**Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development**

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES AS A MODERATOR BETWEEN
WORK-FAMILY DEMANDS AND WELL-BEING AMONG
FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Pui Poh Ching

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PhD ☐

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# FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES AS A MODERATOR BETWEEN WORK-FAMILY DEMANDS AND WELL-BEING AMONG FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY
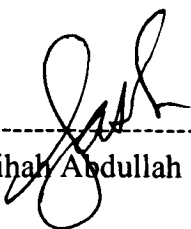
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(Human Resource Development)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
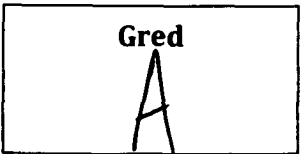UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
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The project entitled 'Family-Friendly Policies as A Moderator between Work-Family Demands and Well-being Among Frontline Employees in Hospitality Industry' was prepared by *Pui Poh Ching* and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (*Human Resource Development)*

Received for examination by:

-----------------------------------------
(Dr. Nur Fatihah Abdullah Bandar)

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ABSTRACT

Work-family conflict as a common issue in this new era of globalization due to high work and family demands is affecting well-being in hospitality industry especially frontline service position. This study is conducted to determine the relationship between work-family demands and wellbeing and the role of family-friendly policies in this relationship among the frontline employees of hospitality industry in Kuching, Sarawak. The independent variable of this study is work-family demands whereas the dependent variable is well-being. The moderator of this study is family-friendly policies. There is a total of 85 respondents involved in this research study and the data collected are analyzed using Pearson Correlation test and Hierarchical Multiple Regression test. From the findings, it was proved that there was a negative and significant relationship between work-family demands and well-being. There was a potentially significant moderation between work-family demands and family-friendly policies on well-being. Therefore, the Human Resource Practitioners has the responsibilities to pay more attention on employees' well-being and comes out with effective strategies to help the employees in balancing their work and family life. Hence, family-friendly policies play an important role to balance between work domain and family domain thus increasing the well-being of the frontline employees of hospitality industry in Kuching, Sarawak.

*Keywords:* work-family conflict, work-family demands, well-being, family-friendly policies, frontline employees, hospitality industry

# ABSTRAK

Konflik keluarga-kerja sebagai isu umum dalam era globalisasi baru ini disebabkan tuntutan yang tinggi dari aspek kerja dan keluarga telah menjejaskan kesejahteraan dalam industri hospitaliti terutamanya pekerja-pekerja di perkhidmatan garis depan. Kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk menentukan hubungan antara permintaan keluarga-kerja dan kesejahteraan pekerja serta peranan dasar mesra keluarga dalam hubungan ini di kalangan pekerja barisan hadapan industri hospitaliti di Kuching, Sarawak. Pemboleh ubah bebas dari kajian ini adalah tuntutan kerja-keluarga sedangkan pemboleh ubah bergantung adalah kesejahteraan. Penyederhana kajian ini adalah polisi mesra keluarga. Terdapat sejumlah 85 responden yang terlibat dalam kajian ini dan data yang dikumpul dianalisis dengan menggunakan ujian Korelasi Pearson dan ujian Regresi Multiple Hierarki. Daripada penemuan ini, terbukti terdapat hubungan negatif dan signifikan antara tuntutan keluarga-kerja dan kesejahteraan pekerja. Terdapat kesederhanaan yang berpotensi signifikan antara tuntutan keluarga dan polisi mesra keluarga terhadap kesejahteraan. Oleh itu, Pengamal Sumber Manusia mempunyai tanggungjawab untuk memberi perhatian kepada kesejahteraan pekerja dan mencadangkan strategi yang berkesan untuk membantu pekerja dalam mengimbangi pekerjaan dan kehidupan keluarga mereka. Oleh itu, polisi mesra keluarga memainkan peranan yang penting dalam mengimbangi antara domain kerja dan domain keluarga bagi meningkatkan kesejahteraan pekerja barisan hadapan dalam industri hospitaliti di Kuching, Sarawak.

*Kata kunci:* konflik keluarga-kerja, tuntutan keluarga-kerja, kesejahteraan, polisi mesra keluarga, pekerja barisan hadapan, industri hospitaliti

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0   Background of study

Work-family conflict as a common issue in this new era of globalization due to high work and family demands is affecting well-being in hospitality industry especially frontline service position. Male and female employees are identified to have similar level of work-family conflict regardless of their gender across Europe and Asia countries (Shockley, Shen, DeNunzio, Arvan & Knudsen, 2017).

In Malaysia, according to the latest Monster Employment Index (MEI) 2018, roles in hospitality industry were one of the most in demand profession for the three consecutive months in 2018 (NST Business, 2018). The hospitality industry needs for labor is high to fulfill the demands of the current market. Therefore, the employee in this industry is facing high work demand. According to Zakaria and Ismail (2017), work-family conflict issue is prominent in Malaysia. They further mentioned that the heavy workload in the organization in order to provide good service will lead to work-family conflict affecting the well-being. According to Sim and Bujang, the employees are much busier and more packed than usual day when they are in the peak season which is during weekends and public holidays (2012). Therefore, the frontline employees will be physically present as much as possible while contributing to conflict between work and family.

In foreign country, travel and tourism industry contributes over 7.6 trillion U.S. dollars in 2016 showing high demands that will affect directly on the economics of the industry including accommodation. People spend about 70 % of time at work due to high demand of work (Esitti & Koleoglu, 2015). The occurrence of work-family conflict among frontline has been linked to various factors such as work-related and family-related factors (Gamor et al, 2017). It is also mentioned that the hotel frontline employees are the major candidates that

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experiencing role conflict between work and family (Zhao et al, 2014). O'Neill and Davis claimed that the necessity of social interactions between frontline and customers in daily work life is one of the factors that increase the workload (2011).

High demand in hospitality industry has cause the employee to often facing difficulties to devote in both work and family domains (Cleveland, O'Neill, Himelright, Harrison, Crouter, & Drago, 2007; Esitti & Koleoglu, 2015; Gamor, Amissah, Amissah, & Nartey, 2017) especially the frontline employees (Karatepe & Baddar, 2006). According to Zhao (2016), the natural of the job as a frontline employee required them to work for long hours with irregular work schedules and working on holidays. Their job scope is to deal directly and frequently with the customers to fulfill the customers' inquiries and complaints (Karatepe & Baddar, 2006).

Prior study had suggested to study the moderating effect of family-friendly policies between work-family demands and well-being (Achour et al, 2017). Hence, this study will focus on the relationship between work-family demands and well-being with family-friendly policies as a moderator among frontline employees in hospitality industry in Kuching.

## 1.1 Problem statement

A research done by Aazami, Akmal, and Shamsuddin (2015) had examined the effect of a model of the four dimensions of work-family conflict which are time-based Work Interfere with Family life (WIFt), strain-based Work Interfere with Family life (WIFs), time-based Family Interfere with Work life (FIWt), and strain-based Family Interfere with Work life (FIWs) on psychological distress among Malaysian working women in public sector. Job satisfaction and family satisfaction act as mediating role across the relationship. This study revealed that WIFs and FIWs have cross-domain effect on the level of satisfaction on job and family negatively. Apart from that, WIFt and FIWt have shown the same impact on level of satisfaction on job and family. Thus, low level of job satisfaction and family satisfaction significantly increase the level of psychological distress. However, they failed to study the

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work-family demands that lead to the occurrence of work-family conflict and threaten the well-being. Hence, there is a need to study the relationship between work-family demands and well-being to provide an in-depth knowledge to the industry as mentioned by Achour et al. (2017).

Past research found mostly studied on the relationship between work-family demands, work stress, work-family conflict and well-being. Past research mostly focuses on the direct relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable and limited study has been done on the moderating effect between the relationship. There was a research done studied on the moderating effect of managerial and supervisory support between work-family demands and well-being (Achour, Shahidra Abdul Khalil, Bahiyah Ahmad, Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor, & Mohd Yakub Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff, 2017) . However, there is a need to study on other moderating factors such as family-friendly policies between the relationship (Achour et al., 2017). According to Moon and Roh (2010), implementation of family-friendly policies helps the employees to find a better balancing between work and family. Under the policies, they feel motivated and view their employers as family-supportive thus gradually increasing the well-being.

Another study conducted by O'Neill and Davis (2011) examined the relationship between work stress and well-being in hotel industry. This research aimed to identify the work stressor, difference between work stressor and occupation, and the effect of work stress to the employee health and job performance. The findings from the study claimed that managers were significantly more stressors than the hourly employees due to interpersonal tension and work overload. This then lead to health problem and lower job satisfaction. However, this study only brings out the insight of management level in hotel industry. In addition, there is also a similar past research done focusing on academicians in educational institutions (Achour et al., 2017). There is little research done in Malaysia that focusing on frontline employees in hospitality

industry regarding the work-family demands and well-being. Hence, there is a need to study from the aspect of hospitality industry.

Based on the past research, the research done were focusing on women well-being (Aazami, Akmal, & Shamsuddin, 2015; Meguellati Achour et al., 2017; O'Neill & Davis, 2011). Therefore, there is a gap where the current research can focus on both men and women well-being.

## 1.2 Research objectives

### 1.2.1 General objective

To determine the relationship between work-family demands and wellbeing and the role of family-friendly policies in this relationship.

### 1.2.2 Specific objectives

- To determine the relationship between work-family demands and well-being.

- To determine the moderating effect of the family-friendly policies on the relationship between work-family demands and well-being.

## 1.3 Research hypotheses

$H_1$: Work–family demands are negatively correlated to well-being.

$H_2$: Family-friendly policies moderates the relationship between work–family demands and well-being.

## 1.4 Conceptual framework

The figure below shows the relationship of work-family demands (Independent Variable) and the well-being (Dependent Variable) and the role of family-friendly policies (Moderator) along the relationship.

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┌──────────────────┐                              ┌──────────────────┐
│   Work-family    │                              │    Well-being    │
│     demands      │─────────────┐───────────────▶│                  │
└──────────────────┘             │                └──────────────────┘
                                 │
                         ┌──────────────────┐
                         │  Family-friendly │
                         │     policies     │
                         └──────────────────┘
```
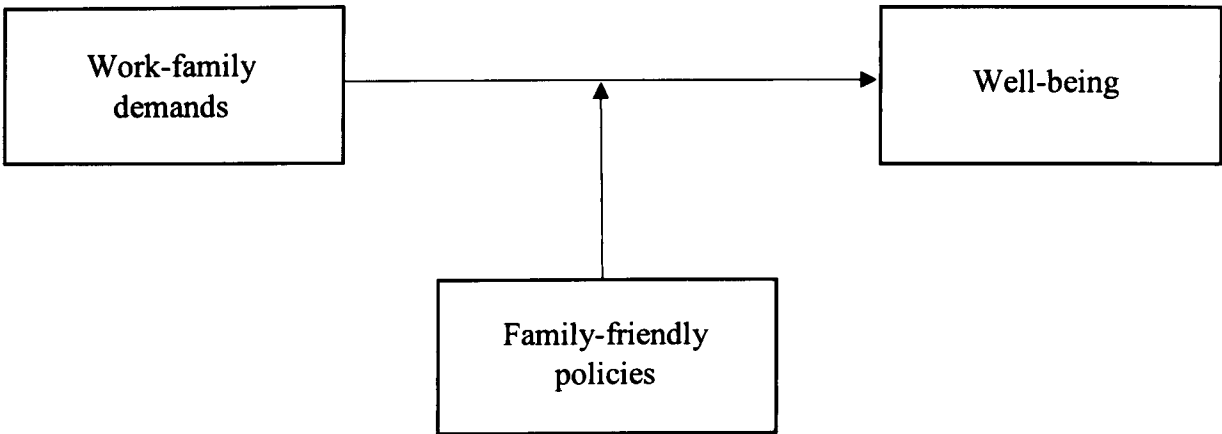
*Figure 1*. The relationship between work-family demands and well-being with family-friendly policies as moderator.

## 1.5 Definition of terms

The terms that will be defined in this study are work-family demands, work-family conflicts, well-being and family-friendly policies. The terms will be defined in both conceptual and operational.

### 1.5.1 Work-family demands

**Conceptual definition**

Time commitment and role expectation in one domain may become a demand when considered from the perspective of another domain (Luk & Shaffer, 2005).

**Operational definition**

In this research, high time commitment and responsibilities at work and family domains are the resources lead to high work and family demands.

### 1.5.2 Work-family conflicts

**Conceptual definition**

Work-family conflict is referred as inter-role conflict in an individual when failed to balance between work and family domains (Mansour & Mohanna, 2018).

**Operational definition**

In this research, we will consider high demands from work domain is interrupting the family responsibilities leads to work-family conflict and affects the well-being of frontline staffs.

### 1.5.3 Well-being

**Conceptual definition**

Well-being can be defined as an illustration of the condition of person's life situation (McGillivray, 2007).

**Operational definition**

In this research, well-being is measured under three facets which are job satisfaction, family satisfaction and life satisfaction.

### 1.5.4 Family-friendly policies

**Conceptual definition**

Family-friendly policies can be referred as the implemented policies to facilitate employees to balance between work and family, and to fulfill both their family and work responsibilities (Frye and Breaugh, 2004).

**Operational definition**

In this study, family-friendly policies act as the moderator in between the relationship of work-family demands and well-being.

## 1.6　Significance of studies

### 1.6.1　Contribution to the body of knowledge

This research can provide knowledge to the frontline employees on the effect of work and family demands on well-being in terms of job satisfaction, life satisfaction and family satisfaction. It is a waste when some employees are not fully utilizing the use of family-friendly policies since this is a kind of organizational support to the employees. When they sense the seriousness of the effects to their well-being, it then raises their awareness towards the problem. Therefore, they will change their thinking on the importance of the usage of family-friendly policies to neutralize the negative effects of work-family demands on well-being.

### 1.6.2　Contribution to the Human Resource Practitioners

This research can provide a perspective to Human Resource (HR) practitioners to implement effective program to increase employees' well-being. In this study, it provides awareness the positive effect family-friendly policies bring to the employees' well-being. It is the responsibilities of the HR practitioners to take care of the employees' wellbeing to improve the productivity and efficiency within the organization. Through this study, the HR practitioners able to understand the how the employees perceive family-friendly policies. This allow them to improve the policies to help employee manage well between work and family domains.

## 1.7　Limitation of study

There are few limitations identified in this study. Firstly, this is a cross-sectional study where the data obtained for one time same as the observation and investigation made. Secondly, the sample chosen from selected hotel cannot be representative for the whole hospitality industry in Malaysia as this study is only based in Kuching, Sarawak. Next, this study is a quantitative research in which has limited the understanding of what it means to say things are going well or not so well in evaluating the well-being by using Likert Scale. Lastly, this study

only focusses on family-friendly policies as a moderator between work-family demands and well-being. Further research can study on other moderating effect such as social support.

## 1.8 Conclusion

In summary, this research studied the relationship between work-family demands and frontline employees' well-being with family-friendly policies as moderator in hospitality industry in Kuching, Sarawak. This research will study the frontline employees' wellbeing in terms of their job satisfaction, family satisfaction and life satisfaction. The next chapter will focus on the literature review from past similar research and discussion on the theory related to this study.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.0   Work-family demands

Boyar, Maertz, Mosley and Carr (2008) mentioned that past research often defined work and family demand in a way that are too narrow and only related it to the role overload when it comes to the definition. Therefore, Boyar, Carr, Mosley and Carson perceive the word 'demand' as the overall perception from the society on the level of role responsibility in either work or family domain (2007). However, it cannot be denied that role overload has no relation with work-family demands.

Several studies had proved that working hours (Bruck, Allen, & Spector, 2002; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), working overtime, shift work (Byron, 2005), and workload are the indicators of work demand. In hospitality industry, frontline employees are mostly working for long hours (Zhao, 2016). According to Boyar et al. (2008), the level of perceived work demand is higher as the working hours increase. It is stated that frontline employees should always be at their position to act immediately and efficiently to resolve problem faced by customer and satisfy them by giving extra or unexpected service (Songan, Nirmala Ramakrishnan Pillai, & Nur Fatihah Abdullah, 2016). Therefore, they are lacking of the autonomy to manage their job activities and faced with irregular schedule thus leads to work demand (Boyar et al., 2008).

On the other hand, indicators of family demand are number of children, number of dependent and hours in caregiving. Family demand normally happens on married employees as they have the role responsibility to take care of their family (Lu, Kao, Chang, Wu, & Cooper, 2008). Family demand is higher than those married employees with no children at home. The level of family demand increase again with young children at home as they do not have the ability to take care of themselves (Gamor et al., 2017). Lu, Kao, Chang, Wu, and Cooper (2008)

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again claimed that the gender equality in life has caused both female and male employees to share the same level of responsibilities for family maintenance.

## 2.1 Work-family conflicts

Work is always the factor that affects family life in negative ways (Marican & Sabil, 2017). Work-family conflict occurs as inter-role conflict of different roles in work domain and family domain due to failure of managing a balance between the two domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Boyar et al. (2008) contended that work demand and family demand are the factors of work-family conflict. For example, married employees tend to have multiple roles in both work and family domains. Employees who are having high demand at work would devote more resources such as time and energy to the work domain spending lesser resources to fulfill family responsibility (Annor, 2016). Conflict occurs when an individual failed to manage the work-life balance in between both domains. Greenhaus and Beutell again mentioned three elements under work-family conflict which are time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict (1985).

Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000) defined time-based conflict as the time devoted by an individual to fulfill the role responsibility in one domain caused restriction to be involved in another domain. Time-based conflict normally occurs when an individual is facing irregular work schedule, heavy workload and long working hours from work domain and high frequency needed to participate in family activities from family domain. The conflict occurs as the individual is not able to devoted same amount of time in both domain to fulfill their responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Strain-based conflict refers to negative experiences such as strain and fatigue suffered by an individual in one domain will affect the way they perform in another domain (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000). Factors lead to work stress such as role conflict, role ambiguity and low supervisory support can cause tension, anxiety and depression in individual. On the

other hand, low spouse support and family conflict from family domain are the factors of strain-based conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Behavior-based conflict happens once behavior required in one domain is not compatible with the expected behavior for another domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). In workplace, the employees are required to be objectivity and secretiveness to produce high work efficiency. However, openness, warmth and nurturant are always to be expected in fulfilling the responsibility in family domain. The expected behavior from both domains are incompatible with each other. Hence, it occurs behavior-based conflict in order to meet the expectation (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

## 2.2 Well-being

Many terms have been used to describe well-being such as "happiness, quality of life, satisfaction, objective well-being and subjective well-being" (Karakas, Lee, & MacDermid, 2004). McGillivray defined well-being as an illustration of the condition of person's life situation (2007). Well-being is generally classified into two measures which is objective and subjective measures. Objective measure of well-being normally can be measured through three aspect: economic, social and environmental. Subjective measure of well-being is measured through internal feelings such as happiness and satisfaction in life of an individual (Alatartseva & Bartsheva, 2015). Past research mostly studied subjective well-being in terms of job satisfaction (Aazami et al., 2015; Bruck et al., 2002), family satisfaction (Boyar, Carr, Mosley, & Carson, 2007) and life satisfaction (Achour et al., 2017).

Different researchers had defined job satisfaction in different ways. Hoffman and Ingram (1992) claimed that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and working environment highly affecting the level of job satisfaction of an employee. It is suggested that the level of satisfaction of job is measured through the characteristic of both individual and job other than career development in an organization (Bustamam, Teng, & Fakhrul Zaman Abdullah, 2014;

Daryanto, 2014; Jessen, 2010). Researchers also defined job satisfaction as happiness, pleasurable and positive emotion found in workplace resulting from joyful experiences. Hence, it is important for the frontline employees to perceive their job positively to take care of their well-being.

Family satisfaction is defined as a "conscious cognitive judgment of one's family life in which the criteria for the judgment are up to the individual" (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013). A study by Wan Edura, Mohamad, Azura, and Izhairi (2012) define family satisfaction as the individual manner and expression towards family life. Family satisfaction normally is linked with other family wellness variables such as family cohesion, adaptability, communication, and overall family functioning (Poff, Zabriskie, & Townsend, 2010).

Achour et al. (2017) defines life satisfaction as the degree of happiness with one's life situation based on various aspects of life experiences. In addition, Zabriskie and Ward (2013) gave their definition for life satisfaction as a cognitive evaluation of one's own life in which the judgement is based on their perceived criteria. According to Karatepe and Baddar (2006), life satisfaction is constructed to measure the overall well-being of an individual generally by evaluate their own life. It can be measured through evaluation of satisfaction by see through one's past, present and expected future life (Margolis, Schwitzgebei, Ozer, & Lyubomirsky, 2018).

## 2.3 Family-friendly policies

According to Allen (2001), family-friendly policies is one of the strategies made by organization to assist the employees for a good balance between work and family life. Frye and Breaugh define family-friendly policies as the "degree to which people perceive that their company has policies to personally assist them in integrating their work and family roles" (2004). Family-friendly policies can be divided into few categories: childcare policies, work-life programs, telecommuting, alternative schedules, leave policies and parental policies which