIF is greater for employees in higher-level positions than employees in lower-level positions.

**Hypothesis 1b.** The relationship between job level and WIF is mediated by work hours and job demands.

Research has also shown that extensive time devoted to home and family activities, increased family demands, and the responsibilities associated with caring for children and aging parents are associated with high levels of FIW (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Byron, 2005). We suggest that because extensive family demands and time pressures are more typical for lower-level employees, they are likely to experience more FIW than higher-level employees.

The relative priority that individuals place on different life roles is associated with the time and energy they devote to these roles (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Lower-level employees tend to place greater priority on the family role, whereas higher-level workers stress the centrality of work in their lives (Burris, 1991). Family role salience may be associated with higher family demands, in part explaining why lower- and middle-income employees spend substantially more time caring for their dependents than do higher-income earners (Heymann, 2000). In addition, child-care services typically cost lower-income families 15% of their income compared to only 6% for higher-income families (Gianarelli & Barsimantov, 2000). This extra burden often forces lower-level workers to personally care for their children or elders, with these increased family demands frequently leading to unscheduled absences and/or reductions in work hours (Hirschfeld, Schmitt, & Bedeian, 2002). Because lower-level workers are likely to experience stronger family demands and spend more hours on family tasks than higher-level workers, we propose:

**Hypothesis 2a.** FIW is greater for employees in lower-level positions than employees in higher-level positions.

**Hypothesis 2b.** The relationship between job level and FIW is mediated by family demands and the time spent on home-related activities.

### *The role of organizational and family resources*

We previously proposed that higher-level employees experience greater WIF than lower-level employees due to the extensive demands arising from their work domain. We now suggest that higher-level employees incur greater benefits than lower-level

employees from three organization-based resources associated with reducing such conflict: family-supportive cultures, family-supportive supervision, and high levels of job autonomy.

Family-supportive organizational cultures (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2006; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999) and family-supportive supervision (O'Driscoll et al., 2003; Thomas & Ganster, 1995) have been shown to be negatively related to work–family conflict, presumably because they reduce the time demands and/or increase the flexibility associated with work. Moreover, the impact of family-supportive organizations on work–family conflict seems to be stronger for employees with greater work demands and for those who spend more time at work (Grandey, Cordeiro, & Judd, 2007). Presumably these individuals need flexibility and understanding more than those with comparatively fewer work demands and hours in order to adequately balance obligations in both the home and work domains. Because higher-level workers typically have greater work demands and work longer hours than those at lower levels (Hill et al., 2006), family-supportive cultures and family-supportive supervisors should have stronger effects on WIF for higher-level employees than for lower-level employees.

Job autonomy is another resource that may help mitigate WIF more strongly for higher-level employees than for lower-level employees. Having sufficient job control can help protect employees from the stress and strain produced by work-related demands (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). With increased control over work duties and decisions, higher-level employees may be better able to craft their jobs so as to minimize the interference of work with family life. Previous research utilizing samples of predominantly higher-level employees supports the influence of job control on reducing work–family conflict (Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, 2006). However, because lower-level jobs tend to be routine and characterized by standardized procedures and lower levels of stress (Berg & Frost, 2005), increasing individual control is less likely to influence how and when work is completed for lower-level employees, thereby limiting its relationship with WIF for these workers.

**Hypothesis 3a.** The negative relationship between perceptions of a family-supportive organizational culture and WIF is stronger for higher-level employees than lower-level employees.

**Hypothesis 3b.** The negative relationship between perceptions of having a family-supportive supervisor and WIF is stronger for higher-level employees than lower-level employees.

**Hypothesis 3c.** The negative relationship between job autonomy and WIF is stronger for higher-level employees than lower-level employees.

Whereas work-based resources may reduce WIF more strongly for higher-level employees because of their more extensive work demands and long work hours, home-based resources may reduce FIW more strongly for lower-level employees because of their more extensive family demands and the greater salience of their family role. We examine three home-based resources: having a supportive family, having an employed spouse, and owning a home.

A number of studies have shown that family support can relieve the pressures and stress of home-based demands and reduce FIW (Byron, 2005, Carlson & Perrewé, 1999; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). It is likely that family support is particularly important for individuals confronted with extensive home-based demands because they have a greater need for assistance. Because lower-level employees feel a greater family burden (Burris, 1991), spend substantially more time caring for family members (Heymann, 2000; Hirschfeld et al., 2002), and do not enjoy the same financial capacity to outsource family responsibilities (Gianarelli & Barsimantov, 2000), family-based support may more substantially reduce their time pressures and stress and consequently the extent to which their family interferes with work.

Research suggests that having an employed spouse is positively associated with FIW (Kirchmeyer, 1993; Rotondo & Kincaid, 2008) because family tasks, which must be shared by both partners, can intrude into work responsibilities. However, because lower-level employees have fewer job demands and work fewer hours for family responsibilities to interfere with, sharing family responsibilities is not as likely to create added conflict for these workers. Instead, given the financial strains commonly faced by lower-level employees (Gianarelli & Barsimantov, 2000), they may place greater value on the additional income that is provided by a working spouse. Therefore, lower-level employees with a working spouse may experience less family stress because of the additional income and the increased access to benefits (e.g., health care, pension plans, and child-care programs) thereby experiencing lower levels of FIW (Byron, 2005).

Home ownership is directly related to individual perceptions of financial well-being (Penn, 2009). Lower-level employees, who experience greater difficulty purchasing a home than higher-level employees, are often forced to rent for extended periods of time to save and conserve their resources. Therefore, lower-level employees who own a home may feel less threatened by the possibility of losing shelter for their family due to the lack of stability that accompanies renting one's home and the concern they may hold about the potential threat of unemployment (Karsten & Moser, 2009). As a result, home ownership may offer lower-level employees greater piece of mind and financial well-being relative to higher-level employees, which can reduce home-based stress (Penn, 2009) and FIW (Byron, 2005).

**Hypothesis 4a.** The negative relationship between family support and FIW is stronger for lower-level employees than higher-level employees.

**Hypothesis 4b.** The negative relationship between having a working spouse and FIW is stronger for lower-level employees than higher-level employees.

**Hypothesis 4c.** The negative relationship between home ownership and FIW is stronger for lower-level employees than higher-level employees.

## Method

### Sample

Respondents in this study came from the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW) conducted by the Families and Work Institute. The data set is comprised of a nationally representative sample of employed adults in the United States and is used to examine how work and personal lives have changed over time. (See Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2003 for details about the NSCW procedures.) We included only those employees who indicated that they currently reside with their spouse or partner and have at least one child at home because being in a marriage or committed relationship and having one or more children are likely to play a significant role in work–family relationships (Byron, 2005; Eby et al., 2005). To better reflect the experiences of organizational employees working in competitive markets, the sample was further reduced to include only those individuals employed by organizations in the private sector, thereby eliminating those who were either self-employed or government workers. Our final sample consisted of 1090 respondents with an average age of 41.6 years. Fifty-eight percent of the sample was male and 81.4% of the sample was white.

### Measures

#### Job level

Dummy codes were used to reflect higher- and lower-level employees (0 = lower-level, 1 = higher-level). The lower-level group was comprised of hourly workers whose occupational classification was administrative support, service, production, operations, or repair. The higher-level group was composed of salaried employees classified as executives, managers, administrators, or professionals. In support of our classification, we found that higher-level employees earned a considerably higher income than lower-level employees (lower-level:  $M = \$31,873.83$ ,  $SD = \$19,839.52$ , higher-level:  $M = \$58,861.61$ ,  $SD = \$42,988.82$ ,  $t = 11.49$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Demographic analyses revealed that the average age was 44 years for higher-level employees and 41 years for lower-level employees ( $p < .01$ ). Additionally, women comprised 46% of the higher-level group and 39% of the lower-level group ( $p < .05$ ), and non-whites made up 10% of the higher-level group and 22% of the lower-level group ( $p < .01$ ).

#### WIF and FIW

Ten items assessed conflict at the work–family interface. Participants indicated the prevalence of conflict on a scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Factor analyses revealed two distinct dimensions representing the directionality of the conflict. Consistent with current theory (Anderson et al., 2002; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk, & Beutell, 1996) the two dimensions (from work to family and from family to work) were used to represent WIF and FIW respectively. Items assessing WIF included, “How often have you NOT had enough time for your family or other important people in your life because of your job?” and “How often has your job kept you from concentrating on important things in your family or personal life?” ( $\alpha = .87$ ). The remaining five items assessed FIW. Sample items included, “How often have you not had enough time for your job because of your family?” and “How often has your family or personal life kept you from doing as good a job at work as you could?” ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

#### Job demands

Job demands ( $\alpha = .70$ ) was comprised of five items, including “I never seem to have enough time to get everything done on my job” and “My job requires that I work very hard.” Respondents indicated the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with these statements on a four-point scale ranging from 1, “strongly agree,” to 4, “strongly disagree.” Scores were reversed such that high scores reflect high job demands. *Work Hours* was calculated as the average number of hours respondents reported devoting to their job in a typical week.

#### Family demands

Family demands ( $\alpha = .80$ ) was measured with three items assessing the level of responsibility respondents had for the following three home-related activities, cooking, cleaning, and child-care. Responses included, 1 = My spouse/partner has the greatest responsibility, 2 = I share this responsibility about equally with my spouse/partner, and 3 = I have the greatest responsibility.

#### Home hours

Home hours were calculated as the average number of hours respondents spent per week attending to child-care and home-based chores.

#### Work-based resources

Four items were used to create the *job autonomy* measure. Respondents indicated on a 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree) their level of agreement with statements such as “I have a lot of say about what happens on my job” and “It is basically my own responsibility to decide how my job gets done” ( $\alpha = .70$ ). *Family-supportive culture* and *family-supportive supervision* were each measured using 5 items assessed on four-point scales in which respondents expressed their level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree) to statements concerning their workplace and direct supervisor. Family-

supportive culture items (reverse coded) included, “There is an unwritten rule at my place of employment that you can’t take care of family needs on company time” and “At my place of employment, employees who put their family or personal needs ahead of their jobs are not looked on favorably” ( $\alpha = .73$ ). Family-supportive supervision items included, “My supervisor or manager accommodates me when I have family or personal business to take care of?” and “My supervisor or manager is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work” ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

#### Home-based resources

Family support ( $\alpha = .80$ ) was measured with three items assessing the degree to which individuals receive help and support with family responsibilities. Having a *working spouse* and *home ownership* were each measured with one-item objective indicators. To assess a spouse’s employment, respondents were asked, “Does your partner work for pay?” (1 = not employed, 2 = employed), and to determine whether respondents owned their own home, they were asked, “Do you own your own home?” (1 = do not own home, 2 = own home).

#### Controls

Demographic variables are likely to play a major role within the work–family interface (Byron, 2005). We examined the relationships between key demographic characteristics and the study variables. Because age and race were significantly related to job level (as reported above) and to WIF (age  $r = -.13$ ,  $p < .01$ ; race  $r = -.13$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and FIW (age  $r = -.06$ ,  $p < .05$ ; race  $r = -.11$ ,  $p < .01$ ), they were controlled in all analyses. Although sex was related to job level (reported above), it was unrelated to WIF ( $r = -.04$ , ns) and FIW ( $r = -.01$ ) and was not controlled in the analyses.

## Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations among variables are presented in Table 1. Hierarchical regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses. Job level was positively related to WIF ( $r = .12$ ,  $p < .01$ ), as expected, and was also positively related to FIW ( $r = .09$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which was unexpected. In addition, job demands and work hours were positively related to both WIF ( $r = .50$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $r = .26$ ,  $p < .01$  respectively) and FIW ( $r = .29$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $r = .09$ ,  $p < .01$  respectively).

Tables 2 through 4 provide the results of the hierarchical regression analyses used to test the hypotheses. The findings reported in Table 2 provide support for Hypothesis 1a, which proposed that higher-level employees would experience greater levels of WIF than lower-level employees ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Hypothesis 1b, which predicted that work-based stressors (job demands and work hours) would mediate the relationship between job level and WIF was also supported. First, job level was positively related to job demands ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and work hours ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .01$ ; analyses not shown). Second, job demands ( $\beta = .46$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and work hours ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were each related to WIF. Finally, the relationship between job level and WIF was no longer significant ( $\beta = -.01$ , ns) when job demands and work hours were entered in Step 3 of the regression analysis.

As shown in Table 2, Hypothesis 2a, which predicted that lower-level employees would experience more FIW than higher-level employees, was not supported. Although job level was related to FIW ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $p < .01$ ), it was the higher-level employee rather than the lower-level employee who experienced more FIW, and this relationship was not mediated by family demands or home hours (Hypothesis 2b). We then conducted post-hoc analyses that revealed that work-based stressors mediated the positive relationship between job level and FIW. That is, job level was positively related to job demands ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and work hours ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .01$ ), job demands ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and work hours ( $\beta = .09$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were related to FIW, and the relationship between job level and FIW was no longer significant ( $\beta = .01$ , ns) when job demands and work hours were entered in Step 3 of the regression analysis. These analyses indicate that higher-level employees experience more FIW because they have more substantial job demands and work longer hours than lower-level employees.

Hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 3c, which predicted that the negative relationships of work-based resources with WIF would be stronger for higher-level employees than for lower-level employees, were supported. As seen in Table 3, the interactions of job level with autonomy ( $\beta = -.06$ ,  $p < .05$ ), family-supportive supervision ( $\beta = -.07$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and family-supportive culture ( $\beta = -.06$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were all significant. Using the procedure suggested by Aiken and West (1991), the interactions were plotted to determine the shape of the moderator effects. As seen in Fig. 1, job autonomy mitigated WIF to a greater extent for higher-level employees than for lower-level employees. Plots of the interactions for family-supportive supervision and family-supportive culture were virtually identical and were not included due to space limitations. Simple-slope tests (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003; results available from the authors) indicated that job autonomy, family-supportive supervision, and family-supportive culture were significantly related to WIF for both higher-level and lower-level employees. Nevertheless, the relationships were stronger for the higher-level group than the lower-level group.

Hypotheses 4a, 4b, and 4c predicted that the negative relationships of home-based resources with FIW would be stronger for lower-level employees than for higher-level employees. As seen in Table 4, the interactions of job level with having a working spouse ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and home ownership ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were both significant. As Fig. 2 indicates, owning one’s own home mitigated FIW to a greater extent for lower-level employees than for higher-level employees. A plot of the interaction between having a working spouse and job level was virtually identical and was not included due to space limitations. Thus support was found for Hypotheses 4b and 4c. Simple-slope tests (Cohen et al., 2003; results available from the authors) indicated that having a working spouse and owning a home were negatively related with FIW for lower-level employees but were unrelated to FIW for higher-level employees. No support was not found for Hypothesis 4a as the interaction of job level with family support was not significant ( $\beta = .00$ , ns).

**Table 1**  
Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables.<sup>a</sup>

Variable	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
1. Age	41.62	11.6														
2. Race <sup>b</sup>	1.18	.38	-.10**													
3. Family-supportive culture	2.98	.79	.08**	-.17**												
4. Family-supportive supervision	3.24	.75	.03	-.00	.50**											
5. Job autonomy	2.96	.75	.07*	-.06*	.29**	.31**										
6. Family support	3.08	.98	-.09**	-.07*	.08**	.13**	.04									
7. Working spouse <sup>c</sup>	1.75	.43	-.03	-.03	.07*	-.02	-.06	-.01								
8. Home ownership <sup>d</sup>	1.77	.42	.42**	-.22**	.15**	.01	.11**	.02	.08**							
9. Job level <sup>e</sup>	.35	.48	.14**	-.16**	.17**	.05	.26**	.03	.07*	.22**						
10. Job demands	2.89	.78	-.04	-.01	-.30**	-.23**	-.10**	-.05	-.01	.06*	.23**					
11. Work hours	44.68	12.01	-.03	.05	-.09**	-.04	.06	-.03	-.05	.06*	.17**	.30**				
12. Family demands	1.95	.74	-.05	-.04	.04	.05	-.07*	.04	.34**	.04	.05	-.02	-.27**			
13. Home hours	30.82	33.02	-.22**	.11**	-.03	.05	-.06	-.02	.08**	-.11**	-.12**	.00	-.14**	.16**		
14. WIF	2.54	.92	-.13**	-.11**	-.33**	-.31**	-.14**	-.12*	-.04	-.02	.12**	.50**	.26**	-.06*	-.07*	
15. FIW	2.05	.69	-.06*	-.09**	-.18**	-.07*	.01	-.12**	-.03	-.04	.09**	.29**	.09**	.02	-.01	.54**

<sup>a</sup> N = 1090.

<sup>b</sup> 1 = White; 2 = Other.

\*\* p < .01.

\* p < .05.

<sup>c</sup> 1 = Not Employed; 2 = Employed.

<sup>d</sup> 1 = Do not own home; 2 = Own home.

<sup>e</sup> 0 = Low; 1 = High.

**Table 2**

The relationship between job level and WIF mediated by job demands and work hours and the relationship between job level and FIW mediated by family demands and home hours.

Dependent variable	WIF			FIW		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Step 1						
Age	-.14**	-.15**	-.11**	-.07*	-.08*	-.06*
Race	-.13**	-.11**	-.13**	-.10**	-.09**	-.09**
Step 2						
Job level		.13**	-.01		.08**	.09**
Step 3						
Job demands			.46**			
Work hours			.13**			
Family demands						.00
Home hours						-.01
R <sup>2</sup>	.03	.05	.29	.01	.02	.02
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	.03**	.02**	.25**	.01**	.01**	.00

\*\* p<.01.

\* p<.05.

**Discussion**

Building from recent observations on the prevalence of managerial and professional samples in work–family research (Casper et al., 2007) and suggestions to more fully address the role of context in organizational behavior (Johns, 2006), this study incorporated one contextual element, job level, into the study of work–family conflict. Our intention was to determine whether lower-level employees, an understudied population in the work–family literature, experience different levels and sources of conflict than higher-level workers. Johns (2006) suggested that a study’s context can affect the occurrence of a particular variable (in this case, work–family conflict) as well as its relationships with other variables. Our findings provide support for both roles of context at the work–family interface.

First, regarding the occurrence of work–family conflict, we found that higher-level employees experience greater WIF than those at lower levels of the organization. Moreover, as expected, the greater WIF among higher-level workers was due to the more extensive job demands and work hours associated with higher-level positions. However, unexpectedly, higher-level workers also experience greater FIW, which was also explained by their more extensive job demands and work hours. In other words, higher-level employees experience more FIW not because they have more extensive demands at home that interfere with work but rather because they have more extensive demands at work that are interfered with by their family responsibilities. This finding calls into question the prevailing view that family-related stressors are the primary contributors to FIW (Anderson et al., 2002; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Parasuraman et al., 1996) and suggests the need for additional research to examine the relative impact of work demands and family demands on both directions of work–family conflict.

Second, our findings indicate that the contextual element of job level also affects the extent to which work- and home-based resources are associated with work–family conflict. Although lower-level workers are thought to be in greater need of organizational work-life initiatives (Gault & Lovell, 2006), we found that three work-based resources (job autonomy, family-

**Table 3**

Interactions between work-based resources and job level predicting WIF.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Step 1									
Age	-.14**	-.15**	-.15**	-.15**	-.15**	-.15**	-.14**	-.14**	-.14**
Race	-.13**	-.11**	-.11**	-.12**	-.11**	-.11**	-.13**	-.16**	-.16**
Step 2									
Job level		.18**	.19**		.13**	.14**		.18**	.19**
Job autonomy		-.18**	-.19**						
Family-supportive supervision					-.31**	-.32**			
Family-supportive culture								-.37**	-.38**
Step 3									
Job level × job autonomy			-.06*						
Job level × family-supportive sup						-.07*			
Job level × family-supportive culture									-.06*
R <sup>2</sup>	.03	.07	.08	.03	.14	.15	.03	.17	.18
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	.03**	.04**	.01*	.03**	.11**	.01*	.03**	.14**	.01*

\*\* p<.01.

\* p<.05.



**Table 4**  
Interactions between home-based resources and job level predicting FIW.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Step 1									
Age	-.07*	-.09**	-.09**	-.07*	-.08**	-.08**	-.07*	-.06	-.06
Race	-.11**	-.10**	-.10**	-.10**	-.09**	-.09**	-.10**	-.09**	-.10**
Step 2									
Job level		.09**	.09**		.09**	.08**		.09**	.08*
Family support		-.13**	-.13**						
Working spouse					-.04	-.04			
Home ownership								-.05	-.03
Step 3									
Job level × family support			.00						
Job level × working spouse						.06*			
Job level × home ownership									.07*
R <sup>2</sup>	.01	.04	.04	.01	.02	.03	.01	.02	.03
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	.01**	.02**	.00	.01**	.01**	.01*	.01**	.01**	.01*

\* p < .05.  
\*\* p < .01.

supportive culture, and family-supportive supervision) were more strongly related to WIF for higher-level employees. This is not to say that these resources were unimportant to lower-level employees, as their relationships with WIF were negative across both job levels, but rather that they reduced WIF to a greater extent for higher-level workers than for those at lower levels.

To test the notion that this difference stems from the more extensive work demands of higher-level employees, we conducted post-hoc analyses controlling for job demands and work hours while testing the interactions between the three organizational resources and job level predicting WIF. All three interactions lost significance when controlling for job demands and work hours, supporting our belief that organizational resources are of greater value to higher-level workers because of their increased demands at work. Future research should examine the relative value of additional work-family resources (e.g., flexible work arrangements and dependent care services) to determine whether some work-family initiatives are particularly helpful to lower-level employees.

Additionally, we found that the negative effects of two home-based resources—home ownership and an employed spouse—on FIW were stronger for lower-level workers than higher-level employees. Because post-hoc analyses revealed that home demands and home hours did *not* explain these moderator effects, future research is necessary to identify other factors that explain why lower-level employees benefited more from these resources. For example, home ownership may provide a secure, comfortable, and less stressful home environment to individuals at lower levels of the organization that is not felt as extensively by employees at higher levels. The fact that home ownership actually increased FIW for higher-level workers while reducing it for lower-level workers suggests that the same resource could be either a bane or boon for workers at different levels of the organization, a promising avenue for future research.

Similarly, understanding why spousal employment had a negative effect on FIW only for lower-level employees requires additional research. It may be that many of the family strains felt by lower-level workers result from financial stressors that can be reduced by the additional income provided by a working spouse. It is also possible that when both spouses are working, the likelihood of being provided employer-sponsored resources (e.g., dependent care and flexible work schedules) are doubled, thereby decreasing FIW.

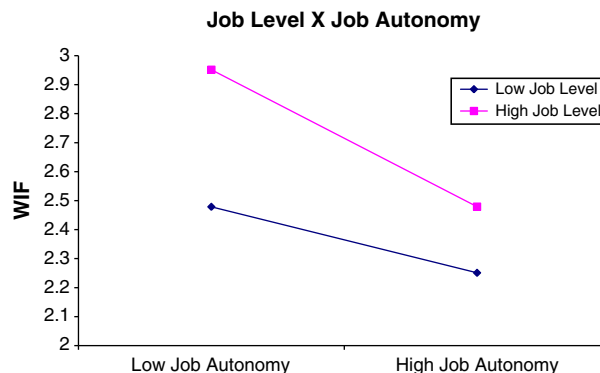


Fig. 1. Interaction of job level and job autonomy on WIF.

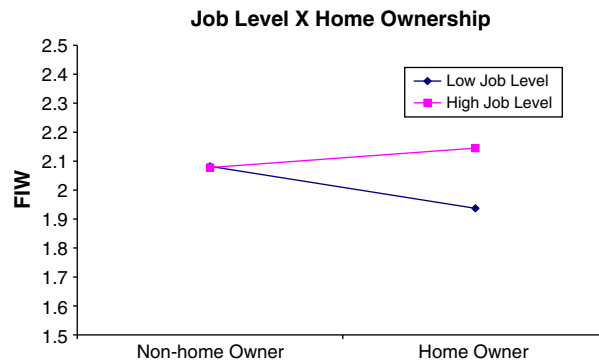


Fig. 2. Interaction of job level and home ownership on FIW.

### Limitations and future research

As with all research, the present study has limitations that restrict the conclusions that may be drawn. Although our predictions were grounded in theory, the study's cross-sectional design makes it impossible to determine the causal direction of the observed relationships. In addition, our reliance on single-source data is a cause for concern. Although some researchers question whether common method variance inflates the relationships between study variables (Spector, 2006), we have nevertheless employed some of the procedures recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) to minimize its effect such as measuring many of the study variables (e.g. spousal employment, home ownership, work hours, and home hours) with objective indicators. Moreover, the presence of a number of significant interactions in this study argues against an overwhelming influence of common method variance (Evans, 1985). Nevertheless, multi-source data collection from supervisors and family members as well as a longitudinal research design may help alleviate concerns over method bias in future research. Furthermore, although one strength of this study is its large and diverse sample, the population is limited to U.S. employees in the private sector. Future research may seek to expand the examination of these relationships to other segments of the economy, to employees in other countries, and to the self-employed.

Along with the recommendations identified above, the present study suggests additional areas for future inquiry. For example, it would be helpful to examine the impact of job level on a broader array of work–family outcomes such as work–family enrichment or facilitation, fit, and balance (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Moreover, future research could examine individuals who have moved from lower- to higher-level positions, or vice versa, to determine the degree to which it is the demands of the job or one's personal characteristics that explain the levels and antecedents of work–family conflict, enrichment, fit, and balance.

In addition, research should examine the impact of additional contextual factors besides job level on the work–family interface. The implications of cultural influences for theory and research at the work–family interface have already been recognized (Powell, Francesco, & Ling, 2009). Other contextual candidates for examination in work–family research include industry, the business strategy of the employer, and the health of the economy.

### Conclusions

The results of the present study suggest that lower-level employees, an understudied population in work–family research, differ from higher-level employees not only in the amount of work–family conflict they experience but also the resources that can potentially reduce conflict. The findings also suggest more broadly that jobs at different levels of an organization's hierarchy provide a useful context in which to examine the work–family interface. Considerably more research is needed to understand how job level and other contextual factors shape employees' experiences and the relationships between their work and family lives.

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