

Coping with Work-Family Conflict from a Cross Cultural Perspective

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The Aim of the Study



- This study was aimed at addressing the issue of coping with work-family conflict (WIF and FIW) from a cross-cultural perspective.
- Specifically, we expect that, universally, coping strategy will be negatively related to WFC; however, we suggest a 'cross cultural hypothesis, because we expect that the effectiveness of specific coping styles may vary in related to culture/ nation

Coping with WFC- The Importance of the Individual Perspective

- The practitioner literature has focused on the ways organizations can "manage the situation" in such forms as child-care assistance, and flexible working hours - but very few formal organizational supports exist (Treas & Widmer, 2000; Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000).
- Further, many jobs are not suitable for alternative arrangements.
- Therefore, the ability to cope with WFC might, at least partially, be a function of the individual's capabilities (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007; Pratt & Rosa, 2003).

Personal Coping with WFC- Definition

- Coping with WFC is defined here as the cognitive and behavioral efforts individuals make to manage the stresses arising from the conflicting demands of the work and family domains (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007).

Personal Coping Strategy Typology

Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007



- (1) Good enough at home - lowering the performance of family responsibilities to a less than perfect level.
- (2) Super at home - insisting on doing all families duties perfectly.
- (3) Delegation at home - managing family duties by delegating some to others.
- (4) Priorities at home - Setting priorities in handling home duties
- (5) Good enough at work - lowering the performance of work responsibilities to a less than perfect level.
- (6) Super at work - Insisting on doing all work duties perfectly.
- (7) Delegation at work - Managing work duties by delegating some to other
- (8) Priorities at work - Setting priorities for managing work duties

Coping with WFC - The Advantages of this Taxonomy

- Like Hall's (1973) typology it was developed specifically for dealing with work–family conflict.
- It focuses on accommodation of both work and family to satisfy family and work demands.
- It was developed in a bottom-up process, capturing employees' authentic experience of how they cope with work–family conflict rather than relying on the researchers' perspective.

Personal coping: Why taking a cross-cultural perspective?

- Work and family pressures reflect social and self-expectations and are most susceptible to values, beliefs internalized through socialization (Gelfand & Knight, 2005).
- Culture has both constitutive and regulatory effects that shape how people act in the domains of work and family. (Thein, Austen, Currie & Lewin, 2010).
- Systematic cross-cultural comparisons on coping with WFC are in paucity (Lu et al., 2009).

The Distribution of the Ten Nations by Cultural Values (based on cluster analysis)

| | Individualism | Collectivism |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Traditional | - | <u>C-T</u> (collectivism-Traditional) China, India Indonesia, Turkey |
| Egalitarian | <u>I-E</u> (Individualism-Egalitarian) Australia, Canada Spain, U.S. | <u>C-E</u> (collectivism-Egalitarian) Israel Taiwan |

Hypotheses

- we expect that, universally, coping strategy will be negatively related to WFC; however, we suggest a 'cross cultural hypothesis, because we expect that the effectiveness of specific coping styles may vary in related to culture/nation.

Method

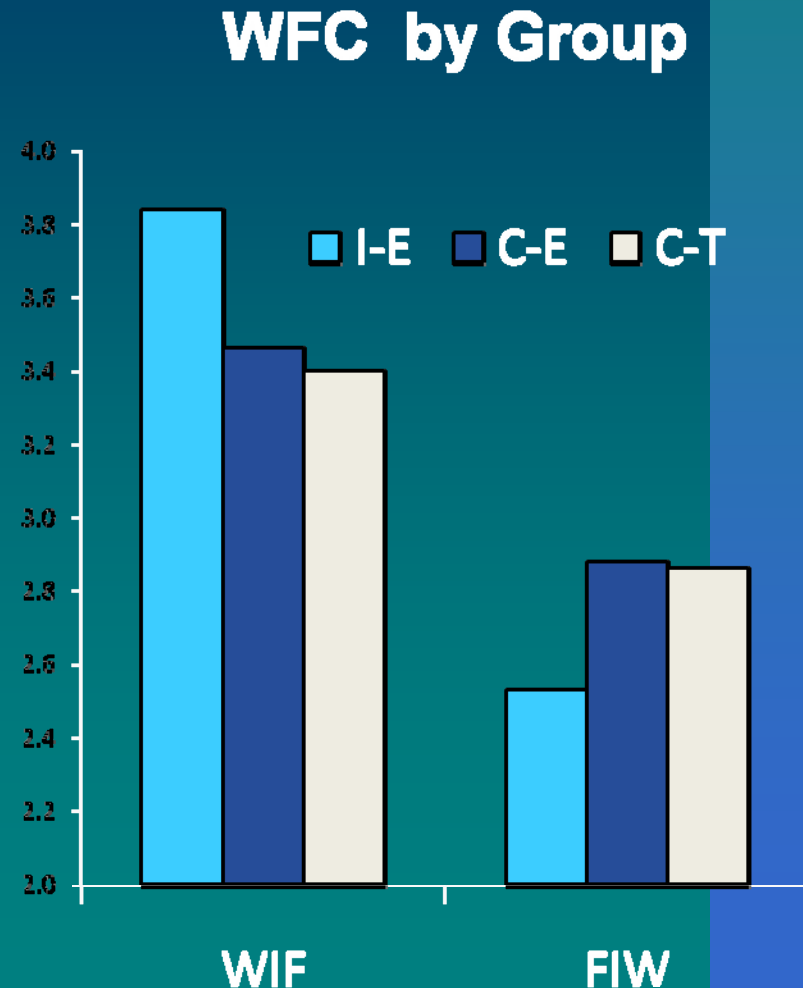
- Data was gathered from 10 nations as part of Project 3535, by self report valid questionnaires.
- For evaluating personal coping strategies, we used the scale of Somech & Drach-Zahavy (2007).
- As can be seen in Table 1, the results indicated acceptable measurement equivalence indexes.

Summary of Fit Statistics for Scale Equivalence tests

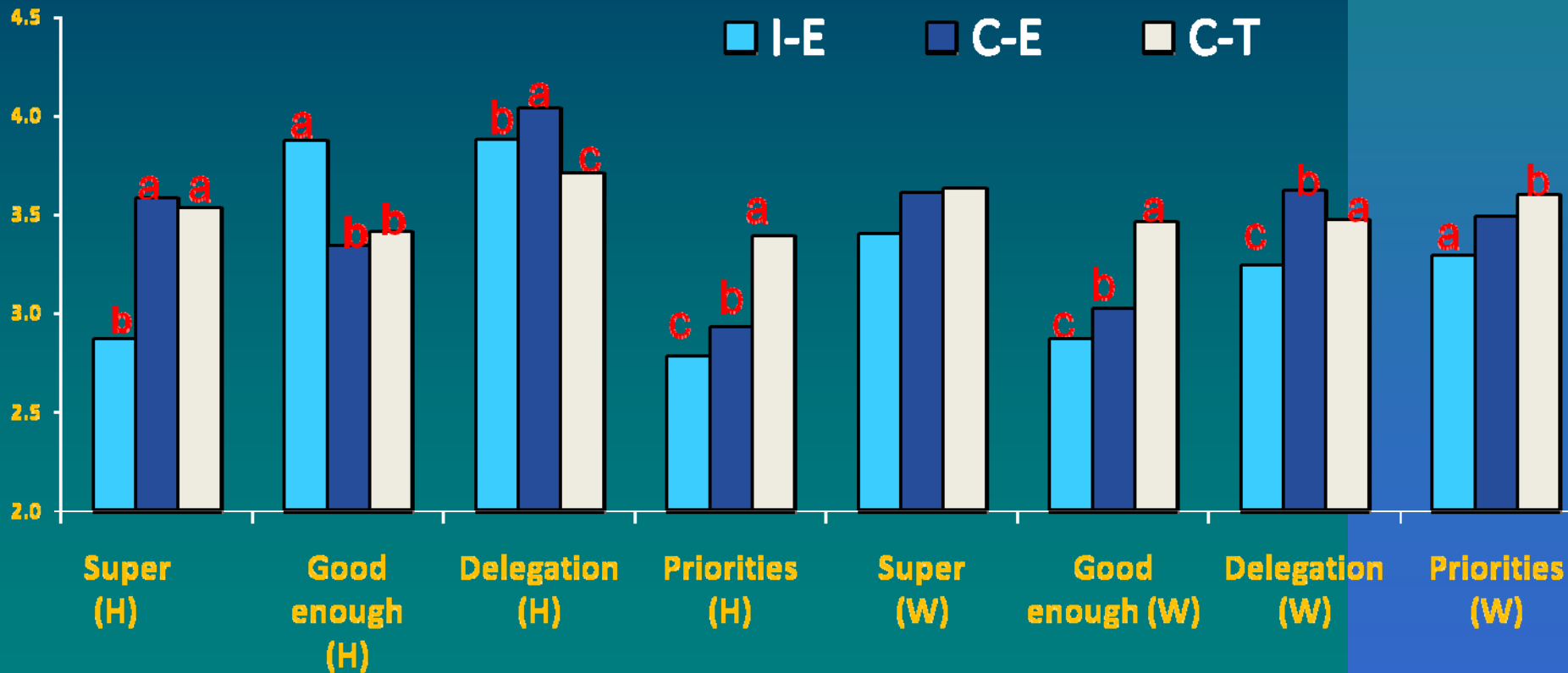
| Scale | <u>Configural Invariance</u> | | | <u>Measurement Invariance</u> | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|------|-------|--------------|
| | χ^2 (df) | CFI | RMSEA | χ^2 (df) | CFI | RMSEA | Δ CFI |
| WIF Time-based | 335.8 (80) | 0.96 | 0.034 | 424.8 (116) | 0.96 | 0.031 | 0.01 |
| WIF Strain-based | 335.8 (80) | 0.96 | 0.034 | 424.8 (116) | 0.96 | 0.031 | 0.01 |
| FIW Time-based | 296.3 (80) | 0.97 | 0.032 | 414.3 (116) | 0.96 | 0.031 | 0.01 |
| FIW Strain-based | 296.3 (80) | 0.97 | 0.032 | 414.3 (116) | 0.96 | 0.031 | 0.01 |
| I-C | 453.3 (80) | 0.946 | 0.025 | 566.6(116) | 0.94 | 0.023 | 0.01 |
| Gender role ideology | 258.7 (80) | 0.94 | 0.029 | 326.6 (116) | 0.93 | 0.026 | 0.01 |

Findings: WFC by Group

- The WIF score of the individualistic-Egalitarian group was significantly higher than that of the two other groups.
- The FIW score of the individualistic-Egalitarian group was significantly lower than that of the two other groups.

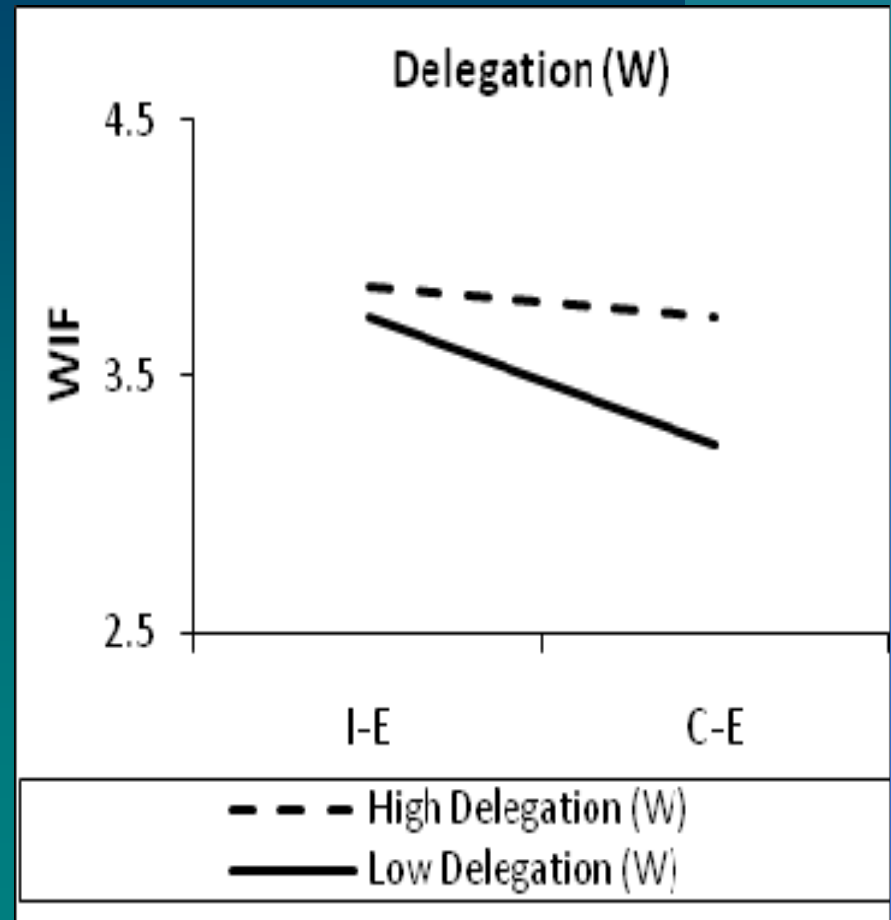
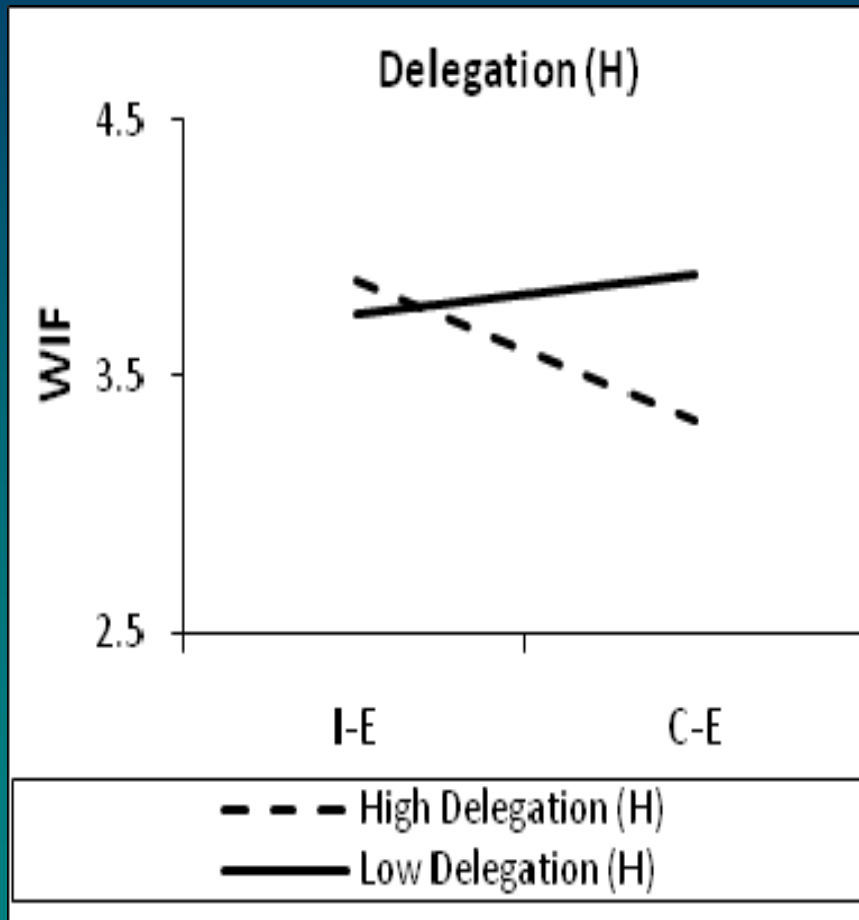


Findings: Personal Coping Strategies by Group*

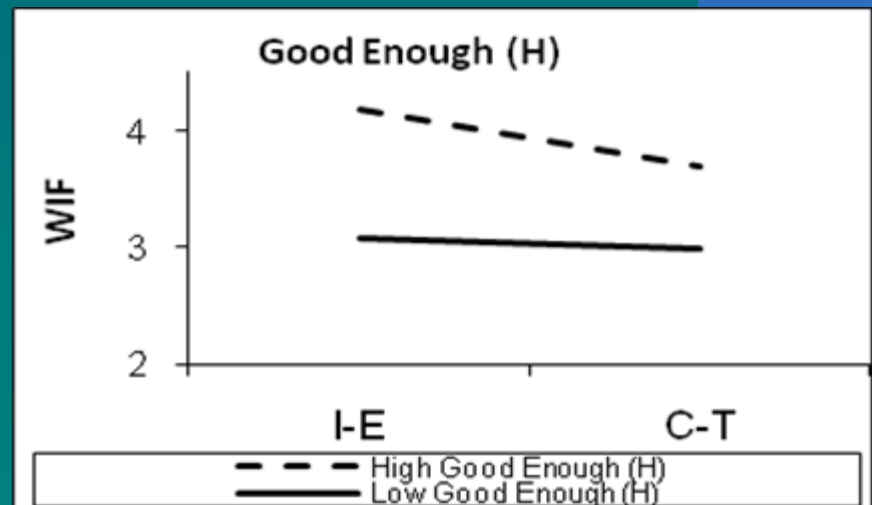
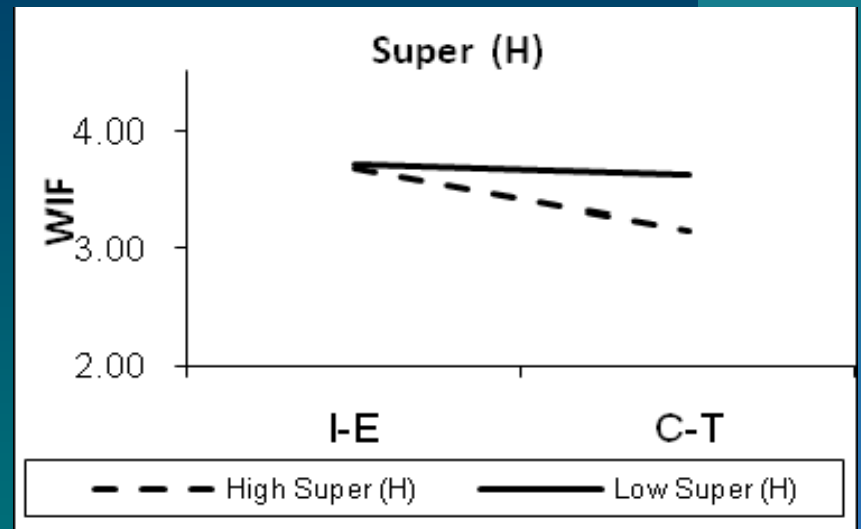
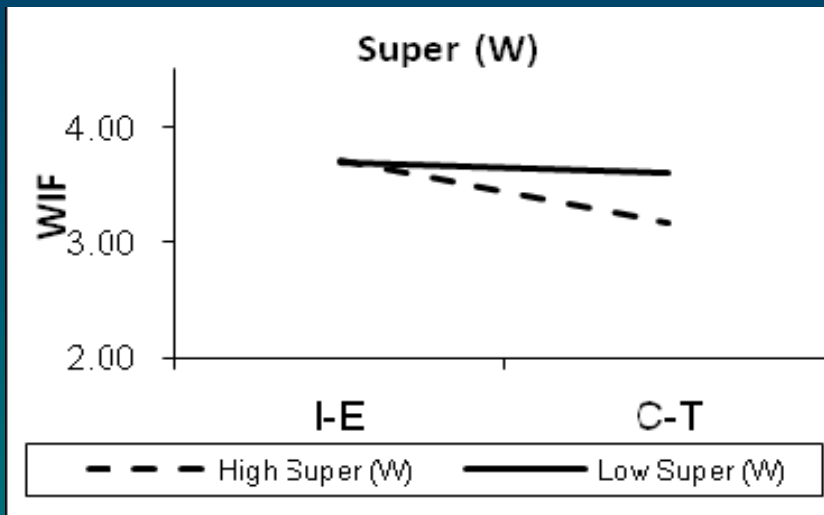


*Different letters indicate significant differences

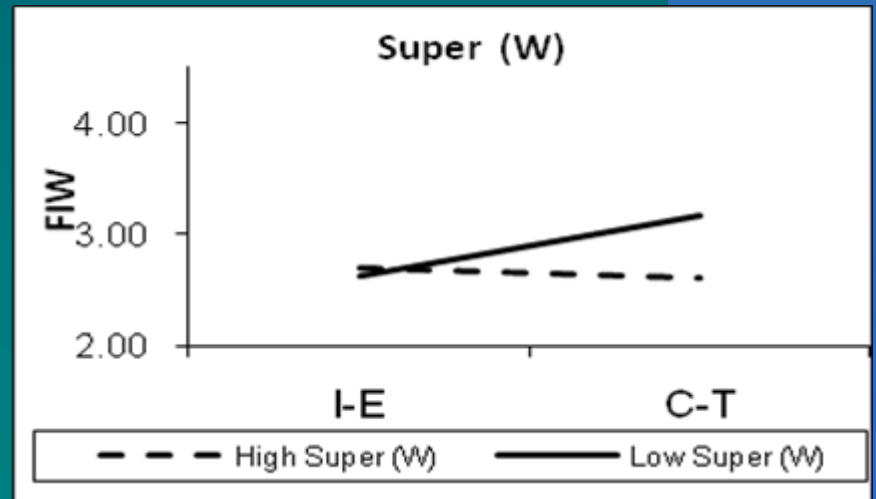
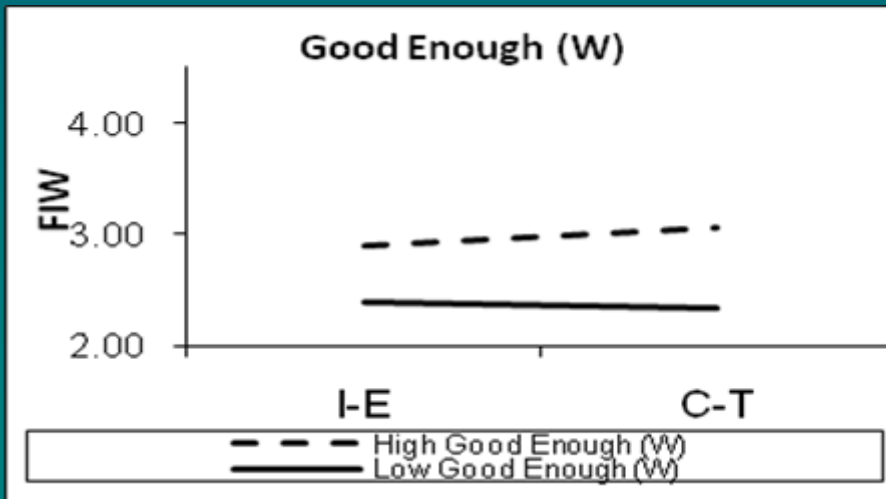
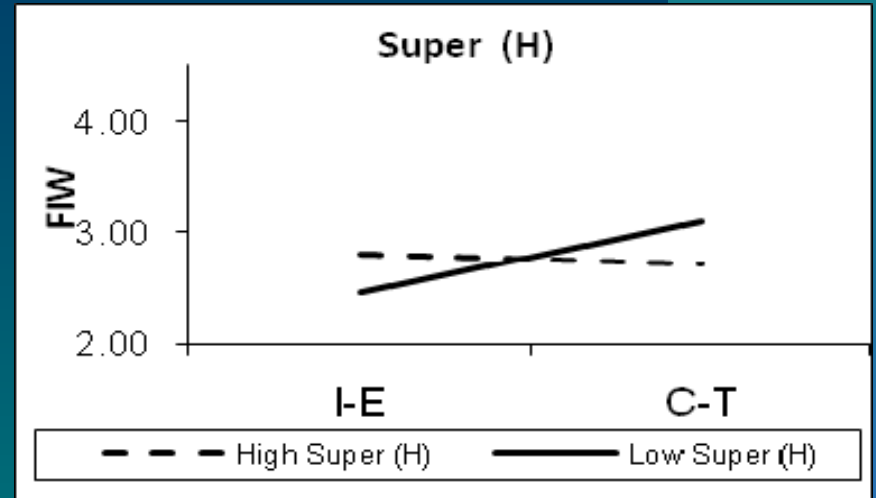
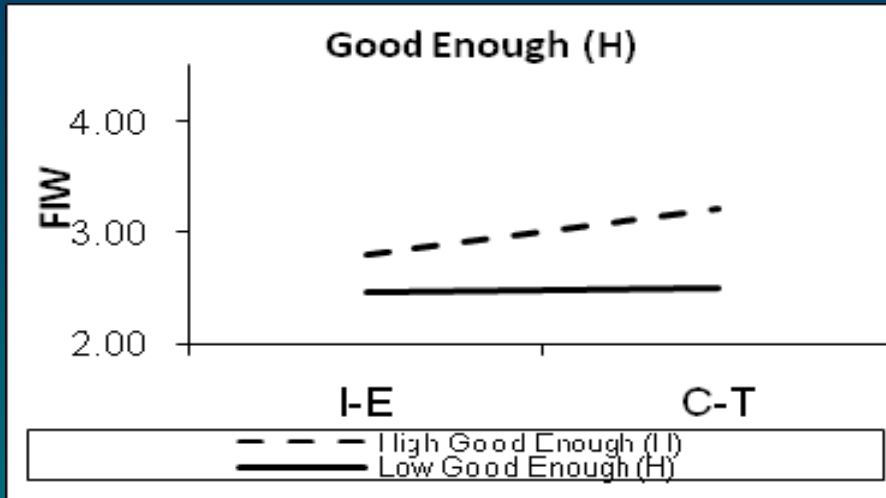
Interactive effect of Coping Strategy and Group (I-E vs. C-E) on WIF



Interactive effect of Coping Strategy and Group (I-E vs. C-T) on WIF



Interactive effect of Coping Strategy and Group (I-E vs. C-T) on FIW



Discussion

- All three groups reported higher level of WIF than FIW, and support a pattern of asymmetry such that family boundaries are more influenced by work than vice versa (Eby et al., 2005). However the level of WIF and FIW were culture-dependent.
- The degree of use of the different coping strategies was also determined by the cultural patterns.
- Overall, the present results suggest that the effectiveness of a coping strategy style might depend on the congruence between cultural values and the extent of use of a certain style of coping.