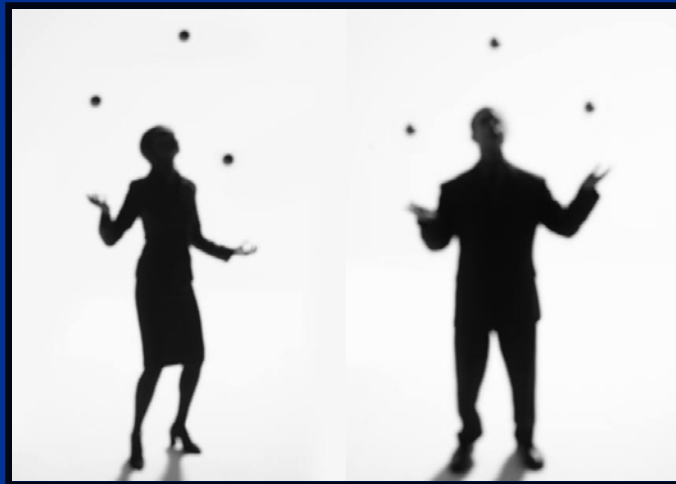


Work-Family Enrichment Buffers Relationships Linking Work- Family Conflict to Well-Being



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Background

- Dominant assumption in work-family literature has been that work and family roles are in competition for scarce resources.
- “Conflict” assumption challenged by research showing work-family synergy and positive effects of multiple-role involvement.
- Call for attention to flip side of work-family conflict: positive spillover, enhancement, enrichment, facilitation.

Work-Family Enrichment

- The degree to which experiences in one role improve role performance and quality of life in the other role. (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; elaborated by Carlson et al., 2006)
- Like conflict, enrichment is bidirectional.
- Enrichment and conflict not necessarily parallel: Underlying processes and outcomes may differ.

How Do Enrichment and Conflict Operate Together on Outcomes?

- Much research does not include enrichment.
- If included, usually simple additive model.
- Additive model is rarely explicitly justified.
- Exception: Grzywacz, J. G., & Bass, B. L. (2003). Work, family, and mental health: Testing different models of work-family fit. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 65, 248-262.

Alternative Models of the Enrichment–Conflict Relationship

- **Additive Effects:** Enrichment and conflict have independent effects on outcomes.
- **Interactive Effects:** Enrichment buffers or protects from negative effects of conflict.
- **Relative Difference:** Effects depend on balance between enrichment and conflict.

Source: Grzywacz, J. G., & Bass, B. L. (2003). Work, family, and mental health: Testing different models of work-family fit. Journal of Marriage and Family, 65, 248-262.

Grzywacz and Bass (2003) Findings

- Enrichment and conflict had additive effects on depression and problem drinking.
- Enrichment and conflict had interactive effects on anxiety: Enrichment buffered negative effects of conflict on anxiety.
- Underlying processes may differ by outcome.

Source: Grzywacz, J. G., & Bass, B. L. (2003). Work, family, and mental health: Testing different models of work-family fit. Journal of Marriage and Family, 65, 248-262.

National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States

- MIDUS Wave 1: 1995–1996, ages 25–74
- National RDD (random digit dialing) sample
- 30-minute phone interview plus mail survey
- Overall response rate of 60.9%

Subsample

- Employed
- Filled out enrichment and conflict measures
- $N = 2,031$
 - 1,075 men
 - 956 women

Secondary analysis funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Work and Family Demographics

- Work hours: 44.3 hrs/wk ($SD = 14.8$)
- Married/partnered: 69.2%
 - Partner employed: 74.9%
 - Partner hours: 41.5 hrs/wk ($SD = 13.4$)
- Caregiving
 - Have minor children: 44.2%
 - Assist own parents: 34.7%
 - Sandwiched: 16.8%

Enrichment and Conflict

■ Enrichment

- W>F: “Having a good day on your job makes you a better companion when you get home.”
- F>W: “Talking with someone at home helps you deal with problems at work.”

■ Conflict

- W>F: “Job worries or problems distract you when you are at home.”
- F>W: “Responsibilities at home reduce the effort you can devote to your job.”

Well-Being Outcomes

- Self-Rated Mental Health
- Life Satisfaction
- Affect Balance
- Spouse/Partner Relationship Quality

Increment to R² vs. Baseline for Each Model

	Additive Effects (Independent)	Interactive Effects (Buffering)	Relative Difference (Balance)
Mental Health	.042	.050	.039
Life Satisfaction	.171	.177	.156
Affect Balance	.086	.092	.076
Relat. Quality	.233	.246	.196

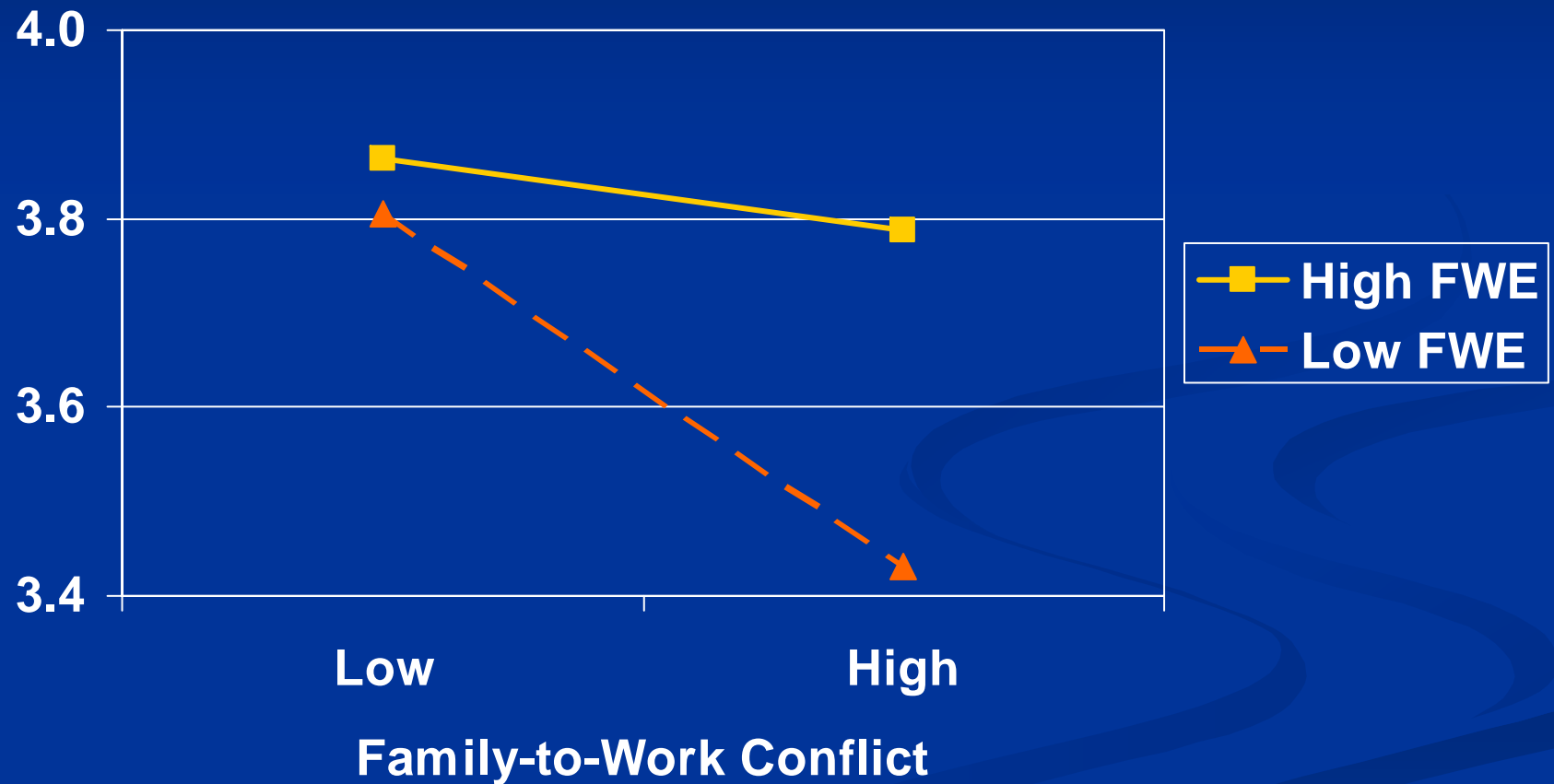
Increment to R² vs. Baseline for Each Model

	Additive Effects (Independent)	Interactive Effects (Buffering)	Relative Difference (Balance)
Work-to-Family			
Mental Health	.023	.023	.020
Life Satisfaction	.123	.123	.108
Affect Balance	.054	.054	.041
Relat. Quality	.044	.044	.021
Family-to-Work			
Mental Health	.031	.038	.030
Life Satisfaction	.090	.095	.090
Affect Balance	.055	.061	.055
Relat. Quality	.211	.223	.196

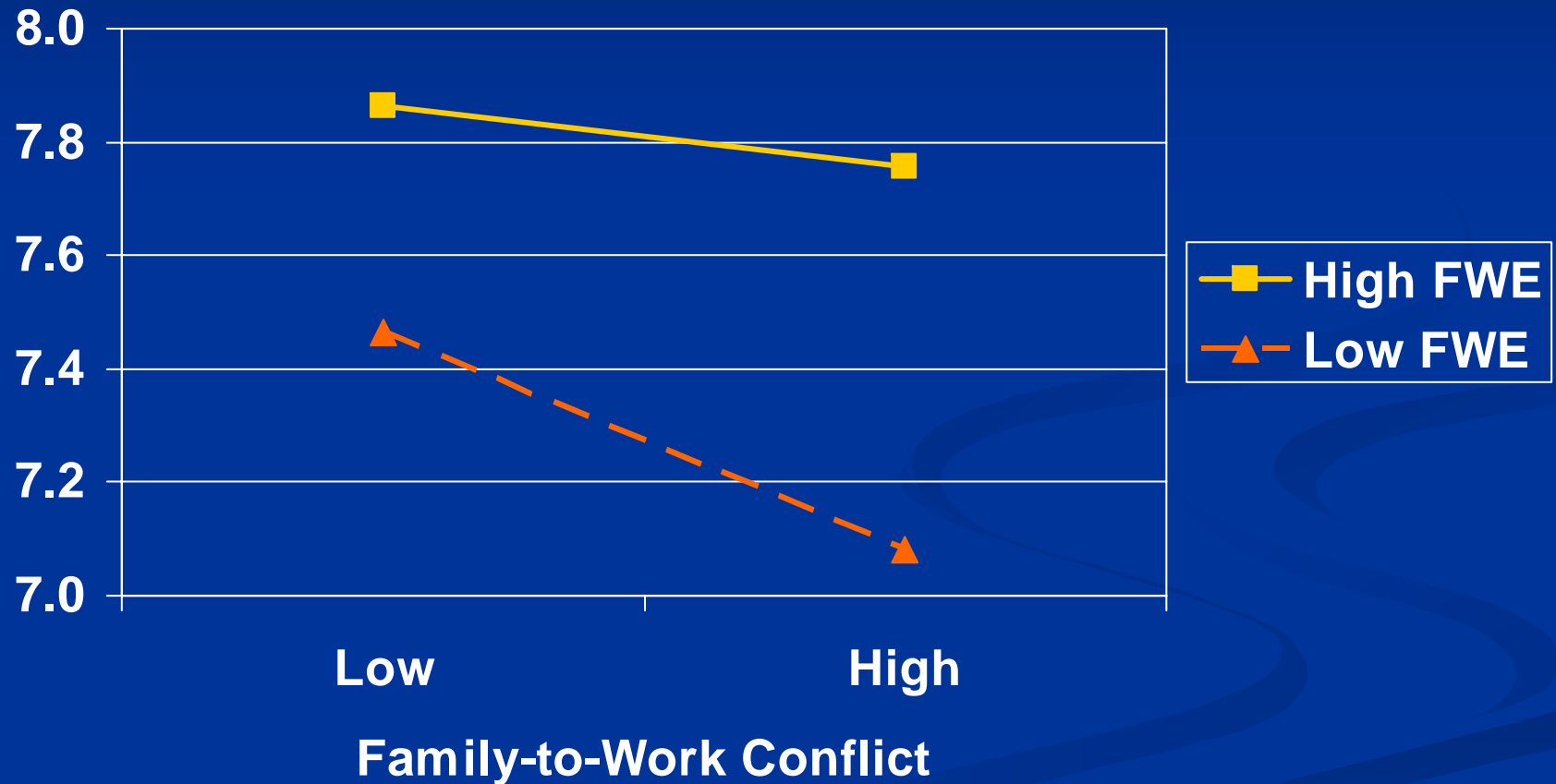
Results

- In the work-to-family direction, the additive model was supported.
 - W>F conflict and W>F enrichment made independent contributions to all four outcomes.
- In the family-to-work direction, the interactive model was supported.
 - F>W enrichment buffered the negative effects of F>W conflict on all four outcomes.

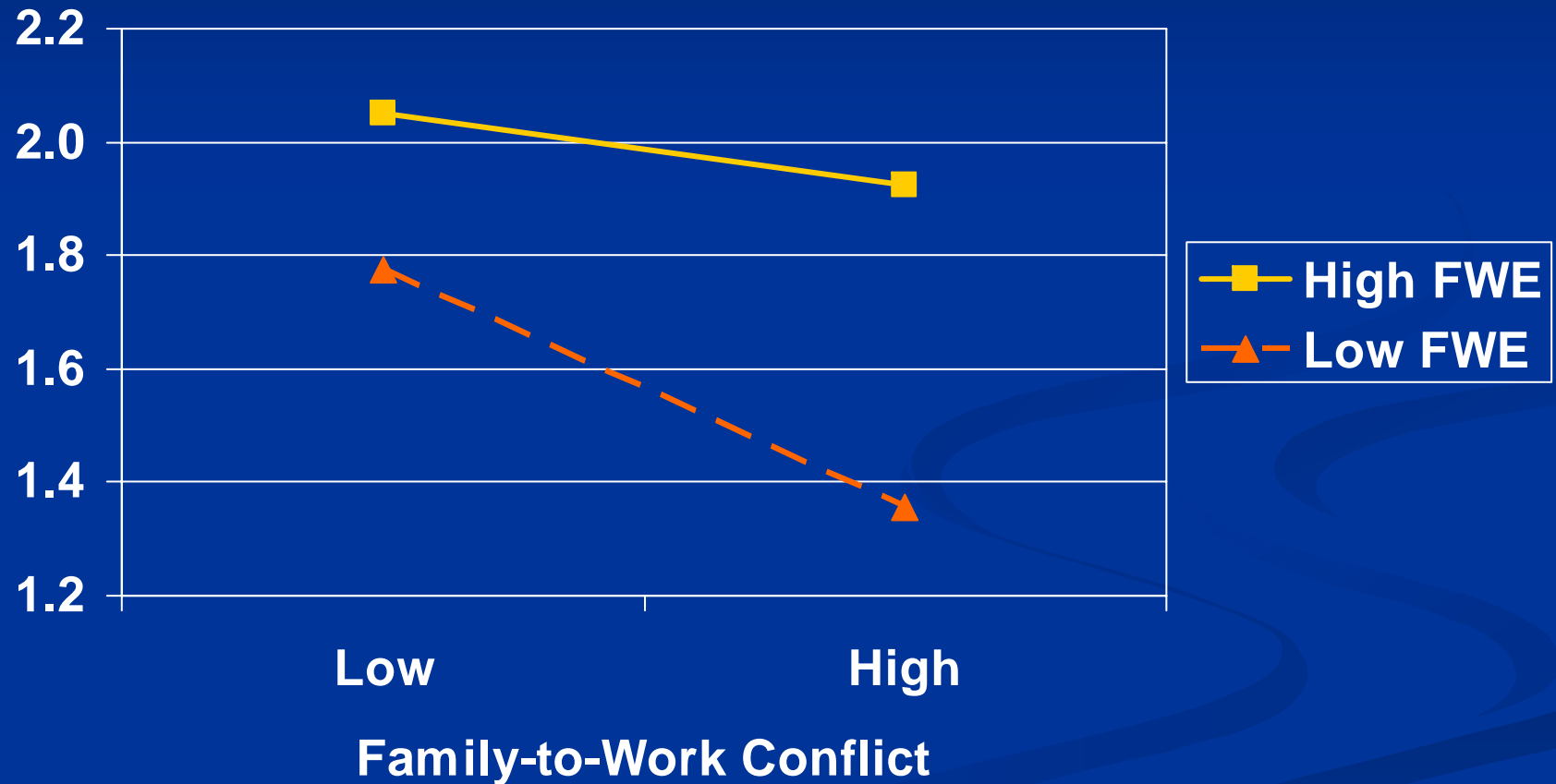
Mental Health



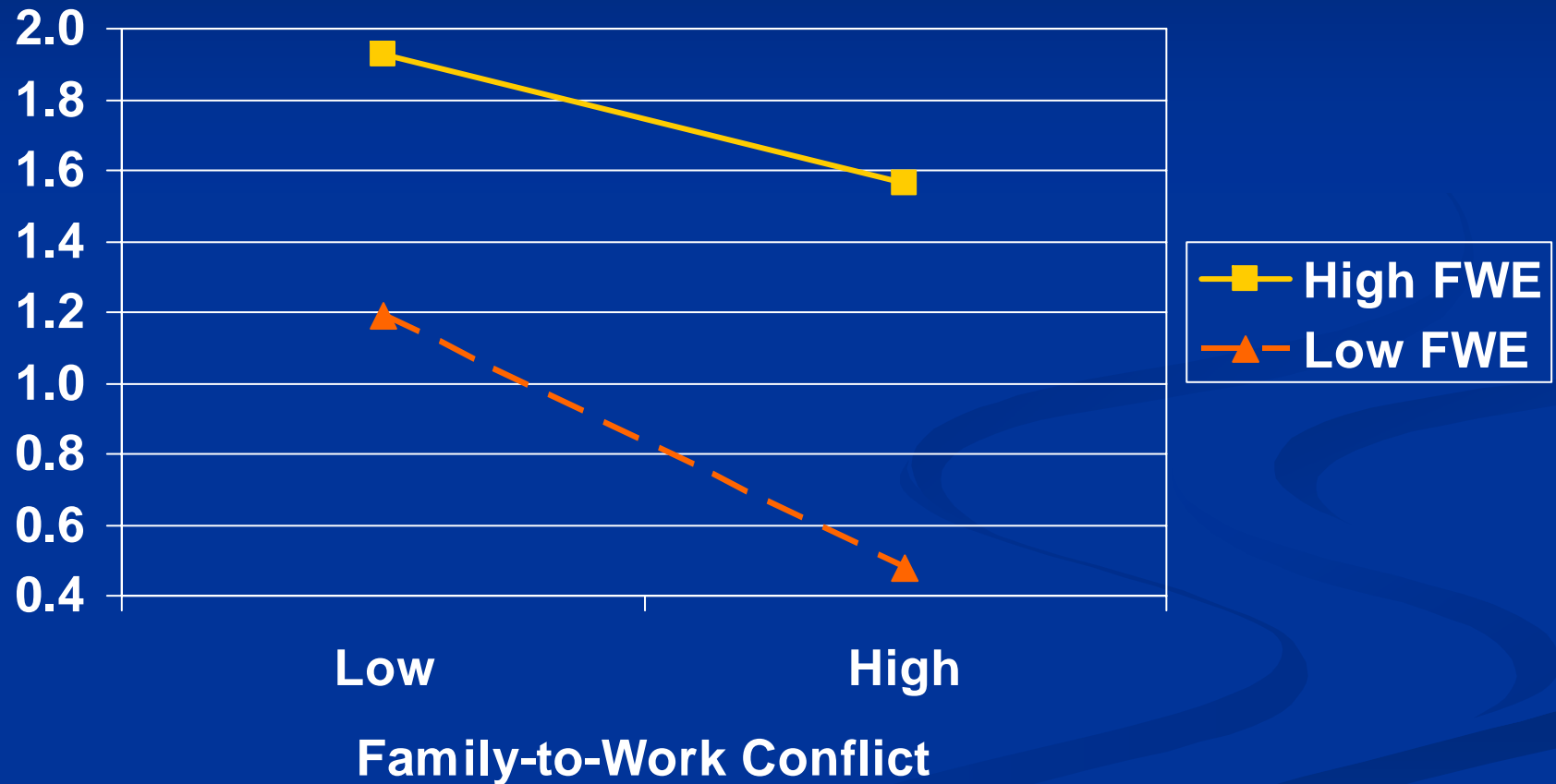
Life Satisfaction



Affect Balance



Relationship Quality



Conclusions

- Evidence that the specific processes linking enrichment and conflict to outcomes differ by outcome and by direction.
- Findings challenge traditional focus on conflict. Measures of enrichment are key in studies of the work-family interface.
- Implications for policy/practice: Counteract negative effects of conflict with interventions designed to promote enrichment as well as to reduce conflict.

Future Research

- Wider variety of outcomes, especially work-related; e.g., job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment.
- Longitudinal studies to disentangle issues of causality, illuminate recursive nature of work-to-family and family-to-work processes.
- Family as unit of analysis: Each member's job (if applicable) and family experiences affect other members' job and family experiences.