



The Impact of Caregiving on Women's Career Advancement: A Cross-Cultural Study between Hong Kong and the UK

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Abstract

This manuscript explores the complex relationship between women's roles as caregivers and their career advancement, focusing on the effects of family-friendly policies in Hong Kong and the UK. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated challenges for working women, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities for children, elderly parents, or sick dependents. This study investigates whether caregiving invariably hinders women's professional growth, considering the emotional and physical stress associated with caregiving roles. Despite these challenges, the research also highlights potential benefits of caregiving, such as enhanced childhood development and the opportunity for caregivers to serve as role models. The manuscript aims to understand how a balance can be achieved between work and family commitments for female employees, emphasizing the importance of their contribution to the labour market and the ethical responsibility of employers to support their well-being and success in managing work-family balance. By conducting a cross-cultural comparison between the UK and Hong Kong – regions with similar welfare systems but differing cultural and family values – the study seeks to identify the impact of caregiving on women's work and family life. The findings aim to contribute to the discourse on gender equality policy, motherhood, and work-life balance, offering insights into how supportive measures can mitigate the negative effects of caregiving responsibilities on women's career progression.

Keywords: Business Ethics; Family-Friendly Policies; Gender Equality; Work-Family Conflict; Stress