Newcomer work-to-nonwork conflict to withdrawal via work-to-nonwork self-efficacy: The buffering role of family supportive supervisor behavior[☆]

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ABSTRACT

In adulthood, starting a new job is a major life event that, for many, accompanies significant changes to one's personal life (e.g., moving to a new location, setting up new childcare or eldercare arrangements, renegotiating schedules and nonwork responsibilities with a spouse or partner). Research shows that job candidates anticipate the degree of work-family support and conflict they might experience in a new role when deciding to accept or reject a job offer. Despite this, work examining associations between newcomer work-to-nonwork conflict (WNC), once arriving at a new job, and their adjustment to the new work role has lagged. To address this, the current study investigates the relationship between newcomers' work nonwork demands (i.e., WNC) and resources (having a family-supportive supervisor) during organizational entry, in relation to work withdrawal. Results from surveys administered to newcomers across three time points, indicate that newcomers' WNC was positively related to work withdrawal via reduced work-to-nonwork self-efficacy. Additionally, the indirect relationship between WNC and newcomer withdrawal was moderated by family-supportive supervisor behavior, indicating that managers can serve as resources with powerful potential to counteract the negative effects of conflict during this early stage. This study is among the first to explicitly link the work-nonwork and organizational socialization literatures. Our results suggest that organizations aiming to support and retain new workers may benefit from training supervisors to help newcomers manage WNC when starting a new job.

In the face of increased worker mobility and a competitive labor market, organizations are increasingly concerned with the retention of workers (Hancock et al., 2013). Research suggests that a key to achieving increased retention of an organization's best employees is early engagement and support of new workers (Allen, 2006). For new employees, the first few months on the job are a critical period during which they reconcile expectations with reality, learn about their new role and organization, and evaluate their decision to join the organization (Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 2021). Despite the optimism that may accompany starting a new job, research shows that this period is also often fraught with increased rates of organizational turnover (Rubenstein et al., 2019), often

attributable to a failure in adjustment to the new work role (Allen, 2006).

One indicator of a failure to adjust is a lack of personal confidence that one can successfully meet the demands of the new work role and master new work tasks (i.e., self-efficacy; Bauer et al., 2007; Jones, 1986). Indeed, newcomer self-efficacy, which represents newcomers' judgements about their capability to successfully perform new work tasks (Bandura, 1986; Gruman et al., 2006), has been shown to relate positively to job attitudes and performance, and negatively to intentions to quit and turnover (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Myriad work-related factors have been examined in association with newcomer self-efficacy, including newcomer proactive behavior (Bauer et al., 2007), the role of insiders (e.g., leaders; Hu et al., 2020), and organizational socialization tactics (Saks & Gruman, 2011). However, despite important insights from this work, a major oversight has been the failure to consider the multiple roles newcomers embody beyond the work context (i.e., as a partner, family member, parent, elder caretaker, etc.), that inevitably influence their experiences of work, and may meaningfully alter the adjustment process, including the development of personal efficacy and desire to remain with the organization. This has been true despite growing attention to nonwork roles, including the family role, in multiple other organizational research domains.

In fact, a transition to a new job is a meaningful life event that, in many cases, comes with significant nonwork adjustments (Sons & Niessen, 2022). Such adjustments may include moving to a new location, establishing new eldercare or childcare arrangements, or job changes for a spouse or partner. It is feasible that newcomers' new work roles have the potential to contribute to nonwork challenges, and that the resulting dynamics between work and nonwork may influence newcomers' adjustment and desire to remain with their organization, however to our knowledge this has not been examined within the prior organizational socialization literature. Indeed, this primary focus within socialization research on the work role, at the exclusion of other important roles in newcomers' lives, fails to acknowledge prior work showing that job candidates consider and form expectations about work-family balance when searching for and accepting job offers (Careless & Wintle, 2007; Wayne & Casper, 2016), and industry reports that espouse perceived work-family balance is a top consideration for today's job seekers (e.g., Howington, n.d.). Thus, examining early experiences of work-to-nonwork conflict (WNC) in relation to the adjustment process provides an opportunity to better understand how to support and retain new workers and contributes to our understanding of both newcomer adjustment and work-nonwork dynamics.

Socialization scholars have long called for the integration of work-family experiences in models of newcomer adjustment to more accurately map the nomological network of antecedents and outcomes of newcomer socialization (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). Similarly, work-family researchers have pointed to the need to thoughtfully consider family or other nonwork experiences in relation to employee career decisions (e.g., job change; Kramer & Kramer, 2021). In addition, Allen et al. (2019) argued that understanding the context within which work-family experiences happen helps explain when they may be more or less detrimental to employee well-being. Despite calls to integrate these research streams and the potential to contribute meaningfully to both areas of research, outside of some work on expatriate adjustment (e.g., Shaffer & Harrison, 1998), no studies we are aware of have directly investigated WNC among traditional newcomers. This has resulted in a relatively one-sided (i.e., work-centric) understanding of the factors that contribute to newcomer adjustment or maladjustment, such as early turnover, and fails to take advantage of this unique time within one's career to enhance our understanding of work-nonwork dynamics. At a minimum, this gap in our knowledge base significantly limits our theoretical understanding of the adjustment process, and leaves organizations without holistic guidance in how to best support newcomers.

Accordingly, the goal of the current study is to examine newcomers' WNC during organizational entry in relation to *work-to-nonwork self-efficacy* (i.e., expectations about the capability to manage WNC in the future). Drawing on the job demands-resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and self-efficacy theory (Wood & Bandura, 1989), we gathered data from newcomers at three time
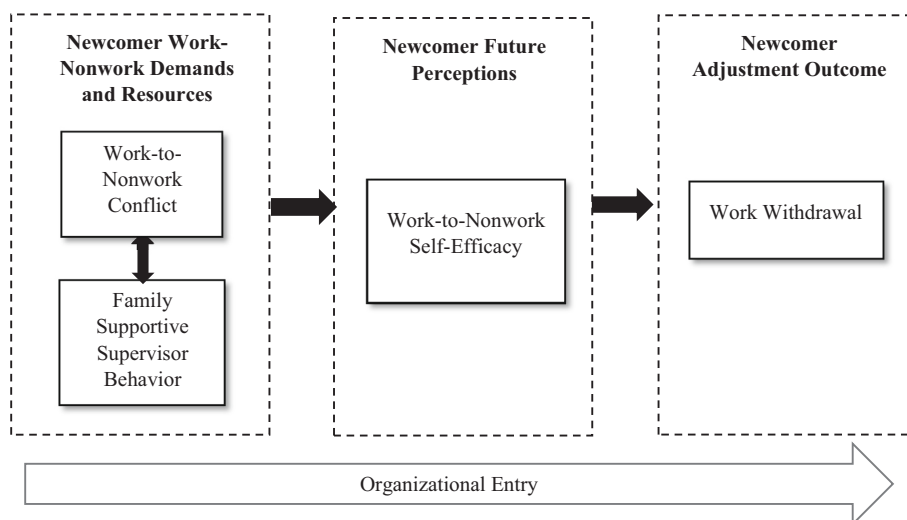

Fig. 1. Theoretical model linking newcomer work-to-nonwork conflict and family-supportive supervisor behavior (FSSB) to work-to-nonwork self-efficacy and work withdrawal.

points to test a path model linking early experiences of WNC and having a family-supportive supervisor, to later work withdrawal via newcomer work-to-nonwork self-efficacy (Fig. 1).

Our study contributes to our understanding of the role of WNC in the adjustment process. Specifically, we link early WNC with work-to-nonwork self-efficacy, describing the ways in which early conflict may be perceived by newcomers as a failure experience, thereby shaping work-to-nonwork self-efficacy beliefs important for subsequent adjustment. In addition, we examine the buffering role of a critical work-nonwork resource—family-supportive supervisor behavior (FSSB; Hammer et al., 2007). Socialization researchers have long acknowledged the important role of immediate supervisors in assisting newcomers with adjusting to their new role, primarily through the provision of critical task-related information (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998), social information (e.g., Ellis et al., 2017), and mentorship (Allen et al., 2006). FSSB entails the provision of a broader form of support that is aimed at helping employees effectively manage conflict between their work and nonwork roles (Hammer et al., 2009, 2007). Our study identifies FSSB as a meaningful resource that helps newcomers make sense of early WNC, and manage instances of it, neutralizing WNC's effect on subsequent efficacy perceptions and withdrawal. Given a context where both work and nonwork demands may be heightened and where resources within the work setting have not yet been developed, identifying a critical and trainable resource like FSSB may be a key factor in reducing premature newcomer turnover. Finally, this study provides some insight into the relatively under-examined effect of timing on the relationship between WNC and employee outcomes given the natural starting point of beginning a new job, where newcomers and supervisors are similarly early in the building of their relationship (Allen et al., 2019).

1. Theory and hypothesis development

1.1. Work-to-nonwork conflict and work-to-nonwork self-efficacy

We know that organizational entry is a potentially stressful time for newcomers where successful adjustment is key to long-term success. Coping with new work demands, learning to navigate new organizational structures, understanding role expectations, and generally making new relational connections at work are critical to ensuring newcomers effectively adjust to their new role. In addition, the development of self-efficacy has been shown to be a key indicator of successful adjustment (Bauer et al., 2007). Wood and Bandura (1989) outlined certain experiences as meaningful in the development of self-efficacy. These experiences included enactive mastery experiences, in which employees can gain confidence through early successes; vicarious experiences, which provide opportunities for observation of others' successes; social persuasion, referring to the positive encouragement provided by others; and physiological and affective states, which provide immediate internal feedback. For newcomers, early experiences of demands and resources may serve as particularly important cues that help them make sense of the new environment, and to which they may subscribe significant meaning related to their ability to be successful (Ellis et al., 2015; Louis, 1980). Based on self-efficacy theory (Wood & Bandura, 1989), we can delineate how the experience of certain resources early in the socialization period, could influence adjustment through their impact on the development of self-efficacy, a critical personal resource for newcomers (Gruman et al., 2006), and how certain demands could signal to newcomers an experience of failure that reduces subsequent self-efficacy.

WNC represents one such demand and refers to situations in which work and nonwork roles, including family roles and those beyond the family, are incompatible (Fisher et al., 2009; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The trade-offs for time, resources, and energy can be exhausting to employees and have been linked to numerous deleterious work and personal outcomes (Amstad et al., 2011; Frone et al., 1997; Nohe et al., 2015). Employees may experience WNC when the completion of work tasks takes time away from nonwork activities, or when one carries negative emotions or strain associated with work into the home domain. Through the lens of self-efficacy theory, early experiences of WNC are demands that may be interpreted by newcomers as a lack of mastery, or inability to successfully manage competing priorities in work and home domains. Moreover, prior research has found that daily experiences of work-to-family conflict, one type of WNC, are exhausting and associated with negative affective reactions (e.g., French & Allen, 2020; Judge et al., 2006). These cognitive and affective cues resulting from the experience of interference of work on nonwork life degrades newcomers' expectation that they will be able to effectively cope with WNC in the future, and therefore their work-to-nonwork self-efficacy. Supporting this line of reasoning, while not in a newcomer context, Cho et al. (2022) studied caregivers' experiences of work-family balance and work-family balance self-efficacy, closely related concepts to those examined in the current study, before, during, and after the Covid-19 lockdowns. These results illustrated that experiences of work-family balance during the pandemic were associated with post-pandemic reports of work-family balance self-efficacy. Thus, we propose that the degree of WNC a newcomer is experiencing as they start their new job will be related to their confidence to navigate similar future conflict.

Hypothesis 1. Newcomers' WNC will be negatively related to work-to-nonwork self-efficacy.

1.2. Family-supportive supervisor behavior and work-to-nonwork self-efficacy

One aspect of newcomer adjustment which supervisors may influence is the degree to which they create a culture of supporting employees in managing the different spheres of their lives (Major & Cleveland, 2007). Contrary to experiences of WNC, early interactions with supervisors surrounding WNC that are supportive and encouraging may build confidence in newcomers' expectations about managing work and nonwork demands. FSSB refers to the provision of family-specific support by supervisors and may take the form of direct emotional and instrumental support, or indirect forms of support such as role modeling, and instituting creative management practices that proactively alleviate work-family conflict for employees while also jointly benefiting the organization (Hammer et al., 2009). FSSB constitutes a job resource in that it enables employees to successfully meet demands, particularly those

related to WNC. According to the JD-R framework, job resources enable the development of personal resources, which may include self-efficacy (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). This combination of job and personal resources are relevant to facilitating motivation and higher performance in the work domain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Supervisor behaviors are especially important and relevant in the development of newcomer self-efficacy, as prior research indicates that newcomers gain significant information about their new work role through the observation of others (Morrison, 1993a, 1993b), and that supervisor support plays an important role in overall adjustment (Ellis et al., 2017; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). Supervisors, in particular, may be key to signaling the availability of resources with regard to managing competing work and nonwork roles, as prior research has found that newcomers pay close attention to the actions of leaders, and these actions can influence newcomer adjustment behavior (Nifadkar, 2020). For instance, Nifadkar et al. (2019) found that when supervisors shared personal, family-related information about themselves with newcomers, the newcomers reported greater trust in their supervisor, which was subsequently related to greater newcomer information seeking. Supervisors who demonstrate FSSB not only role model how to effectively navigate work and nonwork, which should represent a vicarious experience relevant for building newcomer self-efficacy, but also through engaging in direct interactions with followers by providing support and encouragement (i.e., social persuasion). Moreover, supervisors who engage in creative work-nonwork management efforts that are proactive in nature, also signal to the employee that it is a progressive environment where improvements are being made to better support nonwork life. These direct and indirect interactions cue newcomers that successfully managing WNC is possible in the new context, and there is support available to assist them in managing future WNC. Thus, we hypothesize the following regarding how FSSB will relate to newcomer work-to-nonwork self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 2. FSSB will be positively related to newcomers' work-to-nonwork self-efficacy.

In addition to evaluating direct associations between WNC, FSSB, and work-to-nonwork self-efficacy, we propose that WNC and FSSB will interact and be related to work-to-nonwork self-efficacy. The JD-R framework suggests that resources in the workplace can play a buffering role in the face of job demands, thereby reducing the effect of stressors on outcomes (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In line with this rationale, newcomers who do experience WNC early on in their socialization process, but also have experiences of early support from supervisors in managing such conflict, are more likely to report a sense of efficacy in managing future WNC. In this way, early experiences of FSSB play a dual role. Although FSSB signals the availability of resources needed to manage inevitable WNC in their new organization (i.e., a direct effect), FSSB can also alleviate early experiences of WNC directly, thereby mitigating any negative effect of WNC on the development of work-to-nonwork self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 3. FSSB will moderate the negative association between newcomers' WNC and work-to-nonwork self-efficacy, such that the relationship will be weakened under higher levels of FSSB.

1.3. Work-to-nonwork self-efficacy and newcomer withdrawal

Work-to-nonwork self-efficacy is an indicator of newcomers' expectation that they can effectively cope with WNC in the future. Just as task-based self-efficacy relates to distal outcomes in the work role, including work withdrawal and turnover intentions and behavior (Bauer et al., 2007), we expect that work-to-nonwork self-efficacy will similarly act as a proximal adjustment indicator with downstream effects on more distal socialization outcomes, such as work withdrawal. Wood and Bandura (1989) argued that self-efficacy is a critical self-regulatory mechanism, which influences or whether people persist through challenges or withdraw from certain activities and environments. Particularly in the context of a new work role which is broadly considered an uncertain and challenging time (Ellis et al., 2015), newcomers who lack confidence in their ability to meet demands will withdraw from that role. Wood and Bandura (1989) stated, "When faced with difficulties, people who have self-doubts about their capabilities slacken their efforts or abort their attempts prematurely…" (p. 365). Accordingly, newcomers who lack confidence that they will be able to effectively cope with WNC in the future, will be more likely to withdraw from the task of adjustment and socialization critical to success during this phase, while those who feel confident their new job will enable them to continue to meet nonwork responsibilities, will remain engaged in the task of adjustment as evidenced by reduced work withdrawal.

Hypothesis 4. Newcomers' work-to-nonwork self-efficacy will be negatively related to work withdrawal.

Taken together, we hypothesize that WNC and FSSB will relate to newcomer work withdrawal through the association with work-to-nonwork self-efficacy. WNC will be perceived by newcomers as a demand. Demands are threatening to newcomers because they indicate a potential or actual loss of resources critical for well-being and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Newcomers who perceive a relatively high degree of WNC will be more likely to evaluate their work environment as one that is resource taxing and unfavorable to maintaining a desired degree of engagement in the nonwork role. That is, early experiences of WNC may exacerbate negative evaluations of the work environment and newcomers' belief about their ability to be successful in such an environment. To the extent these beliefs relate to work-to-nonwork self-efficacy, they will subsequently degrade newcomers' engagement in the adjustment process, and instead encourage a withdrawal from it.

Conversely, FSSB should function as a resource, signaling to employees that the work environment is welcoming and supportive of multiple roles (including the family and other nonwork roles), and that conflicts or demands can be managed and mitigated. These experiences observing and interacting with a family-supportive supervisor have the potential to engender trust (Nifadkar et al., 2019) and build confidence in newcomers with regard to the future and their ability to be successful in meeting WNC as it arises. In turn, newcomers are encouraged to engage with the new work role and, thus, withdrawal is less likely.

Hypothesis 5.   The conditional indirect effect of WNC on newcomer withdrawal via work-to-nonwork self-efficacy will be stronger for those with lower as opposed to higher levels of FSSB early on.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and procedure

Data were collected from new employees from a variety of organizations via three online surveys separated by approximately one week each. This design allowed us to separate key variables in time reducing the potential for common method bias (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2003), while also capturing a critical time period of unfolding events that is theoretically and practically meaningful as newcomers begin their positions (Bauer et al., 2007). Participants were recruited using Qualtrics panels in Fall of 2020. Invitation for participation was restricted to members within the United States. To participate in the study, respondents had to be at least 18 years of age, working at least 30 h per week at their primary job, and had to have been at their job for less than 90 days. Prior research has indicated that the first 90 days is a critical time for newcomers as it represents a period with significant change in job attitudes (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Lance et al., 2000). Beyond the considerations mentioned above, past research has shown that the influence of supervisor support on outcomes tends to dwindle after 90 days (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013) further supporting the relevance of this time frame. Participants were compensated in accordance with their Qualtrics agreement. Informed consent was received from every participant in accordance with human subjects approval for the project, "Understanding Work-life Balance for New Employees" (2019-214-CP).

Responses were screened for quality using several measures: 1) two attention check items were included in the first survey; 2) one open-ended item was included, and then responses that indicated a lack of attention were removed; 3) respondents who completed the survey in less than half the median completion time were removed; and finally, 4) responses were analyzed for variation and cases were removed where substantial straight lining was indicated. Ultimately, 360 participants qualified and provided usable responses to Time 1. These participants were invited to take part in Time 2 approximately one week later. A total of 260 responses were received in Time 2 (72 %). Those who completed Time 1 and 2 were invited to participate in Time 3 approximately one week later. A total of 223 responses were received in Time 3 (86 %). As a final validation check and subsequent use as a control variable, we asked participants to write in the number of days they had been at their job. This was manually coded by the first author and resulted in the removal of an additional 21 cases leaving a final sample of 202 participants.

Responses were matched across time points using a unique identification number. A response-non-response analysis comparing participants with a response at Time 3 to those with no response at Time 3 showed no significant differences in gender (χ^2 (2) = 5.71, p = .057), having children (χ^2 (1) = 3.47, p = .062), nor hours worked (t (273.1) = 1.081, p = .281). There was a small but significant difference in the age of participants (t (283.68) = 2.34, p = .020), with those responding being slightly older (M = 44.06 years) than nonrespondents (M = 41.20 years).

The average age of participants in the sample was 44 years (SD = 11 years). Twenty-eight percent (n = 57) of the final sample were male. A total of 81.7 % (n = 165) of the sample reported having traditional nonwork responsibilities of either a spouse or partner living with them, and/or children, and/or regular eldercare responsibilities (Table 1). Collectively, these conditions indicate this was an appropriate sample in which to test our hypotheses. In terms of race, 80 % of participants self-identified as White, 12 % Black; less than 2 % identified as Asian or American Indian. 21 % of the sample held a high school diploma, 36 % some college, 29 % a bachelor's degree, and 14 % had a master's or doctorate degree. About 15 % of the sample indicated they worked in a supervisory role. Participants worked an average of 39 h per week (SD = 5.46). Job titles varied (e.g., Warehouse Team Leader, Physician's Assistant, Grants Manager).

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Work-to-nonwork conflict

Following work by Matthews et al. (2010), we assessed WNC in the first survey (Time 1) with three items which were adapted from Carlson et al. (2000) measure. Instructions asked participants to consider their nonwork life broadly inclusive of "family and/or your personal or free time". Items were, "I have to miss nonwork activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities", "I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my personal life", and "The behaviors I perform that make me effective at work do not help me to be a better parent and spouse". Responses were provided on a 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) scale.

2.2.2. Family-Supportive Supervisor Behavior (FSSB)

FSSB was also assessed at Time 1 with four items from Hammer et al. (2013) short-form scale. Items and instructions were similarly adapted to refer broadly to participants' multiple roles and responsibilities outside of work. A sample item is, "My supervisor makes me feel comfortable talking to him or her about my conflicts between work and nonwork." Responses were provided on a 1 (Strongly

Table 1
Self-reported nonwork responsibilities by type.

Elder care responsibilities (0 = no, 1 = yes)	Married or living with spouse (0 = no, 1 = yes)	Children under 18 years living at home (0 = no, 1 = yes)	N (count)	Percentage of sample
0	0	0	37	18.32 %
0	1	1	37	18.32 %
0	1	0	35	17.33 %
0	0	1	28	13.86 %
1	0	0	19	9.41 %
1	1	1	17	8.42 %
1	0	1	15	7.43 %
1	1	0	14	6.93 %
		Total	202	

disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) scale.

2.2.3. Work-to-nonwork self-efficacy

Four items from Hennessy and Lent (2008) assessed employees' work-to-nonwork self-efficacy at Time 2. A fifth item from the original scale was left out in error.[1] As with previous scales, items were adapted to include reference to participants' nonwork responsibilities in addition to family responsibilities. A sample item is, "How confident are you that you could fulfill your family/nonwork responsibilities despite going through a trying and demanding period in your work?" Responses were provided on a 0 (Complete lack of confidence) to 9 (Total confidence) scale.

2.2.4. Work withdrawal

We used eight items from Lehman and Simpson (1992) job behaviors scale to assess work withdrawal at Time 3. Newcomers were asked to indicate how frequently they engaged in the behaviors since starting their job. Sample items include, "Put less effort into job than should have" and "Thoughts about leaving current job" using a 1 (Never) to 7 (Very often) response scale.

2.2.5. Control variables

Demographic and control variables were assessed at Time 1. In all analyses, we controlled for gender of the newcomer, relationship status, whether they reported having children, and whether they reported eldercare responsibilities. These decisions were based on prior work showing, first, that these factors can change experiences related to work and nonwork, in addition to how much support is received from supervisors (e.g., Shockley et al., 2017); and, second, showing that gender and work-family conflict may interact and affect withdrawal behaviors such as absence and leaving work early (Boyar et al., 2005). The number of days on the job was also used as a control variable given that newcomers in the study could have completed the first survey at any point during their first 90 days. All participants had been at their job for 90 days or less. On average, participants were at their job for 54.42 days (SD = 27.16) with a range of 1 day to 90 days.

Finally, given the data were collected during the Covid-19 pandemic at a time when many organizations adopted work-from-home policies, we wanted to examine differences in respondents' mode of work (i.e., virtual, hybrid, in-person) using respondents' onboarding process as a proxy. We found that 41 % of respondents reported in-person onboarding, 27 % virtual onboarding, 23 % a mix of both, and 2 % indicating they did not receive onboarding. To assess the potential effect of the onboarding modality on key variables in our study, we conducted a series of ANOVAs with onboarding mode as a predictor variable. Our data revealed no significant effects of onboarding mode on withdrawal behavior or work-to-nonwork self-efficacy. As such, we did not control for onboarding mode in the following analyses.

3. Results

3.1. Preliminary analyses

Prior to testing hypotheses, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to test the measurement structure of our model. A model with four factors with all items loading on to their respective factors showed acceptable fit to the data (χ^2 (146, N = 202) = 309.246, p = .000, CFI = 0.923, RMSEA = 0.074, SRMR = 0.072). We tested an alternative model with items from the WNC scale and work-to-nonwork self-efficacy scale loaded on a single factor. This model showed poorer fit to the data (χ^2 (149, N = 202) = 386.507, p = .000, CFI = 0.889, RMSEA = 0.089, SRMR = 0.085), as did a model in which WNC and FSSB items were forced to load on to a single factor (χ^2 (149, N = 202) = 418.149, p = .000, CFI = 0.874, RMSEA = 0.095, SRMR = 0.099). Based on this, we proceeded with the original items and scales. Cronbach's alpha for the scales along with descriptive statistics are provided in Table 2.

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[1] To ensure the missing item did not substantively change the performance of the scale, we collected a separate online sample of 151 newcomers (with less than 90 days of tenure). We found no meaningful differences in scale mean, standard deviation, or Cronbach's alpha when four items were retained compared to the original five items.

Table 2

Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability information for study variables.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Eldercare	0.32	0.47									
2. Gender	0.72	0.46	0.13								
3. Children	0.48	0.50	0.02	0.21*							
4. Tenure (days)	54.42	27.16	0.04	−0.02	0.09						
5. Relationship status	0.51	0.50	−0.05	−0.03	0.09	0.04					
6. WNC (T1)	3.12	0.94	0.27**	0.13	0.20*	0.05	−0.05	(0.68)			
7. FSSB (T1)	3.71	0.98	−0.06	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.02	−0.20*	(0.89)		
8. Work-to-Nonwork Self-Efficacy (T2)	6.81	1.76	−0.14	−0.05	0.00	0.09	0.02	−0.36**	0.38**	(0.93)	
9. Withdrawal (T3)	2.44	1.18	0.09	−0.05	−0.03	−0.01	−0.02	0.20*	−0.32**	−0.30**	(0.86)

Note. $n = 202$. Cronbach's alpha for scales reported in parentheses. Eldercare was coded 0 = No, 1 = Yes; Gender was coded 0 = Male, 1 = Female; Children was coded 0 = No children living with newcomer, 1 = At least one child under the age of 18 living with newcomer; Relationship status was coded 0 = single, divorced, or widowed, 1 = married or living with partner; WNC = Work-to-nonwork conflict; FSSB=Family supportive supervisor behavior; Withdrawal = Work withdrawal; T1 = Time 1, T2 = Time 2, T3 = Time 3.

* $p < .01$.

** $p < .001$.

3.2. Hypothesis tests

To test our hypotheses, we specified a path model using the lavaan package in R, version 0.6–9 (Rosseel, 2012), with paths from WNC, FSSB, and the interaction between WNC and FSSB to work-to-nonwork self-efficacy, and a path from work-to-nonwork self-efficacy to withdrawal. Paths from control variables to work-to-nonwork self-efficacy and withdrawal were also included.[2] All exogenous variables were allowed to covary. Estimates were derived using full information maximum likelihood as this approach enables use of information from all participants, including those with missing data, and provides a less biased approach compared to the default of listwise deletion (Newman, 2014). This model fit to the data but not well as indicated by the following: χ^2 (3, $N = 202$) = 13.780, $p = .003$, CFI = 0.872, RMSEA = 0.133, SRMR = 0.029. Adding a direct path from FSSB to withdrawal improved model fit. As such, we specified a second model including this direct path. This second model showed good fit to the data, χ^2 (2, $N = 202$) = 2.525, $p = .283$, CFI = 0.994, RMSEA = 0.036, SRMR = 0.013, and explained 14.5 % of the variance in newcomer work withdrawal ($R^2 = 0.145$).

Path estimates are shown in Fig. 2 and full results are provided in Table 3. Specifically, controlling for gender, children, relationship status, eldercare and the number of days on the job, the relationship between WNC and work-to-nonwork self-efficacy was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.337$ $p = .000$, CI [−0.823, −0.352]) indicating that newcomers who reported greater conflict within their first 90-days on the job felt less confident in managing their work and nonwork demands. This supported Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 stated that FSSB would serve as a resource, and thus, be positively related to work-to-nonwork self-efficacy among newcomers. Results of the path analysis also supported this hypothesis ($\beta = 0.292$, $p = .000$, CI [0.301, 0.748]). In support of Hypothesis 3, we also found a significant interaction between WNC and FSSB on work-to-nonwork self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.205$ $p = .003$, CI [0.101, 0.537]), such that the negative relationship between WNC and work-to-nonwork self-efficacy is weakened under conditions of high FSSB. A test of the simple slopes showed significant slopes at one and two standard deviations below the mean (Est. = −1.228, $SE = 0.274$, $p = .000$, CI [−1.765, −0.704], Est. = −0.911, $SE = 0.182$, $p = .000$, CI [−1.262, −0.553]) and at one standard deviation above the mean (Est. = −0.275, $SE = 0.128$, $p = .031$, CI [−0.552, −0.026]), and a nonsignificant slope at two standard deviations above the mean (Est. = 0.042, $SE = 0.204$, $p = .837$, CI[−0.363, 0.436]). Figs. 3 and 4 provide a depiction of this interaction (Cheung et al., 2021).

Next, Hypothesis 4 predicted that work-to-nonwork self-efficacy would be negatively related to newcomer withdrawal. Our results showed support for this relationship ($\beta = -0.201$, $p = .021$, CI [−0.250, −0.017]). Although we expected an indirect relationship between FSSB and newcomer withdrawal, our results supported a direct path as well. Specifically, we found that FSSB had a negative direct effect on newcomer withdrawal such that newcomers who perceived greater nonwork support from their supervisor at Time 1 were significantly less likely to report withdrawal at Time 3 ($\beta = -0.240$, $p = .001$, CI [−0.448, −0.113]).

Finally, we tested the conditional indirect relationships between WNC and newcomer withdrawal through newcomer work-to-nonwork self-efficacy, conditioned on FSSB. Based on 1000 bootstrapped samples, and after accounting for control variables, we found a significant positive indirect effect of WNC on newcomer withdrawal via work-to-nonwork self-efficacy at lower levels of FSSB (Est. = 0.123, $SE = 0.058$, $p = .035$, CI [0.015, 0.254]). The conditional indirect effect at higher levels of FSSB was not significant (Est. = 0.037, $SE = 0.026$, $p = .149$, CI [0.000, 0.096]). These results indicate that in the absence of FSSB, early experiences of WNC are more strongly associated with work-to-nonwork self-efficacy and subsequent withdrawal. However, where higher levels of FSSB are present early on, this effect is neutralized as it is no longer statistically significant. These results support the buffering effect of FSSB and provide support for Hypothesis 5.

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[2] Results do not substantively change when these control variables are excluded from the analysis. Full analysis available upon request from the first author.
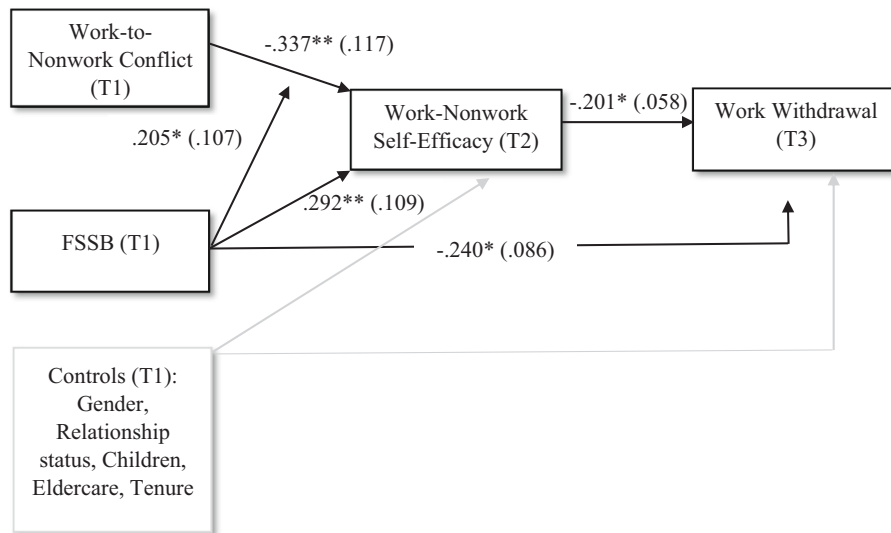
Fig. 2. Final path model linking newcomer work-to-nonwork conflict and family-supportive supervisor behavior (FSSB) to work-to-nonwork self-efficacy and work withdrawal.

Note. $n = 202$. Standardized parameter estimates are shown, followed by standard errors in parentheses. All data were provided by newcomers. FSSB = family-supportive supervisor behavior; T1 = Time 1, T2 = Time 2, T3 = Time 3.

*$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

Table 3
Results of the moderated mediation analysis.

Variable	Work-to-Nonwork Self-Efficacy			Work Withdrawal		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Constant	6.671	0.353	3.794**	3.422	0.506	2.912**
Gender	−0.164	0.275	−0.042	−0.158	0.192	−0.060
Relationship Status	−0.077	0.213	−0.022	−0.023	0.156	−0.010
Children	0.234	0.224	0.067	−0.018	0.168	−0.008
Tenure (Days)	0.005	0.004	0.081	0.000	0.003	0.010
Eldercare	−0.130	0.256	−0.034	0.143	0.188	0.057
WNC	−0.593	0.117	−0.337**			
FSSB	0.514	0.109	0.292**	−0.283	0.086	−0.240*
WNC * FSSB	0.323	0.107	0.205*			
Work-to-Nonwork Self-Efficacy				−0.134	0.058	−0.201*
R^2	0.282			0.145		

Note. $n = 202$. B = unstandardized regression coefficients; β = standardized regression coefficients.

R^2 = overall variance explained in dependent variable by the variables in the model.

WNC = Work-to-nonwork conflict; FSSB=Family supportive supervisor behavior.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .001$.

4. Discussion

The goal of the current study was to examine relationships between newcomer experiences of WNC and their association with newcomer work-to-nonwork self-efficacy and withdrawal during organizational entry. The first few months of a newcomer's tenure with an organization is a critical time in which they make sense of their new work environment (Louis, 1980), begin to develop an understanding of their role within the organization, and either engage with the adjustment process or withdraw from it (Ellis et al., 2015; Tak, 2011). The results of the current three-wave study of newcomers showed that newcomers' work-to-nonwork self-efficacy was explained, in part, by early experiences of WNC and FSSB. Newcomers with a greater degree of WNC early on were less likely to report feeling efficacious in their ability to manage WNC, which, in turn, negatively related to subsequent work withdrawal. However, our findings showed this effect was conditional on the degree to which newcomers perceived they had supervisors that provided nonwork support. That is, the indirect effect of WNC on newcomer withdrawal via reduced work-to-nonwork self-efficacy was mitigated and became nonsignificant when newcomers had access to a key resource—supportive supervisors. These results were consistent with and without controlling for proxies of nonwork demands such as gender, having children, eldercare responsibilities, being in a relationship, and days worked at their job.
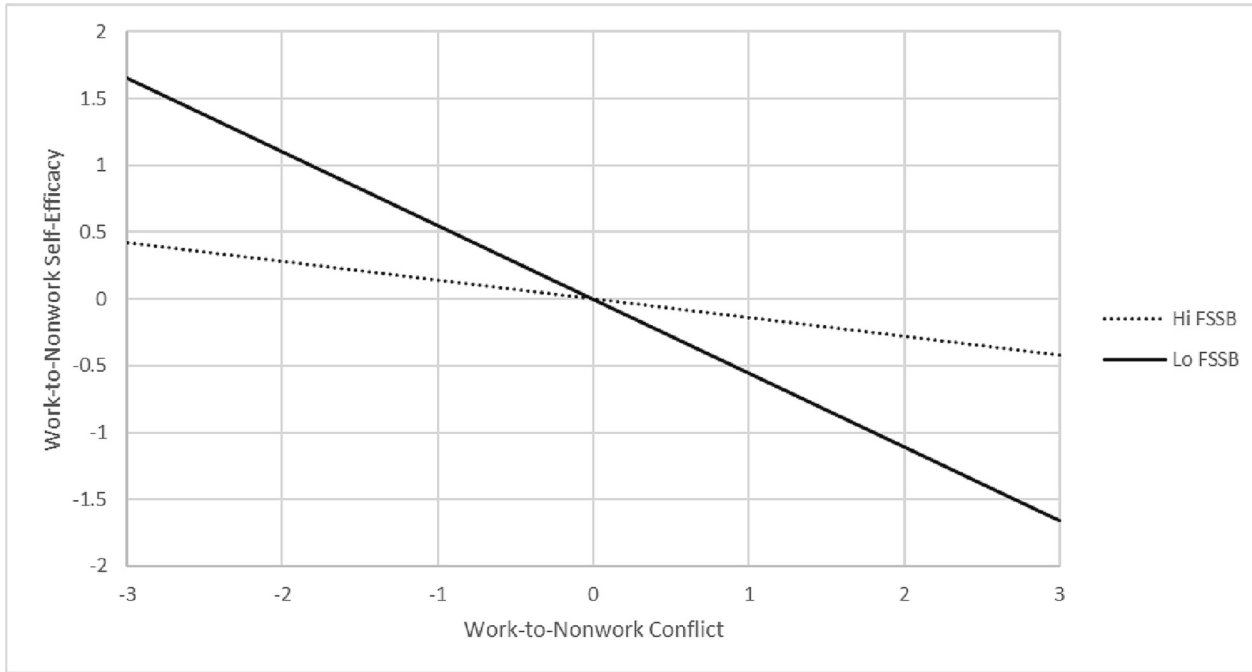
Fig. 3. Standardized Effects of Work-to-Nonwork Conflict on Work-to-Nonwork Self-Efficacy Conditional on FSSB.
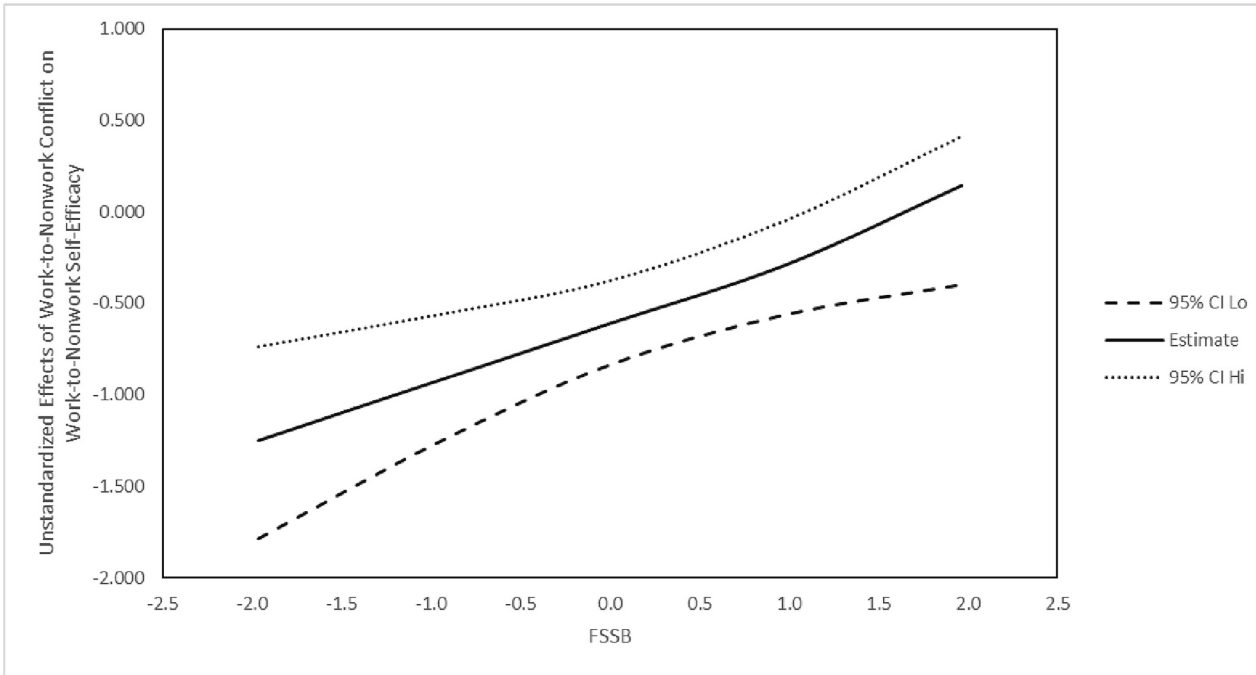
Fig. 4. Unstandardized Effects of Work-to-Nonwork Conflict on Work-to-Nonwork Self-Efficacy Conditional on FSSB.

The examination of newcomer WNC during the socialization period, provides an extension to previous work on job entry which has demonstrated that candidates anticipate future WNC and take stock of family-friendly workplace policies prior to joining an organization (Carless & Wintle, 2007; Westring & Ryan, 2011). It further addresses calls from socialization and career researchers to integrate work-nonwork experiences into existing theorizing and empirical research (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011; Kramer & Kramer, 2021). Our results showed that early WNC and FSSB are salient demands and resources that expand our understanding of newcomers' adjustment, including the extent to which they may withdraw from the adjustment process. Prior work has identified proximal adjustment indicators including a sense of belonging, clarity in the work role, and a sense of mastery of work tasks (Bauer et al., 2007). In addition to these newcomer psychological states, our results suggest that newcomers also consider whether they will be able to successfully meet obligations in both work and nonwork domains (i.e., work-to-nonwork self-efficacy), and that these cognitions matter for future adjustment.

4.1. Theoretical implications

These findings support the hypothesis that early experiences, both demanding and resource-providing, are associated with expectations newcomers form about their future ability to be successful in managing WNC. Experiences of WNC appeared to impede the development of confidence to manage WNC (i.e., work-to-nonwork self-efficacy), while FSSB helped to build this confidence. Further, we found that WNC and FSSB interacted and were jointly associated with work-to-nonwork self-efficacy. This is consistent with and has implications for predictions by the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), however by integrating theory on the development of self-efficacy, we were able to speculate as to why these particular job demands and resources matter. That is, WNC may degrade the development of work-to-nonwork self-efficacy because it signals a lack of mastery and engenders negative affective reactions which reinforce the cue that one is unable to successfully meet the demands of work while simultaneously fulfilling responsibilities at home. FSSB was positively associated with work-to-nonwork self-efficacy, and thus, may work in the opposite fashion through the provision of, for example, clear examples of successfully managing work and nonwork demands (i.e., role modeling) and providing direct support to newcomers (i.e., emotional and instrumental support), both of which should bolster feelings of efficacy among newcomers.

Additionally, a newcomer who perceives that supervisors are proactively attempting to improve the work-nonwork interface for employees within the organization via their supportive behaviors (i.e., creative work-nonwork management) should also experience confidence that future difficult WNC could be addressed in that given environment where improvements are being made. In turn, we found that newcomers' confidence in managing instances of WNC was negatively associated with work withdrawal. Withdrawal is problematic because, at best, it indicates a lack of engagement in the newcomer socialization process (Ellis et al., 2015), and at worst, may be associated with intention to leave the organization (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005). Thus, our work has important implications for understanding the links between perceived and actual employee resources and withdrawal. We encourage future research to further consider these theoretical connections.

4.2. Practical implications

A focus on newcomers that considers work-nonwork adjustment beyond purely work role adjustment, enables a better understanding of the factors that may lead newcomers to withdraw in their first months, and points to possible improvements within socialization programs. For example, our results showed positive associations between reported WNC and withdrawal via reduced work-to-nonwork self-efficacy. These results suggest that minimizing WNC and enhancing supports such as FSSB during newcomers' initial tenure may be beneficial for helping newcomers build efficacy and positive expectations about their future ability to effectively manage competing work and nonwork demands. Accordingly, socialization programs may consider FSSB training for hiring managers (for reviews see Crain & Stevens, 2018; Hammer & Perry, 2019; Kossek, 2016), helping build manager capabilities around supporting newcomers' work-nonwork challenges, or could include practices that facilitate significant nonwork-related transitions such as assisting newcomers in establishing childcare, eldercare, or spousal job placement support. These practices should also orient supervisors and organizations to the nonwork challenges that newcomers regularly face as they begin new positions, so that preventative measures can be taken and challenges addressed quickly when they do arise.

Our results also speak to important implications for newcomers and their supervisors. First, potential hires may have limited information about what life is like in an organization when in the initial recruitment phase, aside from awareness of formal policies and practices that may be made available through a human resources page of the organization's website or advertised in the job announcement. One preventative measure applicants can take is to explicitly ask questions about how work-nonwork challenges are supported informally and what the work-nonwork culture could be characterized like during the selection phase. Although our study was focused on the provision of support from supervisors, newcomers may also proactively seek out support during early phases of their new job, given that supervisors are also in the beginning stages of learning about the newcomer's specific work-nonwork challenges and demands. Future intervention research and practice could also be targeted towards the newcomer, integrated alongside FSSB trainings, that would empower the newcomer to advocate for themselves and seek out information about how to address WNC in a productive way that will not engender retributions from supervisors or the organization. Given that FSSB also alleviated early experiences of WNC, future FSSB trainings should highlight the importance of supervisors establishing early communication with newcomers, in addition to incumbent employees, related to potential nonwork challenges. This dual integration of both supervisor-focused and newcomer-focused interventions would be an initial step towards improving organizational work-nonwork climates, while also placing onus on both parties rather than just the newcomer to advocate for themselves in a new and stressful environment.

4.3. Potential limitations and future research

The current findings should be interpreted in light of potential limitations to our study design, including the self-reported nature of our data which may contribute to common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This concern is tempered by considerations made in the research design, including the separation of key study variables in time, and the small to moderate magnitude of correlations among variables in the study. Nevertheless, future research may benefit from including spousal, supervisor, or coworker reports of key variables such as WNC, FSSB, or employee work withdrawal, to further validate our findings. Including coworkers, for example, may also open the door to investigating the role of coworker support in addition to supervisor support for managing WNC, which likely play an important role early on in the socialization process, given power distance between supervisors and employees that may limit employees' efforts to seek support, and the reality that employees likely spend more time with coworkers early on learning the informal nature of the job. Indeed, prior literature indicates the important role of coworkers in providing key information to newcomers which aids in the adjustment process in general (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), while nonwork support from coworkers may reduce instances of WNC at the outset (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2009), or be a needed supplemental source of work-nonwork support (Tortez & Mills, 2022).

Relatedly, previous research has found that the views of key nonwork contacts (e.g., family members) may play an important role in both sensemaking during organizational socialization (Settoon & Adkins, 1997) and expectations applicants hold about the degree of WNC within a given profession or role (Ryan et al., 2001). Thus, family members, such as significant others, may be an important source for socialization research that further elucidates the sensemaking process newcomers go through as it relates to their experiences of conflict between their new job and home life. It is likely the case that newcomers' family members are also having to re-establish their roles at both home and work as the newcomer orients to their new work environment, especially if work hours are changing, the new workload creates changes in stress or fatigue, response time expectations shift, commutes become longer, or the amount of time available for personal time off, sick time, and/or vacations is altered. In this way, newcomer work-to-nonwork self-efficacy is likely a product of both the newcomer's experience in their new workplace, as we captured in this study, alongside the extent to which partners or other family members are willing and able to fulfill other roles and obligations at home as the newcomer is socialized into their new organization. Capturing family members' own reports of work-nonwork conflict (especially nonwork-to-work conflict) and work-to-nonwork or nonwork-to-work self-efficacy, in addition to other-reports of the newcomer's performance at home (e.g., perceived partner supportiveness, time management, parenting behaviors) may be particularly useful in understanding how the newcomer's experience affects the larger family system.

Our study was not able to capture expectations newcomers might hold about WNC prior to entry. The focus of this study was on newcomers' perceptions of actual WNC and FSSB experienced since joining the organization. However, the extent to which newcomers hold preconceptions about the degree of WNC they might experience in their role prior to entry may be important in explaining the magnitude of the effect of early experiences of WNC or FSSB on subsequent outcomes (Westring & Ryan, 2011). For instance, pre-entry expectations of low WNC that are met with greater WNC could be relatively more disruptive as they indicate a mismatch between expectations and reality (Taris et al., 2006). It is also worth noting that the measure of WNC used in the current study demonstrated lower than ideal levels of internal consistency. This may reflect the small number of items, the item content which taps into three distinct dimensions of WNC including time-, strain-, and behavior-based conflict, or perhaps the specific reference in one item to 'parent' and 'spouse' (see Measures section), roles that may not have been applicable to all participants. Nonetheless, we found relationships with this lower alpha, making it a relatively conservative test of our hypotheses.

Although the current study was focused upon early newcomer experiences within the context of work, a logical next step could be examining these associations in relation to nonwork demands and resources which may vary by individual newcomer. A related line of literature on work-family fit (Voydanoff, 2005), considers evaluations employees make of the extent to which their work demands match resources provided in the home domain, and vice versa, whether family demands are met with sufficient resources in the work domain. To this latter point, the current research only investigated conflict that flows in the work-to-nonwork direction, however future research may consider both directions. The notion of person-environment fit has historically driven much socialization research (Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007). Inclusion of newcomer perceptions of work-family fit or work-nonwork fit could further contribute important insight into this established line of inquiry.

Finally, we believe that future research may benefit from extending the time frame of the current study to examine changes over time using a longitudinal research design which would provide greater evidence for the theorized development of work-to-nonwork self-efficacy proposed here and enable a test of reverse causality. Much has been learned from longitudinal studies examining organizational socialization phenomena including burnout (Dunford et al., 2012), supervisor support (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2009), and job satisfaction (Boswell et al., 2009). While one of the first studies to examine WNC during newcomer organizational socialization, our study was only able to capture newcomer responses across a three-week span. Although this decision was driven by previous research that has established the critical nature of this window of time (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Lance et al., 2000) and a theoretical rationale for the time period within which we were likely to see effects, examining dynamic relationships among these variables over the first six to twelve months may provide greater insight into how newcomers cope with and respond to early WNC, as well as greater support for the theorized causal relationships between work-nonwork resources, demands, and efficacy.

5. Conclusion

In summary, our study suggests that early work-to-nonwork conflict, family supportive supervisor behavior, and work-to-nonwork self-efficacy are important factors for understanding newcomer work withdrawal, a potential precursor to turnover. We found

evidence that newcomers' early experiences of WNC may be interpreted by newcomers as failure events that are associated with reduced work-to-nonwork self-efficacy and subsequent newcomer withdrawal. Family supportive supervision mitigated this process, neutralizing its effect. This work has important theoretical implications for expanding the existing socialization literature, while also creating new directions for human resources initiatives and nonwork-supportive training in the workplace that can improve the lives of newcomers and their families.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Allison M. Ellis: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Talya N. Bauer:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Tori L. Crain:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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