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Failing to Be Family-Supportive: Implications for Supervisors

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Family-supportive supervision benefits employees in many ways. But what are the implications for the supervisors themselves, particularly when this support is not extended? Drawing on social exchange theory, we frame family-supportive supervision as a desirable resource that when withheld may trigger negative social responses from employees. We hypothesize that workplace ostracism is a mechanism through which employees sanction supervisors who fail to be family-supportive, thereby harming supervisor well-being. Study 1 captured the employee perspective and utilized an experimental design to understand whether employees engage in ostracism in response to a lack of family-supportive supervision. In Study 2, we captured the supervisor perspective with multisource data to examine whether supervisors report ostracism and in turn lower subjective well-being when employees report a lack of family-supportive supervision. Consistent findings were observed across studies, suggesting negative outcomes for supervisors who fail to be family-supportive. In Study 2, we also examined moderators of the relationship between failing to be family-supportive and workplace ostracism and potential conditional indirect effects. However, we did not find evidence of such effects. Theoretical implications for the study of family-supportive supervision and workplace ostracism are discussed.

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Achieving work-life balance is a top concern for U.S. workers (Drexler, 2013). Yet headlines reveal managerial practices that are unsupportive of employee efforts to balance life and work. For example, a recent article describes how a Walmart supervisor would not grant a nauseous, pregnant employee a work break without a physician's note (Strauss, 2018). How might employees reciprocate when faced with a lack of support, especially from more powerful superiors, when their desire is to balance life with work? Past research on the construct of family-supportive supervision finds many positive benefits for employees receiving this valuable resource, including lower work-family conflict and improved well-being (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011). But the research to date is almost exclusively one-sided. What is missing is evidence of the impact of family-supportive supervision on the supervisors responsible for providing such support, particularly when such support is not provided.

Defined by Allen (2001), *family-supportive supervision* includes supervisor behaviors that facilitate and promote effective management of work and life for employees, such as creatively arranging flexible work hours, lending instrumental and emotional support, and serving as a role model for balance (Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hanson, 2009; Kossek & Distelberg, 2009). Although the construct label may suggest otherwise, family-supportive supervision is beneficial not only to employees with families but to others as well (e.g., individuals without children) as such behaviors still facilitate work-life balance, employee engagement, and well-being (Matthews, Mills, Trout, & English, 2014). Supervisors are often in the best position to provide family-supportive supervision (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009) since they are the "most proximal representative of the work organization and the authority most involved in an employee's daily work activity" (Major & Lauzun, 2010: 71). Employees place high value on support in the work-family domain; people are more attracted to employers who are more family-supportive (Wayne & Casper, 2016), and organizations with more positive reputations regarding work-family issues have applicants with higher job pursuit intentions (Wayne & Casper, 2012). These findings underscore the importance of work-family support, and in recent years, the notion of family-supportiveness has shifted from a resource employees desire to one they expect (Wayne & Casper, 2016).

This requires a paradigm shift: What happens when supervisors fail to be family-supportive? For example, supervisors may work countless hours and serve as a poor role model for employees and be inflexible in dealing with scheduling conflicts and thus fail to provide instrumental support (Hammer et al., 2009). There are many reasons for such failures, especially in the United States, which was the context for our research. Ollier-Malaterre and Foucreault (2017) point to both structural and cultural factors that influence support for work-life balance. In the United States, there are several structural impediments to balance, including no federal mandate for paid family leave (Doerer, 2015; Ollier-Malaterre & Foucreault, 2017), which suggests that supervisor family support may be even more critical in this context. Additionally, cultural factors may lead supervisors in the United States to provide low family-specific support. As an individualistic society, U.S. supervisors may believe that their employees are responsible for figuring out their own approach to balance,

whereas supervisors in collectivist cultures may be more inclined to look out for their employees' work-life welfare (Powell, Francesco, & Ling, 2009). In the United States, supervisors' failure to be family-supportive may also stem from shared cultural beliefs regarding the ideal employee and the work devotion schema, the belief that work should take precedent over other considerations in life (J. C. Williams, Berdahl, & Vandello, 2016; J. C. Williams, Blair-Loy, & Berdahl, 2013). This may lead supervisors to be so consumed in their own work and the bottom line that they simply do not prioritize employee work-life balance. Some supervisors may not even be empowered by their employers to be family-supportive (Major & Lauzun, 2010). For instance, a supervisor may be unable to modify a shift schedule to accommodate employee requests due to organizational policy, even if they wanted to support their employee. Yet as a central influence on employees, supervisor behavior shapes employees' perceptions of the family-supportiveness of the organization (Matthews & Toumbeva, 2015).

We propose that failing to be family-supportive may have deleterious implications not only for employees (Kelloway, Sivanathan, Francis, & Barling, 2005) but also for supervisors. We ground our hypotheses in social exchange theory, with particular attention to Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, and Hall's (2017) work. Cropanzano et al. propose two dimensions of social exchange: activity (active/exhibit or inactive/withhold) and hedonic value (desirable/positive or undesirable/negative). Social exchanges are likely to be of the same form (Gouldner, 1960), so employees likely reciprocate in kind across both dimensions of exchange (Cropanzano et al., 2017). With this theory in mind, we argue that supervisors who fail to be family-supportive withhold desirable behaviors from employees and propose that employees withhold desirable behaviors in return through workplace ostracism directed at their supervisor (Ferris, Chen, & Lim, 2017). Workplace ostracism occurs "when an individual or group omits to take actions that engage another organizational member when it is socially appropriate to do so" (Robinson, O'Reilly, & Wang, 2013: 206). Ostracism differs from other counterproductive behaviors as it entails the omission of desirable (and undesirable) behaviors (Ferris et al., 2017; Robinson et al., 2013). We propose that ostracism may explain why failing to be family-supportive may relate to lower supervisor well-being.

We contribute to the literature in several ways through the present research. First, we ask whether supervisors have a personal stake in providing family-supportive supervision. Limited research by Bagger and Li (2014) shows that employees who experience family-supportive supervision are likely to direct citizenship behavior to their supervisor. But what we don't know is whether employees who perceive low family-supportive supervision will sanction their supervisors in return. Scholars have implied that supervisors may be immune to such consequences. For example, Scott et al. (2015) found that work-family conflict is linked to coworker-directed undermining, and they argued that undermining would not be directed at supervisors. We suggest that coworkers may not be the only targets of undesirable actions when employees feel discontent regarding work-family issues. We propose that supervisors may be targeted with ostracism, which excludes them from positive work relationships (Ferris et al., 2017).

Second, by identifying workplace ostracism as a proximal outcome and mechanism, we examine why supervisors may be harmed when they fail to be family-supportive. Though employees may lack legitimate power (French & Raven, 1959), by avoiding their supervisors, not returning greetings, and withholding positive interaction more generally (Ferris

et al., 2017), workplace ostracism has the potential to harm even more powerful targets (Robinson et al., 2013; K. D. Williams, 2007). One consequence of workplace ostracism is harm to target well-being (O'Reilly, Robinson, & Schabram, 2013), though to our knowledge, researchers have not examined whether supervisor well-being may be impacted when it is their employees who are the source of the ostracism. We were interested in examining supervisors' subjective well-being because models of family-supportive supervision highlight employee well-being as an outcome of supervisor family support (Straub, 2012) and evidence supports this link (Lapierre & Allen, 2006). We tested the hypothesis that supervisor well-being may be indirectly impacted when supervisors fail to be family-supportive, which may be explained by workplace ostracism. Our focus on supervisor well-being is also important because the stress experienced by leaders influences their own leadership behaviors, which in turn serve as a driver of employee health, well-being, and performance (Barling, 2014; Harms, Credé,Tynan, Leon, & Jeung, 2017). Likewise, by studying the failure to be family-supportive as an antecedent to workplace ostracism, we heed Robinson et al.'s (2013) call for research on the predictors of ostracism. Our research also takes this a step further by studying whether some supervisors are more likely to be ostracized given employee perceptions of low family-supportive supervision.

Third, our research informs the literature on interpersonal conflict, which "emerges when one party—be it an individual or group of individuals—perceived its goals, values, or opinions being thwarted by an interdependent counterpart" (De Dreu, 2008: 6). When supervisors fail to be family-supportive, they create a conflict because employee expectations of such support are not met. We focus on conflict with one's supervisor, which researchers acknowledge is an understudied actor in the literature (Dijkstra, Beersma, & van Leeuwen, 2014). When studied, active forms of supervisor conflict are captured (e.g., arguments, yelling; Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006; Frone, 2000), as are employee responses (e.g., counterproductive work behaviors, gossip; Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006; Dijkstra et al., 2014). In contrast, we study conflict arising from supervisors' failure to provide family-supportive supervision.

Finally, we delineate the effects of the failure to be family-supportive from other undesirable supervisor behaviors, including abusive supervision. Abusive supervision is "the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000: 178). Employees are known to respond to abusive supervision with supervisor-directed deviance (Mackey, Frieder, Brees, & Martinko, 2017), which may harm abusive supervisors in return. Yet meta-analytic evidence suggests that these active forms of supervisor conflict are relatively infrequent (Mackey et al., 2017). We sought to understand employee responses to what may be a more common experience: when supervisors fail to provide family-supportive supervision. Our research reveals how such failures may degrade work outcomes for supervisors themselves. We continue with the theoretical basis for our model.

Failing to be Family-Supportive

Family-supportive supervision is a beneficial job resource for employees (Major & Lauzun, 2010), allowing them flexibility and integration between work and life (Kossek et al., 2011). Family-supportive supervisors provide emotional support (e.g., listening to employees discuss problems managing work and life), instrumental support (e.g., being flexible with employees when scheduling conflicts occur), creative work-family management (e.g., innovatively helping employees achieve balance), and they are role models for work-life balance (Hammer et al., 2009). Although the construct is multifaceted, strong positive

correlations are observed among dimensions (Hammer et al., 2009), suggesting that if a supervisor is supportive (or unsupportive) in one area, they are likely supportive (or unsupportive) in the others. The benefits for employees include decreased work-family conflict and turnover intent and greater work-family enrichment, engagement, job satisfaction, and well-being (Hammer et al., 2009, 2011; Kossek et al., 2011). Given its many benefits, family-supportive supervision is highly desired and even expected by employees.

Thus, when supervisors fail to be family-supportive, there is a mismatch of expectations on the part of the employee and supervisor. Employees feel entitled to family-specific support to a greater extent than managers feel it is the responsibility of the organization to provide (Stavrou & Ierodiakonou, 2016). We focus on these misaligned expectations as a point of social exchange. Imagine the following realistic scenario: A supervisor may work countless hours (i.e., serving as a poor role model for employees), be unwilling to listen to work-family issues (i.e., failing to provide emotional support), be inflexible in dealing with scheduling conflicts (i.e., failing to provide instrumental support), and avoid devising strategies to assist employees in managing work and family (i.e., failing to provide creative work-family management; Hammer et al., 2009). We propose that employees who are faced with low family-supportive supervision are likely to respond in kind, a possibility to which we turn next.

Withholding Desirable Behavior Through Social Exchange

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is grounded in tenets of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) such that social relationships depend on exchanges of equal treatment. Cropanzano et al. (2017) criticized social exchange theory, suggesting that only one dimension of social exchange has been the focus of research, that of *hedonic value*, or whether the exchange between actor and target is desirable or undesirable. They assert that researchers have been "confusing action with inaction" (494), which for example would incorrectly imply that undesirable actions such as a lack of family-supportive supervision and the presence of abusive supervision are the same. Instead, Cropanzano et al. propose a second dimension—*activity*—which differentiates between exchanges that are active/exhibited or inactive/withheld. Using Cropanzano et al.'s framework, supervisors withhold desirable behavior when they fail to be family-supportive, but they exhibit undesirable behavior by being abusive. Social exchange theory leads to predictions that exchanges are of the same form, and given Cropanzano et al.'s extension to two dimensions, "people may tend to reciprocate on both the hedonic value and also on the activity dimensions" (501). This implies that by withholding desirable behavior, when supervisors fail to be family-supportive, they trigger employees to withhold desirable behavior in return. One way in which employees may withhold desirable behavior is via ostracism.

Workplace ostracism includes a range of behaviors, such as being ignored and avoided, not being invited to after-work events, having your greetings go unreturned, and being treated like you were not even present (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008; O'Reilly, Robinson, Berdahl, & Banki, 2014; Robinson et al., 2013). The common link among these behaviors and a distinguishing feature of ostracism is that ostracism involves "acts of omission rather than commission; that is, it results from the purposeful or inadvertent failure to act in ways that socially engage another" (Robinson et al., 2013: 208). Using Cropanzano et al.'s (2017) social exchange framework, workplace ostracism entails withholding desirable behavior, which puts it on equal footing with the failure by supervisors to be family-supportive. What's

more, employees perceive ostracism to be less likely to be punished when compared with more active harassment (O'Reilly et al., 2014). Such perceptions may extend from the less visible nature of ostracism (Robinson et al., 2013) as ostracism may inflict harm and with lower potential for reprisal, on supervisors who hold higher power in the relationship. In this way, subordinates with less structural power may modify the way information is shared and communication takes place in the organization, changing the organization's structure and power dynamics (Brass, 1984).

Social exchange–based mechanisms may further explain why employees may ostracize their supervisors due to low family-supportive supervision. For example, Cropanzano et al. (2017) suggest that hedonically negative interactions may lead to negative affect. When supervisors fail to be family-supportive, it is likely that employees may experience negative affect, which could lead them to engage in workplace ostracism. This seems especially likely when specific examples grounded in each of the four dimensions of family-supportive supervision are considered. From an example provided earlier, consider a pregnant employee who requests a break, only to have such a request denied by her supervisor. This lack of instrumental support could lead the employee to experience anger and avoid her supervisor's presence as a result. Contemplate an employee who tries to engage their supervisor in a conversation about their sick child, yet the supervisor simply shifts the conversation back to work. Such low emotional support could lead the employee to be disgruntled and avoid such conversations altogether. Further, envision a supervisor who is continually resistant to modifying job duties even though they could facilitate balance among employees. This resistance to engage in creative work-family management could promote frustration among employees, thereby leading them to avert their supervisor when possible. Finally, imagine reporting to a supervisor who works constantly. Such poor role modeling of work-family balance may ultimately lead employees to experience discontent given the implicit signal that they should do the same, which may lead them to exclude their supervisor from social gatherings. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: Lack of family-supportive supervision is positively related to workplace ostracism directed at supervisors (i.e., supervisor-directed ostracism; pilot and Study 1) and experienced by supervisors (i.e., supervisor ostracism experiences; Study 2).

Pilot Study Overview

In a pilot study, we conducted an initial test of Hypothesis 1 from the employee perspective to see if employees who experience low levels of family-supportive supervision report ostracizing their supervisor. As previously noted, social exchange theory suggests that workplace ostracism is more likely to stem from the failure to be family-supportive than abusive supervision. However, some research shows that employees avoid their supervisor when they are abusive (e.g., Kiewitz, Restubog, Shoss, Garcia, & Tang, 2016). Therefore, we examined the relationship between family-supportive supervision and workplace ostracism while accounting for abusive supervision. By including abusive supervision, we were also able to compare how frequently employees experience abusive supervisors versus supervisors who fail to be family-supportive.

Pilot Study Method

Participants and Procedure

Employed respondents with a supervisor and with not more than 30% of their work done at home were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. U.S. participants with a 97% approval rate and who had previously completed at least 50 tasks could participate. Five questions were embedded to ensure effortful responding. Those who failed to correctly complete at least four of the five questions were excluded. Respondents were paid $1.75. A total of 242 people participated; 27 were excluded for un-effortful responding or not meeting study qualifications, and another was removed for listwise deletion. Participants (N = 214) were primarily Caucasian (79.0%), male (54.7%), and worked 40.3 hours a week on average (SD = 7.1).

Measures

Items were randomly presented. Constructs were assessed based on a 5-point Likert-type scale unless noted. Participants considered the last month when responding. Table 1 reports reliability estimates. Consistent with prior family-supportive supervision research (e.g., Bagger & Li, 2014), participant gender (0 = male, 1 = female), number of household children aged 17 and under, and relationship status (0 = in a relationship [i.e., long-term relationship but not married or cohabitating, cohabitating but not married, or married], 1 = not in a relationship [i.e., single, divorced, or widowed]) were included as controls.

Lack of family-supportive supervision. Hammer, Kossek, Bodner, and Crain's (2013) four-item measure was used. An example is, "My supervisor worked effectively with employees to creatively solve conflicts between work and nonwork." Items were reverse scored so higher scores reflect a lack of family-supportive supervision.

Supervisor-directed ostracism. Six items that could be modified to reference the participants' supervisor were adapted from Ferris et al.'s (2008) measure. Instructions were "How often have you done the following in the past month," and an example item is "Left greetings from your supervisor unanswered at work." Responses were made on a 5-point frequency scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *many times*).

Abusive supervision. Mitchell and Ambrose's (2007) five-item measure was used. An example item is, "My supervisor ridicules me."

Pilot Study Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents correlations and descriptive statistics. Lack of family-supportive supervision and abusive supervision were positively correlated (r = .57), but their discriminant validity was supported through confirmatory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimation in Mplus v7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2015). The two-factor model was a better fit, $\chi^2(26) = 55.49$, $p < .001$, comparative fit index (CFI) = .98, root mean square error of

Table 1
Pilot Study Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliability Estimates

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Lack of family-supportive supervision	2.55	.91	(.86)					
2. Supervisor-directed ostracism	1.42	.70	.47***	(.89)				
3. Abusive supervision	1.61	.87	.57***	.58***	(.93)			
4. Gender	.45	.50	–.08	–.12	–.08	(—)		
5. Household children	.60	.98	–.15*	–.15*	–.12	.12	(—)	
6. Relationship status	.31	.46	.01	–.04	–.02	–.01	–.29***	(—)

Note: $N = 214$. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients along the diagonal, where applicable. Gender coded 0 = male, 1 = female. Household children reflects the number of children aged 17 and under living in the household. Relationship status coded 0 = in a relationship (i.e., long-term relationship but not married or cohabitating, cohabitating but not married, or married), 1 = not in a relationship (i.e., single, divorced, or widowed).
*$p < .05$.
***$p < .001$.

approximation (RMSEA) = .07, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .05, than a one-factor model, $\chi^2(27) = 263.48$, $p < .001$, CFI = .82, RMSEA = .20, SRMR = .11, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 207.99$, $p < .001$. Failing to be family-supportive ($M = 2.55$, $SD = .91$) was also more common than abusive supervision ($M = 1.61$, $SD = .87$), $t(213) = 16.67$, $p < .001$. Indeed, 20.6% of employees disagreed/strongly disagreed that their supervisor made them feel comfortable talking about conflicts between work and nonwork, and 16.8% disagreed/strongly disagreed that their supervisor worked effectively with employees to creatively solve conflicts between work and nonwork. Table 2 presents results from regression analysis to test Hypothesis 1. After entering controls, a lack of family-supportive supervision had a significant positive coefficient (unstandardized $b = .15$, $p = .004$), supporting Hypothesis 1.

Study 1 Overview

Results from the pilot study provided tentative evidence supporting Hypothesis 1. Still, to better isolate the impact of failing to be family-supportive, we followed up with an experimental design in Study 1. Given the ethical challenges associated with manipulating actual family-supportive supervision, we developed an experimental vignette study to replicate the test of Hypothesis 1. Although there is some quasi-experimental research on family-supportive supervision, the focus of that work is on interventions such as training to change family-specific support (e.g., Hammer et al., 2011) rather than the manipulation of family-supportive supervision itself. Consequently, we reasoned that an experimental vignette study with realistic vignettes generated from actual critical incidents would be a useful means through which to examine workplace ostracism in response to supervisor's failure to be family-supportive.

Study 1 Method

Participants

Respondents were also collected through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Pilot study participants were excluded from participating, but otherwise, the same general inclusion criteria

Table 2
Pilot Study Results From Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analysis of Supervisor-Directed Ostracism

Variable	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	ΔR^2 (%)
Model 1					34.9
Intercept	.80	.10	7.78	<.001	
Abusive supervision	.45	.04	9.93	<.001	
Gender	–.09	.08	−1.19	.235	
Household children	–.06	.04	−1.55	.122	
Relationship status	–.09	.09	−1.02	.309	
Model 2					2.6
Intercept	.55	.13	4.15	<.001	
Abusive supervision	.36	.05	6.76	<.001	
Gender	–.09	.08	−1.11	.268	
Household children	–.05	.04	−1.31	.192	
Relationship status	–.09	.09	−1.01	.314	
Lack of family-supportive supervision	.15	.05	2.93	.004	
Total R^2 (%)			37.5		

Note: $N = 214$. Unstandardized coefficients reported.

were used. Two validation questions (e.g., "Leave this question blank") and three vignette attention check items (following the presentation of the backstories) were embedded to ensure effortful responding. Respondents were paid $1.20 for participating. A total of 172 people participated; 7 were excluded for un-effortful responding or not meeting study qualifications, and 3 were removed due to listwise deletion. The analysis sample ($N = 162$) was primarily Caucasian (75.9%) with an average age of 32.8 years ($SD = 8.6$) and organizational tenure of 5.4 years ($SD = 4.9$). The sample was 51.9% female, and on average, respondents worked 42.0 hours a week ($SD = 6.9$).

Design

Scenarios for low, neutral, and high family-supportive supervision were created from critical incidents derived from an unpublished dissertation study. A summary of the process of gathering and refining the critical incidents is as follows. First, 50 industry managers were recruited to generate critical incidents of family-supportive supervision by asking them to provide as many examples of effective manager behaviors that help employees to handle their work and family demands (i.e., high family-supportive supervision) and provide as many examples of ineffective manager behaviors that prevent employees from managing work and family demands (i.e., low family-supportive supervision). In raw form, 546 critical incidents were generated. After eliminating redundancies and additional cleaning, 97 critical incidents remained. Second, 10 graduate students were recruited and trained to rate the 97 critical incidents on the degree of (in)effectiveness and provide supplemental incidents based on identified gaps. Thirty additional examples were generated. Third, one author reviewed the behaviors and noted those that were rated as the most, least, and somewhat (in)effective. Items evaluated as neutral were removed, and unnecessary redundancies were eliminated.

The resulting 45 critical incidents reflected diversity in (in)effectiveness (i.e., high and low family-supportive supervision) and coverage of the construct (e.g., Hammer et al., 2009). From the 45 critical incidents, 40 scenarios were developed, split evenly between effective and ineffective family-supportive supervision. The scenarios depicted a fictitious supervisor, Patrick, a situation involving one or more of his direct reports, and an action taken by the supervisor in response to the presented situation. Fifth, a new sample of 50 managers and 13 graduate students was recruited to evaluate how well the supervisor handled the situation in each scenario while also considering the backstories provided for each team member. Specifically, participants rated the scenarios on the degree of (in)effectiveness on a 1 (*very ineffective*) to 7 (*very effective*) scale. Given that provision of family-supportive supervision is idiosyncratic in nature, backstories were developed to introduce the key players and contextualize the depicted situations. Doing so helps enhance the realism of the fictitious scenarios (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014) by requiring the consideration of multiple employee, team, and organizational factors to effectively engage in family-friendly supervision. The scenarios were once again evaluated, and those rated as neutral were eliminated or revised, resulting in a final set of 24 scenarios.

For the present study, we selected four critical incidents for each of the three levels of family-supportive supervision from the 24 scenarios, based on their aforementioned ratings of (in)effectiveness. Rather than presenting a single scenario, we used 4 incidents for each level with different direct reports on Patrick's team to engage participants and provide sufficient context, as recommended by Aguinis and Bradley (2014), with between-subjects designs. The 4 scenarios depicting Patrick as a family-supportive supervisor (i.e., the high family-supportive supervision condition) included scenarios rated as either a 7 (*very effective*) or a 6 (*effective*). The 4 scenarios used to portray Patrick as failing to be family-supportive (i.e., the low family-supportive supervision condition) included scenarios rated as either 1 (*very ineffective*) or 2 (*ineffective*). Finally, 4 scenarios in a neutral condition included 2 scenarios rated as 5 (*somewhat effective*) and 2 rated as 3 (*somewhat ineffective*), reflecting variable levels of family-supportive supervision (see Appendix for details).

Procedure

Participants first completed a series of unrelated measures on well-being and a measure of experienced family-supportive supervision (included as a control). Participants then read the instructions and the backstories. Following this, they answered three attention check items. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of the three conditions (i.e., high, neutral, or low family-supportive supervision; between-subjects design). Within each condition, participants were shown four critical incidents (randomly presented) and asked to evaluate how effective the supervisor managed each situation. After reading all four critical incidents, participants made an overall evaluation of effectiveness and completed the ostracism measure and demographics.

Measures

The demographic variables from Study 1 were measured and included as controls. Also, family-supportive supervision from their actual supervisor was included as an additional control.

Manipulation check. Participants were asked the following question: "Thinking about the four scenarios you just read, how supportive do you think Patrick is in terms of helping his ENTIRE team manage their work and nonwork demands and responsibilities?" Responses were made on a 7-point scale (1 = *very unsupportively*, 7 = *very supportively*).

Supervisor-directed ostracism. Six items used in Study 1 and based on Ferris et al. (2008) were modified to capture workplace ostracism directed at Patrick, the fictional supervisor. Instructions were "Based on what you've learned about your manager, Patrick, to what extent would you . . . ." An example item is "Leave greetings from Patrick unanswered at work." Responses were made on a frequency scale (1 = *never*, 7 = *always*).

Experienced family-supportive supervision. Hammer et al.'s (2013) four-item measure was used wherein participants indicated their actual experienced level of family-supportive supervision as a covariate. However, consistent with the original measure, higher scores reflect higher levels of experienced family-supportive supervision.

Study 1 Results and Discussion

Results from a one-way ANOVA suggest the manipulation of family-supportiveness was effective, $F(2, 159) = 182.50$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .70$. Follow-up pairwise comparisons were conducted with a Bonferroni correction to the p values.[1] The fictional supervisor, Patrick, was seen as most supportive in the high family-supportive supervision condition ($n = 47$, $M = 6.47$, $SD = 1.04$), and this was significantly higher than the neutral ($n = 51$, $M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.28$, $M_{\text{difference}} = 1.29$, $p < .001$) and low family-supportive supervision conditions ($n = 64$, $M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.29$, $M_{\text{difference}} = 4.27$, $p < .001$). Patrick was also seen as more supportive in the neutral condition than in the low family-supportive supervision condition ($M_{\text{difference}} = 2.98$, $p < .001$). We also report the manipulation check in Table 3 that includes means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables. The manipulation check correlated with manipulated family-supportive supervision at $r = .82$, $p < .001$, which attests to the strength of the manipulation. In addition, the manipulation check correlated as expected with supervisor-directed ostracism ($r = –.33$, $p < .001$), indicating that participants tended to report lower supervisor-directed ostracism when they believed Patrick was more supportive in terms of helping his entire team manage their work and nonwork demands and responsibilities.

We conducted a one-way ANCOVA on supervisor-directed ostracism to test Hypothesis 1 and report results in Table 4 (details in the following text); pairwise comparisons were again conducted with a Bonferroni correction to p values. Based on the significant F value for condition, after adjusting for covariates, results from Study 1 also supported Hypothesis 1. Means adjusted for covariates indicated that supervisor-directed ostracism was higher in the low family-supportive supervision condition ($M = 2.29$, $SE = .13$) than the neutral ($M = 1.81$, $SE = .15$; $M_{\text{difference}} = .48$, $p = .050$) or high condition ($M = 1.15$, $SE = .16$; $M_{\text{difference}} = 1.14$, $p < .001$). There was also a significant difference in supervisor-directed ostracism in the high and neutral family-supportive supervision conditions ($M_{\text{difference}} = .66$, $p = .008$). These results provide additional evidence that employees respond to the failure to be family-supportive with supervisor-directed ostracism.

Table 3
Study 1 Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliability Estimates

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Manipulation check	4.38	2.20	(—)						
2. Manipulated family-supportive supervision	–.10	.82	.82***	(—)					
3. Gender	.52	.50	.05	.03	(—)				
4. Household children	1.81	1.08	.09	.01	.14	(—)			
5. Relationship status	.26	.44	.04	.04	–.16*	–.22**	(—)		
6. Experienced family-supportive supervision	3.34	.95	–.10	–.08	–.09	.10	–.02	(.88)	
7. Supervisor-directed ostracism	1.81	1.16	–.33***	–.41***	–.09	–.13	.10	.12	(.93)

Note: $N = 162$. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients along the diagonal, where applicable. Manipulated family-supportive supervision coded as −1 = low, 0 = neutral, 1 = high. Gender coded 0 = male, 1 = female. Household children reflects the number of children aged 17 and under living in the household. Relationship status coded 0 = in a relationship (i.e., long-term relationship but not married or cohabitating, cohabitating but not married, or married), 1 = not in a relationship (i.e., single, divorced, or widowed).
*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

Table 4
Results of Study 1 Analysis of Covariance

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	Partial η^2
Between treatments	44.06	6	7.34	6.61	<.001	.204
Gender	.40	1	.40	.36	.547	.002
Household children	2.40	1	2.40	2.16	.144	.014
Relationship status	1.86	1	1.86	1.68	.198	.011
Experienced family-supportive supervision	1.80	1	1.80	1.62	.204	.010
Family-supportive supervision condition	34.65	2	17.33	15.60	<.001	.168
Error	172.20	155	1.11			
Total	744.62	162				

Study 2 Overview

The pilot and Study 1 captured the employee perspective and show that employees are likely to respond in kind to a lack of family-supportive supervision by ostracizing their supervisor. What these studies do not capture is the supervisor perspective. Do supervisors actually report higher levels of workplace ostracism when their employees perceive a lack of family-supportive supervision? Moreover, does workplace ostracism relate to harm to supervisor well-being? We considered these possibilities in Study 2.

Models of workplace ostracism highlight the many ways in which workplace ostracism can impact targets (Robinson et al., 2013). We argue that through ostracism, employees can withhold positive social interactions, which in turn may harm supervisor subjective well-being. Human beings need social interaction and have a need for belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). When such social resources are lost or threatened, distress and depleted well-being may

result (Hobfoll, 1989). Research suggests that targets of ostracism may experience many outcomes, including lower psychological health (Wu, Yim, Kwan, & Zhang, 2012) and well-being (O'Reilly et al., 2013). Neuroimaging research shows that social exclusion can harm targets in ways similar to the experience of physical pain (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003). In an organizational context, although supervisors hold greater legitimate power than their employees (French & Raven, 1959), it is likely that supervisors are not immune to the effects of social exclusion. Indeed, O'Reilly et al. (2013: 109) suggest that "for the most part ostracism is an equally painful experience for everyone." This led us to hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: Supervisor ostracism experiences are negatively related to supervisor subjective well-being.

When presented with a lack of family-supportive supervision, employees are likely to respond in kind across both dimensions (i.e., activity and hedonic value) of social exchange via workplace ostracism (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Thus, workplace ostracism may be a mechanism by which a lack of family-supportive supervision relates to harm to supervisor well-being.

Hypothesis 3: Supervisor ostracism experiences mediate the negative relation between a lack of family-supportive supervision and supervisor subjective well-being.

An Exploration of Moderators

We were encouraged during the review process to consider moderating variables that may influence the likelihood that failing to be family-supportive would relate to supervisor ostracism experiences. Indeed, at the outset of the article, we suggest that family-supportiveness is something employees expect, but is this expectation the same of all supervisors? To test this proposition, we examined variables that may influence employee expectations of family support, including supervisor demographics (i.e., supervisor gender, number of children supervisors have living at home, and supervisor relationship status) and leader-member social exchange quality (Bernerth, Armenakis, Field, Giles, & Walker, 2007; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). We pose this as a research question in the present study.[2] We studied these variables because they may signal that the supervisor should be more or less accommodating to subordinate work-life needs and potentially influence the expectation that supervisors should provide positive social exchange by enacting family-supportive supervision.

With respect to supervisor demographics, social role theory states that people expect that others will behave in ways consistent with gender roles as prescribed by societal stereotypes (Eagly, 1987). In the U.S. context, this includes viewing women as more communal than men (i.e., concerned with others' needs; e.g., Heilman, 2001). Consistent with this, Hopkins (2002) found that subordinates seek more help with personal/family problems from female than male supervisors. Thus, female supervisors who fail to provide family-supportive supervision may be at particular risk for workplace ostracism because they violate the expectation that women should be interpersonally sensitive and communal. Likewise, people with dependents tend to use more work resources to balance work and life (Brough, O'Driscoll, & Kalliath, 2005). Therefore, employees may expect that when their supervisor has children, they should be more understanding of the need to provide family-supportive supervision. This suggests that

supervisors with children may be more likely to be ostracized by subordinates should they fail to be family-supportive. Lastly, supervisors who are in a relationship likely balance their work and life with the need to maintain and nurture such personal relationships (Becker & Moen, 1999) to a greater extent than supervisors who are not in a relationship. Subordinates may have higher expectations that such supervisors provide family-supportive supervision to their employees.

Leader-member social exchange quality may also influence expectations of family-supportive supervision. High-quality leader-member exchange is characterized by mutual respect and trust between supervisors and employees (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995). Straub (2012) proposed that supervisors should be more willing to be family-supportive of employees with whom leader-member exchange quality is high. Thus, employees may have higher expectations of family-supportive supervision when the quality of the social exchange between employees and supervisors is high rather than low, and employees may be more likely to ostracize supervisors who are not family-supportive when leader-member social exchange quality is high. However, it is also possible that high-quality leader-member social exchange may function as a buffer. It may be that when leader-member social exchange quality is high, employees essentially forgive their supervisors for the lack of family-supportive supervision.

Research Question 1: Do supervisor demographics (i.e., supervisor gender, number of children supervisors have living at home, supervisor relationship status) and leader-member social exchange quality moderate the relationship between a lack of family-supportive supervision and supervisor ostracism experiences?

Regardless of whether any of the aforementioned variables moderate the relationship between failing to be family-supportive and workplace ostracism, the indirect effect of failing to be family-supportive on supervisor subjective well-being may be conditional on the aforementioned moderators since these are separate tests (Hayes, 2015). An assessment of potential conditional indirect effects may provide insight into which supervisors are most likely to report lower subjective well-being as a result of workplace ostracism resulting from failing to be family-supportive. As we have suggested previously, some supervisors may be more or less likely to be ostracized when they are not family-supportive, which in turn may have implications for their subjective well-being. However, it is also possible that the indirect relation is similar regardless of supervisor demographics and leader-member social exchange quality. Thus, we explored potential conditional indirect effects in a second research question.

Research Question 2: Is the indirect effect of a lack of family-supportive supervision on supervisor subjective well-being conditional on supervisor demographics and leader-member social exchange quality?

Study 2 Method

Participants and Procedure

Study 2 data came from a multisource study of employees (teachers) nested within supervisors (principals). To recruit participants, a total of 8,024 valid e-mail addresses from public

school principals in 12 states were obtained from department of education websites. Principals were sent an invitation explaining the study and asked to participate in a 15-minute survey; 1,211 principals participated (response rate = 15.1%). Simultaneously, teachers at the 137 schools from which principals consented were also invited to complete a 12-minute survey. Teachers were entered into a drawing for one of four $25 Amazon gift certificates, whereas principals had a drawing for 1 of 10 $25 Amazon gift certificates.

We retained all respondents for which at least one family-supportive supervision measure was provided, and for which we had complete data from supervisors, which included 1,269 teachers nested in 136 principals. The average teacher respondents per principal was 9.3 (*SD* = 7.1; 10 or 7.4% of principals had one teacher response). The teachers were primarily Caucasian (82.5%) and female (78.1%), with an average age of 43.5 years (*SD* = 10.9). Teachers worked an average of 48.8 hours each week (*SD* = 11.7) and had been in their job for 10.3 years on average (*SD* = 7.8). Principals were 87.5% Caucasian and 52.9% female. The average age was 47.2 years old (*SD* = 8.4). Principals worked 56.8 hours on average per week (*SD* = 9.99). They had an average job tenure of 6.5 years (*SD* = 5.6) and organization tenure of 6.6 years (*SD* = 6.7).

Measures

Table 5 reports reliability estimates. Unless noted, responses were captured with 5-point Likert-type response scales, and higher scores reflect higher levels of each construct. To help ensure that teachers and principals reflected on the same time period, both teachers and principals were asked to consider the past month as they responded to all items.

Lack of family-supportive supervision. Failure to be family-supportive was assessed by teachers with Hammer et al.'s (2009) 14-item measure. The referent was changed to principal. A sample item is, "My principal is willing to listen to my problems in juggling work and nonwork life." Items were reverse scored so higher scores reflect a lack of family-supportive supervision.

Supervisor ostracism experiences. Principal experiences of workplace ostracism were assessed with five items adapted from Ferris et al. (2008); 5 of the original 10 items were excluded to reduce item redundancy. Principals indicated their level of agreement with items such as "Others left the area when you entered" and "Your greetings have gone unanswered at work." In an independent sample (*N* = 844), the five-item measure correlated *r* = .96 with Ferris et al.'s (2008) 10-item version (Matthews & Ritter, 2016, Study 3).

Supervisor subjective well-being. Supervisor subjective well-being was completed by principals using six items from the General Health Questionnaire (Banks et al., 1980). Only the positively worded items from Banks et al.'s (1980) measure were included because data were collected as part of a larger study. A sample item is, "How often have you been able to enjoy your normal day to day activities?" Responses were given using a 5-point response scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *always*).

Moderator variables. *Supervisor demographics* included gender (0 = male, 1 = female), number of children living in the household (0 = none, 4 = four or more), and relationship status (0 = in a relationship [i.e., long-term relationship but not married or cohabitating,

Table 5
Study 2 Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliability Estimates

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Lack of family-supportive supervision	(.98)										
2. Supervisor ostracism experiences	.30***	(.90)									
3. Supervisor subjective well-being	–.03	–.22*	(.80)								
4. Supervisor gender	.06	–.11	.05	(—)							
5. Supervisor household children	–.05	.09	–.12	–.18*	(—)						
6. Supervisor relationship status	.00	–.04	.07	–.02	–.28**	(—)					
7. Leader-member social exchange	–.20*	–.42***	.10	–.06	–.02	–.01	(.83)				
8. Interaction: Supervisor gender	.11	–.03	.08	–.01	–.09	–.12	.02	(—)			
9. Interaction: Supervisor household children	–.18*	.00	.01	–.11	–.06	–.01	.07	–.13	(—)		
10. Interaction: Supervisor relationship status	.07	–.10	–.01	–.11	–.01	.01	.04	–.05	–.37***	(—)	
11. Interaction: Leader-member social exchange	–.03	–.05	–.06	.02	.06	.05	–.06	–.05	–.19*	.14	(—)
M	2.46	1.56	4.02	.53	1.11	.15	3.83	.02	–.04	.00	–.06
SD	.53	.60	.52	.50	1.33	.36	.59	.26	.59	.20	.29

Note: Supervisor-level data reported. $N = 136$. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients along the diagonal where applicable. Gender coded 0 = male, 1 = female. Household children reflects the number of children living in the household. Relationship status coded 0 = in a relationship (i.e., long-term relationship but not married or cohabitating, cohabitating but not married, or married), 1 = not in a relationship (i.e., single, divorced, or widowed). Interaction terms include lack of family-supportive supervision and the named variable, which were both grand mean centered before creating the interaction term.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

cohabitating but not married, or married], 1 = not in a relationship [i.e., single, divorced, or widowed]). *Leader-member social exchange* was completed by principals and measured with six items from the scale developed by Bernerth et al. (2007). Two items were removed to reduce redundancy, and items were modified to capture exchange quality between the principal and their teachers. An example item is, "My teachers and I have a two-way exchange relationship."

Data Analysis

Because our focus was only on supervisor-level relationships, we aggregated employee experiences of a lack of family-supportive supervision to the supervisor level. A one-way ANOVA showed significant variability between supervisors in employee-reported

family-supportive supervision, $F(135, 1133) = 4.16$, $p < .001$, corresponding to an intraclass correlation (ICC[1]) value of .25 and ICC(2) value of .76. The ICC(1) shows that 25% of the variability was between-supervisor variability (LeBreton & Senter, 2008), which suggested that there were meaningful differences across supervisors in employee perceptions of family-supportive supervision. In addition, the median r_{WG} was .96, which is indicative of very strong agreement (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). These statistics supported the supervisor-level analysis.

Analyses were conducted using multiple regression in PROCESS (Hayes, 2013). We first tested the mediated model while treating supervisor demographics and leader-member social exchange as control variables. We included the demographics as controls to be consistent across studies because these variables had been included as controls in the pilot and Study 1, albeit from the employee perspective. By including leader-member social exchange, we were able to examine whether employee perceptions of a lack of family-supportive supervision explained variability above and beyond principals' own perceptions of general social exchange with their teachers. Then we separately tested supervisor demographics and leader-member social exchange as moderators of the relation between a lack of family-supportive supervision and workplace ostracism. In these analyses, all moderators and lack of family-supportive supervision were grand mean centered. We used 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals from 10,000 samples that are implemented in PROCESS to draw inferences concerning the significance of indirect effects. Unstandardized coefficients are reported.

Study 2 Results and Discussion

Table 5 presents correlations and descriptive statistics. Table 6 shows results from hypothesis tests. A lack of family-supportive supervision was positively related to supervisor ostracism experiences ($b = .27$, $p = .002$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Supervisor ostracism experiences were negatively related to supervisor subjective well-being ($b = –.18$, $p = .035$), supporting Hypothesis 2. Moreover, the indirect effect of a lack of family-supportive supervision on supervisor subjective well-being through supervisor ostracism experiences was negative and different from zero (indirect effect = –.05, 95% CI [–.119, –.006]), supporting Hypothesis 3.

Analyses were conducted to examine Research Questions 1 and 2. No interaction terms were statistically significant, including interactions with the number of children supervisors have living at home ($b = .07$, $p = .404$), supervisor gender ($b = –.12$, $p = .514$), supervisor relationship status ($b = –.35$, $p = .129$), and leader-member social exchange ($b = –.14$, $p = .385$). We also examined the index of moderated-mediation to test whether there was evidence of conditional indirect effects (Hayes, 2015). However, the index of moderated-mediation was not statistically significant for any of the tested moderators, including the number of children supervisors have living at home (index = –.01, 95% CI [–.073, .009]), supervisor gender (index = .02, 95% CI [–.025, .132]), supervisor relationship status (index = .06, 95% CI [–.002, .258]), and leader-member social exchange (index = .03, 95% CI [–.022, .114]). In sum, when supervisors fail to be family-supportive, they are likely to experience ostracism from their employees, which relates negatively to their subjective well-being. We also observed that the indirect relationship between failing to be

Table 6
Study 2 PROCESS Results for the Mediating Role of Supervisor Ostracism Experiences

Predictor	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Mediator variable model: Supervisor ostracism experiences (R^2 = 25.13%)				
Constant	2.42	.42	5.80	<.001
Lack of family-supportive supervision	.27	.09	3.08	.002
Supervisor gender	–.16	.09	–1.75	.082
Supervisor household children	.03	.04	.78	.435
Supervisor relationship status	–.04	.13	–.33	.745
Leader-member social exchange	–.38	.08	–4.88	<.001
Dependent variable model: Supervisor subjective well-being (R^2 = 5.98%)				
Constant	4.21	.46	9.21	<.001
Supervisor ostracism experiences	–.18	.09	–2.13	.035
Lack of family-supportive supervision	.03	.09	.29	.771
Supervisor gender	.02	.09	.17	.863
Supervisor household children	–.03	.04	–.90	.368
Supervisor relationship status	.06	.13	.46	.646
Leader-member social exchange	.01	.08	.16	.875
Indirect Effect	Effect	Boot *SE*	LLCI	ULCI
Supervisor ostracism experiences	–.05	.03	–.119	–.006

Note: N = 136. Unstandardized coefficients reported. LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval.

family-supportive and supervisor subjective well-being did not vary as a result of supervisor demographics or leader-member social exchange quality.

General Discussion

We drew on social exchange theory to understand the impact of failing to be family-supportive on supervisors. Findings across studies suggest a common interpretation; when supervisors fail to be family-supportive, employees are likely to engage in workplace ostracism directed at their supervisor, which may relate to harm to supervisor well-being. In the following paragraphs, we consider the implications of the present research.

Theoretical Contributions and Research Implications

First, we contend that no longer can scholars be simply interested in examining the question, "Is family-supportive supervision a good thing?" Instead, we must recognize that the failure to provide this type of support has systemic implications beyond employees. By applying social exchange theory, we uncovered negative effects for supervisors' work life and well-being when they do not provide family-supportive supervision. Study 2 showed limited variability in observed relations, and the relations persisted while controlling for supervisor demographics and general perceptions of the quality of leader-member social exchange with employees. As such, theoretical models of family-supportive supervision such as that by Straub (2012), which largely focuses on the employee and team perspective, must

be extended to include supervisor outcomes. By integrating social exchange theory with models of family-supportive supervision, scholars and organizations may better understand the costs and benefits for supervisors when they are or are not family-supportive.

Our findings also have implications for the broader study of social exchange in organizations. We found that when supervisors fail to be family-supportive, employees may reciprocate via workplace ostracism. This finding supports Cropanzano et al.'s (2017) conceptualization of social exchange theory, suggesting that the withdrawal of desirable behavior by one party in an exchange relationship is likely to signal the other member to respond in kind. Results also contribute to our understanding of social exchange by distinguishing between undesirable supervisor behaviors that differ in their level of activity (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In contrast to the low base rate of abusive supervision (Mackey et al., 2017), our pilot study results suggest that the failure to be family-supportive may be more common. Future research should continue to take a fine-grained approach to studying the form of exchange to understand how the nature and type of behaviors elicit different kinds of employee responses.

To that end, we found that employees reciprocate via workplace ostracism when they experience low family-supportive supervision. Further research is needed to delve into the cognitions, emotions, and perceptions of employees that might further explain these responses. As we noted earlier, social exchange theory suggests that negative affect may provide an explanation (Cropanzano et al., 2017). For example, similar to abusive supervision (e.g., Kiewitz et al., 2016), employees may experience anger in response to a supervisor who fails to be family-supportive. Yet it is also possible that other mechanisms may explain the linkage. For instance, overall justice (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009) or more nuanced justice perceptions (e.g., interpersonal justice; Colquitt, 2001) may be influenced by a lack of family-supportive supervision. If an employee has negative justice perceptions, this is problematic because such support may or may not be at the discretion of the supervisor, who may have limited autonomy in this realm (Major & Lauzun, 2010). By understanding such mechanisms, organizations may be able to alleviate negative emotional reactions and neutralize potential feelings of injustice.

Our research also speaks to the larger literatures on harmful organizational behaviors, such as supervisor conflict. Interpersonal conflict can stem from many issues, including work tasks and relationship incompatibilities (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). We posit that such conflict may also originate from the failure to be family-supportive on the part of the supervisor. Our focus on the failure to provide family-supportive supervision contrasts with much of the literature on supervisor conflict, wherein conflict is measured as destructive actions, such as being yelled at by the supervisor (e.g., Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006; Frone, 2000). Researchers have also captured various styles for handling conflict, one of which involves avoiding conflict altogether. An avoiding conflict management style is conceptually similar to ostracism because ostracism involves avoiding both positive and negative interactions (Ferris et al., 2017). Interestingly, Rahim, Magner, and Shapiro (2000) actually showed that employees may avoid conflict with their supervisor when they have positive perceptions of supervisor treatment, such as higher distributive justice perceptions, a finding the authors acknowledge was somewhat counterintuitive. Our findings thus offer some clarity to the specific supervisor behaviors that may lead employees to avoid their supervisors.

The present research contributes to theories of workplace ostracism, including the antecedents to and conditions under which ostracism may occur. Robinson et al. (2013: 209) note that "Although the vast majority of research on ostracism has focused on its consequences,

comparatively less research has addressed the antecedents of ostracism," an assessment reiterated by others (e.g., Wu et al., 2015). Interestingly, Wu et al. (2015) studied the conditions under which supervisors might ostracize their employees, finding cooperative goals to be one important factor. Our findings augment this past research, shedding light on how a lack of family support by a supervisor may act as a precursor to their ostracism.

Practical Implications

Findings from the present research can inform recommendations for practice; we focus on three. First, we concur with Major and Lauzun (2010), who assert that employers should empower their supervisors to be family-supportive. Our results highlight a new reason to support this recommendation: that supervisors may suffer harm to the extent that their employees do not experience family-supportive supervision. In addition to empowering supervisors, organizations must train their supervisors to provide family support (Hammer et al., 2011), and our findings have implications for such interventions. Motivating supervisors to provide family-specific support is challenging (Major & Lauzun, 2010), and building motivation to learn is essential for effective training (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000). One component of motivation is valence: that trainees see value in the training (Colquitt et al., 2000). Trainers designing programs to teach family-supportive supervision should emphasize at the outset the many benefits for both employees and supervisors.

Second, if organizations promote greater family-supportive supervision, they may also improve relationships between supervisors and employees and reduce workplace ostracism. Providing family-supportive supervision may be a way to enrich the employee-supervisor relationship and guard against forms of exclusion. Finally, given the consequences of work-family issues for both employees and supervisors, organizations should acknowledge and encourage open conversations around realistic expectations of work-life support. With open communication, training, and formal policies, organizations and their members may be able to improve balance and well-being and reduce interpersonal strains.

Limitations and Additional Research Directions

The present research has several limitations that lead to additional research directions. First, the pilot study and Study 2 were based on cross-sectional designs. In these data, the potential for common method bias exists, and causal inferences are limited. However, we attempted to address these issues in two ways. First, Study 1 employed an experimental vignette study that has greater internal validity (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). In addition, Study 2 data were collected from multiple sources, which should limit the potential for common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Second, although each of the three studies examined the linkage between failing to be family-supportive and workplace ostracism, only Study 2 captured the link between workplace ostracism and supervisor well-being in a unique context and sample of teachers and principals. Research is needed to understand to what extent and why ostracism may relate to harm to supervisor well-being in different organizations.

Third, the scenarios in Study 1 were different across conditions. Although this tactic may have helped to engage and provide greater context for participants (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014), differences mean we are unable to point to the specific behaviors that are most likely to drive workplace ostracism. For example, in our low family-supportive supervision condition, one scenario depicted the fictional supervisor being family-supportive of one employee but to the

detriment of another by asking the employee to give unfinished work to a colleague. Future research may help to identify which behaviors contribute the most to ostracism.

More generally, our research captures the consequences for supervisors when they provide low levels of family-supportive supervision. However, it does not address why the low levels of support occur. Although supervisors may withhold the positive behavior of family-supportive supervision from their employees, they can do so in myriad ways and for different reasons. For example, a supervisor may deliberately attempt to undermine balance between work and family, whereas other supervisors may unintentionally do so. Future research would be very helpful to illuminate how these reasons shape employee reactions by examining additional variables that capture how and why the low family-supportive supervision occurs. One possibility is whether the supervisor intentionally or unintentionally fails to be family-supportive.

More research is needed to understand for whom and under what conditions supervisor failure in the provision of family-specific support leads to ostracism. Such moderators may encompass variables at higher levels of analysis. For instance, the economic context may influence this relationship such that employees may be less likely to engage in ostracism in response to a lack of family-supportive supervision when alternative employment options are limited. Finally, the Study 2 response rate was low. To some extent, the fact that similar relations between family-supportive supervision and workplace ostracism were observed across the three studies using different methods attenuates this concern, but nonetheless, there is the potential for response bias to influence conclusions.

Conclusion

When supervisors provide family-supportive supervision, employees benefit. In the present research, we examine the other side of this exchange relationship and provide evidence that when supervisors fail to be family-supportive, the supervisors themselves can experience harm. We encourage future researchers to continue to take alternative perspectives to the study of family-supportive supervision, and to explore its impact beyond the employee.

Appendix

Study 1 Instructions, Backstories, and Scenarios

Instructions

For the next activity, please imagine that you work for a large U.S. corporation. Also imagine that you work for a manager, Patrick, who supervises a six-person team, including you, as one of his employees. The high-paced work environment in which they work is based on strong corporate values, such as integrity and teamwork, results-driven performance culture, and concern for employee well-being. To help support employee well-being and ensure high productivity, a number of benefits, policies, and resources are available to help employees balance work and personal life (e.g., flexible work time, working from home, onsite child care, wellness seminars, and tuition assistance programs).

Backstories

Patrick's direct reports include you, Megan, Bob, Jenny, Tim, and John. Next, you will find some information about the other people on the team. Please read the following carefully.

Patrick: Patrick has been working for the company for 10 years. A few months ago, he was transitioned into this supervisor role from a different part of the business. He is still learning the ropes of being a supervisor but is very familiar with the company and its functions.

Megan: Megan is a 30-year-old mother of an 8-month-old child. Last week she mentioned on a team call that she's glad her husband and parents are around to help with the child care responsibilities.

Bob: Bob is 35 years old and single. He plays soccer as part of the company team and participates in many games and competitions each season. He often jokes about how he's glad he does not have a wife and children to keep him from work and his hobbies.

Jenny: Jenny is 28 years old and has one more semester before she gets her MBA. She often shares how difficult it is to work and go to school at the same time, but she's happy that the company covers her tuition. She recently mentioned that her husband has been complaining about how little time they spend together nowadays.

Tim: Tim is 40 years old and recently married. He is in the process of remodeling the house and making it suitable for his 75-year-old father who is no longer able to live on his own. Tim is happy that his wife is supportive and hopes that the two of them will be able to balance work, their new marriage, and caring for his aging father.

John: John is in his early 30s. He has mentioned that he lives by himself and often travels to visit family and friends who live all over the country. He seems to value privacy because he does not share much about his personal life with the team.

On the next page, you will find several scenarios involving Patrick and one or more of your colleagues. Please reflect on the backstories that you just read and read the scenarios presented closely.

High Family-Supportive Supervision Condition	Neutral Family-Supportive Supervision Condition	Low Family-Supportive Supervision Condition
1. Megan mentions to Patrick that her babysitter is moving away. Patrick sympathizes and asks if she has any back-up options for child care. She shares that her parents are vacationing in Europe for 2 weeks, her husband has upcoming business trips, and she doesn't know where to start looking. Patrick helps brainstorm some options and provides her with information on the onsite child care services and home-based child care referrals provided through the company. He follows up with Megan in a couple of days to see how things are working out.	1. John calls Patrick early in the morning saying that his flight is delayed and he might not make it to work on time. John is worried because he is leading an important meeting that day with key stakeholders. Patrick offers to cover for him in the meeting if he is not back in time. When John returns, Patrick recommends that he try to get on earlier flights in the future to avoid missing work.	1. Megan reaches out to Patrick with concerns that she is not always able to attend last-minute meetings that keep getting scheduled each week. Patrick expresses understanding and shares that this is the nature of the business. He informs Megan that she needs to put her personal life on hold at times, especially if she wants to be successful in this job—after all, committed employees should be on call 24/7.

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

High Family-Supportive Supervision Condition	Neutral Family-Supportive Supervision Condition	Low Family-Supportive Supervision Condition
2. Tim shares that his father's health is deteriorating. He asks Patrick if he could take a few days off to care for him. Patrick conveys his sympathy for Tim's father and asks if it is okay to share with the team so that his work tasks can be redistributed appropriately for the week. Patrick assures Tim that the team will be fine and tells him to focus on his dad.	2. Patrick notices that his team has been given more work than they could handle for quite some time now. Despite attempts to streamline team processes, redistribute work, and extend deadlines, the team remains overworked and stressed. Patrick decides to voice concern to his supervisor and put in a request to partner with another team or hire another person to help with the workload.	2. Patrick notices that Bob has not taken any of his vacation or personal days this past year. On the next team call, he praises Bob for his commitment to the company and expresses pride that someone on the team shares his own enthusiasm for work. Patrick encourages the rest of the team to follow Bob's example especially if they care about career advancement.
3. Patrick receives word from upper management about a new project for which the team will be put in charge. He relays this information to the team via e-mail and assigns preliminary tasks and deadlines to each team member. Patrick concludes the e-mail with a disclaimer not to worry about the project for now and wishes everyone happy holidays.	3. On a team call, Patrick takes a little time to talk about everyone's weekend. He asks Jenny if she is still struggling to keep everyone at home happy. Patrick then reflects on the importance of making enough time for life outside of the office even though they are so busy with work.	3. Jenny tells Patrick that she has to take a morning class this semester. It would be only once a week but Jenny expresses concern that she may need more time to finish her work tasks. Patrick tells her not to worry. He instructs her to give her unfinished tasks to Bob as he has no kids and is more likely than anyone else on the team to have free time.
4. Patrick notices that John has been sending work e-mails over the past several weekends. During their next meeting, Patrick brings up that he has noticed a lot of e-mails coming from John outside of work hours. He discourages John from working on weekends, especially when there are no urgent work tasks or project deliverables.	4. Tim has an upcoming off-site meeting with clients. A few days before, he approaches Patrick asking if he can have someone cover for him because he has to take his dad to several doctor appointments on the same day as the meeting. Patrick advises Tim to reach out to his teammates directly and see if anyone can cover for him. Later, Tim informs Patrick that he was not able to get anyone to attend in his place and asks if he should try to reschedule the meeting. Patrick replies that at the end of the day, work comes first and Tim needs to be there to meet with the clients.	4. John runs into Patrick on the way to a meeting. John mentions that he may need to finish his work later tonight because he needs to leave the office early to take care of a personal issue. Patrick asks why he needs to leave and strongly suggests that he maintain a strict 9 to 5 p.m. work schedule in the future.

Notes

1. We used SPSS to conduct our statistical analysis. The Bonferroni correction employed in SPSS multiplies the observed *p* values by the number of comparisons made, three in our case. Then these adjusted *p* values are compared against the traditional alpha level of .05 to determine whether the difference is statistically significant.

2. In the initial version of the article, in Study 2, we also examined how supervisor experiences of workplace ostracism may lead to subsequent failures to be family-supportive, as reported by a subset of employee respondents in a Time 2 survey. We found evidence that supervisor experiences of workplace ostracism were positively associated with a lack of family-supportive supervision at Time 2 and that ostracism mediated the positive relationship between lack of family-supportive supervision at Time 1 and Time 2. However, we were encouraged during the review process to summarize these analyses, thus enabling us to focus on other aspects of our model, including potential moderators. Results from these prior analyses are available on request from the authors.

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