

**HO KWAN CHEUNG
RESEARCH STATEMENT**

My research focuses on understanding the experiences of women in the workplace, particularly how they intersect with the work-family interface. Despite the increasing representation of women in the American workforce, gender discrimination persists in numerous forms from wage discrepancies to sexual harassment. Women's mutable roles through life, in particular as they go through pregnancy to motherhood, also add extra challenges to their career development due to the stigma associated with motherhood. My research attempts to address these issues by **1) evaluating the manifestations of discrimination against women, particularly in the form of barriers to work-life balance, and 2) identifying individual and organizational strategies to ensure a women- and family-friendly workplace.**

In pursuit of these goals, I have published a total of twelve peer-reviewed journal articles, four of which as first or equal author with the others, and three of which involve PhD student co-authors. Currently, I have two first-author manuscripts under review: one at the *Journal of Applied Psychology* that includes a PhD student co-author, and one at the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. I also have one non-first author manuscripts under review at *Group & Organization Management* and another at *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Finally, I have three manuscripts under a 2nd round of revise and resubmission (I serve as first author for the first two and a co-author for the last two): one at *Journal of Applied Psychology*, one at *Journal of Business and Psychology*, and one at *International Journal of Testing*. I have numerous other projects in the pipeline in writing, data analysis, data collection, and planning phases, many of which include my graduate students.

My research interests, productivity, and future plans are described in detail below, organized into my two related research themes.

Theme 1: Evaluating Workplace Gender and Family-Related Discrimination

In order to build an understanding of experiences of women in the workplace, it is important to understand the manner in which gender discrimination manifests itself. One way in which gender discrimination can occur is when women face backlash for stepping out of their prescribed gender roles, even though the same behavior is not seen as problematic for men. In a paper that is published in *Gender in Management*, I studied biased reactions to women's influence attempts in a male-dominated workplace and found that while there are within-gender differences in women's use of influence tactics, women continue to be penalized in performance ratings for acting inconsistently with gender norms (i.e. being assertive, self-promoting, and independent) (Cheung, Lindsey, King, & Hebl, 2015). These findings are corroborated in another study conducted by my colleagues and I that found that women in STEM fields who ingratiate (a feminine influence tactic) are more well-liked by their supervisors than those who self-promote (a masculine tactic) (Gilrane, Wessell, Cheung, & King, 2019). In addition to this more overt form of discrimination, gender discrimination can manifest in more subtle or interpersonal forms. In a paper that is published in *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, my colleagues and I examined the phenomenon of the personal-group discrimination discrepancy, or the tendency for women to recognize discrimination when directed at others but not themselves.

We used triangulating experimental and survey methods on sample of working women to explore the types of sexism that women recognize and act against. We found that women's recognition of and action against sexism depends on its subtlety (subtle versus overt), form (formal versus interpersonal), and focus (self versus others) (Lindsey, King, **Cheung**, Hebl, Lynch, & Mancini, 2015). I am also currently conducting an experiment to examine judgments toward sex-based harassment incidents. Specifically, I argue that women who violate gender roles (e.g. being assertive, independent) are seen as less worthy of moral concerns, and so their harassment is seen as less severe (**Cheung**, Bowes-Sperry, Goldberg, & Pierce, in preparation). These studies illustrate the pervasiveness of gender discrimination in various forms and settings in the workplace.

In addition to gender discrimination, the challenges that women face in the workplace are further complicated by their transition into motherhood. Despite the common presence of dual-earning households, women still often shoulder a larger proportion of family responsibilities that are often viewed as opposing the "ideal worker" image. Women's family roles become particularly salient as they transition into a new role in life as working mothers, which can cause them to be perceived as unfitting for the professional worker role. As part of my dissertation work that is currently under a 2nd round of revise and resubmission at *Journal of Applied Psychology*, I challenged the notion that relationship with one's leader, or leader-member exchange (LMX), is stable over time by arguing that women's acquisition of a new social identity as mothers can disrupt their existing established relationship dynamics with their supervisors, which can have far-reaching consequences on women's careers. To test this, I conducted a longitudinal survey study to understand women's perceived LMX from pregnancy to post-birth over the span of 18 months. Results suggest that women perceived lower relationship quality with their supervisors after they give birth, and that change does not recover over time, even when accounting for length of maternity leave and length of relationship (**Cheung**, King, Nicolaidis, Getu, & Hernandez, Revise and Resubmit). In addition to pregnancy, women may also face additional challenges postpartum, particularly when breastfeeding. I am currently also currently exploring the affective experiences of breastfeeding mothers juggling multiple roles, including a breastfeeding role, and how it may predict key outcomes such as maternal turnover and intention to continue breastfeeding (Markell-Goldstein, **Cheung**, King & Kaplan). To summarize the literature, I am also leading a large-scale meta-analysis that examines the effects of family responsibilities on men and women's careers, drawing from literature from the fields of psychology, sociology, and economics, as well as public policy and labor studies (**Cheung**, Leslie, Manchester, King, & Wellmann, in preparation). In so doing, I hope to shed new light into the ways that gendered expectations challenge women and families.

These various forms of discrimination can translate into consequences in both work and non-work settings for women. In a meta-analysis that is published at *Human Resource Development International*, we found that while increasing proportion of women in the workplace is related to more positive evaluative and affective outcomes for women in gender-neutral tasks, such an effect does not hold for male-typed tasks (**Cheung**, Goldberg, Konrad, Lindsey, Nicolaidis, & Wang, 2020). This underscores the pervasiveness of masculine norms in the workplace, as mere numerical representation of women is insufficient to reduce gender differences in workplace outcomes. Furthermore, such discrepancies can be further exacerbated

when gender stereotypes intersect with other stigmatized social identities such as sexual orientation. In a paper currently under review at *Journal of Organizational and Occupational Psychology*, I used both survey and lab experiment designs to examine how timing of sexual orientation identity disclosure affects gay men and lesbian women's salary differently (**Cheung**, Lindsey, Sabat, King, Ahmad, & Pope, 2020). The intersection of prejudice against sexual minorities and gendered expectations in self-disclosure result in differences in perceptions toward gay men and lesbian women when they reveal their stigmatized identity. Our findings suggest that gay men can have more control over the negative repercussions associated with their stigmatized identities by choosing to reveal their sexual orientation later, while lesbian women are viewed negatively regardless of whether they come out early or later. Furthermore, effects of discrimination can be found beyond just the workplace. In a meta-analysis that is published in *Psychological Science*, my colleagues and I found that gender differences in subjective well-being, including life and job satisfaction, differ as a function of variation in gender inequality across the world (Batz, Tay, Kuykendall, & **Cheung**, 2018). Based on 281 effect sizes for life satisfaction and 264 effect sizes for job satisfaction, results showed that the gender gap in subjective well-being is widest in countries with greater gender inequality, such that women suffer lower overall subjective well-being. Beyond the employees themselves, these detrimental effects also have a larger societal impact by spilling over to children and family, as evidenced in a current ongoing study that examines the cross-domain, dyadic effects of job discrimination on children's developmental outcomes using nationally representative data (**Cheung & Wang**, in preparation). These studies provide evidence that gender discrimination at different levels, whether organizational or societal, has a far-reaching impact on women's quality of life in both work and non-work domains.

Theme 2: Identifying Individual and Organizational Remediation Strategies to Ensure Inclusive Workplace

In light of the obstacles faced by women in the workplace, my research also aims to uncover remediation strategies to break down gender-related barriers in the organizations. One important component of organizational diversity initiatives is training, but extant research suggests that training yields only small or no effects in improving diversity outcomes. In a conceptual paper now under review at *Journal of Applied Psychology*, I argue that extant discrimination reduction efforts fail because of lack of alignment between social-cognitive mechanisms underlying discrimination and the learning/training theories currently adopted to explain diversity training effectiveness. I propose a mindfulness-based discrimination reduction (MSDR) approach targeted to overcome specific affective and cognitive components of bias and facilitate training effectiveness (**Cheung**, Randall, Nittrouer-Carr, & Hanson, under review). Currently, I am also working on a complementary experimental study that is testing our proposed theoretical model and that examines whether a mindfulness-based diversity training can better facilitate diversity outcomes above and beyond traditional awareness-based diversity training (**Cheung**, Hanson, Nittrouer-Carr, & Randall, in preparation). In a paper that is published at *Group & Organization Management*, I contended that individuals' expectations about their organization's authentic commitment to anti-harassment initiatives can affect cognitive and attitudinal outcomes of sexual harassment training, which is woefully understudied despite its clear social importance (**Cheung**, Goldberg, King, & Magley, 2017). Results from a pre-post harassment training field study confirm that when individuals perceive both their organization and unit as uncommitted to

ethical changes, they are less likely to retain knowledge or improve negative attitudes about harassment. Besides training, another organizational approach to achieve gender-diversity is through recruitment. As an example, in a paper that is published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, we found that organizations can also portray themselves higher in behavioral integrity and increase their attractiveness to female job seekers by aligning their recruitment strategies with the representation of women in upper management (Windshield, Bowes-Sperry, Kidder, **Cheung**, Morner, & Lievens, 2016). This work was further recognized by the Dorothy Harlow/ McGraw Hill Best Paper Award by the Gender and Diversity in Organizations Division of the Academy of Management. These studies highlight the importance of alignment in diversity management, both across different levels of an organization and between an organization's words and deeds in communicating their commitment to inclusivity, especially with respect to gender.

In light of the obstacles faced by working mothers as they try to balance their work and family roles, my research also aims to uncover individual strategies to mitigate the detrimental effects of family responsibilities-related discrimination. In a paper that is currently under 3rd round of revision and resubmission at the *Journal of Business and Psychology*, I conducted a field experiment that examines hiring discrimination against working mothers. Applying to real jobs using manipulated resumes, I examined whether countering stereotypes against working mothers by reinforcing competence, commitment, and flexibility is effective in reducing the lower callback rates. Preliminary analyses show promising results that such individuating information is effective in reducing discrimination against working mothers in the initial hiring screening process (Cheung, Anderson, King, Warner & Mahabir, Revise and Resubmission). Similarly, my dissertation draws from impression management literature to argue that women can engage in behaviors to actively bridge the discrepancy between their perceived and desired professional image that are caused by their pregnancy and motherhood. By behaving in a counter-stereotypical fashion, such as maintaining their performance or even taking on more difficult tasks, they can assert their competence, commitment, and flexibility, and therefore maintain their image as a successful professional and continue their existing relationship with their leaders. Altogether, my research sheds light on the active and strategic role women can take in navigating their work and family domains.

Future Directions

My research involves a variety of methodologies including laboratory experiments, field experiments, surveys, and longitudinal archival data to capture different perspectives of women and families in the workplace. I also employ different statistical techniques such as moderated mediation regression, multilevel modeling, factor analysis, and latent growth curve modeling to better understand the complex interactions of individual behavior with work context, as well as boundary conditions and explanatory mechanisms of discrimination in the workplace. Building on my existing research, I will continue to study the obstacles faced by working women in gaining equal opportunity at work and attaining work-life balance. For instance, I am planning a longitudinal study examining the process of breastfeeding mothers in transition back to work after giving birth, and the role of competing expectations posed by workplace and society in affecting mothers' psychological health and breastfeeding outcomes. In addition, I would like to expand my work on prejudice and discrimination to other socially disadvantaged groups such as

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those with invisible disabilities (e.g., mental disorders) and refugee status. Unlike gender, these concealable identities raise the difficult decision between disclosing and risking discrimination or concealing and being deprived of accommodation. Currently, I have multiple papers under the review process related to the discrimination against refugee, racial minority, and obese individuals (**Cheung**, Baranik, Burrows, & Asburn-Nardo, under review; Dalal, Randall, **Cheung**, Roch, & Williams, Revise and Resubmission; Jang, **Cheung**, & Ford, in preparation), and I hope to continue expanding this line of research. Altogether, my research highlights challenges faced by women, especially working mothers, in the workplace and offers unique solutions for its alleviation.