

## Gender and Work-Family Conflict Gaps in Hong Kong: The Impact of Family-Friendly Policies

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**Abstract :** Gender gap, unfortunately, is still prevalent in the workplace around the world. In most countries, women are less likely than men to participate in the workplace. They earn considerably less than men for doing the same work and are generally expected to prioritize family obligations over work responsibilities. Women often face more conflicts while balancing the increasingly normalized roles of both worker and mother. True gender equality in the workplace is still a long way off. In Hong Kong, no less is this true. Despite the fact that female students are outnumbered by males at universities, only 55% of women are active participants in the labour market, and for those in the workforce, the gender pay gap is 22%. This structural inequality also exacerbates the issues of confronting biases at work for choosing to be employed as a mother, as well as reinforces the societal expectation of women to be the primary caregiver at home. These pressures are likely to add up for women and contribute to increased levels of work-life conflict, which may be a further barrier for the inclusion of women into the workplace. Family-friendly policies have long been thought to be an alleviator of work-life conflict through helping employees balance the demands in both work and family. Particularly, for women, this could be a facilitator of their integration into the workplace. However, little research has looked at how family-friendly policies may also have a gender differential in effect, as opposed to traditional notions of having universal efficacy. This study investigates both how and how much the gender dimension impacts work-family conflict. In addition to disentangling the reasons for gender gaps existing in work-life conflict for women, this study highlights what can be done at an organizational level to alleviate these conflicts. Most importantly, the policies recommendations derived from this study serve as an avenue for more active participation for women in the workplace and can be considered as a pathway for promoting greater gender egalitarianism and fairness in a traditionally gender-segregated society.

**Keywords :** family-friendly policies, Hong Kong, work-family conflict, workplace

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