

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Being a family supportive team leader: Implications for team emotional climate and performance

Marcello Russo¹ | Francesco Montani^{2,3}  | Gabriele Morandin¹ | Simon Grenier⁴

¹Department of Management, University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy

²Department of Health Management, Evaluation and Policy, University of Montreal School of Public Health, Montréal, Québec, Canada

³Department of Management, University of Bologna—Rimini Campus, Rimini, Italy

⁴Department of Psychology, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Québec, Canada

Correspondence

Francesco Montani, Department of Health Management, Evaluation and Policy, University of Montreal School of Public Health, 7101, Avenue du Parc, H3N 1X9, Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Email: francesco.montani@umontreal.ca

Abstract

The impact of family-supportive supervision at the team level has largely not been explored. Since teams are the cornerstone of organizational effectiveness, it is critical to understand how family-supportive managers can lead teams to achieve higher performance. We develop and test a team-level moderated mediation model that unpacks the team-level impact of Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviours (FSSB) on team performance. Drawing on Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, we hypothesize that a team's other-focused emotional climate mediates the positive effects of team FSSB on team performance and that managers' relational job characteristics attenuate the positive influence of team FSSB. Results from a two-wave, multi-source study of 435 employees and their managers across 56 electronic retail stores support our predictions. These findings advance current multi-level theorizing on FSSB by shedding new light on how and when family-supportive managers can drive team performance. The implications for theory and practice are discussed.

KEYWORDS

emotional climate, FSSB, leadership, market performance, relational job characteristics, team

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Practitioner points

- Supporting employees' nonwork lives can enhance team dynamics.
- Managers could nurture the perception of a team wherein personal needs are valued when engaging in FSSB.
- A caring emotional climate and improved performance can be achieved even without strong manager relational job characteristics, as long as family-supportive conditions are in place.

INTRODUCTION

Family-supportive supervisor behaviours (FSSB)—a set of discretionary behaviours in which supervisors engage with the specific goal of helping employees attain a good work-life balance (Hammer et al., 2009)—are receiving increasing scholarly attention due to their beneficial effects on both nonwork and work outcomes (Crain et al., 2014; Kossek et al., 2023; Russo et al., 2018). The literature has indeed largely shown that family-supportive behaviours enacted by managers benefit not only employees' nonwork outcomes (i.e. work-life balance and work–family conflict) but also relevant work outcomes, such as engagement and job performance (Crain & Stevens, 2018; Guo et al., 2024; Kossek et al., 2023).

Despite this evidence, FSSB remains at the margins of management literature and few studies have examined its effects at the team level. This gap is relevant because, in the face of today's complex and uncertain work conditions, modern organizations heavily rely on teams to execute critical functions, adapting effectively to changes and producing relevant performance outcomes (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Mathieu et al., 2017). Ignoring the role of family-supportive supervisor behaviours in the team context is a significant shortcoming, as it limits our capacity to understand and explain the extent to which these managerial practices can be effectively implemented to optimize team members' collective performance.

To fill this void, in the present manuscript, we focus on team FSSB, conceived as a set of leadership behaviours through which the supervisor uniformly supports the work-life balance needs of the team as a whole. This study aims to clarify the impact of team FSSB on team performance by examining the mediating role of team climate and the moderating role of manager job characteristics in this relationship. Given that the research is conducted across multiple stores of a large retailer, the study variables—i.e. FSSB, climate, performance, and manager job characteristics—are conceptualized and measured at the store level. Grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), we propose and test a moderated mediation model (see Figure 1) where (a) the team other-focused emotional climate mediates the positive relationship between team FSSB and team performance and (b) manager relational job characteristics moderate this relationship, such that the mediating effect of team other-focused emotional climate on the relationship between team FSSB and team performance is stronger when manager relational job characteristics are low.

To develop our model, we draw on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), which posits that teams equipped with external resources (i.e. support from their leaders) are more likely to invest those resources in goal-supportive behaviours. According to COR theory, a team climate that reflects the set of practices and behaviours valued by its leader often serves as the mechanism through which resource-endowed teams invest their resources in effective actions (Chen et al., 2015; Dietz et al., 2020; Kaluza & Junker, 2022). Therefore, we investigate whether team FSSB can enhance team performance by fostering a shared perception of an other-focused emotional climate across all team members. Furthermore, COR theory highlights the concept of 'equifinality,' suggesting that multiple resources of equal value can substitute for one another in achieving the same goal (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Huang & Zhang, 2013). We propose that a manager's relational job characteristics hold value equivalent to team FSSB, as they enable leaders to be prosocially inclined to provide resources and benefits to their team without discrimination

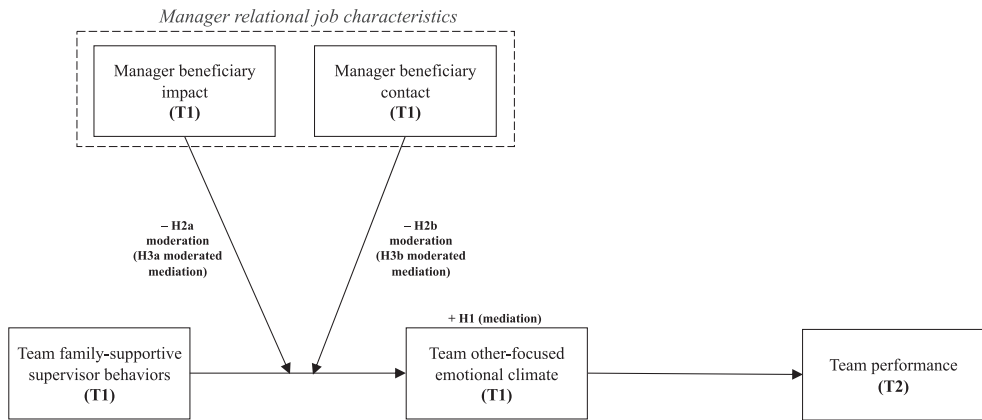


FIGURE 1 Theoretical model.

(Grant, 2008; Robertson et al., 2023). Therefore, we expect that manager relational job characteristics can substitute for FSSB in supporting the development of an other-focused emotional climate that has the potential to shape team performance.

This paper significantly contributes to FSSB research. First, there are few studies examining the effects of FSSB at the team level. This is unfortunate given the increasing evidence suggesting that work-family dynamics could be better examined by adopting a relational perspective (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Russo & Morandin, 2023). Our research addresses this issue by identifying team (other-focused emotional) climate as a key mechanism transmitting the (conditional) effects of team FSSB on team performance. In doing so, we add to the limited empirical work examining the role of team leadership in shaping the affective climate within a team (Li et al., 2014; Zohar & Tenne-Gazit, 2008), thereby extending current theoretical understanding of the leader-climate relationship at the team level. Finally, although scholars have theoretically highlighted the importance of manager job characteristics in shaping managers' activities and followers' reactions (Ganster, 2005; Hambrick et al., 2005; Nielsen & Taris, 2019), research has remained relatively silent on the role of managers' job characteristics as boundary conditions of leadership. Our study provides a nuanced understanding of how managers' relational job characteristics shape the effects of team FSSB on team climate and performance, thereby contributing to enriching current theoretical knowledge of the role of job characteristics in the leadership context. In doing so, we also respond to recent calls to expand the understanding of the boundary conditions of FSSB (Guo et al., 2024).

Team FSSB

FSSB is a set of four discretionary behaviours consciously enacted by a supervisor to facilitate employees in managing their work and personal lives (Hammer et al., 2009), namely: emotional support, instrumental support, role modelling and creative work-family management. Emotional support refers to the team leader's ability to convey genuine interest and openness toward team members' nonwork-related roles, activities and responsibilities. Instrumental support reflects the team leader's willingness to address specific requests for flexibility and adjustments to work schedules made by collaborators to accommodate their family and/or nonwork needs. Role modelling captures the team leader's ability to demonstrate behaviours that align with the notion that achieving a good work-life balance is beneficial as well as feasible. Finally, creative work-family management reflects the proactivity of a team leader and their willingness to propose adjustments to team functioning, enabling everyone to accomplish their work and nonwork-related goals.

Prior research has shown that this set of supportive behaviours can contribute to creating a resourceful work environment wherein employees experience optimal functioning and become psychologically and emotionally capable of investing in both their work and nonwork roles (Erdogan et al., 2022; Russo et al., 2018; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012; Yu et al., 2022). Working with a family-supportive supervisor can make employees more comfortable discussing their family-related needs at work, seeking advice and support to reconcile their work-family responsibilities, and communicating frankly when they need to focus more on their family in certain moments of their lives (Hammer et al., 2009). Recent research also highlights the positive effects of FSSB on both leaders and teams, as family-supportive supervisors are often seen as more competent and approachable (Yu et al., 2022), which in turn helps improve the quality of interactions within the team.

Straub (2012) developed a conceptual model suggesting that FSSB can facilitate team functioning and performance, as the presence of a leader who shows care and provides support for team members' unique work-life needs likely increases mutual respect, team cohesion and promotes positive behaviours that are instrumental to achieving a good work-life balance. Prior research has shown that team leaders play a key role in modelling effective management of work and nonwork boundaries. Family-supportive leaders promote social learning, helping employees adopt similar boundary management strategies, which leads to more positive work and nonwork outcomes (Koch & Binnewies, 2015). These findings suggest that a leader who prioritizes work-life balance and successfully manages both professional and personal demands can alleviate team members' concerns about the perceived conflict between work and family life. As a result, having a supportive supervisor increases employees' perception that dedicating time and energy to one's personal life is both appropriate and valued within the team (Koch & Binnewies, 2015).

This idea aligns with the team-level leadership literature, which suggests that leaders can direct their styles and behaviours uniformly toward the team as a whole rather than toward individual members, thus exerting unique effects on team processes and outcomes (Jiang & Chen, 2018; Klaić et al., 2018, 2020; Li et al., 2017). This premise implies that, like other leadership behaviours, such as transformational leadership (e.g. Lorinkova & Perry, 2019), empowering leadership (e.g. Li et al., 2017), or servant leadership (e.g. Hu & Liden, 2011), family-supportive leadership can operate at the team level, enabling leaders to provide family-supportive conditions broadly to all members of the same team. We thus refer to family-supportive supervisor behaviours directed at the whole group as *team FSSB*.

Team FSSB and team emotional climate

We connect team FSSB to emotional climate and team performance, hypothesizing that perceiving a family-supportive supervisor can improve the internal climate of a team, which captures the shared perceptions among team members of the norms, emotions, principles and rules governing internal team dynamics (Schneider et al., 1992). This claim is consistent with the long-held proposition in the work climate literature that 'leaders create climate' (Lewin et al., 1939; Zohar, 2010). The leadership-climate link can be explained as a social learning process in which team members' repeated observations of and interactions with their leader produce a shared understanding of the behaviours that are accepted and valued by a leader and, ultimately, by the team as a whole (Dragoni, 2005; Hiller et al., 2011; Ostroff et al., 2003; Zohar & Tenne-Gazit, 2008). These shared perceptions then constitute the core meaning of the unique climate produced by the leader within the team (Zohar, 2010).

This premise implies that team climate can have different foci (Koys & DeCotiis, 1991), capturing the shared perceptions of several aspects of the internal climate, such as the level of psychological safety (Edmondson, 2010), justice (Li & Cropanzano, 2009), autonomy, trust and emotions that characterize the life of a team (Härtel et al., 2008). In this manuscript, we focus on the dimension that captures the perceptions of the dominant emotions characterizing the interpersonal exchanges and relationships within the team (De Rivera, 1992; Härtel et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2014). Liu et al. (2014) found that expressed or underlying emotions in the team can shape the perception of a climate that can be described

as ego-focused or other-focused. An ego-focused emotional climate captures the extent to which team members perceive the team to value and reward independence, individualism and attention to personal needs only. An other-focused emotional climate is perceived when interpersonal needs, social worth and empathy are believed to be fundamental characteristics of team dynamics, characterizing the daily interactions within the team (Mesquita, 2001). Ego-focused emotions favour autonomy and independence, whereas other-focused emotions favour engagement, solidarity and collaboration (Härtel et al., 2008).

The mediating role of team other-focused emotional climate

Consistent with the leadership-climate literature (Dragoni, 2005; Zohar, 2010) and drawing on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001, 2012), we contend that team other-focused emotional climate acts as a key mediating mechanism explaining why and how team FSSB exerts a positive impact on team performance. According to COR theory, individuals aim to acquire, protect and sustain the resources that are important to them (Hobfoll, 2012; Hobfoll et al., 2018). In the workplace, the availability of resources from the work environment is essential to enable team members to master threatening work conditions, such as work-family demands and, thereby, free their capacities to invest in further resource-generative activities via performance-oriented collective behaviours (Hobfoll et al., 2018). COR theory and research further posit that *leaders* contribute to the creation and maintenance of a resource gain climate (Breevaart et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2015; Gutermann et al., 2017; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Such a climate, in turn, exerts an important signalling function by informing members that resource-supportive behaviours are valued and expected within the team, thereby increasing the likelihood that members will collectively invest their resources to meet the team's mission and goals.

Team climate reflects the normative practices and behaviours that are internalized based on the repeated observation of the corresponding leaders' behaviours (Dragoni, 2005; Zohar, 2010; Zohar & Tenne-Gazit, 2008). Being exposed to a family-supportive leader can nurture among team members the perception that the internal emotional climate is characterized by mutual understanding and respect toward everyone's needs, preferences and values—in other words, by a team other-focused emotional climate (Carmeli & Russo, 2016). As emotions quickly spill over within a team (Barsade, 2002), working with a family-supportive leader can instill the perception that a team other-focused emotional climate is the preferable working mode within the team, inducing similar behaviours due to vicarious learning (Bandura, 1971; Zessin et al., 2015). As team members observe their colleagues acting warmly toward others, they might develop an internal reproduction of a caring mindset and activate the neurological systems that are associated with care, thus being likely to act with an other-oriented focus (Gallese et al., 2007; Miller & Kelly, 2020). Consequently, the caring attitudes transmitted by a family-supportive supervisor to employees may circulate and spread among other team members, leading to the development of an other-focused emotional environment within the team. Such a climate, by signalling the normative presence of reciprocal care and support among members, would act as a collective resource that is available to the team, thereby promoting team members' investment of resources in behaviours that are supportive of the team's common goals (Chen et al., 2015; Hobfoll, 2001). The following hypothesis is thus proposed:

Hypothesis 1. Team other-focused emotional climate mediates the positive relationship between team FSSB and team performance.

The moderating role of manager relational job characteristics

The supervisor's decision to engage in FSSB is often shaped by individual (i.e. family condition) and organizational characteristics (i.e. organizational policies and culture) that act as potential moderators and could allow a supervisor to engage with more efficacy and intensity in this form of proactive

behaviour (Straub, 2012). Accordingly, we examine whether supervisors' perceptions of relational job characteristics moderate the relationship between FSSB and a team other-focused emotional climate. Grant (2008, 2012) argued that relational characteristics of the job—and, more specifically, the possibility of benefiting others and promoting their welfare—are crucial characteristics of one's occupation that can make one's job a truly better one (Colby et al., 2001; Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004). Grant (2008) proposed that relational job characteristics lead to prosocial motivation, one's desire to have a positive impact on beneficiaries.

Historically, scholars have focused on several task characteristics of the job that can contribute to making it increasingly interesting, including autonomy, support, feedback and identity (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). More recently, scholarly attention has been focused on social characteristics (those referring to opportunities to have positive interactions with others) and relational characteristics (those referring to opportunities to benefit others) of one's job (Grant, 2008; Morgeson & Campion, 2003). There are essentially two relational job characteristics: (i) beneficiary impact and (ii) beneficiary contact. The first relational job characteristic—beneficiary impact—refers to the perception that one's job can have a positive impact on the lives of other people, either through the services or products generated through one's job or through interactions with others. The second relational job characteristic—beneficiary contact—refers to the opportunities that the job provides to enter into contact with the beneficiaries of one's job Grant (2008); Grant (2012) demonstrated that when a job presents these relational characteristics, the individual holding that job will likely feel a stronger prosocial motivation toward the beneficiaries of his or her job.

In this paper, we contend that managers' perceptions that their job has a positive impact on others and fosters positive interpersonal interactions can moderate the relationship between FSSB at the team level and the other-focused emotional climate present in the team. More specifically, we assume that the positive effects of FSSB are weaker when the relational job characteristics are perceived to be *higher* rather than lower. With one exception (i.e. Grant, 2012), most researchers argue for the value of relational job characteristics using the leadership substitute perspective (Kerr & Jermier, 1978). This perspective suggests that well-designed jobs operate as *compensatory* mechanisms that can enhance intrinsic motivations within teams and organizations that lack effective leadership (Dionne et al., 2002). Complementing the leadership substitute perspective, COR theory highlights the equifinality phenomenon, according to which the investment of a resource might substitute for the investment of another: in other words, one resource can be more or less important depending on the extent to which it can be obtained in alternative forms or from alternative sources (Anand et al., 2010; Halbesleben et al., 2014; Huang & Zhang, 2013). Precisely, COR theory posits that “a lost resource may be substituted by a second resource of generally equivalent value” (Hobfoll, 2001, p. 350).

The value of manager relational job characteristics is comparable to that of team FSSB. Relational job characteristics indeed enable managers to build indiscriminately close relationships and emotional connections with their followers (Grant, 2008). As such, these job characteristics give managers the same possibility as family-supportive behaviours to take emotional care of followers' needs and, thereby, to contribute to a team climate characterized by reciprocal care and support. Thus, if the sources of similar resources can replace each other, team FSSB is expected to have a weaker impact on the team's other-focused emotional climate when its potential substitute—manager relational job characteristics—is also present. This is because a team that enjoys high levels of these generally equivalent resources might invest in either resource or both of them simultaneously, thus lessening their reliance on one single resource and ultimately diminishing the impact of each resource on team climate. In contrast, when FSSB is absent, team members are likely to be more attuned to signals from prosocial job characteristics, which indicate the availability of an alternative set of resources for the team (Stoverink et al., 2017). Thus, taken together, our arguments lend support to the substitution phenomenon outlined in COR theory.

Hypothesis 2. Manager relational job characteristics, i.e. manager beneficiary impact (a) and manager beneficiary contact (b) moderate the positive relationship between team

FSSB and team other-focused emotional climate such that this relationship is weaker when manager relational job characteristics are high rather than low.

The combination of Hypotheses 2 and 3 leads to a moderated mediation link between team FSSB and team performance. In line with our COR-based argument that effective leadership is less important for enhancing team motivation and performance when functionally similar task characteristics are already present, the benefits of team FSSB on team performance via team other-focused emotional climate are expected to be weaker when manager relational job characteristics are high. Therefore, we advance the following first-stage moderated mediation hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Manager relational job characteristics, i.e. manager beneficiary impact (a) and manager beneficiary contact (b) moderate the positive indirect relationship between team FSSB and team performance via team other-focused emotional climate such that this indirect relationship is weaker when manager relational job characteristics are high.

METHOD

Participants and procedure

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a two-wave, team-level, multisource study on employees and managers from the stores of a large Italian retailer of consumer electronics and household appliances. Upon agreement from the Human Resource Management and Legal departments of the organization, participants were invited to complete an online survey questionnaire at two points in time, separated by 2 months. Online informed consent was obtained from all participants, with a full explanation of the purpose and procedures of this study. At Time 1 (T1), employees were asked to answer survey items related to team FSSB, team other-focused emotional climate, as well as demographic characteristics and emotional exhaustion (which were used as controls; see details below). At the same time, store managers responded to items pertaining to their relational job characteristics (i.e. manager beneficiary impact and beneficiary contact). Finally, at Time 2 (T2), the store managers evaluated team performance. As each store was headed by one manager, the number of surveyed stores corresponded to the number of surveyed managers. At T1, we received usable responses from 1108 employees and 142 managers. Teams with fewer than three members ($n = 41$) and those with no matched ($n = 13$) or missing ($n = 20$) manager evaluations were excluded from the sample, yielding a sample of 435 employees and 56 stores at T1. The 56 managers who responded to the Time 1 survey provided complete responses at T2. Accordingly, the final sample comprised 435 employees nested in 56 stores.

To examine whether respondent attrition across time led to non-random sampling, we used multiple logistic regression to test whether Time 1 individual-level variables—FSSB and control variables (emotional exhaustion and demographics)—significantly predicted the probability of dropping from the sample at Time 2 (Goodman & Blum, 1996). The logistic regression model predicting the probability of leaving the sample at Time 2 by Time 1 variables was non-significant ($\chi^2[5] = 7.37$, ns) and none of the predictors was significant. We also conducted a response-non-response analysis comparing usable participants at Time 2 to those with no response at Time 2 (Ellis et al., 2023). Results showed no significant differences in gender ($\chi^2[1] = .51$, ns), education ($\chi^2[4] = 3.82$, ns), age ($t[158.66] = -1.52$, ns), organizational tenure ($t[159.77] = -.31$, ns) and tenure with manager ($t[158.55] = .24$, ns). Most employees were female (51%), were aged above 36 years (70%), had a high school degree or higher (85.1%) and reported an organizational tenure of more than 8 years (50%) as well as a tenure with a manager beyond 14 years (37.9%). The average store size was 7.18 (SD = 6.79) and ranged from 3 to 39 members, which is similar to the range of team sizes reported in other studies (e.g. Campion et al., 1993; Lester et al., 2008; Magjuka & Baldwin, 1991).

Measures

All measures were slightly adapted to the organizational context of the present study by changing the terms ‘team’ or ‘organization’ to ‘store.’

Employee measures

Team FSSB

Employees rated team FSSB using Hammer et al.'s (2013) four-item scale. Since FSSB is conceived as a team-level construct in our study, it represents a shared team property, reflecting a referent-shift consensus compositional model (Chan, 1998). In this model, the referent of FSSB shifts from the individual to the team level, making FSSB meaningful when shared among team members (Chan, 1998). We calculated the $r_{wg(j)}$ (Bliese, 2000; James et al., 1984, 1993), $ICC_{(1)}$ and $ICC_{(2)}$ (Bliese, 2000) coefficients to examine the justifiability of team-level aggregation. Values of .70 or above indicate acceptable within-group interrater agreement (James et al., 1993). Regarding $ICC_{(1)}$ and $ICC_{(2)}$, values of .12 (James, 1982) and .47 (Schneider et al., 1998) or above indicate reasonable between-unit variance and reliability of unit-level means, respectively. The median values for these coefficients were as follows: $r_{wg(j)} = .83$, $ICC_{(1)} = .19$ and $ICC_{(2)} = .96$. As these values met the recommended thresholds, we proceeded to aggregate the individual FSSB scores to the team level. Responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). To match the conceptualization of team FSSB and capture its team-level property, we slightly adapted the wording of the items to emphasize a team-focused referent. The items were: ‘OUR store manager makes US feel comfortable talking to him/her about OUR conflicts between work and non-work,’ ‘OUR store manager demonstrates effective behaviors in how to juggle work and non-work issues,’ ‘OUR store manager works effectively with US to creatively solve conflicts between work and non-work’ and ‘OUR store manager organizes the work in OUR store to jointly benefit employees and the company’ ($\alpha = .90$).

Team other-focused emotional climate

We measured employees' perceptions of the team's other-focused emotional climate using Liu et al.'s (2014) four-item scale. The median values for $r_{wg(j)}$ (.86), $ICC_{(1)}$ (.22) and $ICC_{(2)}$ (.97) justified the aggregation of individual scores for the team's other-focused emotional climate to the team level. Responses were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*completely*). A sample item is, “The dynamics among the members of the store are harmonious” ($\alpha = .87$).

Manager measures

Manager relational job characteristics

Store managers rated their own relational job characteristics—manager beneficiary impact and manager beneficiary contact—using Grant's (2008) nine-item scales. Responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A sample item for manager beneficiary impact is, ‘My job provides opportunities to substantially improve the welfare of my employees’ ($\alpha = .92$), while a sample item for manager beneficiary contact is, ‘My job enables me to interact regularly with my employees’ ($\alpha = .87$).¹

¹The upper managers of the surveyed organization confirmed to us that store managers were regularly involved in frequent interactions with their employees, which highlights the pertinence of assessing manager-beneficiary contact in the present study. Specifically, store managers were particularly involved in day-to-day operations, actively participating as direct supervisors in most activities. These activities ranged from handling incoming merchandise to supporting warehouse staff and, when necessary, engaging in direct sales to customers. It was the duty of the manager to ensure excellent customer service and management, which included directly overseeing sales floor operations. Additionally, the company adopted an annual structured evaluation feedback process, which typically involved regular follow-ups from the store manager to the store employees throughout the year to monitor assigned objectives and address any performance delays among store members.

Team performance

Store managers assessed team performance using Delaney and Huselid's (1996) six-item scale, which specifically captures indicators related to performance in terms of sales, market share and profitability compared to competing stores. The items used to evaluate team (i.e. store) performance are the following: 'Customer satisfaction of our products and services is higher than that of our competitors,' 'Our employees are more committed to our organization than our competitors' employees,' 'The quality of our products and services is higher than that of our competitors,' 'Our organization has more ability to attract and retain essential employees than our competitors,' 'Job satisfaction of our employees is higher than that of our competitors' employees' and 'Work productivity of our employees is higher than that of our competitors' employees' ($\alpha = .85$).² Responses to these items were rated on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). These indicators are particularly relevant for measuring store performance because they directly address the goals that most retail companies target to achieve superior performance in the marketplace (Chuang & Liao, 2010; Heskett et al., 1994; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Consistent with our study, prior research has adopted this measure to assess store performance (e.g. Chuang & Liao, 2010). Moreover, assessing performance at the store level is particularly meaningful in this context, as the job activities of the surveyed store employees involved interdependent, collaborative and coordinated work. Although employees were assigned to different sales areas (e.g. home goods, technology, cash register), the activities among these areas were highly interconnected. In addition to achieving individual sales targets, employees were required to work toward store-wide common objectives. Furthermore, with regular shift rotations, employees had multiple reciprocal exchanges necessary for completing daily tasks, linking each colleague's results to others' activities. Finally, store employees were often required to collaborate in innovative cross-functional task forces to improve current service processes.

Control variables

First, we controlled for team size, as it has been shown to influence team processes (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Second, we controlled for team average age and organizational tenure, as these demographic characteristics have been found to be associated with team performance (Hu & Liden, 2015). Third, we controlled for team average tenure with the supervisor to rule out potential temporal effects of supervisor influence (van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Wang & Rode, 2010). Due to anonymity requirements, age (1 = < 31 years, 2 = 31–35 years, 3 = 36–40 years, 4 = > 40 years), organizational tenure (1 = < 8 years, 2 = 8–14 years, 3 = > 14 years) and tenure with a manager (1 = < 8 years, 2 = 8–14 years, 3 = > 14 years) were categorically measured. Finally, we controlled for the alternative mediating role of team emotional exhaustion at the team level because it could offer an alternative theoretical explanation as to why and how team FSSB influences team performance. Precisely, according to COR theory, team members who have access to resources from the work environment—i.e. from family-supportive supervisors—are better able to cope with the demanding aspects of their work, thus being less likely to suffer from emotional resource loss and, thereby, to experience emotional exhaustion (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008); as a consequence, such members would be motivated to collectively invest in resource gains rather than attempting to minimize further resource loss, resulting in enhanced team performance (Hobfoll, 1989; Shirom, 2003). Employees rated their own emotional exhaustion with Maslach and Jackson's (1981) three-item scale ($\alpha = .91$).

²These items are relevant to the retail context of the present study. Specifically, as revealed by the upper managers of the company, the surveyed store employees were directly involved in sales consulting and customer needs analysis, which justifies the pertinence of performance items related to customer satisfaction (i.e., item 1) and product and service quality (i.e., item 3). Moreover, employees evaluated their company and store organization through the Employee Net Promoter Score (E-NPS), which highlights the importance of performance items capturing employee attraction and retention (i.e., item 4) and job satisfaction (i.e., item 5). Finally, since employees worked closely together, they could assess their colleagues' contributions, which justifies the meaningfulness of performance items measuring employee engagement (i.e., item 2) and productivity (i.e., item 6).

Consistent with prior research on emotional exhaustion at the team level (Westman et al., 2011; Wirtz et al., 2017), we then aggregated this variable at the team (i.e. store) level ($r_{wg[j]} = .72$, $ICC_{[1]} = .06$, $ICC_{[2]} = .33$).³

RESULTS

Confirmatory factor analysis

We first examined the dimensionality of our study measures through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with Mplus 7.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015). We used a robust maximum likelihood (MLR) estimator to account for any deviations of the data from normality. Thus, the Satorra–Bentler scaled chi-square difference test with a scaling correction factor was used to compare nested models (Bryant & Satorra, 2012). At the employee level, fit indices for the hypothesized three-factor model, including team FSSB, team other-focused emotional climate and emotional exhaustion, yielded an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2[41] = 178.51$, $p < .01$; comparative fit index [CFI] = .96; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .09; standardized root mean squared residual [SRMR] = .05) and outperformed a one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2[3] = 1173.64$, $p < .01$). At the team level, to maintain an acceptable indicator-to-sample-size ratio, we randomly averaged scores across items to create three indicators per construct (Little, 2013). The theorized three-factor model (manager beneficiary impact, manager beneficiary contact and team performance) yielded a good fit ($\chi^2[24] = 33.13$, $p < .01$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .08) and outperformed any alternative two-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2[2] = 45.16$ to 114.29 , $ps < .01$) or a one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2[3] = 144.97$, $p < .01$).

Moreover, since FSSB, team other-focused emotional climate and emotional exhaustion were measured at the same time from the same source, the relationship between these variables could be affected by common method variance (CMV). Therefore, we addressed this issue via the unmeasured latent method construct (ULMC) technique in CFA (Podsakoff et al., 2012). We compared the theorized two-factor CFA model (i.e. FSSB and team other-focused emotional climate) to a three-factor model that included the ULMC as an additional, uncorrelated factor on which all the items were loaded. Although the three-factor model displayed a better fit than the hypothesized eight-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2[10] = 126.14$, $p < .01$), the ULMC factor accounted for 20% of the total variance, which is comparable to the median proportion of CMV (i.e. 25%) reported in self-report research (Podsakoff et al., 2012; Williams et al., 1989). These findings suggest that CMV is not a major concern in our data. The means, standard deviations and correlations for the study variables at the team level are reported in Table 1.

Hypothesis tests

To test our hypotheses, we conducted (moderated) multiple regression analyses with Hayes's (2013) PROCESS macro and calculated 95% confidence intervals to determine the significance of the hypothesized (moderated) indirect effects. Table 2 reports the moderated multiple regression analysis results for team other-focused emotional climate and team performance. As shown in Table 2 (Model 1), team FSSB was positively associated with team other-focused emotional climate ($B = .37$, $p < .01$). Moreover, team other-focused emotional climate was positively related to team performance ($B = .54$, $p < .05$; Model 4). Based on 5000 bootstrap replications, the team other-focused emotional climate was found

³The median $r_{wg(0)}$ value of .72 is within the acceptable cutoff point of .70 (James et al., 1993). Moreover, the $ICC_{(1)}$ value was .06, which is within the average range of .05–.20 (Bliese, 2000) and similar to the coefficient of .08 reported by Wirtz et al. (2017). Finally, the $ICC_{(2)}$ value of .33 is slightly below the recommended .47 threshold (Schneider et al., 1998), but comparable with the coefficient of .30 obtained by Westman et al. (2011). Thus, since $r_{wg(0)}$ and $ICC_{(1)}$ values are within or close to the recommended cutoffs, and because the aggregation of team emotional exhaustion is supported by theory (Westman et al., 2011; Wirtz et al., 2017), the aggregation of individual scores of emotional exhaustion to the team level is justified.

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics and correlations.

Variable	Source	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Team size (T1)	M	7.18	6.79	—									
2. Team average age (T1)	E	—	—	-.23	—								
3. Team average organizational tenure (T1)	E	—	—	-.14	.44**	—							
4. Team average tenure with manager (T1)	E	—	—	.12	.14	.08	—						
5. Team FSSB (T1)	E	3.75	0.85	-.08	-.03	-.28*	.05	—					
6. Manager beneficiary impact (T1)	M	4.12	0.61	.12	-.07	-.00	.10	.03	—				
7. Manager beneficiary contact (T1)	M	4.34	0.54	.20	-.18	-.19	.13	-.18	.47**	—			
8. Team other-focused emotional climate (T1)	E	3.52	0.64	-.01	.18	-.25	.02	.54**	-.03	-.17	—		
9. Team emotional exhaustion (T1)	E	3.20	0.70	-.05	.06	.37**	-.09	-.34**	-.17	-.05	-.46**	—	
10. Team performance (T2)	M	3.52	0.81	.07	-.17	-.15	-.03	-.24	.06	.28*	.14	.00	—

Note: N = 56 teams; T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2. M = Manager; E = Employee.

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

TABLE 2 Moderated multiple regression analysis results for team other-focused emotional climate and team performance.

Variable	Team other-focused emotional climate									Team performance		
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Team size	.00	.01	.36	.00	.01	.10	.00	.01	.26	-.00	.01	-.19
Team average age	.31*	.13	2.51	.24	.12	1.99	.29*	.12	2.37	-.30	.19	-1.56
Team average organizational tenure	-.25	.13	-1.95	-.27*	.12	-2.32	-.30*	.13	-2.38	-.10	.19	-.52
Team average tenure with manager	-.16	.58	-.28	.08	.54	.15	-.01	.57	-.01	.21	.82	.25
Team FSSB	.37**	.09	4.09	.42**	.09	4.84**	.43**	.10	4.38**	-.49**	.15	-3.24
Manager beneficiary impact (MBI)	–	–	–	-.00	.11	-.02	–	–	–	–	–	–
Manager beneficiary contact (MBC)	–	–	–	–	–	–	.01	.15	.06	–	–	–
Team FSSB × MBI	–	–	–	-.44**	.14	-3.13	–	–	–	–	–	–
Team FSSB × MBC	–	–	–	–	–	–	-.38*	.18	-2.09	–	–	–
Team other-focused emotional climate	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.54*	.20	2.67
<i>R</i> ²	.38	–	–	.48	–	–	.44	–	–	.23	–	–
<i>F</i>	6.10**	–	–	6.46**	–	–	5.31**	–	–	2.38*	–	–

Note: *N* = 56 teams. Estimates are unstandardized regression coefficients.

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

to significantly mediate the indirect positive effect of team FSSB on team performance (estimate = .20, 95% CI = .02, .48). Hypothesis 1 is thus supported. Interestingly, the results additionally revealed a negative direct effect of team FSSB on team performance ($B = -.49, p < .01$; Model 4).

To test Hypotheses 2 and 3, the interaction effects of team FSSB and relational job characteristics—i.e. manager beneficiary impact and manager beneficiary contact—were examined separately because of renowned power problems and inflation of Type II errors related to simultaneously assessing multiple interactions in moderated multiple regressions (Spitzmüller & Stanton, 2006). As shown in Table 2, the interactions of team FSSB with manager beneficiary impact ($B = -.44, p < .01$; Model 2) and manager beneficiary contact ($B = -.38, p < .05$; Model 3) significantly predicted team other-focused emotional climate. Simple slope tests indicated that the positive relationship between team FSSB and team other-focused emotional climate was significant and positive when the manager beneficiary impact was low (i.e. -1 SD below the mean: $B = .68, p < .01$) but was nonsignificant when it was high (i.e. 1 SD above the mean: $B = .15, ns$). Similarly, the relationship between team FSSB and team other-focused emotional climate was significant and positive when manager beneficiary contact was low ($B = .63, p < .01$) but was nonsignificant when manager beneficiary contact was high ($B = .22, ns$). The plots of the interactions of team FSSB with manager beneficiary impact and manager beneficiary contact are presented in Figures 2 and 3, respectively.

Based on 5000 bootstrap replications, moderated mediation results further revealed that at low levels of manager beneficiary impact, the indirect effect of team FSSB on team performance was significant and positive (estimate = .69, 95% CI = .42, .95), while at high levels of manager beneficiary impact, the indirect effect on team performance was nonsignificant (estimate = .15, 95% CI = -.08, .37). Hypothesis 3a is thus supported. Similarly, at low levels of manager beneficiary contact, the indirect effect of team FSSB on team performance was significant and positive (estimate = .34, 95% CI = .03, .79), while at high levels of manager beneficiary contact, the indirect effect on team performance was nonsignificant (estimate = .12, 95% CI = -.01, .40). Hypothesis 3b is thus supported.

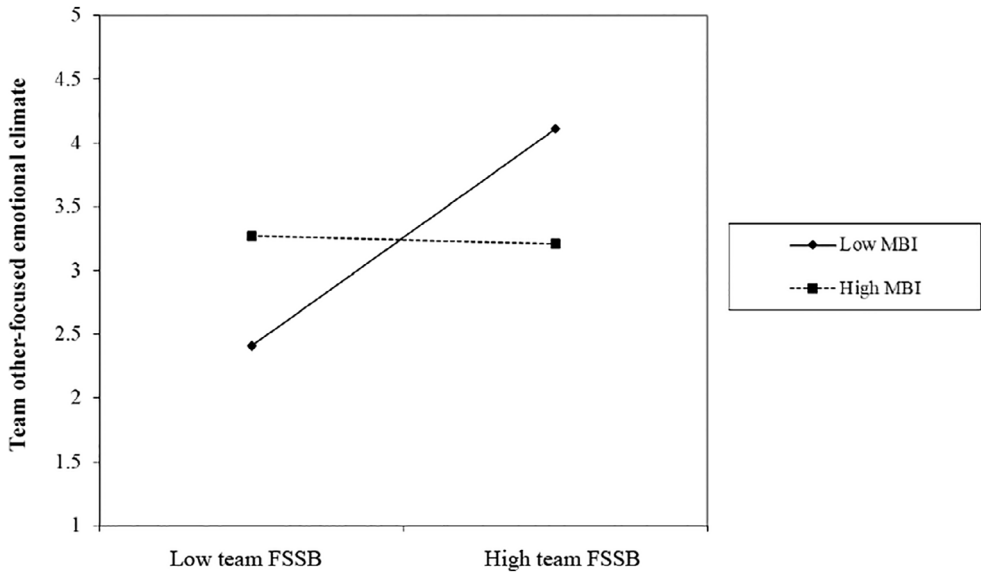


FIGURE 2 Moderating effect of manager beneficiary impact (MBI) on the relationship between team FSSB and team other-focused emotional climate. At low MBI (1SD below the mean), $B = .68, p < .01$; at high MBI (1SD above the mean), $B = .15, ns$.

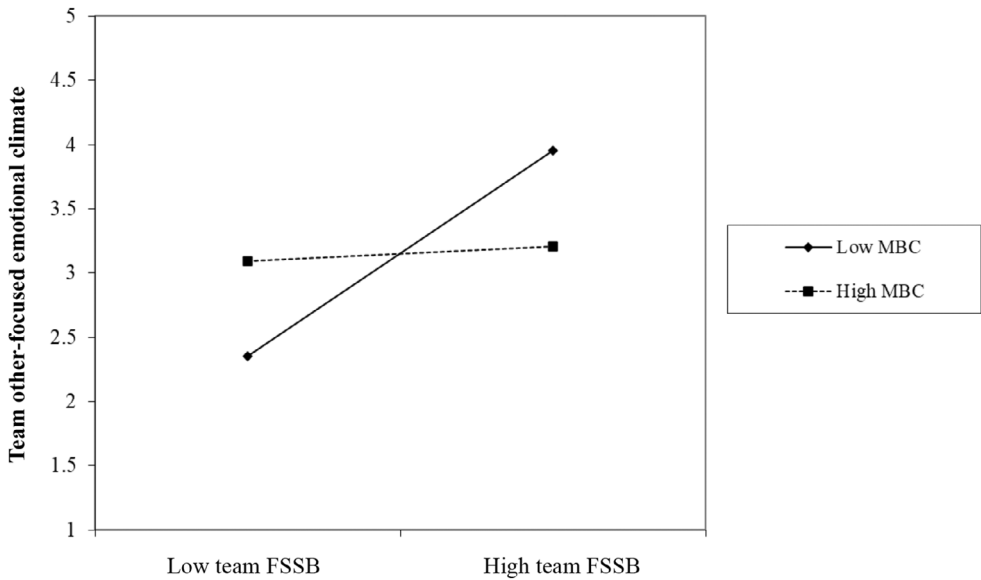


FIGURE 3 Moderating effect of manager beneficiary contact (MBC) on the relationship between team FSSB and team other-focused emotional climate. At low MBI (1SD below the mean), $B = .63, p < .01$; at high MBI (1SD above the mean), $B = .22, ns$.

Robustness check

As discussed above, team emotional exhaustion could represent an alternative mechanism explaining the (conditional) impact of team FSSB on team performance. Therefore, we replicated the moderated mediation analyses to rule out the mediating role of team emotional exhaustion and thereby ascertain the robustness of

our findings. Results revealed that team emotional exhaustion did not significantly mediate the relationship between team FSSB and team performance (estimate = -0.00 , 95% CI = $-0.07, .08$), whereas the mediating effect of team other-focused emotional climate remained significant (estimate = $.20$, 95% CI = $.02, .50$). Moreover, team FSSB did not significantly interact with either manager beneficiary impact ($B = .20$, *ns*) or manager beneficiary contact ($B = .38$, *ns*) in predicting team other-focused emotional climate. Finally, the indirect effects of team FSSB on team performance via team emotional exhaustion were non-significant at either low (estimate = -0.00 , 95% CI = $-0.09, .13$) or high (estimate = -0.00 , 95% CI = $-0.07, .06$) levels of manager beneficiary impact, as well as at either low (estimate = -0.00 , 95% CI = $-0.15, .18$) or high (estimate = -0.00 , 95% CI = $-0.06, .06$) levels of manager beneficiary contact. Conversely, as predicted, the indirect effects of team FSSB on team performance via team other-focused emotional climate were significantly positive when either manager beneficiary impact (estimate = $.37$, 95% CI = $.03, .78$) or manager beneficiary contact (estimate = $.34$, 95% CI = $.02, .83$) was low and non-significant when either manager beneficiary impact (estimate = $.08$, 95% CI = $-0.00, .35$) or manager beneficiary contact (estimate = $.12$, 95% CI = $-0.01, .40$) was high. Taken together, these findings provide evidence for the mediating role of team other-focused emotional climate in the (conditional) team FSSB-team performance relationship above and beyond the mediating role of team emotional exhaustion.

POST HOC SCENARIO-BASED EXPERIMENT

We conducted a scenario-based experiment to replicate and strengthen the results of the main study. Although we adopted procedural (i.e. two-wave and multisource research design) and statistical (i.e. ULMC technique in CFA) remedies to alleviate concerns about method bias, the cross-sectional and self-reported nature of the measures of team FSSB and team other-focused emotional climate do not allow us to provide robust evidence for the hypothesized causal effects of team FSSB. Our aim was to provide experimental evidence for the indirect effects of team FSSB on team performance via team other-focused emotional climate. Scenario experiments are widely used in management research due to their high rates of internal validity (e.g. Baum & Kabst, 2014; Iseke & Pull, 2019). We recruited 150 U.S. and U.K. participants via Prolific (Palan & Schitter, 2018) for the experiment. To be admitted to the present study, participants needed to meet the following criteria: (a) have a minimum age of 18 years, (b) be employed as full-time employees, (c) work in the retail sector and (d) correctly answer multiple attention checks (Porter et al., 2019). Each participant was paid £0.70 for completing the online experiment. Online informed consent was obtained from all participants with a full explanation of the purpose and procedures of this study. None of the participants failed the attention check. Thus, the final sample comprised 150 participants, 59% of whom were female and 53% of whom had an undergraduate education or higher. The mean age was 37.13 years ($SD = 12.47$) and the average organizational tenure was 6.25 years ($SD = 6.17$).

To manipulate team FSSB, we adopted Yu et al.'s (2022) vignette-based approach, in which participants' supervisors were described with terms reflecting the theoretical definition of FSSB (Hammer et al., 2007). Moreover, to align the scenario with the organizational context of the main study, participants were specifically asked to imagine working in an electronic retail store. Participants were then randomly assigned to two different conditions ($n = 75$ participants per condition). In the high team FSSB condition, the supervisor was described as someone who 'truly cares about the work-life balance of his or her subordinates' and 'assists employees in their efforts to successfully manage their dual responsibilities in work and family roles.' In the low team FSSB condition, the supervisor was described as someone who 'believes that work-life balance is not an organizational concern' and 'does not speak about his or her personal life with subordinates.' To measure team FSSB ($\alpha = .98$), team other-focused emotional climate ($\alpha = .93$) and team performance⁴ ($\alpha = .96$), we used the same scales as in the main

⁴Consistent with prior research adopting scenario-based experiments to predict team outcomes (Kupor et al., 2018; Telecan et al., 2023), in order to ensure the suitability of the team performance measure to the scenario context, participants were asked to imagine themselves in the scenario and indicate their beliefs about the hypothetical performance of the store described in the scenario.

TABLE 3 Scenario experiment descriptive statistics and correlations.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Team FSSB	—	—	(.98)		
2. Team other-focused emotional climate	3.16	1.24	.86**	(.93)	
3. Team performance	3.18	1.37	.88**	.92**	(.96)

Note: $N = 150$. Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alphas) appear along the diagonal, in parentheses.

** $p < .01$.

study. One-way ANOVA revealed significantly greater levels of team FSSB in the high team FSSB condition ($M = 4.60$, $SD = .61$) than in the low team FSSB condition ($M = 1.40$, $SD = .64$), $F(1, 149) = 973.42$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .87$. These results suggest that the manipulation of team FSSB was successful. The means, standard deviations, and correlations for the study variables are reported in Table 3.

To test our predictions, we carried out an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the team's other-focused emotional climate. Moreover, we conducted a path analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro with 5000 bootstrap replications to examine the indirect effects of team FSSB on team performance via team other-focused emotional climate. The ANOVA results revealed a main effect of team FSSB on team other-focused emotional climate ($F[1, 149] = 433.62$, $p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .75$). In support of our predictions, the means showed that the team other-focused emotional climate was more common in the team FSSB condition ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .68$) than in the low team FSSB condition ($M = 2.08$, $SD = .56$). Interestingly, ANOVA further revealed a main effect of team FSSB on team performance ($F(1, 149) = 515.32$, $p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .78$): team performance was greater in the high-team FSSB condition ($M = 4.36$, $SD = .61$) than in the low-team FSSB condition ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .68$). Furthermore, based on 5000 bootstrap replications, the team other-focused emotional climate was found to significantly mediate the positive indirect effect of team FSSB on team performance (estimate = 1.42, 95% CI = 1.10, 1.71). Overall, the results from the scenario experiment replicate the positive effects of team FSSB as found in the main study.

DISCUSSION

The increasing employees' interest in achieving a good work-life balance (Guo et al., 2024) cannot be considered without regard to the pervasiveness of work teams as building blocks of modern organizations (Wallrich et al., 2024). Accordingly, it is essential to understand the implications that managers' responses to work-life balance aspirations have for teams' capacity to achieve performance outcomes. Indeed, leaders' patterns of behaviour influence team functioning by managing team members' resources and their progression toward the accomplishment of work tasks with the aim of boosting team performance (Ceri-Booms, Curşeu, & Oerlemans, 2017; Morgeson et al., 2010). However, while the effects of family-supportive supervisor behaviour (FSSB) on individual-level work outcomes have been largely documented (Guo et al., 2024), how family-supportive supervision operates at the team level to drive team performance outcomes has remained under-investigated. Addressing this issue is of utmost importance to advance extant theorizing on the role of FSSB in the workplace because experiences at the team level have unique influences on team behaviours (Choi & Sy, 2009; Johns, 2006). Thus, when such experiences are overlooked, research has limited capacity to understand and explain collective behaviours, such as team performance (Bliese & Jex, 2002).

The present manuscript aimed to examine team-level perceptions of family-supportive supervisor behaviour (FSSB) to offer a unique insight into *how* and *when* family-supportive managerial practices influence team performance, distinctively from individual-level experiences of these practices (Bliese & Jex, 2002). Our results demonstrate that team members' aggregate perceptions of supervisors' FSSB positively influence team performance via an enhanced shared perception of the team other-focused emotional climate. Moreover, managers' perceptions of the relational characteristics of their role acted as moderators of the relationship between team FSSB and team other-focused emotional climate. We

also found an unexpected negative direct effect of team FSSB on team performance. As noted in prior research (Perrigino et al., 2018), this finding might point to the unintended negative consequences of formal and informal work-life policies, a phenomenon referred to as work-family backlash. Specifically, despite the significant positive impact of FSSB on both work and non-work outcomes, as also highlighted in this paper, an excessive emphasis on employees' non-work needs and preferences (i.e. high levels of FSSB) might divert supervisors' energies and attention away from task completion and business objectives. This could explain the negative impact on team performance when FSSB is considered in isolation. Supporting this interpretation, a study by Stan, Evans, Arnold and McAmis (2012) in the service sector showed that high levels of organizational social support diminished the relevance of salespeople's customer orientation, resulting in poorer performance.

Another noteworthy finding is the non-significant relationship between team FSSB and manager relational job characteristics, suggesting that these two factors are unlikely to co-occur in the same organizational context. Although this result contrasts with Stempel et al.'s (2023) study, which reported a positive relationship between leadership styles and leader job characteristics, it aligns with prior research showing no significant link between leadership styles and functionally similar contextual factors that serve as a substitute-for-leadership function. For example, Jiang et al. (2015) found that service-oriented high-performance work systems (HPWS) substituted for the influence of service leadership on collective customer knowledge and service climate, with no significant relationship between the two predictors. Taken together, these findings suggest that the compensatory function occurs primarily when one of the two factors of similar value is absent, consistent with the substitute-for-leadership principle (Kerr & Jermier, 1978).

Our results advance the current FSSB literature in numerous ways. First, Hammer et al. (2007, p. 195) claim in their seminal work that “taking a multilevel approach to understanding not only the concept of FSSB but also the outcomes of such behaviors will provide a clearer understanding of the importance of FSSB for both researchers and managerial practitioners.” Straub (2012) theorized that FSSB could benefit team functioning and outcomes (i.e. cohesion and performance) beyond individuals' work and nonwork outcomes. However, none of these claims had been tested empirically in previous research and there was no clear consensus on the intervening mechanisms in this relationship. Our work answers the call for more empirical investigations of collective perceptions of FSSB in management and organizations (Kossek et al., 2023) by introducing team FSSB and delineating its role in team climate and performance. Showing that FSSB can be evaluated in teams and is related to team-level processes and outcomes adds new knowledge necessary for the consideration of the value of FSSB in organizations.

Our paper further extends the current literature by examining an additional intervening mechanism underlying the effects of team FSSB, namely the team emotional climate. Straub (2012) theorized that FSSB at the team level can enhance mutual respect and internal team cohesion. Consistent with this perspective, our research provides the first empirical evidence for the positive influence of team FSSB on team emotional climate, specifically regarding the dimension referring to other-focused emotions. This result also demonstrates the important effects of team FSSB on improving the emotional dimension of workplace relationships. Yu et al. (2022) found that engaging in FSSB can lead employees to perceive their supervisor as friendlier and warmer in interpersonal relationships, beyond merely being more competent. Our paper enlarges this perspective by showing that team FSSB can shape team members' perceptions of the emotional climate of the entire team. Working with a family-supportive supervisor can enhance the perception that interpersonal relationships are characterized by mutual understanding, empathy, and caring—all of which can increase individuals' psychological availability and their decision to contribute to effective team functioning (Carmeli & Russo, 2016). Our findings regarding the mediating role of a team's other-focused emotional climate are significant, as they offer a theoretically grounded explanation for the team processes that facilitate the positive impact of FSSB on team performance. This influence is observed even when considering the direct negative relationship between team FSSB and team performance.

Finally, we elucidated the boundary conditions that could contribute to making the effects of team FSSB salient for the team. Research has shown that FSSB could be more salient for recipients based

on specific individual needs (e.g. the need for caring; Russo et al., 2018), family configurations (Bagger & Li, 2014) and/or national contexts (Bosch et al., 2018). Our study indicates that, at the team level, team FSSB can also play a compensatory role, becoming an important leverage for managers to offset a lack of closeness to team members. When a manager's perception of the prosocial impact of their role is low—due to job characteristics such as managing a large retail store with hundreds of employees—engaging in team FSSB can make a significant difference. In such contexts, where it is challenging for managers to feel connected to all team members, demonstrating FSSB can enhance the emotional climate and team cohesion. Conversely, when a manager perceives that their role already fosters closeness and is beneficial for employees, the impact of team FSSB may be less noticeable and appreciated by team members. This suggests that the effectiveness of family-supportive behaviours may depend on the existing relational dynamics and the perceived need for such support within the team.

Practical implications

Our results can enrich the discussion on organizational interventions that could enhance team dynamics and managerial competencies. By delineating the concept of team FSSB as a *team-focused* form of family-supportive practices, our findings provide new practical insights into how managers could optimize the usefulness of these practices in the workplace. Precisely, in light of the benefits of FSSB for the team, a first practical implication deriving from this work is that managers should be trained to adopt a contingency perspective by learning to recognize situations in which team-focused family-supportive practices are more needed than individualized practices (Wu et al., 2010). In this regard, our results suggest that it would be more strategic for leaders to target their family-supportive behaviours toward the whole team rather than to the single followers when desired outcomes include the development of a mutually caring work climate within the group and the improvement of collective performance. In this case, managers should then ensure that work-life balance issues are handled with all members of their team rather than with a single follower. To this end, managers could organize family-supportive collective meetings in which they stimulate team members to share family-related needs and collaborate to identify viable solutions to address them.

Furthermore, we showed that team FSSB was less beneficial for team climate and performance when managers' job characteristics were high. These findings have relevant implications for the efficient management of family-supportive behaviours. Indeed, enacting family-supportive behaviours requires extra effort on the part of managers to accommodate employees' family-related needs (Yu et al., 2022), thus posing a potential risk of overload for managers, which might ultimately limit their leadership effectiveness. Our findings indicate that managers should be aware of the extent to which their work allows them to connect with and exert a positive impact on their beneficiaries. Such awareness would allow supervisors to discern the situations in which providing support for team members' family-related needs is essential from those situations in which these supportive actions are not necessary. As a result, managers are protected against the risk of being overwhelmed by extra-role managerial behaviours, as they make more efficient use of them and thus improve their own capacity to effectively boost team functioning.

Limitations and future research directions

Our results should be interpreted in light of several limitations, which indicate directions for future research. First, although managers rated team performance, employees reported both their manager's team FSSB perceptions and their the team other-focused emotional climate, raising a potential common method bias problem (Podsakoff et al., 2012). However, our post hoc, scenario-based experiment contributed to addressing this methodological concern via the manipulation of team FSSB. Nonetheless, future studies are warranted to extend the current findings by adopting multiple ratings, such as supervisors' assessments of their own team FSSB and employees' evaluations of the

team working climate. This would also provide a more holistic understanding of how climate and performance are shaped by different stakeholders in the organization. Second, and relatedly, as managers' self-ratings of their own relational job characteristics might be influenced by social desirability, they might have affected the nature of the interaction effects reported in our study. Nonetheless, prior research has highlighted the accuracy with which individuals estimate the characteristics of their work (Ganzach & Pazy, 2001). For instance, several studies have shown that the manipulation of actual job characteristics yielded the expected changes in self-ratings of such characteristics both in the laboratory and the field (Farh & Scott Jr, 1983; Griffin, 1983). Moreover, other research has reported significant correlations between self-reported assessments and objective indicators of job characteristics (e.g. Algera, 1983; Gerhart, 1987; Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Finally, consistent with our investigation, in the only prior study we are aware of to assess job characteristics in the leadership context (Stempel et al., 2023), leaders' job characteristics were measured via leaders' self-reports.

Third, although our experimental study helped offset the limitations associated with the cross-sectional (moderated) relationship between team FSSB and team other-focused emotional climate, because of the nonlongitudinal nature of our research designs, we cannot rule out potential reciprocal relationships among the study variables. Addressing this issue is important since prior research has revealed reciprocal relationships between climate perceptions and leader behaviours (Nielsen et al., 2016) and team outcomes (Pearce & Ensley, 2004). A full longitudinal research design would thus be recommended to draw more robust inferences on the (conditional) causal relationships among team FSSB, team other-focused emotional climate and team performance. Fourth, following the longitudinal direction, the implications of improved team performance via team FSSB could be investigated further, as a virtuous (or vicious) cycle may occur. Do these linkages generate other outcomes, such as increased trust or team cohesion—with their potential undesired consequences (e.g. cognitive lock-in)? These issues warrant future research, which might also help explain the negative direct effect observed in Model 4 (see Table 2).

Fifth, our results showed mixed findings concerning the relationship between team FSSB and team performance (i.e. positive when mediated by other-focused emotional climate and negative when testing a direct effect). Although this result is consistent with prior research (Perrigino et al., 2018; Russo et al., 2018; Straub, 2012; Yu et al., 2022), it is possible that the consequences of FSSB are not uniformly positive but could vary based on organization, leaders and/or country characteristics. For example, leaders who focus excessively on the non-work-related needs of their teams could have a more detrimental impact on team performance compared to leaders who effectively balance attention to personal life with the achievement of group tasks and performance goals. Future research is therefore needed to examine the effects of contextual conditions on the observers' perception of team FSSB. It could be interesting to examine if the direct effect of team FSSB on team performance would be positive in countries with a higher gender egalitarian culture (i.e. Italy is always ranked among the lowest countries in Europe on this dimension), in organizations that have an internal culture that is perceived as family supportive (vs. family unsupportive), or in teams led by leaders capable of balancing both work and nonwork goals and priorities—i.e. paradoxical leaders (Zhang et al., 2015).

On a related note, the identification of manager relational job characteristics as substitutes for team FSSB's effects does not preclude the possibility that other factors could exert similar compensatory functions. For instance, research suggests that flexibility i-deals—a personalized work arrangement between the most talented employees and their supervisors that gives more flexibility (Bal & Rousseau, 2015)—can enhance employees' performance by helping employees manage their family responsibilities (Las Heras et al., 2017). Accordingly, examining the role of individual i-deals as substitutes for the impact of FSSB on team process outcomes would be an area worthy of further investigation.⁵

⁵We thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

Furthermore, our research exclusively focused on performance-related outcomes, thereby neglecting all those team discretionary behaviours that are nonetheless critical to organizational performance and competitiveness, such as team innovation (van Knippenberg, 2017), proactivity (Cai et al., 2019) and citizenship behaviours (Hu & Liden, 2015). A more complete and nuanced theorizing of the team-level effects of team FSSB would thus be gained by incorporating both in-role and extra-role team behaviours in future research, as well as by assessing the specific processes and boundary conditions that are associated with the distinct relationships between team FSSB and team outcomes. Research in this area would not only enlarge the scope and the impact of team FSSB across domains, but also outline limitations or boundary conditions for its effectiveness. Finally, although our hypotheses concerning the interaction effects of team FSSB and manager relational job characteristics were theoretically grounded on the COR-based principle of equifinality (Halbesleben et al., 2014), our results did not fully support this principle: high manager relational job characteristics were found to attenuate the effects of team FSSB on team other-focused emotional climate but did not benefit climate when team FSSB was absent. Accordingly, since the equifinality principle could be theoretically inferred but not substantiated by our findings, future research is needed to provide more robust evidence on alternative boundary conditions that could effectively substitute for the benefits of team FSSB on work outcomes.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we examined the consequences of team family supportive supervision on team dynamics and performance. We demonstrated that team FSSB is an important team-level supervisor behaviour that can benefit team dynamics and team performance by developing among team members a shared perception of working in an other-focused emotional environment wherein individuals' needs and family conditions are valued and supported. This is one of the first papers to examine the consequences of team FSSB for team dynamics, contributing to the existing and increasing literature on FSSB.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Marcello Russo: Conceptualization; writing – review and editing; writing – original draft; supervision; project administration; resources; validation. **Francesco Montani:** Investigation; methodology; formal analysis; data curation; software; writing – review and editing. **Gabriele Morandin:** Writing – review and editing; writing – original draft; validation; visualization. **Simon Grenier:** Writing – review and editing; validation; visualization.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. We thank Gianluca Eugenio Porcelli for his invaluable assistance during data collection.

ORCID

Francesco Montani  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2648-9871>

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