THE PARADOX OF DECLINING FEMALE HAPPINESS IN MALAYSIA : A STUDY OF GENDER WAGE GAP

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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that:

(1) This undergraduate research project is the end result of our own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the references to ALL sources of information be they printed, electronic, or personal.

(2) No portion of this research project has been submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other university, or other institutes of learning.

(3) Equal contribution has been made by each group member in completing the research project.

(4) The word count of this research report is ____19,767____.

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DEDICATION

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Lastly, and most importantly, we would like to dedicate this research study to females of the past, present, and future. The remarkable strength, determination, and fortitude of all females from all around the globe had inspired us greatly to conduct this very study.

> *"I stand on the sacrifices of a million women before me, thinking, what can I do to make this mountain taller so the women after me can see farther."*
>
> – Rupi Kaur

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARG   Argentina

AUS   Australia

AVE   Average Variance Extracted

BRA   Brazil

CHL   Chile

CHN   China

DEU   Germany

FER   Female Employment Rate

FH   Female Happiness

FLPR   Female Labour Participation Rate

GSS   General Social Survey

GWG   Gender Wage Gap

HTMT   Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations

KOR   Korea

MARITAL	Marital Status
MAS	Malaysia
MDG	Madagascar
MEX	Mexico
NLD	Netherland
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PML	Paid Maternal Leave
PTPTN	Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional
SAS	Statistics Analysis System
TEL	Tertiary Education Level
UBZ	Uzbekistan
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
USA	United States of America
WORK	Working Experiences

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PREFACE

This research is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Economics (HONS) Financial Economics at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). This research paper is conducted under the supervision of Dr. Abdelhak Senadjki.

The title of this study is "The Paradox of Declining Female Happiness in Malaysia: A Study of Gender Wage Gap". The independent variables included in this study are Gender Wage Gap, Female Employment Rate, Paid Maternal Leave, and Tertiary Education Level. The general objective of this research is to examine the impact of independent variables on women's happiness in Malaysia.

The beginning of this study introduces the topic selected, research background, and discusses about the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. This study then proceeds to examine in detail about the relationship between the variables based on past relevant studies and theory in the literature review. Afterwards, this study collects important data using the primary data methodology, along with convenience sampling and snowball sampling. The data collected is then analyzed and presented in order to achieve the study's ultimate goal. The results of the relationship between variables are discussed in Chapter 4. Lastly, the overall test results, policy implications, limitations and recommendations were concluded in the last chapter.

ABSTRACT

The advancement of human population has as well brought enhancement to present day women's standard of living and well-being. This progression can be seen around the globe, though each country's pace of development may differ accordingly. In Malaysia, the standard of living of females in terms of education, female labour participation force, reproductive rights, healthcare, and freedom have been increasing steadily. However, do the gains really matter and attribute to fellow females' happiness level?

Other than that, the study of gender inequality and gender-related studies are also still very limited and inadequate due to the low amount of attention focusing on this area of studies. Thus, the full potential of females in Malaysia are still yet to be fully exercised and reached. Due to such conditions, this study aims to study the factors that truly impacts female happiness level in Malaysia. There are four independent variables used in this study, namely, Gender Wage Gap, Paid Maternal Leave, Employment Rate, and Education Level. The dependent variable is female happiness level.

In this research, we have used the questionnaire method to collect relevant data. The questionnaire we designed consists of 37 questions and a total of 430 sets of responses were gathered. The results are later analysed using the SMART PLS3 software. It was found that there is a significant relationship between education level, paid maternal leave, age, working experience, and marital status; and the female happiness level in Malaysia. It was also concluded that gender wage gap, as well as, employment rate does not have a significant impact on the female happiness level in Malaysia.

CHAPTER 1 : RESEARCH OVERVIEW

1.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of 8 sections that provides an introductory explanation regarding of the study. Firstly, the chapter begins with research background that discusses women's position in the society from the past to present, as well as the definition of women's happiness. Secondly, problem statement is presented. Thirdly, research questions, research objectives, significance of study is presented. Fourthly, chapter layout outlines the content of each chapters and lastly, the chapter ends with conclusion which recaps the highlights of this chapter.

1.1 Research Background

From the moment of birth, every human being is gifted with the ability to feel and hold different emotions. Out of all of the emotions humans experience, happiness is the emotion one seeks for the most in life. It is also the emotion that drives people to look forward to each day as well as fosters one's physical well-being in the long run. As the human race is generally divided into two categories, men and women, it is believed that elements that promote men's happiness varies with the elements that promotes women's (Crowley & Knowles, 2014).

Unfortunately, women's happiness was not regarded as highly as men's in the majority of societies since the beginning of time (Glasberg & Deric, 2011). Women has always been deemed to be the inferior sex as patriarchy has always been the way of life starting as early as during the ancient times (Zerzan, 2010).

Patriarchy was even assimilated into constitutions such as politics, law, education, religion, economy as well as social cultures (McKeown, 2017).

As patriarchy gave men a sense of power over women, women commonly never had the ability or rights to take control of many things, including their bodies, marriage, and reproductive rights. Women were seen as men's properties and were expected to succumb to men's orders (Acker, 1990). Even people with influence and power such as Aristotle and Plato believed and proclaimed that women's sole purpose in the society were to serve and help men ensure human race continues by reproducing and also perform household duties (Fishbein, 2002). Other than that, Aristotle (Bar On, 1994) also held the belief that imperfections exist in the world due to women. They even incorporated the idea of women's lowliness in several of their works. The passing down of patriarchal belief system from one generation to another were nourished by the conditioning of such values and correspondingly allowed the succession of patriarchy to be carried from generation to generation (Lerner, 1987).

Despite the limited freedom women possess in the early days, feminism could be found way back to as early as the 15th century. According to De Beauvoir (1953), Christine de Pizan, a French author of the 15th century had depicted criticisms of gender prejudice in her books. According to Schneir (1994) and Sarasohn (1984), many other authors such as Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, Margaret Cavendish, Hannah Woolley, Anne Bradstreet had also continuously introduced the idea of gender equality to the public through philosophical writings in the following centuries. Philosophical records of these works may not be of significant amounts, nonetheless, it was thought to be a considerable progress in the eras of male domination. The period between late 19th and early 20th century was the moment of time where feminism had a serious breakthrough, which is also known as the 'First-wave feminism'. The first-wave feminism sparked the occurrence of a never-before-seen episode where a group as large as 300 people, consisting both women and men, held a gender-equality rally at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 (Rampton, 2015).

The rising female movement swept across several countries, such as United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Netherlands (Cott, 1989). The initial objective of the movement was to endorse gender equality by advocating for unbiased policies and contracts. Other than that, women's position in marriage and family were also fought for, with hopes of ending the continuation of chattel marriages (Dorey-Stein, 2015). However, fellow feminists had also spoken out and demanded that women had the equal rights as men to participate in political matters by possessing the rights to vote. Ultimately, the movement of wave was to plead for equal opportunities for women (Thomas, 2016).

The success in promoting gender equality during the first movement had sparked the subsequent second-wave feminism (Bisignani, 2015). This time, women called for a variety of rights such as rights over their sexuality, reproductive choice, dissent against the patriarchy system and bondage of women's role as a homemaker (Burkett, 2016). The second movement also shared its focus on the minority groups around the world. Thus, associating their movement to a deeper level of social construct, cultural and political disparity (Freedman, 2003). According to Hunt (2014), the author of 'The Feminine Mystique', Betty Friedan (1963) had carried out a survey among women in 1963 and discovered that many of those women who were given the option to participate in both work and home had higher life satisfaction than women who is subjected to homemaking. Friedan's (1963) work is considered to had led upon the enforcement of higher job opportunities for women, as well as influencing a number of legal victories such as educational equality, forbidding marital rape and domestic violence, legalized abortion, and many other positive outcomes (Braunstein, 2004).

Given that many objectives of the second movement feminism were achieved (Shaw & Lee, 2015), today in the 21st century, it is reasonable to say that the standard of living of women around the globe have increased significantly. According to Blau and Kahn (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009), female labour force participation has risen over the years which have an indirect influence towards women's gain in control on reproductive choices as well as status in the

family and society. The level of women with education attainment has also heightened greatly (Rampell, 2009). This may be a result of the implementation of policies by majority countries, where it is mandatory for all children regardless of gender, to obtain primary and secondary education. However, in the case of tertiary education, where education is attained by one's own will and choice, female enrolments and completion of tertiary education has been higher than male's since the 1990s (David, 2015). Other than that, females are showing much promising signs of pursuing master's and doctorate studies compared to male (Pew Research Center, 2015). This worldwide phenomenon shows that females are gaining their own decision-making authority and are no longer prohibited by society for attaining higher education. Besides, the narrowing of gender wage gap is also a solid proof of women's rise (Hertz, 2017).

Under any normal circumstances, theoretically, it is assumed that wealth would promote social progress (Blanc, 1998; Fitoussi & Siglitz, 2013). Similarly, it is assumed by many that the advanced conditions would promote women's welfare (Werber, 2017). However, practically, that may not be the case. Stevenson & Wolfers (2009), has indicated that women in the United States experience a declining happiness trend, as comparative to men. It is also considered that women's movement which were supposed to pave a happier state of living for women may had instead caused the declination of women's happiness in the current day. Then again, it would be unsuitable to plaster the findings of a research done solely on the American women to women of other countries.

Likewise, although women are expected to be happier and more contented than men from the expansion of opportunities, but in reality, their emotional wellbeing is showing rather the contrary (Herbst, 2011). It is believed that the women's movement has not only brought advantages to women, but as well as men. Men are benefitting through the increase in female labour force participation rate by being able to provide less towards family income because women with income are also contributing their incomes towards the family (Aguirre, 2006). This can be seen in Malaysia, where increasing number of women are becoming more

independent and picking up the responsibility of being the family's breadwinner alongside their partners. This helps lessen men's obligations towards family expenses as the sole breadwinner as compared to decades ago. However, according to Hochschild and Machung (1989), women have always remained to be the one with higher responsibility towards homemaking despite labour market demand for female have increased. This creates a situation where women unknowingly slip into having double working shifts – one, at work and another, at home. The patriarchy system might had diminished within the society, but it still lingers behind closed doors. Majority of men are still refrained from helping out with household chores. Hence, causing a certain degree of emotional and physical exhaustion for fellow women (Petherick, 2016). This also creates a paradox of whether the increase in female employment rate increases or decreases women's happiness level as the seemingly benediction may instead wear out their emotional and physical health as of the many responsibilities they are required to carry as a working female.

1.1.1 Gender Wage Gap Towards Female Happiness

Gender wage gap is a universal phenomenon where men earn a higher wage relative to women despite holding the same job position, having the same qualifications, accomplishing the same type of task and amount of workload. Women around the globe have endured gender wage inequality since the 1940s, when women entered the workforce to fill up the loss of male employees due to the recruitment of soldiers during the global war period (Rowen, 2018). Numerous protests, rally, movements to promote gender wage equality have been witnessed throughout the years and decades, and yet 5 decades later, the disparity between men and women's income are yet to be filled (Farber, 2017). The relationship between gender wage gap and women's happiness are suggested by the fact that a women's income is the source of many families' income (Nobel, 2015). When the

source of a family's income is paid unjustly, the victims include children and elderlies of the family. Burn (2014), a professor of psychology, believes that when the welfare of a women's family is affected, her emotional health would drop even way more than men's, due to natural mother instincts within them.

Figure 1.1: Percentage Gap Between Median Men's And Women's Wages For All Full Time Workers of Year 2010 to 2014 vs. Female Happiness Level.
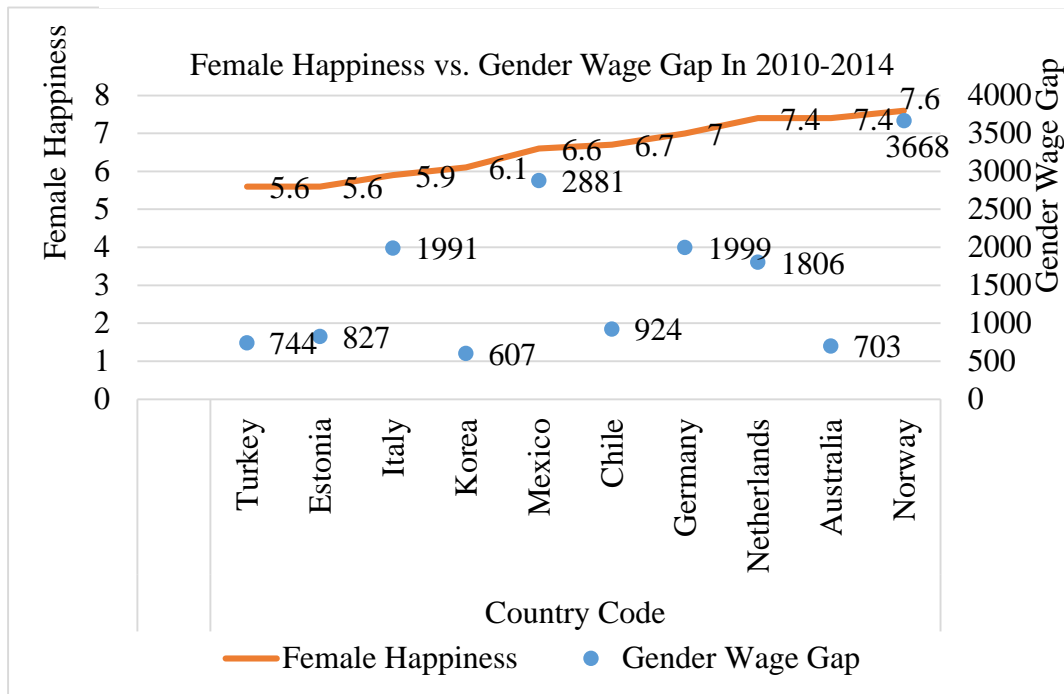
Source: OECD Gender wage data portal (2014) & Eurostat (2014)

In order to have a clearer image in understanding the gender wage gap between female happiness in the few countries above, figure 1.1 shows the average level of men and women's wages throughout the year 2014, as well as the effect of wages towards females' happiness level of the selected countries. Across the industrialized countries, most of the men's earnings were higher than women's wages. As for the result, Norway is the country with biggest gender wage gap where men's income is 72% higher than

women's. The smallest wage gap belongs to Korea, where its gender wage gap is only 11.9%. Even though, Norway has the biggest gender wage gap percentage, it is also among all the countries above who has the highest female happiness level. Korea, on the other hand, has a relatively low female happiness level at 6.1 despite being the country who has lowest gender wage gap percentage. Australia, who ranks second lowest in terms of gender wage gap percentage, has got a relatively high female happiness level, taking on the second highest female happiness level country. It can be temporarily concluded that gender wage gap does impact female's level of happiness. However, other aspects are taken into consideration as well. For example, although Norway has high gender wage gap, it has high quality benefits such as five weeks long paid vacation, childbirth and children's medical expenses covered, free university education, and pension money at the age of 67, even for females who do not participate in the labour market. These factors may complement for the high gender wage gap and contribute to female's happiness level (Junior, 2017). Korea, on the other hand, has been known to be a nation which finishes last in happiness survey (Park, 2014; Cho, 2017). Thus, this may explain why Korean females' happiness level are relatively low despite of the low gender wage gap percentage. Australia, however, shows that the relationship and impact between female happiness level and gender wage gap exists.

1.1.2 Employment Rates Towards Female Happiness

Figure 1.2 : The Percentage of Female's Happiness vs. Employment Rate.
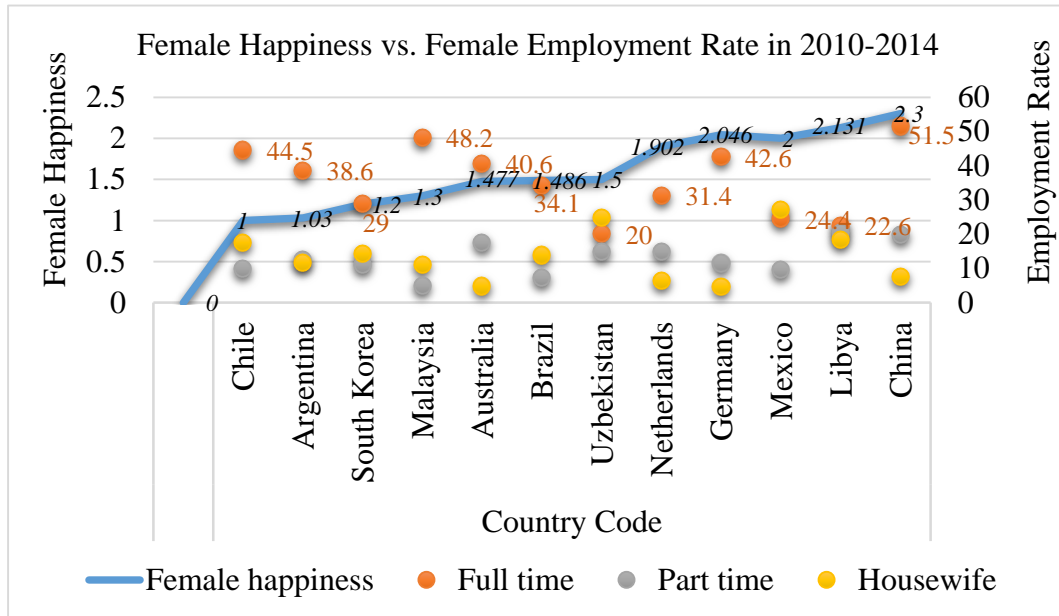
Source : OECD & World Values Survey Data (2010-2014)

As the Figure 1.2 shown above, the country with the highest employment rate for full time female workers is China with a record of 51.5% while the country with the lowest employment rate for full time female workers is Uzbekistan with a mere 20%. Based on the results above, China's female happiness level resonates well with its data of high female employment rate as it is both the highest in number among the countries above.

On the other hand, Chile who has the lowest female happiness level, contradicts with its high female employment rate. This may be rooted by the statistics of high suicide rates within the country, as more than 20% of Chileans suffer from depression (Tian, 2016). Chileans are obliged to long working hours which leaves them with insufficient time as well as energy for leisure, family, and even sex. Like anything else, women suffer worse than men as they are subjected to bearing household chores even after working hours (Bonnefoy, 2009). Thus, it is only logical that Chilean

women are far more likely to be depressed, which explains the low female happiness level in Chile despite having high employment rate.

According to the graph above, Malaysia who has the second highest female employment rate at 48.2% is ranked at the second lower for female happiness level. This is seemingly low and may either be an indication that there is weak relation between female employment rate and female happiness or it may be due to the burden and responsibility Malaysian females have to bear as an employee at work, as well as a caretaker at home.

Based on the study of Herrera and Badr (2011), it explains the reason behind why male has higher likelihood of being employed than female is because females play a bigger role in maintaining the household and nurturing children than men. Thus, this might affect females' capability at work because it affects their emotional health due to the multiple roles they have to play in their everyday lives (Rho, 2016). Therefore, women are more likely to work in a flexible work arrangement such as part-time or informal jobs so that they can have sufficient time looking after their family. Also, as a housewife who is an unpaid worker, they need to assign an adequate amount of time for their household activities (Blau & Kahn, 2000).

Paquetee (2016) states that, women show more concern on whatever that will affect them and their families. Women are the main caregiver for their children as well as the main participating gender in the education sector in most countries. It is possible for females to take care and maintain a balance between their career and family life, given the right policy, work standards, and equal expectations. In conclusion, there are a significant relationship related between female happiness based on the employment rates.

1.1.3 Paid Maternal Leave Towards Female Happiness

Figure 1.3: Number of Weeks of Maternity Leave For Which a Pregnant Woman is Entitled to Leave Her Job Before and Just After a Child-birth vs. Female Happiness in Year 2017.
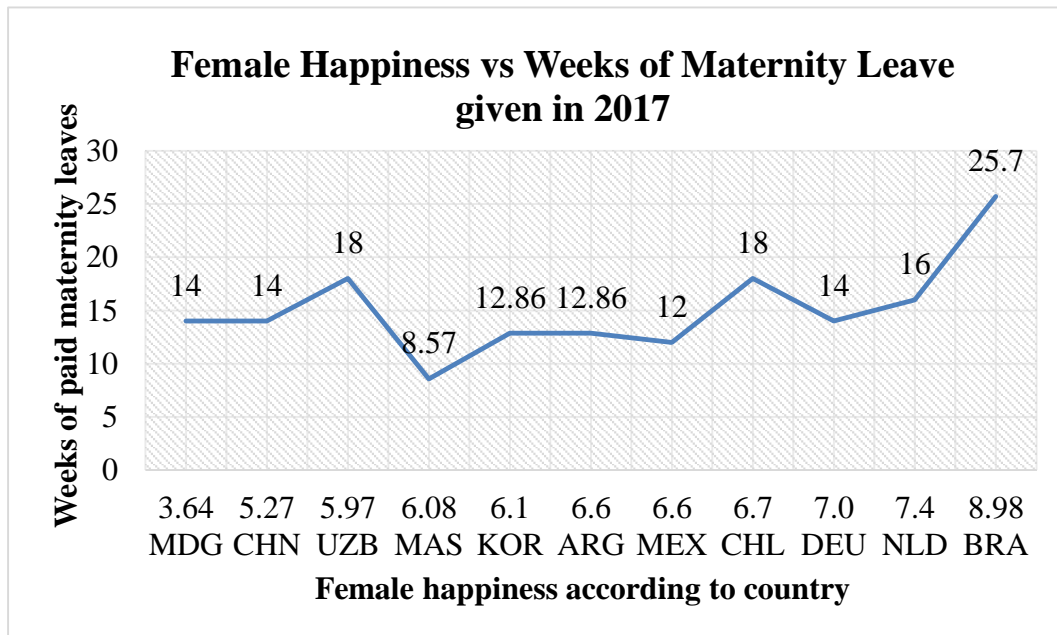
Source: Angloinfo Length of maternity leaves (2017); OECD Better Life Index (2017); OECD Length of maternity leave (2016) & The Global Economy Happiness Index (2017).

Maternity leave, also known as pregnancy leave, are employment-protected leave of absence for employed female at around the time of childbirth, or adoption in some countries. Almost all countries have public income support payments that are tied to taking maternity leave. Some countries allow parents to divide up leave between the two parents however they choose.

Figure 1.3 clearly shows that Brazil, a developing country, offers the most maternity leave to women, which is 25.7 weeks. Other developing countries such as China, Argentina, Mexico, and Malaysia offer maternity

leave within 8 to 14 weeks. For developed countries like Korea, Germany, Netherland and Chile offer paid maternity leaves between 6 to 18 weeks. Madagascar and Uzbekistan, which are the only two countries that represent the third world country, offers 14 and 18 weeks of paid maternity leaves.

As shown in Figure 1.3, the trend for both variables show some relationship between paid maternity leaves (week) and female happiness. Brazil's female happiness index is higher than any other countries as they provide the most paid maternity leaves among the 15 countries above. However, it shows some weak relationship between the two variables for Malaysia after comparing with the other three countries, Madagascar, China, and Uzbekistan. As compared to the three countries at the lower quartile, Malaysia shows a higher female happiness level even though it has the lowest paid maternal weeks whereas the other 3 countries have an average of 14 to 18 weeks of paid maternal leave. This may be due to other positive factors in Malaysia such as equality in education and career opportunities, liberation on females' fertility options, healthcare coverage.

Paid maternity leave is considered to be less fashionable in the labor market. According to a recent study from an economist at Cornell (OECD, 2017), vehement leave policies could endanger all women's chances for promotion and the reason might be due to employers' hesitation to invest in women if there is a chance they will take long periods of time away from work. Hence, it leads to females being less likely to occupy high-powered positions and lower starting salaries.

1.1.4 Tertiary Education Towards Female Happiness

Figure 1.4: Attainment of Tertiary Education by Female (% of Age Group Between 25-64years-old) vs. Female Happiness

Female Happiness vs. Female Graduates in Tertiary Education in 2015 & 2016 (%)
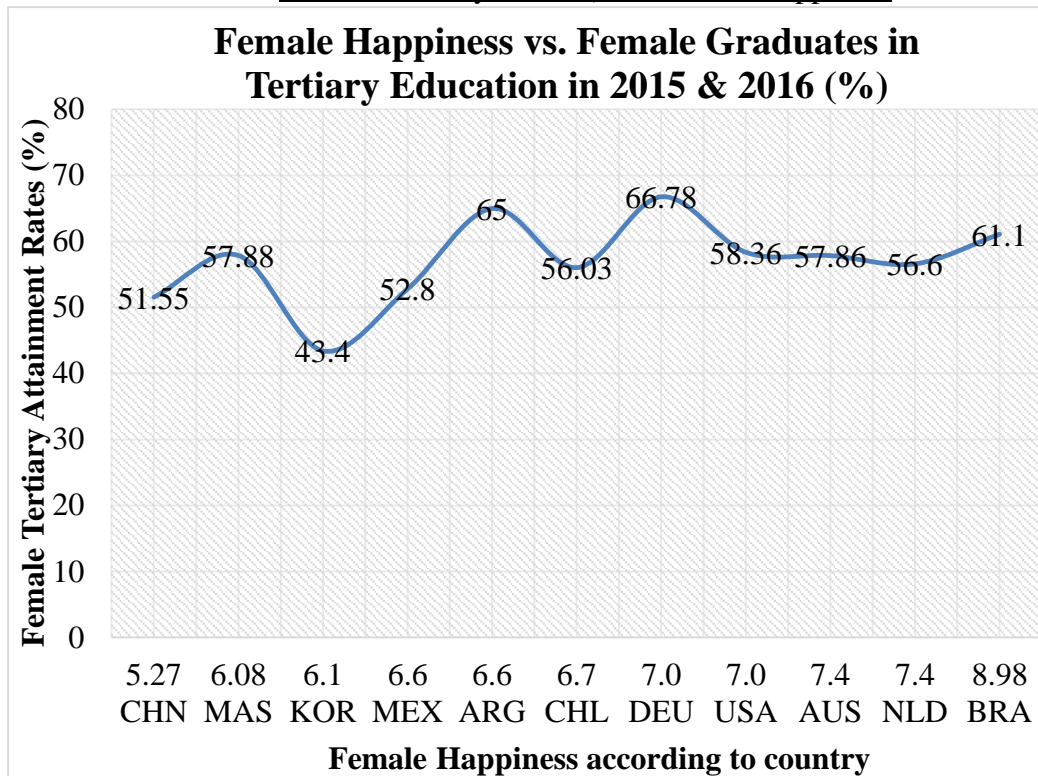
Source: OECD Adult Education Level (2016) & UNESCO Female Tertiary education Graduate rate (2015).

Over the decades, the progress of woman's quality of life has been remarkable. Women's education attainment has risen and surpassed men. Women's educational and occupational achievements are greatly influencing the nation's economic productivity, glory of the nation as well as contributing to the life expectancy and health standards of women and their families.

As shown in Figure 1.4, Germany has the highest rate of female tertiary education graduate, 66.78%, among the developed countries which include Australia, Korea, Netherland, Chile and United States. Germany also has a

relatively high female happiness level at 7 out of the highest 8.98. The graph shows some trend between the attainment of education and happiness among females. Brazil, which has the third highest female tertiary education rate shows the highest female happiness rate, while China and Korea with the least female tertiary education rate rank at the bottom of female happiness rate among the eleven countries.

Malaysia have a relatively low female happiness level when compared to countries with similar or even lower female tertiary education rate. Malaysia have 57.88% female tertiary education rate. When compared to Australia who has a lower female tertiary education rate at 57.86%, Malaysia's female happiness level is 1.32 lesser than Australia. Korea with only 43.4% female tertiary education rate have higher female happiness level than Malaysia. This situation could be explained by how different nationalities, upbringing, and culture affects the way females perceive and define happiness.

According to the new mental health research from the University of Warwick (Stewart-Brown, Samaraweera, Taggart, Kandala, & Stranges, 2015), there is no linkage between education level and personal happiness. The team discovered that the odds of happiness were equal for all levels of educational attainment. But two variables are identified for the basis of women's greater employability due to higher educational attainment, which is potential earning power and greater labor force participation of women. Intellectual and technical ability gained through higher education attainment can contribute to workforce development, increases potential income, providing women with necessary qualification for employment, and changes their attitudes toward women's traditional roles in the household and workplace.

1.1.5 Female Happiness in Malaysia

A nation's happiness index is related to the nation's economic behaviours, therefore, contributing to the rise and downfall of a country's economic growth and development (Lane, 2017). Females make up to as much as 49.3% of the entire human population in Malaysia, and have a higher life expectancy than the males of the country (Countrymeters, 2018). Furthermore, the female labour participate rate (FLPR) in Malaysia has increased by 7.3% in just 5 years' time. The increment has also resulted in an increase in Malaysia's GDP growth per annum (Lee, 2017).

As seen from figure 1.2, figure 1.3, and figure 1.4, Malaysia's female happiness level are consistently in the lower quartile as compared to all the other countries. In figure 1.2 and figure 1.4 particularly, it can be observed that the female employment rate and tertiary education attainment in Malaysia are both within the higher quartile. In other words, it can be seen that females in Malaysia are indeed going through a trend of paradox of female happiness in which the standard of living of females in Malaysia and female happiness level are conflicting.

1.2 Problem Statement

Gender inequality as well as women's happiness level is not an uncommon issue among the discussions of global issues. Out of all gender inequality issues that has been addressed and discussed, gender wage gap is the most discussed, recognized, tackled issue by women and men of different industries all around the world. This study focuses mainly on the enigma of declining rate of women's happiness level in Malaysia. According to Stevenson and Wolfers (2009), research showed that women's happiness in United States has declined both absolutely and relatively to

men. Women in United States have smaller gender wage gap, ever-increasing female education attainment, expanded opportunities in labour market over the past 35 years.

Based on previous discussions, there is relationship between women's empowerment and happiness level. But it is not known, if factors such as gender wage gap, employment rate, paid maternal leave, and tertiary education attainment have significant impact on the level of women's happiness. Particularly, in Malaysia. The lack of studies and knowledge on the subject of factors that affects women's happiness is worrying. Based on Jaafar et al. (2012), most of the studies on happiness have been centered on Western individualistic countries. There are some studies that focus on Eastern people such as Happiness of the Koreans (Kim, Kim, Cha, & Lim, 2007; Lee, Park, Uhlemann, & Patsula, 1999), the quality of life and happiness of the Japanese (Inoguchi & Fujii, 2009; Kan, Karasawa, & Kitayama, 2009; Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Uchida & Kitayama, 2009), the happiness of high school students in Taiwan (Su & Lu, 2009), subjective well-being of migrants and older adults in China (Cheng & Chan, 2005; Ku, Fox & McKenna, 2008; Lam & Boey, 2005; Monk-Turner & Turner, 2009), the quality of life and life satisfaction of the Chinese in Hong Kong (Cheung & Leung, 2002; Sing, 2009), the quality of life in Singapore (Tambyah, Tan & Kau, 2009), the personal well-being of Thais (Ingersoll-Dayton, Saengtienchai, Kespichayawattana, & Aungsuroch, 2004; Yiengprugsawan, Seubsman, Khamman, Lim, & Sleigh, 2009), happiness of the Turks (Eryilmaz, 2010), and the Pakistanis (Suhail & Chaudhry, 2004). There is still a large gap yet to be filled on regards of data and information that explains the determinants of women's happiness in Malaysia. Therefore, this study is conducted to further investigate if gender wage gap and other relevant factors affect women's happiness level in Malaysia. This study will provide a better understanding to female happiness level in this multicultural nation.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions are set as a guideline to establish the hypothesis of the empirical study. The research questions of this study are as follows :

Q1. How does gender wage gap impacts female happiness?

Q2. How does maternal employment rate impacts female happiness?

Q3. How does paid maternal leave impacts female happiness?

Q4. How does tertiary education level impacts female happiness?

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study is to identify the impact of gender wage gap, maternal employment rates, paid maternal leave, and tertiary educational attainment on women's happiness level in Malaysia.

The specific objectives are :

1. To examine the impact of gender wage gap on women's happiness in Malaysia.

2. To examine the impact of female employment rate on women's happiness in Malaysia.

3. To examine the impact of paid maternal leave on women's happiness in Malaysia.

4. To examine the impact of tertiary education level on women's happiness in Malaysia.

1.5 Significance of Study

The prominence of carrying out this study which focuses on Malaysian women's happiness level and the key aspects that influences it, is to fill up the research gap as well as the lack of knowledge and recognition on these issues. Previously, studies were mainly concentrated on developed countries and thus, the findings of this study would be used to help broaden the boundaries of gender studies, as well as tackle gender inequality issues in Malaysia. This study will help the Malaysian government, development ministries, policy makers, and employers to obtain a better understanding of factors that lead to women's happiness. Therefore, designing proper and more effective policies towards a country with happier women.

Since the happiness level is intertwined with labour market outcomes, the raising levels of societal happiness has come to be viewed as an important goal of government. This study will provide more information for policymakers when making decisions relating to the area of women. Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development can implement policies that may improve women's satisfaction. The government will gain support from society if they succeed in increasing women's life satisfaction. This will truly contribute to the economic growth of the country, with higher productivity levels, and also a healthier society.

Other than that, stakeholders in Malaysia will also benefit from this study. It is because the performance of employees is related to their happiness level. When the happiness level is improved, the productivity and efficiency of a corporate will increase as well (Lane, 2017). Lastly, this research conveys advantages to future researchers, as this study will be a stepping stone and guidance for future researchers who opt to conduct further analyses in relation to women's happiness level and gender inequality in Malaysia. The study will also become their cross-reference that provide a background or overview of the women's happiness level in Malaysia.

1.6 Chapter Layout

This study is divided into 5 chapters, where each chapters hold its own significance and purpose. In this chapter, the study's backdrop, issues, goals, and importance has been examined thoroughly. In the next chapter, literatures on the subject of gender wage gap (GWG), employment rates for mothers, paid maternal leave, and women with tertiary education in relation to women's happiness will be reviewed in order to establish the theoretical framework as well as hypothesis. Chapter 3 demonstrates how the research of study is executed through various course of procedures and approach used. Chapter 4 analyzes and exhibits the data collected in previous chapter. Lastly, Chapter 5 comprises the conclusive implications and limitations of the study, and also recommendations for future studies.

1.7 Conclusion

Gender wage gap is a global issue that has been talked about regularly since decades ago. So is women's happiness. These topics are considered to inter-relate as both mutually influences one another. This study also incorporates other highly relevant factors that are correlative with women's happiness to examine possible relationship and impacts. In the rest of this study, more evidence, details, arguments, and information will be presented with the aim of expanding and advancing the frontiers of knowledge.

CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

In this second chapter, theories and past studies related to women's happiness are reviewed and examined. Firstly, theories relating to the topic are addressed. Next, empirical studies where empirical evidences are collected to gain knowledge of the relationship between women's happiness and the respective independent variables. Thirdly, a research framework will be developed and illustrated. Lastly, the research gap will be adopted.

2.1   Theories

2.1.1 The Savanna Theory of Happiness

The Savanna Theory of Happiness is an enthralling theory that explains how happiness varies among individuals as a result of the evolution of the human brain. The Savanna Theory of Happiness or The Savanna Principle proposes that the human brain intuitively and subliminally behave, react and take actions based on ancestral adaptations (Kanazawa & Li, 2016). In other words, our brain is naturally wired to be adjusted to the settings, conditions, circumstances, and situations of ancestral environment, which leaves us to experience and unknowingly inclined to act upon of our present-day life with ancestral instincts every single day (Tooby, Cosmides, & Barkow, 1992).

This may also imply that the human brain faces complications trying to understand, grasp, and cope with situations, conditions, experiences, and basically anything that cease to exist or is unfamiliar during the ancestral period of time (Kanazawa, 2010). As gender wage gap, education, labour force, and maternal leaves do not exist in the ancestral environment, women today are left to face and battle with these occurrences that are unfamiliar to our nature. Fundamentally, the things that exist in both present and ancestral days come down to only four beings - men, women, boys, and girls (Kanazawa & Li, 2016). Other than these four entities, practically nothing that we have in our present setting existed during the ancestral setting. Thus, this could be a suggestive way to explain how and why the happiness level of individuals of different gender varies under certain present-day conditions that each may face.

Stevenson and Wolfers' (2009) work, The Paradox of Declining Female Happiness, which discusses about why the happiness level of females in United States is showing a downward trend despite increase in subjective well-being in the past 100 years, is a seemingly fitting example that can be explained using The Savanna Theory of Happiness (Kanazawa & Li, 2018). The theory suggests that, the things that would had heighten our ancestors' happiness in the past, still, in a similar manner affect our happiness level in the present day and vice versa (Li & Kanazawa, 2016). According to Wilcox and Nock (2006) and Amato and Booth (1995), marital happiness is positively linked with traditional social norms and traditional gender beliefs. Linking to The Savanna Theory of Happiness, women in the ancestral days are intuitively drawn to forming a relationship with the opposite gender which might be implicitly triggering women to be happier married than any other marital status.

Associating to the theory, women nowadays have been increasingly participating in the labour workforce as compared to women in the ancestral days. The number of married women with children juggling

both career and family has also increased significantly as compared to decades ago (Pianin, 2017). This could mean that mothers with a career are spending lesser and lesser time with their children. According to Hrdy (1999), during the entire course of progressive human history, nurturing and caring after children has been a female's natural calling and duty. In the ancestral days, women spent every single day and nearly all the time close to their children, whereas it is an absolute norm for men to be away from their family for an extended period of time for activities such as food and resources hunting. This form of living leads to women and men evolutionarily conditioned to separate, specific roles in the community and society.

In modern day, The Savanna Theory of Happiness is observable through the availability of paid maternal leaves for working mothers. According to Cooklin et al. (2013) and Dagher, McGovern, and Dowd (2014), women showed higher tendency to be diagnosed with Postpartum Depression Syndrome or Maternal Separation Anxiety (MSA) if they resumed to work within six months after childbirth. Thus, there is a marginally significant linear positive correlation between a mother's well-being, happiness, life satisfaction and maternal leave granted (Dagher et al., 2014). However, in Klein, Hyde, Essex, and Clark's (1998) study, it was found that women with a profound career suffered depression deeply when being away from work for a long time. A lengthy paid maternal leave also induces the feeling of anxiety and aggravation among women with volatile employment status. The study also stated that a females' level of distress after childbirth is influenced by several different factors such as overloading responsibilities, constraints on the role they have play, as well as their baby's well-being. Thus, Klein, Hyde, Essex, and Clark (1998) stress that females' happiness after childbirth are substantially related to individual preference towards work and family. Wassell (2015) on the other hand expresses that there is no significant association between females' happiness and weeks of paid maternal leave given.

Women also tend to be more anxious, worried of their child's wellbeing and safety when being separated from their children, in comparison to men (Savage & Kanazawa, 2004). Correlating it to this day and age, women are expected to return to work as soon as possible after childbirth. Thus, the unavailability of maternal leaves for new mothers in certain countries is believed to further trigger unhappiness among these women (Gjerdingen, McGovern, Bekker, Lundberg, & Willemsen, 2000; Cooklin et al., 2013). Relatively, this evolutionary trait that was passed down and adapted by the human brain may be the reason behind the trend of declining female happiness in our present day.

As women today are becoming as equally involved and focused on their careers as men, working mothers are delegating the role of childcare into the hands of daycare centres, hired caretakers, or even the elderly grandparents more than ever (Belsky & Eggebeen, 1991). The long hour separation between mothers and their children is likely to trigger negative emotions such as restlessness, anxieties, uneasiness which reduces their happiness level. This is because, in the human female brain, which is adjusted to the ancestral environment, will comprehend and perceive the separation as a potential danger towards their children even though in today's modern world, daycare centres and hired caretakers are an optimal and completely rational choice for working mothers (Kanazawa & Li, 2018). The Savanna Theory of Happiness has also indicated that the intelligence of individuals affects how happiness level differs between different individuals. Individuals with higher intelligence have an easier time understanding and tackling the evolutionarily novel situations that they come across with, thus, resulting in achieving higher state of happiness and vice versa (Kanazawa & Li, 2015; Kanazawa & Fontaine, 2013).

2.1.2 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory was formed between the 1950s to 1960s by sociologists, Homans (1961) and Blau (1964); and social psychologists, Thibaut and Kelley (1959). Homans (1961) stated social exchange is a human behaviour where at least two individuals are involved in an interaction process of exchanging tangible or intangible assets based on each's personal valuations of the relationship between them.

Humans, in nature, desire a maximization of benefits and minimum losses in any daily interactions or activities at all (Boxer, 2012). The Social Exchange Theory principally define that humans measure and establish their interpersonal relationships based on the incentives yielded and expenses required in conserving the interpersonal relationships (Blau, 1964). The outcomes of these interpersonal relationships, measured by whether the incentives are greater than the expenses or vice versa, will result in whether one achieves satisfaction and happiness or dissatisfaction and unhappiness respectively (Homans, 1974). Social Exchange Theory could be seen in both market relations and social relations (Burns, 1973).

Focusing on social relations, which studies about the relationship between friends and partners, Social Exchange Theory is often applied to study the association between women's education attainment and divorce rates, evaluating women's marital happiness and stability (Brines & Joyner, 1999; Boertien & Härkönen, 2014; Kreager, Felson, Warner, & Wenger, 2013; Sweeney & Cancian, 2004). Therefore, showing how education attainment affects women's happiness level in aspect of marital status. Women remain committed into marriage when incentives generated is greater than expenses maintaining the marriage (Brines & Joyner, 1999). The education attainment of a female is linked to and have its effect on a woman's view of advantages and

disadvantages of a marriage, thus, affecting a women's decision to stay or leave the marriage (Becker, Landes, & Michael, 1977).

Education is a valuable investment which adds worth to one's human capital and a prospective ticket to long-term benefits such as better career choice, higher income, and an enhanced living standard (Wales & Taubman, 1975). For the past decades, a trend of increase in women attaining higher education levels has improved women's subjective lifestyle and well-being. This has resulted in a worldwide observation of phenomena where the level of education a female attains has its correlation to the likelihood of her getting a divorce or not (Hoem, 1997; Martin, 2006; Härkönen & Dronkers, 2006; Park & Raymo, 2013; Chan & Halpin, 2005; Matysiak, Styrc, &Vignoli, 2013).

Divorce is generally linked to a lower marital happiness and stability (McLanahan & Percheski, 2008). Stutzer and Frey (2005) found that married people show higher happiness level and life satisfaction as compared to the single people. Other than that, their study also came across divorcees are not only discontent and less pleased during the period of marriage but also prior engaging into marriage. In addition, Grenier (2008) stated in his book that divorced women are generally happier than divorced men after getting out of an unhappy marriage.

When a woman is in an unsatisfied marriage, she will decide whether to stay or leave the marriage. This is when a woman's education attainment comes into picture. The level of a woman's education attainment also partakes in the final choice of woman when being faced with an unhappy coalition. The choice and outcome also determines the woman's happiness level and satisfaction towards life (Anderberg & Yu, 2009). According to Chan and Halpin (2005), educated women in the United Kingdom shows higher marital happiness and stability as compared to women with less education attainment. In other words, less educated women are prone to higher chances of going through a divorce (Amato, 2010). However,

according to Becker, Landes, and Michael (1977), higher education attainment by women reduces the interdependency between partners as the increment in women's human capital introduces women to be more independent in aspects such as financial security, higher quality careers, and other equally or more attractive options (Kreager et al., 2013). This gives educated women a greater freedom of choice to leave marriage of which they are unsatisfied.

Education, in general, increases a female's well-being and life satisfaction, which leads to higher happiness level (Isen & Stevenson, 2010). When females are experiencing such sense of contentment within themselves, it will in turn carry forward into their life aspects and project similar feelings towards their marriage, thus, promoting marital satisfaction, happiness, and stability (Hardie & Lucas, 2010; Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Marital satisfaction will also compensate and offset the possibility of women searching for further options outside of marriage (Amato, 1996).

In the 21st century, as female labour participation rate has reached a new heightened level, dual earner families are also becoming increasingly common (Blossfeld & Huinink, 1991). As wives are stepping out of the traditional homemaker role into the labour force, many husbands however, are not seen to be stepping out of the traditional sole breadwinner role to help out in homemaking tasks (Meggiolaro, 2013). As a result, the allocation of household chores between partners is also another huge factor that may have an impinge on marital satisfaction (Twenge, Campbell, & Foster, 2003). In this case, educated wives are able to fare better at negotiations and attain a fairer and more reasonable housework distribution with their husbands (Bonke & Esping-Andersen, 2011; Funk & Rogge, 2007). Other than that, Sorenson, Upchurch, and Shen (1996) stated that education is inversely associated to marital violence because, firstly, highly educated women are more likely to leave abusive marriages and secondly, unlikely to marry an abusive partner. Therefore, the growing

number of women attaining advanced education elevates quality and solidity of marriages they participate in (Kreager et al., 2013). Overall, it is observed that education is profiting women in many different life aspects and thus, promoting happiness among women all around the world.

2.1.3 The Second Shift Theory

The Second Shift Theory was first introduced in 1989 by Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung in their book called "The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home" (1989). The Second Shift Theory discusses about how working women are entangled into double burdens or responsibility of both paid and unpaid work (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). Paid work refers to the work women have to put into for their careers while unpaid work refers to household chores. The Second Shift Theory explains for how female employment rate relates and impacts females' happiness level. Noonan (2001) also proposes that working women, in general, suffer a whole lot more drawbacks and disadvantages than men do, for the time they spent on household tasks.

The Second Shift Theory surfaced as females' employment rate in the labour market rose. The female labour participation in labour force is said to be an evolutionary move initially, to fill up positions of men leaving for war. It later on became an economical reason to work in order to help sustain families' financial needs. Today, however, women are working as a sign of revolution to define one's societal worth. It has transformed over the years from women having a job to women having a career of their own (Goldin, 2006). Past researchers (Coverman, 1983; Hersch & Stratton, 1997; McAllister, 1990; Shelton & Firestone, 1988) have shown a coherent and uniform finding where housework responsibilities are negatively correlated to women's wages,

thus, attributing to the phenomena of gender wage gap in the labour force.

Women have been participating in the labour force for nearly a century and yet, any work related to maintaining home is still seen as a female's job (VanGorp, 2013). Despite the fact that women have evolved from utilizing their time focusing solely on household to a less traditional course such as joining the labour force, most men, however, remained traditionally parochial, refusing to participate in the division of household work (Sayer, England, Bittman, & Bianchi, 2009). Society's inability to evolve and adapt to the altering gender norms of women working outside of home attributes to The Second Shift Theory, where the dual burden affects women's well-being, emotionally, mentally, as well as physically.

Women are still expected to continue preserving their gender role of responsibility towards homemaking while upholding their professional performance at work (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009). According to Hochschild and Machung (1989), in the 1970s and 1980s, it is documented that women are loaded with an extra month of work more than men when paid and unpaid labour committed by both men and women are taken into account and calculated. In present day, working mothers are burdened with an extra five hours per week more than men (Milkie, Raley, & Bianchi, 2009). Almost all women of a dual-earner family are affected by The Second Shift Theory, moreover, women with children, especially a child below 6 years old (Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003; Milkie et al., 2009; Craig, 2007; Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Offer & Schneider, 2011).

Hochschild and Machung (1989) denoted that there is a type of men known as transitional men, who have no problem with their other halves entering the workforce as they do but however, demand their wives to fulfil their traditional role at home such as cooking, cleaning,

childcare, and any other household chores. It is also discovered that, transitional marriages are the ones with the most tensions, stemming from disputes regarding on disproportionate division of household labour and unequal expectations from the husband and wife. Furthermore, men may not have equal depiction of a balanced household responsibilities division as women (VanGorp, 2013). For instance, men may think that they have fulfilled their part by bringing their children to extracurricular activities. Though, women who are the one responsible in preparing the gears, equipment, food for the activities in prior would see it as a leisure father-son bonding time instead of actually sharing workload between partners. This does not only contribute to women feeling unsatisfied, emotionally upset, but also leads to marital conflict and lower happiness level (Sironi & Mencarini, 2010).

Women today are partaking in the labour force more than it has ever been. Modern women are compelled to sacrifice their own leisure time in order to juggle between their career and work at home today (Neuwirth & Wernhart, 2008). Also, studies have found a correlation between carrying out repetitive routine chores and depression, which applies more towards women than to men (Coltrane, 2000; Glass & Fujimoto, 1994; Larson, Richards, & Perry-Jenkins, 1994). Therefore, women who do not experience an equal division of household chores in a dual-earner household, will suffer a sense of one-sidedness, anxiety, chronic stress, exhausted with dual-roles, and more prone to be depressed, especially along with their loss of leisure time to wind off and relax (Barnett & Shen, 1997; Golding, 1990; Phillipson, 2002).

According to Stevenson and Wolfers (2009), the downward trend of women's happiness level despite their subjective well-being raised may be due to the change of expectations towards women. The growing opportunities for fellow women may also be causing present women's lives to be much more complicated than before with the many choices they face and have to make in order to balance between

all of their life aspects (Gershuny, 2000). For instance, working women reflects their happiness and satisfaction over a variety of aspects such as family, work, and leisure. In order for today's working women to maintain and attain high contentment in all aspects together, it may be much more difficult as it seems to be (Crosby, 1982). Therefore, to sustain all aspects together at once, it may lead to a lower average happiness level. In general, the roles women have to occupy in the public and private sphere heightens the amount of work they are being subjected to, and are making them hedonically worse off (Krueger, 2007).

2.2 Empirical Studies

According to the findings on literatures, the major findings show an inconsistent result, which consists of positive, negative and insignificant relationships due to the disparity in empirical testing or research methodologies as well as the types of data in the respective papers. We have collected the relevant information and data which was recorded and analyzed by the researchers or professors in their observation or experiment. There are 4 independent variables that we are going to highlight their relationship with our dependent variable which is female happiness in this research paper.

2.2.1 Relationship Between Gender Wage Gap and Female Happiness

At an early stage, it is found that most journals that investigate on female happiness are mainly focused on how gender wage gap is affected by factors such as managerial position, power of control, high skilled workforces, labour cost, females undervaluing themselves, and

so on (Esteve-Volart, 2004; Baldwin & Johnson, 1992; Rogers & DeBoer, 2001). In such studies that researches about female happiness, Esteve-Volart (2004) stated that gender pay gap will result negatively for both genders where the equilibrium wage and investment in human capital are reduced. Thus, leading to lesser general talents, innovations, labour productivity which consequently reduces economic growth. In addition, the existing wage gap will affect female happiness negatively. Other than that, the general social survey (GSS) has also proved that when women enter the labour force, it has a negative relationship with their bargaining power in the family. Along these lines, the deterioration of wage gap towards women's income is likely to further discourage them from joining the labour market. Hence, these factors each attributes towards the diminishing female happiness at the turn of the century.

In another study by Rogers and DeBoer (2001), it is found that the progress of the American women's rights and financial strength had a negative relationship on female's happiness. In the period of more than 35 years, females earning less in comparison to males shows a positive relationship with female happiness. Thus, there is a significant negative relationship between an increase in income of female and female happiness. In addition, it appears that increased females' earnings relate to the decreasing trend of female happiness stability. This could be due to how both partners have dissimilar view on their respective roles in household chores allocation which could lead to the result of reduced economic and domestic benefits of marriage relative to separation.

Besides, it was found that there is a significant positive relationship between female happiness and gender wage gap (Baldwin & Johnson,1992). According to the results, they mentioned that the main factors that influence female happiness based on gender wage gap are the irrational discrimination towards females in the workforce. As a result, females may hesitate to participate in the labour market because

they are unsatisfied with their reservation wages where men receive higher subjective wage payment. Blanchflower and Oswald (2004) state that the gender wage gap had a positive and significant coefficient which indicates that women always reported higher levels of happiness. As it was reported that, in the last few decades, females are happier than men. However, by 2006, this earlier gap had reversed and women are reporting lower level happiness as compared to men.

2.2.2 Relationship Between Employment Rate and Female Happiness

According to the journal, many sociologists believe that increased in job opportunities in the labour market for female has led to the increasing of workload and burden for women, especially for women who have a family with one or more child (Blair, 2015). Thus, increasing burden that falls on females will affect the female happiness level. It shows a negative relationship with female happiness. One of the study found that females are more likely to experience major career interruptions in order to meet the needs of their families than males (Slaughter, 2015).

One possible reason for this is because females will spend more time on housework and childcare on average when compared to their male companions. According to a 2013 survey by Pew Research Centre (Parker, 2015), for family that have children younger than 18 years-old, mothers spent 10.7 hours per week actively engaged in child care while fathers only spent 7.2 hours on average. This can also be an indication that gender roles are lagging behind labour trends. Next, the survey results on females' employment opportunities were less optimistic. Klasen and Lamanna (2009) studied the impact of gender inequality in education and employment on economic growth. In the multinational study, the period from 1960 until 2000 pointed out, in the

Middle East and North Africa, the female labour force participation rate is low due to high combined cost, they found out gender gaps in employment and education reduce the economic growth. In addition, based on Stevenson and Wolfers (2009), increasing employment of female does not affect their level of happiness, it declined even though the lives of women have improved over the years. It is also supported by Blau and Kahn (2007), they believe that female labour force participation has increased to record levels of absolute and relative to men and reduction in profession segregation by sex. Better market outcome may improve women's bargaining position at home and increase their chances outside marriage. Hence, it shows a negative relationship between employment and female happiness.

2.2.3 Relationship Between Paid Maternal Leave and Female Happiness

According to Macmillan (2017), there are reports of discrimination received from co-workers by pregnant females. Based on the evaluated survey, there are three main discriminations where most of the female pregnant worker faced. Firstly, female workers who soon will be taking maternity leave for a period of time. Co-workers in the same company will rate the pregnant worker for being irresponsible or less committed to their job. This usually take place in office work as office work seem to be easy work that does not require much energy, thus the co-workers might think that it is unnecessary for these pregnant workers to have maternity leave. This discrimination can highly affect the emotional well-being of the female worker to the point where they are afraid of taking the paid maternal leave which they are absolutely entitled to. Secondly, discrimination on the opposite site where pregnant females who do not take maternity leave are deemed to be less caring and negligible of the role on being a mother. Their co-workers discriminate them for not focusing on their maternal

responsibility and instead is selfish to hold up two responsibilities in the same time. Hence, they might think that such pregnant women are irrational and do not pay deep attention to the well-being of their babies. Therefore, pregnant females who are judged and discriminated would likely experience discomfort on the choices they make.

Next, Wolfe (2016) stated that the trend of maternal leave being replaced by parental leave is also lowering females' happiness level. In fact, regardless of gender, companies should provide maternity leave to all mothers. Moreover, companies should provide minimum necessities and financial support that some mothers may need in the crucial first few months of a baby's life. This can show their value as an employer which provides support even outside of company. According to the U.S. department of labour, paid maternal leave can help increase women's labour force participation and economic growth, as women are more likely to stay in the workforce when they welcome new children. It shows that paid maternal leave have a positive relationship with female happiness level.

2.2.4 Relationship Between Education Level and Female Happiness

Based on the study of Kruss, McGrath, Petersen, and Gastrow (2015), it showed that education has been rising throughout the period and higher education is associated with greater happiness. This is widely used in the human capital point of view, it says that higher education increases the skill and knowledge which leads to a better chance of getting hired and enjoy the higher income. The result indicates that relationship between education and happiness is generally positive (Cheung & Chan, 2011; Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005; Frey & Stutzer, 2002). This statement is also supported by the director of the Higher Education Policy Institute, Nick Hillman (Bothwell, 2017).

People that pursue higher education are more accommodating to the life situations they come to face, and they have lesser reason to regret and are likely to be more cheerful as compared to those who does not pursue higher education. In addition, female education has a positive relationship with happiness as it circuitously reduces child mortality, or increases the quality of education of their offspring, which are all pointing towards enhancement of women's welfare, wellbeing, and happiness (Galor & Weil, 1996; Lagerlöf, 2003; Schultz, 1997).

Another finding is that education has a positive association with happiness in low quantiles but a negative association at the upper quantiles (Schober & Winter-Ebmer, 2009). Other than that, according to Stevenson and Wolfers (2009), some of the largest university reports absolute declination in females' happiness as their educational attainment increases. Prior to the conclusion, some female graduates have also experienced particularly large declines in female happiness as well. It is worth noting that as the composition of the education category changes, fellow male and female students' happiness level changes as well. However, these changes are more obvious for women. Therefore, a higher level of education may lead to differential happiness trends based on the educational attainment. This situation shows that the increase of female's education level can have an important influence on the relationship between the traditional model to achieve female happiness. It will be interesting to observe whether the change to develop into the other side of the equality of men and women in their lives, such as decision-making, allocation of tasks, divorce, birth, and so on. While Barro and Lee (1994) says that there is a significant negative coefficient for female education in growth regressions, the literature showed that the result is due to the containment of some outliers (Dollar & Gatti, 1999) and multi-collinearity between female school attainment (Klasen, 2002).

2.2.5 Demographic Variables

One of the demographic variables used in this study to examine female happiness is working experience. According to Burke, Koyuncu, and Wolpin (2012), work experience has a positive and significant effect on one's well-being. Similarly, Reisel, Probst, Chia, Maloles, and König (2010) too suggests that working experiences which promotes job security creates job satisfaction for both gender. As working experiences increases one's skills and knowledge, employees with more job experiences in a certain scope of field reports higher level of self-confidence at work which leads to a boost towards an individual's happiness level. Greater working experiences also reduces one's feeling of need to worry of being replaced or dismissed in the labour market. Working experiences are expected to create newer and better career opportunities in the future. Thus, women who have more working experiences believe that it will help them to progress and grow their career (Richardsen, Mikkelsen, & Burke,1997). In addition, job security would also signify financial security. This would mean that the more working experiences women gain, the better she would be able to provide and contribute to her family's financial condition. A stable financial situation would also encourage a happier and harmonious family which would as well heighten a women's happiness level (Tobing, 2016; Riza, Ganzach, & Liu, 2015). However, according to Kardam and Rangnekar (2012), there is no significant linkage between working experiences and job satisfaction. Thus, signifying that working experiences do not have any impact on one's happiness level.

Mroczek and Kolarz (1998) believe that there is a positive relationship between age and happiness. Other than that, the relationship between age and happiness is often called the "U-curve" shape where happiness is higher in younger and third quartile age (Blanchflower, 2009; Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Oswald, 1997) and others that there is

no relationship (Easterlin, 2003; Myers, 2000). This is due to the consistency of individuals, countries, and cultures (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2008; Steptoe, Deaton, & Stone, 2015; Graham & Pettinato, 2002). Happiness declines with age for about two decades from early adulthood to middle-age and then turns upward and increases with age. Although the shape varies across from country to country, the bottom of the curve (bottom of happiness) is between 40 to 60 years old. Morgan (2015) states that on average, women will reach their peak happiness when they are 34 years old. This is because, at that age, they are most likely to feel satisfied, confident, having achieved several milestones in life's which includes starting a career, buying a house and having a permanent relationship and a family.

Next, several studies found that the married people were happier than unmarried, separated, divorced, and widowed individuals for both positive indicators of well-being (Campbell, Converse, & Rogers, 1976; Glenn & Weaver, 1979; Gove, Hughes, & Style, 1983; Shin & Johnson, 1977) and for negative indicators of subjective well-being such as anxiety, depression, and negative affect (Bradburn, 1969; Gove et al., 1983; Veroff, Douvan, & Kulka, 1981). It is found that people who are married for the first time reported an increase in happiness around the time of their marriage (before and after) but in the long run their happiness return to its previous level. This is because a marital relationship produces more happiness, life satisfaction and rewards, social support, and social control. In addition, married people are happier and healthier psychologically which may reduce their chances of adopting risky behaviours and lifestyles. A study by Glenn and Weaver (1988) used data from a U.S. national survey to show a steady decline in the positive relationship between marriage and happiness.

2.3   Research Gap

Based on previous discussion, there are some gaps that needs to be highlighted. One of the gaps is that there are only few studies available which focuses on females' happiness level with maternal leave, and employment rate. Most of the empirical studies indicate that female happiness is positively correlated with many variables such as income, education, marital stability, and health (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004). But there is relatively less researches that have been carried out regarding the subject of female happiness in Malaysia. This chapter discussed the bidirectional relationship between female happiness, gender wage gap, education level, employment rate, maternal leave and demographic groups in different countries. The hypothesis was developed from theories and literature review. Last but not least, researchers are encouraged to investigate and conduct more research in a specific way in which allowing the gap variable to convey a beneficial result as a contribution to increase female happiness (Kimball & Willis, 2006).

Next, one of the gaps in the research on this topic is that there are lack of studies done by using primary data analysis in Malaysia. The primary data source for our study is the National Opinion Research Centre's "World Value Survey". The World Value Survey has been one of the key data sources for research project that explores people's happiness in the OECD countries. The data that we use include gender wage gap, paid maternal leave, education attainment and female employment rate. The adjustments that are made are partly a result of how certain variables are defined by the World Value Survey rather than by the researchers of this study.

2.4   Research Framework

Figure 2.1: Theoretical Framework

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│  ┌──────────────────────────────┐                                 │
│  │  Independent Variables :     │                                 │
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│  │  │                        │  │                                 │
│  │  │  • Gender Wage Gap     │  │                                 │
│  │  │                        │  │                                 │
│  │  └────────────────────────┘  │                                 │
│  │                              │     ┌──────────────────────┐    │
│  │  ┌────────────────────────┐  │     │  Dependent Variable :│    │
│  │  │  • Female              │  │     │                      │    │
│  │  │    Employment Rate     │──┼────▶│  • Female Happiness  │    │
│  │  │                        │  │     │                      │    │
│  │  └────────────────────────┘  │     └──────────────────────┘    │
│  │                              │              ▲                  │
│  │  ┌────────────────────────┐  │              │                  │
│  │  │  • Paid Maternity      │  │              │                  │
│  │  │    Leave               │  │     ┌──────────────────────┐    │
│  │  │                        │  │     │ Demographic Variables:│   │
│  │  └────────────────────────┘  │     │  • Working experience │   │
│  │  ┌────────────────────────┐  │     │  • Age                │   │
│  │  │  • Education           │  │     │  • Marital status     │   │
│  │  │    Attainment          │  │     └──────────────────────┘    │
│  │  └────────────────────────┘  │                                 │
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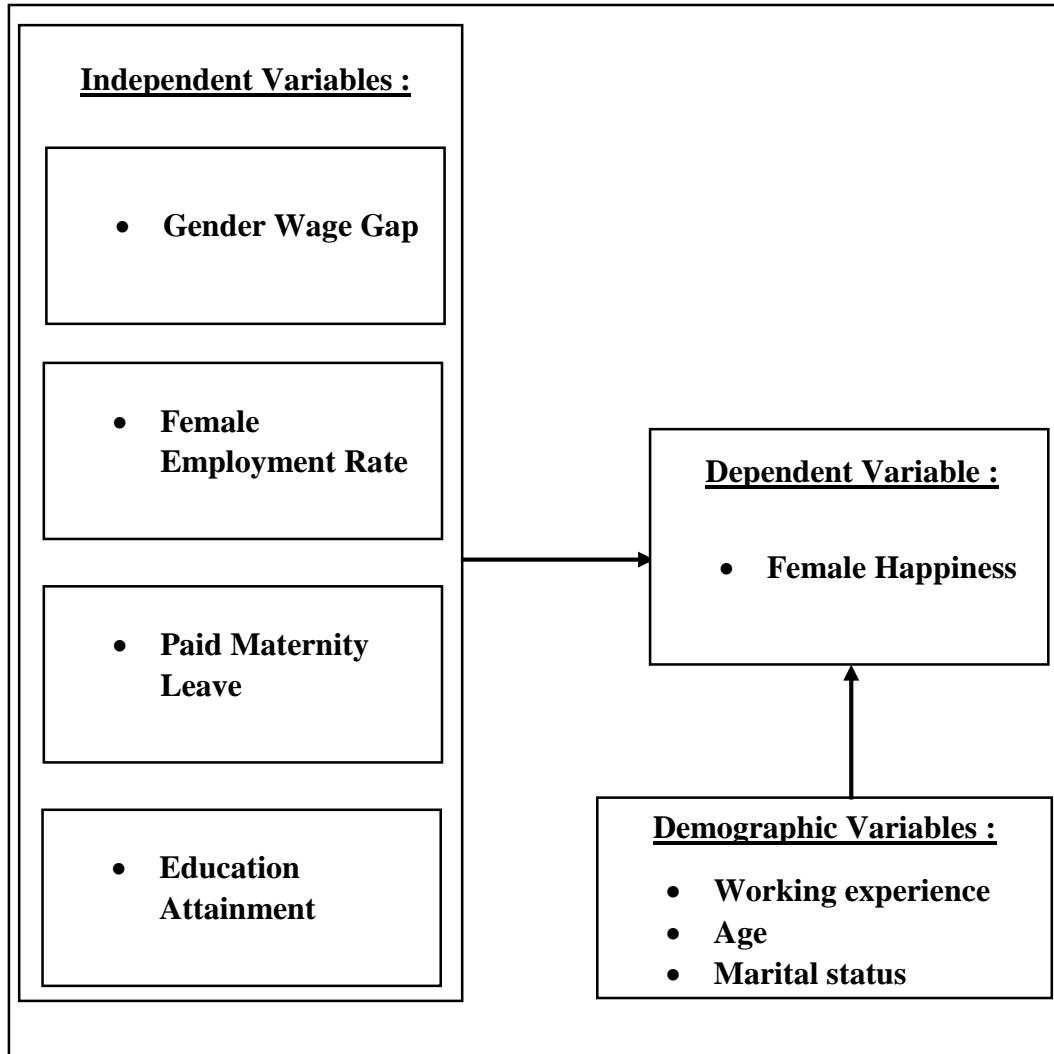
Based on The Social Exchange Theory discussed above, as well as empirical evidences, there is a negative relationship between gender wage gap and females' happiness level (Baldwin & Johnson, 1992; Coverman, 1983; Esteve-Volart, 2004; Hersch & Stratton, 1997; McAllister, 1990; Rogers & DeBoer, 2001; Shelton & Firestone, 1988). The income inequality between genders attributes to women comparing their conditions, lives, and circumstances against men and feeling a sense of injustice, diffidence, discrimination, and prejudice. Women may also feel compelled to measure up to men which may cost their happiness (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009).

Based on The Savanna Theory of Happiness, The Second Shift Theory, and empirical evidences, there is a negative association between maternal employment rate and females' happiness level (Blair, 2015; Bianchi et al., 2000; Craig, 2007; Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003; Milkie et al., 2009; Neuwirth & Wernhart, 2008; Noonan, 2001; Offer & Schneider, 2011; Slaughter, 2015).

The Savanna Theory of Happiness suggests that the long hour separation between mothers and their children due to work sets off negative emotions such as anxiousness and exasperation (Bianchi et al., 2000; Craig, 2007; Milkie et al., 2009). The Second Shift Theory proposes that the dual roles and burden a modern working female have to bear takes a toll on women's physical and emotional well-being, thus leading to a decline to women's happiness (Blair, 2015; Krueger, 2007). Empirical evidences indicate that women are also more likely to face discrimination and face stereotypes in workplace which decreases women's opportunity as compared to men in career-wise (Blair, 2015; Blau & Kahn, 2007; Esteve-Volart, 2004; Slaughter, 2015).

Based on The Savanna Theory of Happiness, there is a positive relationship between paid maternal leaves and female happiness (Cooklin et al., 2013; Dagher, McGovern, & Dowd, 2014; Gjerdingen et al., 2000; Kanazawa & Li, 2018; Savage & Kanazawa, 2004). Mothers need an extensive amount of time to rest and recover after childbirth. Other than that, newborn infants are extremely needful of their mothers (Kanazawa & Li, 2018). Without paid maternal leaves, mothers are forced to part with their newborn infants which may trigger Postpartum Depression Syndrome and Maternal Separation Anxiety (Cooklin et al., 2013; Dagher et al., 2014).

Based on the Social Exchange Theory, there is a positive association between education attainment and females' happiness level (Chan & Halpin, 2005; Hardie & Lucas, 2010; Isen & Stevenson, 2010; Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Kreager et al., 2013; Wales & Taubman, 1975). Education, in general, heightens fellow women's standard of living which thus, increases women's well-being (Isen & Stevenson, 2010). Educated women also tend to make better choices in aspects such as marriage, leading to higher marital satisfaction and happiness (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

Based on empirical evidences (Burke, Koyuncu, & Wolpin, 2012; Reisel, Probst, Chia, Maloles, & König, 2010; Richardsen et al., 1997; Riza et al., 2015) reviewed above, working experience has a positive impact towards female happiness level. Females with greater working experiences allegedly report higher self-confidence, greater opportunities for career development, higher human capital, and better financial security which all steers towards higher happiness level (Tobing, 2016).

There are several empirical evidences which lead to the hypothesis that age and female happiness level are positively linked (Blanchflower, 2009; Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998; Oswald, 1997). At a higher age, women are more likely to be satisfied with their life (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998).

The Savanna Theory of Happiness and empirical evidences showed that married women are the happiest among all other marital status (Amato & Booth, 1995; Campbell et al., 1976; Glenn & Weaver, 1979; Gove et al., 1983; Shin & Johnson, 1977; Wilcox & Nock, 2006). This may be due to the biological urge as well as social gender norms that causes women to be inclined towards being happier when being married (Amato & Booth, 1995; Wilcox & Nock, 2006).

Figure 2.2: Hypothesis Development

Dependent Variable :		Independent Variables :
Women's Happiness	H1: Gender Wage Gap has a negative impact on women's happiness.	Gender Wage Gap
	H2: Employment Rate has a negative impact on women's happiness.	Employment Rate
	H3: Paid Maternal Leave has a positive impact on women's happiness.	Paid Maternal Leave
	H4: Education Level has a positive impact on women's happiness.	Education Level
	H5: Working Experience has a positive impact on women's happiness.	Working Experience
	H6: Age has a positive impact on women's happiness.	Age
	H7: Being married has a positive impact on women's happiness.	Marital Status

2.5   Conclusion

Concisely, this chapter centres on the past studies that investigates about women's happiness. The findings of the literature review points toward a certain level of correlation between women's happiness and the independent variables: gender wage gaps, education attainment, employment rate, and paid maternal leave available. The research framework and hypotheses have also been developed so as to ease readers with a clearer depiction of this study. In the next following chapter, the methodologies of this study will be examined.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will be explaining about the methodology of the research in determining the relationship between exogenous variable and endogenous variable. Research methodology is a crucial element in research, as it is the process of data and information collection, followed by explanation in details during research design, methods of data collections, sampling design, research instrument, construct measurement, data processing and data analysis.

Based on the references of previous studies, we have constructed a study model as follows :

$$FH = \beta_1 + \beta_2 GW + \beta_3 FER + \beta_4 PML + \beta_5 TEL + \mu$$

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the overall process that is planned in details to explain the element of the study in a coherent, systematic and logical way to ensure the research problem is efficiently addressed and as unambiguously as possible. Participation of large amount of respondent in this study leads to quantitative research method, which will be chosen in this research instead of qualitative research method as the data of this study are obtained through distribution of questionnaire instead of interview or observation. Besides of the large population factor, the sampling location is also another factor that promotes the adoption of use of quantitative research method.

According to Oak Ridge Associated Universities (2018), quantitative method tends to be more valid, objective, generalized and reliable in the prediction of cause and effect. This is because the collected response is in fixed option and number-based, hence, analysis is possible.

3.2 Data Collection Method

Data collection is a process of information gathered from all relevant sources, through observation or interview or questionnaire distribution, to enable further investigation towards the possible answers to the research problem, testing the hypothesis and evaluating the outcomes. Data can be divided into two categories: secondary data and primary data. This research will focus on primary data due to the absence of relevant secondary data (data or information obtained through existing sources).

3.2.1 Primary data

Primary data often known as original data where information are acquired first hand by researchers through methods like interview, designed questionnaire to carry out surveys, or observation. Data obtained are related to the variables that are used in this research, and will be used to further conduct research. In this research, researchers collect relevant information through a constructed questionnaire.

3.3 Sampling Design

3.3.1 Target Population

The target population for this research are focused on working females aged between 18 to 60 years old in Malaysia. Target respondents can be from any work field and hold any working position as long as they are currently active in the labour market.

According to Department of Statistic Malaysia, labor force survey report of year 2016 indicates that the total employment rate amount to 14.7 million people and out of it, 54.3% of the total figure belongs to the female labor participation rate (FLPR). Hence, this research targets at the 5.7 million working females in this country.

3.3.2 Sampling Frame and Sampling Location

Sampling frame is a complete list of individuals who can potentially be included in the targeted population. All kind of work place where there is participation of female employee has been chosen as sampling location for this research.

3.3.3 Sampling Elements

Sampling element is the unit of measurement used to measure the targeted population and it can be stood of a single entity, a group or organization. For this research will be a group of the working females aged between 18 to 60 years old coming from all types of work field, background, and position. The targeted population of respondents are females and the key theme of this research is about female happiness, thus, the survey will be able to retrieve more accurate and relevant information.

3.3.4 Sampling Technique

Sampling technique used for this research will be 'convenience sampling' and 'snowball sampling'. Convenience sampling signifies that researchers are able to easily reach the targeted respondents, while snowball sampling means that researchers rely on initial respondents to introduce other potential respondents that are within her social network. (since the target population of this research is working females).

This two sampling technique are chosen as the cost are significantly lower and the data collected in the target population will be more relevant to this study. Questionnaire will be distributed through online (Google Form) as it is an easier and much more convenient way to gather results from fellow respondents.

3.3.5 Sample Size

Sample size is the amount drawn from target population to be involved in the research study. As the target population of this research is 5.7 million working females in Malaysia, the minimum total sample size used in this study should be at least 384 respondents. It is determined based on the Krejcie and Morgan's table (as below) for determining sample size of a known population. The Krejcie and Morgan's sample size calculation was based on p = 0.05 where the probability of committing type I error is less than 5 per cent.

Table 3.1: Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population.

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384
Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size									

Sources: Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

3.4 Research Instrument

We chose questionnaire survey as the research instrument for our research due to its advantages. Questionnaire is an affordable and inexpensive tool to gather quantitative data. Through online and mobile surveys, large number of people can be reached easily.

3.4.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire has a cover layout, which helps the respondents to identify the research title and purpose of the survey. The questionnaire consists of 37 questions and is divided into Section A, Section B, Section C, Section D, Section E and Section F.

Section A is designed to obtain the information about the demographic characteristics of the respective respondents such as age, working experiences, and marital status. In Section B, the dependent variable is focused on. Six questions are stated in this section to collect the response about female happiness level in Malaysia. Section C, D, E, F, contain questions associated to the independent variables that are aimed to survey the response of respondents in regarding of how each factor affects their happiness level. There are four independent variables prepared for the respondents, which are gender wage gap, tertiary education attainment, female employment rate and paid maternal leave. Each independent variable is to derive whether those factors have significant relationship with female happiness level in Malaysia.

3.4.2 Pilot Test

Lavrakas (2008) states that, "Pilot tests are 'dress rehearsals' of full survey operations that are implemented to determine any existing problems that need to be addressed in prior to putting the production survey in the field." Zikmund (2003) states that the questions should be tested in terms of sequence, wording, content and comprehensiveness before collecting the data in full scale. The reasonable sample size for pilot test is to collect data from twenty to thirty respondents (Zikmund, 2003).

In the stage of pilot testing, researchers circulated 30 sets of questionnaires to 30 respondents. The pilot test took about one week's time to gather back all the feedback and information required. The questionnaire will be distributed to the targeted respondents if no error were identified during the stage of pilot test. Before distributing the questionnaire, the questions have also been modified after being reviewed and proofread by the supervisor of this research.

The pilot test is conducted for data collection by using the statistical analysis, SAS, to determine the reliability of the data. The reliability estimates (Cronbach's Alpha) for the survey instruments were calculated since the Alpha coefficient is widely used as a measure of homogeneity (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1990; Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996).

Although the Cronbach's Alpha of Paid Maternal Leave is less than 0.7, this variable is still reliable because "*there is no agreement over the minimum acceptable standards for Cronbach's alpha for scale reliability*" (Bowling, 2011, p.172). Cronbach (1951) and Helmstadter (1964) stated that 0.5 can be accepted as an indicator of good internal consistency.

Table 3.2: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of pilot test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Sum of Items
Gender Wage Gap	0.751	6
Tertiary Education Level	0.815	6
Female Employment Rate	0.735	7
Paid Maternal Leave	0.675	6

Note : Reliability for Paid Maternal Leave is above 0.70 after amending some items.

Table 3.3: Rule about Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Coefficient Alpha (α)	Reliability
0.80 to 0.95	Very Good
0.70 to 0.80	Good
0.60 to 0.70	Fair
< 0.60	Poor

3.5 Constructs Measurement

The terms well-being, happiness, life satisfaction, utility and welfare are used interchangeably among researchers (Easterlin, 2001; Stutzer & Frey, 2006). Some researchers distinguish life satisfaction as a broad cognitive component of well-being whereas happiness as affective or emotional elements (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Diener et al., 2009; Brockmann, Delhey, Welzel, & Yuan, 2009).

Gender wage gap is the wage differences between men and women caused by discrimination (Petersen & Morgan, 1995). Gender wage gap can divide into three types, which are differences in human capital; differences in working conditions; and discrimination in pay, employment, and promotion (Jacobsen, 2016).

Tertiary education refers to all post-secondary education, including both public and private universities, colleges, technical training institutes, and vocational schools (Tertiary Education, 2018). The level of education attainment also has significant effect on social outcomes (Barro, 2001).

Female employment rate is the ratio of employed females to the working age population of female (OECD, 2018). The increase of female employment rate also indicates that the bargaining power of women have improved (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009).

In many countries, maternity leave is thought to be essential to both child and parent's well-being (Stearns, 2015). Paid maternal leave can also improve mother's well-being by reducing physical and mental stress during pregnancy (Stearns, 2015).

3.5.1. Scale Measurement

A measuring system is important for a research study. Scale as the tool or mechanism used to differentiate variables from one and another to the study. In this study, researchers only use three types of measurement scales in questionnaire which are: nominal, ordinal and likert.

3.5.1.1 Nominal Scale

Nominal Scale is a type of measurement scale with limited number of possible outcomes, which cannot be placed in any order representing intrinsic properties of the measurements (Marsh, 1996).

Nominal scale can help the researcher to categorize the value of an object. In this research, there are three questions (question 1, 2 and 3) in section A that are using this scale.

Table 3.4 Example of Nominal Scale in Section A

Gender		Male		Female

3.5.1.2 Ordinal Scale

Ordinal scale is a measurement type that arises from categorical rating scales, or from converting interval scale data to become ranked data (Marsh, 1996). Besides, ordinal scale provides more useful information than the nominal scale.

In Section A of the questionnaire, question 4 (Age), question 5 (Education Level) and question 6 (working experience) are considered as ordinal scale.

Table 3.5 Example of Ordinal Scale in Section A

Working experience	Less than 1 year		1-3 years		4-6 years		7-9 years		10 years and above

3.5.1.3 Likert Scale

This scale is used to give order to the items mentioned in the questionnaire and they are designed to possess equal intervals. In this research, seven-point Likert scale has been used ranging from 1 to 7, which 1 indicates Strongly Disagree and 7 indicates Strongly Agree.

Section B, C, D, E, F of the questionnaire used an interval scale to draw respondent's general opinion. Items for variables include female happiness level, gender wage gap, tertiary education level, female employment rate, and paid maternal leave are measured using seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7.

Table 3.6 Examples of seven Likert Rating Scale in Section B

No	Question	StrD	D	SliD	N	SliA	A	StrA
1	I feel that life is very rewarding.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Table 3.7 Examples of seven Likert Rating Scale in Section C

No	Question	StrD	D	SliD	N	SliA	A	StrA
1	Gender wage gap is a serious issue in Malaysia.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Table 3.8 Examples of seven Likert Rating Scale in Section D

No	Question	StrD	D	SliD	N	SliA	A	StrA
1	I am upset because of my education attainment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Table 3.9 Examples of seven Likert Rating Scale in Section E

No	Question	StrD	D	SliD	N	SliA	A	StrA
1	In my company there are more male employees compare to female employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Table 3.10 Examples of seven Likert Rating Scale in Section F

No	Question	StrD	D	SliD	N	SliA	A	StrA
1	In my company, paid maternal leave is a women right.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3.5.2 Origins of Constructs (Questionnaire)

Table 3.11 The Origins of Constructs of measurement in the research

Questions	Sources	No. of Item
Demographic	Developed by the researcher.	6
Female happiness	Adopted and adjusted from The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire: a compact scale for the measurement of psychological well-being (Hills & Argyle, 2002)	6

Gender Wage Gap	Adopted and adjusted from Gender pay gap reporting survey 2009 (Adams, Gore & Shury, 2010)	6
Tertiary education level	Adopted and adjusted from Higher education for happiness? Investigating the impact of education on the hedonic and eudaimonic well-being of Europeans (Jongbloed, 2018)	6
Female employment rate	Adopted and adjusted from Unemployment and happiness (Winkelmann, 2014)	7
Paid maternal leave	Adopted and adjusted from Maternity Leave, Role Quality, Work Involvement, and Mental Health One Year After Delivery (Klein, Hyde, Essex & Clark, 1998)	6

3.6 Data Processing

3.6.1 Data Checking

"*Checking is the process to check and scan through the questionnaire whether there are inconsistent, incomplete and ambiguous responses. There is possibility for a respondent choosing the rating point 4 for all questions. In this situation, researchers can analyze the answer pattern to identify the understanding of respondent. In this stage, researchers can address all the problems before editing the data*" (Bajpai, 2011, p. 194).

3.6.2 Editing and Fixing

Data editing is the second step of data processing and is checking the questionnaire returned by respondents for such as ambiguities, omissions, ineligible respondents, inconsistent responses, and incomplete data.

If the respondents do not have a clear understanding of the questionnaire, they might leave the questions in blank and cause omission. In this case, researchers can help the respondents to fill up, under the condition that, the unfilled questions are less than 25% (Zikmund et al., 2010).

3.6.3 Data Coding

"*In coding, the answers from questionnaire is identified and classified with a numerical score or other symbolic characteristics for processing data*" (Bajpai, 2011, p. 195). Researchers have used the coding technique to assign the numerical score of data, which the code analysis range for this analysis was from minimum1 to maximum 7.

Table 3.12: Data Coding for Demographic Profile

Question No.	Label	Coding
Section A Q1	Gender	1=Male 2=Female
Q2	Marital	1=Single 2=Married 3=Widowed 4=Divorced 5=Other:
Q3	Nationality	1=Malaysian 2=Non-Malaysian
Q4	Age	1=25 years old and below 2=26 – 35 years old 3=36 – 45 years old 4=46 – 55 years old 5=56 – 65 years old 6=above 65 years old
Q5	Education Level	1=High school or below 2=Certificate or Diploma 3=Bachelor's degree 4=Postgraduate education 5=Professional certificate
Q6	Working Experience	1=Less than 1 year 2=1 – 3 years 3=4 – 6 years 4=7 – 9 years

Table 3.13: Example of data coding for Section B, C, D, E and F

Question	Coding
I am optimistic about the future.	1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree

3.6.4 Data Transcribing

Transcribing data is transferring the coded data from the questionnaires into computer. The encoded data will be transcribed into computer to execute statistical analysis with the help of the SMART PLS3 software.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data that are collected from the 430 respondents were coded and analyzed by using the SMART PLS3 software. The data are used to study the factors that affect female happiness level in Malaysia.

3.7.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics is the method to describe the basic features of the data in a study. It also provides a summary about the sample and the

measurement with simple graphics analysis, it forms the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of data (Trochim, 2006). The data can be presented in a clearer way by using pie chart, bar charts, and, histogram (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

3.7.2 Scale Measurement

In this research, the researchers have shown that the reliability test indicates how consistent an evaluating instrument measures a particular concept in Table 3.2 and 3.3 (Zikmund et al., 2010). From the result of the reliability test, the researchers can find out how well the variables interrelate to each other.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), reliabilities less than 0.60 are considered to be poor, those in the 0.70 range are considered as conventional, and those over 0.80 are considered as very good. The results of the reliability are shown in Table 3.2.

3.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter discuss on how the research methodology had been conducted. This chapter consists of research design, data collection methods, sampling design, measurement scale and method of data analysis. The researchers will use SMART PLS3 and SAS for data running.

CHAPTER 4 : DATA ANALYSIS

4.0   Introduction

This chapter displays the analyses of the data collected from the previous chapter. Data was collected from 430 female respondents in Malaysia. The data was processed using the SMART PLS3 software which utilizes Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modelling method.

4.1   Descriptive Analysis

The questionnaire prepared in the previous chapter were targeted towards females. Thus, the gender of the respondents are all females. The other demographic questions that were queried in the questionnaire includes marital status, nationality, age, level of education, and years of working experience. The results are grouped in the tables below.

Table 4.1: Demographic Information of Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marital Status	**Single**	**277**	**64.42%**
	Married	142	33.02%
	Widowed	5	1.16%
	Divorced	4	0.90%
	Other	2	0.50%

Nationality	Malaysian	425	98.84%
	Non-Malaysian	5	1.16%
Age	25 Years Old and Below	189	43.95%
	26 – 35 Years Old	130	30.23%
	36 – 45 Years Old	55	12.79%
	46 – 55 Years Old	36	8.37%
	56 – 65 Years Old	17	3.95%
	Above 65 Years Old	3	0.70%
Education Level	High School or Below	27	6.28%
	Certificate or Diploma	53	12.33%
	Bachelor's Degree	203	47.21%
	Postgraduate Education	137	31.86%
	Professional Certificate	10	2.33%
Working Experience	Less Than 1 Year	134	31.16%
	1 – 3 Years	82	19.07%
	4 – 6 Years	55	12.79%
	7 – 9 Years	112	26.05%
	10 Years and Above	47	10.93%

Among the 430 female respondents who had participated in this research, a majority of 277 respondents (64.42%) were single while 142 respondents (33.02%) were married. Only 5 respondents (1.16%) were widowed and 4 respondents (0.90%) were divorced. The remaining 2 respondents (0.50%) selected 'others' as their marital status, making up the smallest category group of marital status. The nationality of respondents were also taken into account. A large number of 425 respondents are Malaysians residing in Malaysia, while the outstanding 5 respondents are non-Malaysians residing in Malaysia.

As for the demographic variable, age, respondents aged below 25 years old are the highest frequency group age, amounting to 189 respondents (43.95%) while the

second most participating group age was 26 – 35 years old, amounting to 13 respondents (30.23%). Next, respondents aged between 36 – 45 years old were made up of 55 females (12.79%), followed by 36 female respondents (8.37%) aged between 46 – 55 years old, and 17 (3.95%) female respondents aged between 56 – 65 years old. Lastly, only 3 respondents were above 66 years old, making up the least age group at 0.70%.

Meanwhile, for demographic variable, level of education, a huge amount of respondents possess at least Bachelor's Degree level of education, consisting of 203 females (47.21%). Following up, 137 (31.86%) females have attained Postgraduate level of education. Only 53 respondents (12.33%) were Diploma or equal education level certificates holder. The other 27 respondents (6.28%) have only received high school level of education and the least of all, a mere number of 10 respondents (2.33%) holds Professional Certificate qualifications.

Based on the number of years of working experience, the data collected presented that most of our respondents joined the workforce for less than a year, making up a total of 134 respondents (31.16%). The second highest category which comprises 112 respondents (26.05%) own at least 7 – 9 years of working experience. Subsequently, 82 female respondents (19.07%) have been in the workforce for an average of 1 -3 years. After that, 55 respondents (12.79%) possess 4 – 6 years of working experience and the outstanding 47 respondents (10.93%) have working experiences of 10 years and above.

4.2   Analyses

4.2.1 Data Reliability

Figure 4.1 (see Appendix 4.1) showed the factor loading from the final PLS measurement models. According to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010), the factor loadings have to be more than 0.50 to be considered practically significant. In this research, all items shown in Figure 4.2 (see Appendix 4.2) are more than 0.50 and exceed the 0.50 cutoff values.

4.2.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

Table 4.2 presents the results of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability test of the measurement model. The alpha coefficients of the constructs are higher than 0.70. All the values for independent variables are range from 0.855 to 0.931, which exceeds the acceptable value of 0.70. Thus, the results imply that the items have comparatively high internal consistency. The items are not redundant because the Cronbach's alpha coefficients values are below 0.95.

Composite reliability is an alternate measure of internal consistency reliability (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013). Composite reliability provides more accurate estimation of variance than Cronbach's alpha. It is due to Composite reliability respected indicators as well as the limitation of Cronbach's alpha in the population.

In Table 4.2, all the composite reliability values are above 0.60, which meets the acceptable level for explanatory research (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). All variables have indicated a value above 0.7. The composite reliability is satisfactory and so is the Cronbach Alpha value.

4.2.3 Convergent Validity

According to Hulland (1999), items with loadings lower than 0.5 should be removed to improve the AVE (Average Variance Extracted). 8 items which has lesser than 25% were removed because it threatened the model's integrity.

Table 4.2: Reliability for Constructs

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
AGE	1	1	1	1
EDUCATION	1	1	1	1
FER	0.931	0.936	0.93	0.771
FH	0.907	0.908	0.906	0.618
GW	0.865	0.868	0.862	0.611
MARITAL	1	1	1	1
NATIONALITY	1	1	1	1
PML	0.855	0.853	0.849	0.532
TEL	0.896	0.899	0.895	0.682
WORK	1	1	1	1

Source: Data generated by Smart PLS3 software

4.2.4 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity distinguishes the degree between each construct and implies that the construct is unique by empirical standards (Hair et al., 2013). This study follows three methods, which is Fornell-Lacker criterion, cross loadings and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT).

Table 4.3 shows the Fornell-Lacker criterion validity of this study. It showed that it has adequate discriminant validity since AVE value of each latent variable is larger than the squared associations between the latent variables and other variables.

Table 4.3: Discriminant Validity of Constructs

	FER	FH	GW	PML	TEL
FER	**0.878**				
FH	0.382	**0.786**			
GW	0.265	0.576	**0.781**		
PML	0.36	0.777	0.732	**0.727**	
TEL	0.566	0.608	0.295	0.441	**0.826**

Note: The diagonals (in bold) represent the average variance extracted (AVE) while the other entries represent the squared correlation.

Table 4.4 shows the cross loading results of this study. It indicates each indicator's outer loading value is relatively greater than all of its loadings on other constructs.

Table 4.4: Cross Loadings for Construct

	FER	FH	GW	PML	TEL
FER2	**0.809**	0.298	0.23	0.313	0.445
FER3	**0.857**	0.306	0.279	0.343	0.456
FER4	**0.912**	0.36	0.225	0.33	0.515

FER7	**0.929**	0.372	0.2	0.283	0.566
FH1	0.242	**0.783**	0.495	0.661	0.41
FH2	0.287	**0.745**	0.475	0.527	0.473
FH3	0.365	**0.786**	0.434	0.558	0.517
FH4	0.279	**0.804**	0.378	0.721	0.47
FH5	0.323	**0.787**	0.402	0.586	0.545
FH6	0.305	**0.807**	0.534	0.606	0.455
GW1	0.218	0.527	**0.925**	0.671	0.323
GW2	0.215	0.401	**0.745**	0.554	0.237
GW3	0.202	0.434	**0.72**	0.522	0.174
GW4	0.194	0.428	**0.714**	0.525	0.166
PML1	0.276	0.724	0.489	**0.841**	0.471
PML2	0.202	0.511	0.641	**0.714**	0.25
PML3	0.247	0.461	0.571	**0.654**	0.215
PML4	0.265	0.471	0.557	**0.675**	0.275
PML6	0.321	0.627	0.429	**0.737**	0.361
TEL3	0.428	0.463	0.239	0.365	**0.776**
TEL4	0.443	0.575	0.262	0.402	**0.879**
TEL5	0.533	0.454	0.224	0.304	**0.803**
TEL6	0.471	0.513	0.249	0.384	**0.845**

Source: Data generated by SMART PLS3 software

HTMT approach was used to estimate of what the true correlation between two constructs would be if they were perfectly measured (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). To fulfil the rules of thumb, all HTMT values should be lower than 0.85 for constructs that are conceptually distinct and 0.9 for constructs that are conceptually more similar. In Table 4.5, all the HTMT values are lower than 0.85(0.90). In conclusion, the items in the constructs met sufficient convergent validity after being tested by the three approaches.

Table 4.5: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Values

	FER	FH	GW	PML	TEL
FER					
FH	0.38				
GW	0.265	0.571			
PML	0.357	0.758	0.724		
TEL	0.565	0.607	0.287	0.426	

4.2.5 Assessment of Structural Model

Since the construct measures have been confirmed as reliable and valid, the relationship among the various constructs in structural modal of this study is examined with hypothesis testing which includes testing the strength and direction of Path Coefficient and significant values, as shown in Figure 4.3 (see Appendix 4.3). This research uses SMART PLS3 software for calculation purposes and the replacement value of 1,000 subsamples was adopted in the bootstrapping procedures to assess the statistical significance of the parameter estimate for assessment of the path coefficients.

The critical values for two-tailed test is 1.65 (significance level = 0.10), 1.96 (significance level = 0.05) and 2.57 (significance level = 0.01). The significance level depends on the particular study's objective and the field of study. Researchers often use a significance level of 10 percent for exploratory study (Hair et al., 2013). Hence, this study adopted the 10 percent significance level (t-value = 1.65) as a statistical decision criterion due to limited researchers studying on the topic of female happiness and its factors around the globe, not to mention there are any related research in Malaysia itself. Figure 4.2 (see Appendix 4.2) illustrates the results of the structural modal. The R^2 value is 0.695. It explains 69.5% variance in female happiness.

Table 4.6: Inner VIF value

Constructs	Female Happiness
Gender Wage Gap	2.156
Female Employment Rate	1.508
Paid Maternal Leave	2.462
Tertiary Education Level	1.634

According to Table 4.6, for dependent variable, Female Happiness (FH), all the Inner VIF values for the independent variables (GWG, FER, PML, TEL) that need to be examined for lateral multi-collinearity are less than 5. Hence, this suggests multi-collinearity is not a problem.

Table 4.7 (see Appendix 4.4) and Figure 4.3 (see Appendix 4.3) shows the results of hypothesis testing after running the bootstrapping option. H1 shows that there is no significant relationship between female happiness and gender wage gap (t-value = 0.468, value below 1.645). H2 indicates a non-significant relationship between female happiness and female employment rate (t-value = 1.042, value below 1.645). H3 indicates a significant relationship between female happiness and paid maternal leave (t-value = 8.513, value above 1.645) and H4 shows significant relationship between female happiness and tertiary education attainment (t-value = 7.078, value above 1.645).

In conclusion, H1 and H2 were tested not significant and H3 and H4 show significant relationship. As for the demographic variable, each variable are tested separately one at a time. The results indicate that all demographic variables (Working Experience, Age, Marital Status) are significant to the model since the p-value is equal to zero.

4.3   Discussion of Results

4.3.1 The Impact of Gender Wage Gap on Female Happiness

Since the p-value (0.639) is greater than the significance level $\alpha = 0.10$, we do not reject H_0. Hence, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there

is no significant relationship between gender wage gap and female happiness at $\alpha = 0.10$ significance level.

The result is consistent with The Savanna Theory of Happiness but inconsistent with the hypothesis and past studies. The Savanna Theory of Happiness stated that females in present day may have difficulties processing situations that are non-existent during the ancestral time. Thousands of years ago, gender wage gap is non-existent and naturally, did not matter to females back then. This may resonate with today's females' indifference towards the issue of gender wage gap.

The inconsistent result with past studies may be due to differences in expectations and beliefs of Malaysian women compared to women in other countries. Majority of the past studies reviewed focuses on western countries. Women of western countries hold a complete different agenda and personal views from women of Asian countries such as Malaysia. The difference in upbringings, culture, education system, beliefs, and religions of Western and Asian women could likely play a huge role in the difference in the results of this study and previous studies. It may also be due to Malaysian women being more indifferent or unaware towards issues of gender inequality.

Other than that, factors such as genetics and historical behaviour pattern may also play a role in the how different nationalities possess different happiness level (Jarrett, 2017), of which, explains why the results are inconsistent with our previous findings (Esteve-Volart, 2004; Baldwin & Johnson, 1992; Rogers & DeBoer, 2001).

4.3.2 The Impact of Employment Rate on Female Happiness

Since the p-value (0.298) is greater than the significance level $\alpha = 0.10$, we do not reject H_0. Hence, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is no significant relationship between female employment rate and female happiness at $\alpha = 0.10$ significant level.

This finding matches with the concepts of The Savanna Theory of Happiness. Dating back to the ancestral times, females have always been assigned to child and homecare. Female ancestors do not join the male ancestors in activities of hunting, gathering food, resources, and supplies. Hence, females today may perceive being employed as something they do not necessarily need.

This result is also different from previous studies, which state that there is significant relationship between the two variables. Blair (2015) stated that increasing workload and burden for women will affect female happiness negatively. The difference of result may be attributed by the higher tendency of Malaysian women possessing a conservative mind set and receptive to social norms. Malaysian women may still believe that the role of breadwinning belongs to men and thus, being employed and having a job may be omitted from their life goals which makes them indifferent towards the female employment rate of the country. Other than that, most of the married women's happiness level are influenced by their life partner rather than job position.

4.3.3 The Impact of Paid Maternal Leave on Female Happiness

Since the p-value (0.00) is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.10$, we reject H_0. Hence, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is significant relationship between paid maternal leave and female happiness at $\alpha = 0.10$ significant level.

This outcome corresponds with The Savanna Theory of Happiness which states that mothers who get to spend longer time caring for their newborn child are happier than those who do not. Ancestral mothers spend nearly all the time caring for their children. Intuitionally, modern mothers who spend time caring for their baby would also experience happiness as their biological needs are met.

Besides, the result also supports the hypothesis developed in chapter 2, which stated that maternal leave has a positive impact on female happiness. On top of that, the result is consistent with previous studies. Paid maternity leave makes female employees feel valued and appreciated by their company, linking to positive emotions such as happiness. The availability of paid maternal leave can help increase women's labour force participation and economic growth, as women are more likely to stay in the workforce after welcoming their new children.

4.3.4   The Impact of Education Level on Female Happiness

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.10$, we reject H_0. Hence, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is significant relationship between tertiary education attainment on female happiness at $\alpha = 0.10$ significant level.

The finding complements the The Social Exchange Theory. As higher education attainment improves females' quality of life by bringing in better career opportunity, higher wage, and other benefits. These components gives females an upper hand or incentives when making life decisions. For instance, females with higher education possess higher freedom and capability to leave an unhappy marriage as they can support themselves financially and emotionally. Education gives females the incentives of ability to choose things that induces higher utility level within them.

This result is consistent with the empirical studies and Hypothesis 4 developed in Chapter 2. Most studies found a positive effect of education on happiness. Education can increase one's self-confidence, self-evaluation, and pleasure in acquiring knowledge. Education may also indirectly increase happiness level as people who attained higher education tend to have a more positive outlook towards life. These people are also better at adapting changing environments, as well as solving any challenges and difficulties that they encounter. Kruss et al. (2015) state that, higher education is associated with greater happiness as it is generally linked to improved life quality. Higher education level can also signify better chances at getting hired or a higher quality job, as well as higher income. Higher income level raises one's purchasing power which individuals can use it to improve their health or wellbeing.

4.3.5 The Impact of Working Experience on Female Happiness

Since the p-value (0.00) is lesser than the significance level $\alpha = 0.10$, we reject H_0. Hence, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant relationship between working experience and female happiness at $\alpha = 0.10$ significance level.

The results are consistent with the hypothesis concluded in Chapter 2 and also consistent with the previous studies (Burke et al., 2012; Reisel et al., 2010; Richardsen et al., 1997; Riza et al., 2015). There is a positive relationship between working experience and female happiness level. Higher working experiences increases a woman's qualification, human capital, career opportunities which leads to a higher living standard, well-being, and contentment towards life.

The results are consistent because the effects working experience has on female's happiness applies to women all over the world. It has almost a similar influence to women regardless of their ethnicity, nationality, race, or even religion. As discussed in previous studies (Richardsen et al., 1997; Burke et al, 2012; Reisel et. al., 2010), working experiences gives women a sense of job security which is important in maintaining women's emotional and psychological well-being as they do not have to worry about financial instability and unsecured job opportunities.

It also tallies with the idea of The Social Exchange Theory. Higher working experience increases a female's incentives in life as it generates financial stability.

4.3.6 The Impact of Age on Female Happiness

Since the t-statistic (5.329) is higher than the critical value (1.645), reject H_0. Hence, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant relationship between age and female happiness at $\alpha = 0.10$ significance level.

Mroczek and Kolarz (1998) believe that there is a positive affect between age and happiness. This result is also different from studies by Easterlin

(2003) and Myers (2000), whom stated that there is no relationship between age and female happiness. Easterlin (2003) argue that the overall happiness of the individual depends on the shortfall between aspirations and attainments in each domain, and the relative importance of each domain in the individual's utility function, and cannot fully explain with demographic factor. Myers (2000) state that age, gender, and income give little clue to someone's happiness. The happiness level may affect by knowing people's traits and the quality of their work and leisure experiences. The difference between the results may be due to the inconsistency of individuals, countries, and cultures (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2008; Steptoe, Deaton, & Stone, 2015; Graham & Pettinato, 2002).

The result could also be supported by The Second Shift Theory. As age increases, females gradually become more mature and better at balancing both their responsibility at work and home.

4.3.7 The Impact of Marital Status on Female Happiness

The hypotheses above demonstrate the relationship between female happiness and marital status. According to the results generated from SMART PLS3 software (Table 4.7 (see Appendix 4.4)), marital status is not rejected because t-value, 3.646 is above the critical value, 1.645. Thus, this proved that there is significant relationship between female happiness and marital status.

The findings of this study is consistent with the previous studies whereby The Savanna Theory of Happiness and empirical evidences indicated that married women are the happiest compared to all the other marital status (Amato & Booth, 1995; Campbell et al., 1976; Glenn & Weaver, 1979; Gove et al., 1983; Shin & Johnson, 1977; Wilcox & Nock, 2006). Besides, according to Amato and Booth (1995) and Wilcox and Nock (2006), the

biological urge and social gender norms causes women to be inclined towards being happier when being married.

The reason the result of this analysis is identical with the previous studies may be due to the effect of marriage providing an individual with greater relationship commitment, stability, happiness, and integration, all of which devotes positively to human psychological well-being. Also, marriage provides people with benefits, such as cohabitation, that cannot be received from other marital status like the unmarried, separated, divorced, and widowed.

CHAPTER 5 : DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Summary of Research

Female feeling happiness is acknowledged as an intrinsically important tool for economic growth and development. As the standard of living of females have improved remarkably since decades ago, it is expected as well that female's happiness level should have heightened correspondingly (Werber, 2017). However, reports of females' happiness level diminishing proves conflicting results instead.

Independent variables are adopted to examine its effect on female happiness. Such variables taken into consideration includes health, leisure time, child poverty, and financial dependence. Among these variables, this research has chosen to focus on gender wage gap, maternal employment rate, paid maternal leave, tertiary education attainment, age, working experience, and marital status to have it set as the independent variables of this study. This study intends to investigate the impact that gender wage gap, maternal employment rate, paid maternal leave, tertiary educational attainment, age, working experience, and marital status have on females in Malaysia's happiness level.

This research is conducted using quantitative research method, primary data analysis and cross-sectional analysis. Data were collected from 430 number of female respondents in Malaysia. The data gathered were later processed using the SMART PLS3 software to deduce whether the proposed model is fit for explaining the perceptions of targeted respondents on the type of impacts gender wage gap, employment rate, paid maternal leave, tertiary education attainment,

age, working experience, and marital status have on the happiness level of fellow females in Malaysia. According to the Partial Least Squares (PLS) test, a conclusion about at least one of the respondents who strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree or strongly agree have different perceptions towards female happiness can be made. Major findings from adopting the SMART PLS3 approach includes:

    (i)   There is an impact between gender wage gap and female happiness.

    (ii)   There is an impact between female happiness and its employment rate.

    (iii)   There is an impact between paid maternal leave, tertiary education attainment and female happiness as it shows a positive sign.

This research concluded that paid maternal leave and education attainment play an important role on the female happiness for the selected countries. The results show that majority of the respondents consider there is a positive relationship between paid maternal leave and tertiary education attainment towards female happiness. Last but not least, it is also worth to mention that, there are two different unexpected results from this study, which is gender wage gap and employment rate. Thus, in the case of Malaysia, it is not proven.

5.1 Policy Implication

Malaysia have witnessed a continuous increase in the number of women participating in the labour force. It is also observed that this incredible phenomenon shows the reciprocating effect where the Malaysian economy is benefiting from it (Gupta & Jauregui, 2018). This may be the reason behind why policies that shines light upon women's welfare in Malaysia have been increasingly multiplying. Linking to the results of this study, it is found that the variables maternal leave, education attainment, working experience, age, and

marital status have a significant impact on females' happiness. Thus, Malaysia should develop and implement policies that increase the happiness level of Malaysian women.

Firstly, Malaysia's *Employment Act 1955* (Qld) mentions about maternal leave, maternal benefits, however, does not mention about allowing pregnant working females to have paid time off work for their antenatal appointments. This would signify that pregnant working females have to apply for unpaid leave to go for their antenatal appointments. In this case, Malaysia policymakers should look into United Kingdom's "Maternity Protection Act, 1994", "Maternity Protection (Time Off for Ante-Natal Care and Post-Natal Care) Regulations 1995", and "Maternity Protection (Disputes and Appeals) Regulations 1995" which cover laws that states pregnant mothers are entitled for paid time off work to attend antenatal appointments, which includes the time used for travelling forth and back to work (Citizens Information, 2015).

Malaysia's law also does not gift paid maternal leave to parents whose child is adopted. Being able to adopt a child is the greatest blessing for couples who have infertility troubles. An adopted child is no less than a biologically birthed child to these new parents. Maternal leave should be given to parents who had just adopted a child as the child would need his or her new parent to help them transition into their new family (Carnegie Mellon University, 2017). Maternal leave is also crucial to allow mother and child bond with one another as bonding is a process and possible results of maximum time spending and caregiving (Ben-Joseph, 2018). The Malaysian government could refer to the California's "Paid Family Leave Act" which allows employees to spend time away from work to bond with their newborn baby, adopted child, and also foster child (California Work and Family Coalition, 2018; Employment Development Department, 2018).

In Lithuania, new mothers are entitled of 18 weeks fully paid leave and another 156 weeks leave that can be shared between parents after the child is born. The

initial 52 weeks covers 100% of either parent's salary, while the ensuing 104 weeks are covered by 70% and the remaining are unpaid (Brazienė & Purvaneckiene, 2013). In Norway, mothers are authorized to choose between 35 weeks of fully paid maternal leave or 45 weeks of 80% paid maternal leave (Addati, Cassirer, & Gilchrist, 2014). Denmark's "Danish Maternity Leave Act" permits mothers a total of 18 weeks fully paid maternal leave and another 32 weeks fully paid paternal leave that can be shared between the father and mother of the child (Rasmussen, 2015). Finland, on the other hand, awards 15 weeks of fully paid maternal leave for mothers and another additional 26 more weeks of paid paternal leave. Other than that, under its "Employment Contracts Act", parents are also given the right to paid childcare leave right up until the child reaches 3 (Brandt, 2016). As compared to Malaysia's paid maternal leave which lasts only a mere 8.5 weeks, the Malaysian government should repropose its policy to lengthen the period of paid maternal leave.

Next, on the subject of education attainment in Malaysia, the *Universities and University College Act of 1971* (Qld) has specifies on the equal open membership to both females and males by banning any type of discrimination of rights to education based on gender. Malaysia have since witnessed a remarkable increase in number of females pursuing educational opportunities which leads to improvement in economic participation. However, in this present day the country still witnesses the phenomenon of educational and occupational gender segregation (Ismail, Farhadi, & Wye, 2017). The Malaysian government should adopt policies that further support women in pursuing education, especially for those underprivileged females such as single mothers, or women who had to opt out of education due to bearing responsibilities and obligations. For instance, government could allocate specific funds or grant subsidies on the materials these women would require in their time of studies. Government can also utilize the existing PTPTN loans to help these women by allowing them to receive full loans.

Next, the result of this study shows that females in Malaysia are the happiest when being married, the Malaysian government should as well pay attention to develop

policies that support marriage among its citizens. The costs of a marriage ceremony, honeymoon, and preparations for life after is insanely high in Malaysia. In proposition to that, Malaysian government should offer support to newlyweds just as the local government of Taiyuan, China did in 2017. The program launched by the local government offered a package of deals such as cash rewards when purchasing wedding rings and cars, discounts on wedding photography services, honeymoon trips, wedding venues, and housing appliances to reduce the burden of couples to cover the costs of their wedding ceremony (Feng, 2018). The Malaysian government could also grant discounts to newlyweds who are trying to purchase a house to settle down.

The Malaysian government should also put an effort in reducing the divorce rates within the nation. The Malaysian government should set aside appropriate funds that support efforts on creating healthy and happy marriages between couples. The Malaysian government could work on providing programs such as public education campaigns and pre-marriage education to help aid couples develop a healthy marriage, as well as to create awareness of the consequences of divorce on a family and the psychological wellbeing of the children. In China, a number of courts are adopting the rule which commands troubled couples who are seeking for divorce to go through a "cooling period" lasting from three to six months, in which they are required to undergo marriage counselling and attend marriage workshops to try to resolve their difficulties (Zhou, 2017).

Working experience has a positive impact on female happiness, which is why the Malaysian government should work upon regulating the issue of work experiences among the female labourers. The government can employ policies that promote an open and welcoming environment that helps women, especially those who are married or are mothers, to continue being involved in the labour force instead of resigning to succumb to their responsibilities at home. The Malaysian government should centre on providing job opportunities such as part-time or short-term work projects that can accommodate with these women's needs. This can help women

to maintain their participation in the labour market and not having to worry about their years of working experience being shortened.

Lastly, Malaysia have witnessed a rising number of younger females undergoing stress-related sicknesses such as anxiety, depression, and panic attacks in recent times (Mustapha, 2018). This resonates with the finding of this study wherein age is positively associated with females' happiness. In this year itself, a 28-year-old female attempted suicide by jumping off the Penang bridge after experiencing depression for some time (Basyir, 2018). Government must take immediate action in designing policies that focus on the emotional and mental wellbeing of the younger generation females. The government should devote in establishing more suicide hotlines, public campaigns that educate youngsters about mental illness, and interactive programs that encourage affected individuals to speak out and reach out. Most importantly, government should make it a priority to make these social support programs more effortlessly reachable and widely available to people who needs it.

Policies aiming towards helping the development of females in Malaysia can still be further enhanced and implemented. Most importantly, these government policies should be further developed and progressed even after declaration by affirmative policy enforcement and consistent follow ups to ensure desired outcomes are achieved.

5.2 Limitations

Only cross-sectional analysis was used and applied when conducting the study. Cross-sectional analysis collects and examines data which are collected at a single point of time, rather than over a period of time. The data collected for this study

only focuses on the period of June 2018. The timing of a single short period time is unable to precisely determine and represent the cause and effect.

The second limitation is the measurement of happiness. Each individual being are responsible for measuring their own degree of happiness, but, the contradiction of how each individual rate their degree of happiness may result in a faulty and unsound data collected. For instance, respondent A's level 5 happiness may actually be equivalent to respondent B's level 3 happiness. The inability to address a consistent level of happiness due to each individual's personal level of measurement is a huge problem.

Another limitation is the omission of some variables. This research didn't include variables such as religion, location (urban or rural area, West or East Malaysia), and number of children. This may lead to some possible significant demographic variables being neglected from the model and cause results to be inaccurate and vague.

5.3 Recommendation

Future researchers should apply longitudinal data analysis, which is a combination of cross-sectional and time series analysis when conducting the study. By collecting of data over longer periods, the results would be more accurate and more efficient in capturing the cause and effect relationship.

To overcome the setback of measurement of happiness level between different individuals, future researchers should develop an index of happiness to be their measurement beforehand to eliminate any possible chances of double standards. This should assist future researchers to achieve a precise result that can be

compared between different individuals with the use of a standard index of happiness level.

Future researchers may include more demographic variables that are significant in order to generate a higher reliability results and avoid problems of multi-collinearity at the same time.

5.4 Conclusion

This study was carried out to study how female happiness may be affected by variables such as gender wage gap, education attainment, paid maternal leave, maternal employment rate, age, working experience, and marital status in Malaysia.

After surveying 430 number of females in Malaysia, the data displays that there is no relationship between female happiness and gender wage gap and maternal employment rate. However, there is significant relationship between female happiness and paid maternal leave, education attainment, working experience, age, and marital status.

In anticipation, this study will hopefully be able to be a part of the stones paved towards a better Malaysia for our fellow Malaysian women of different generations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 4.1

Figure 4.1: Results of Measurement Model
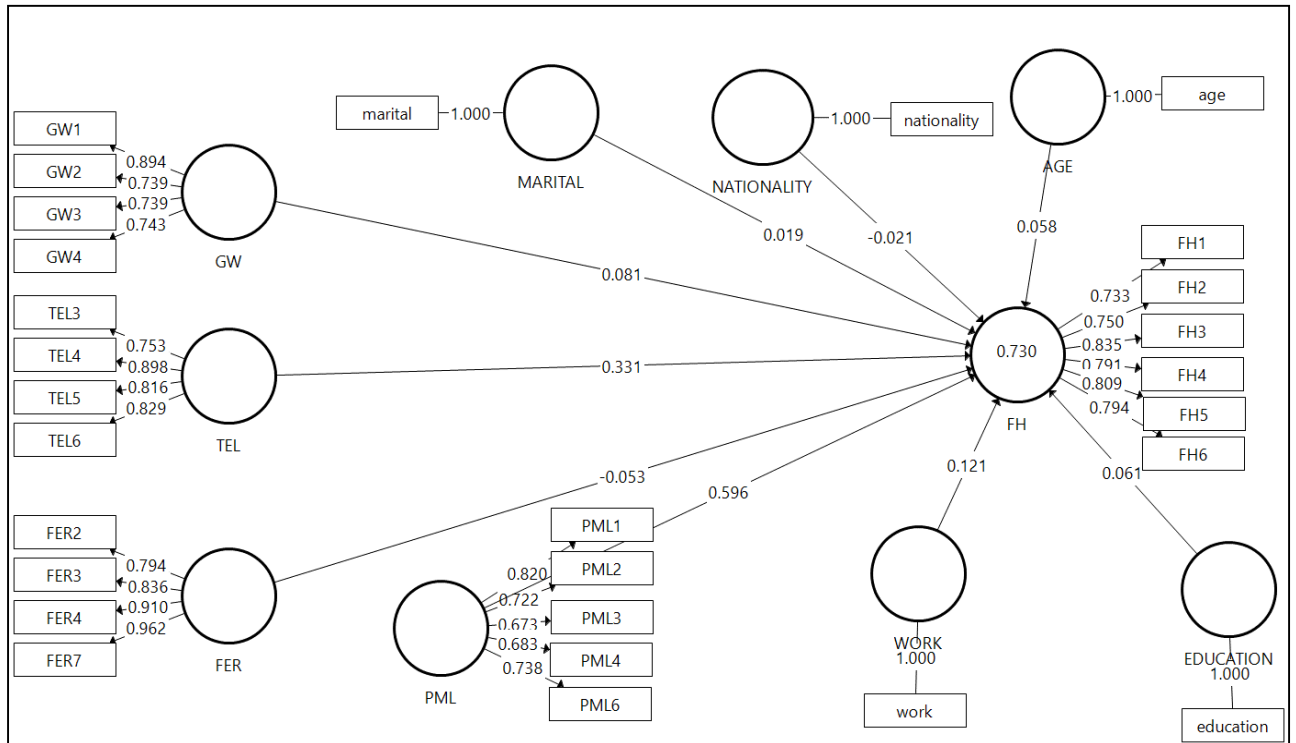
Appendix 4.2

Figure 4.2 : Results of Structural Model
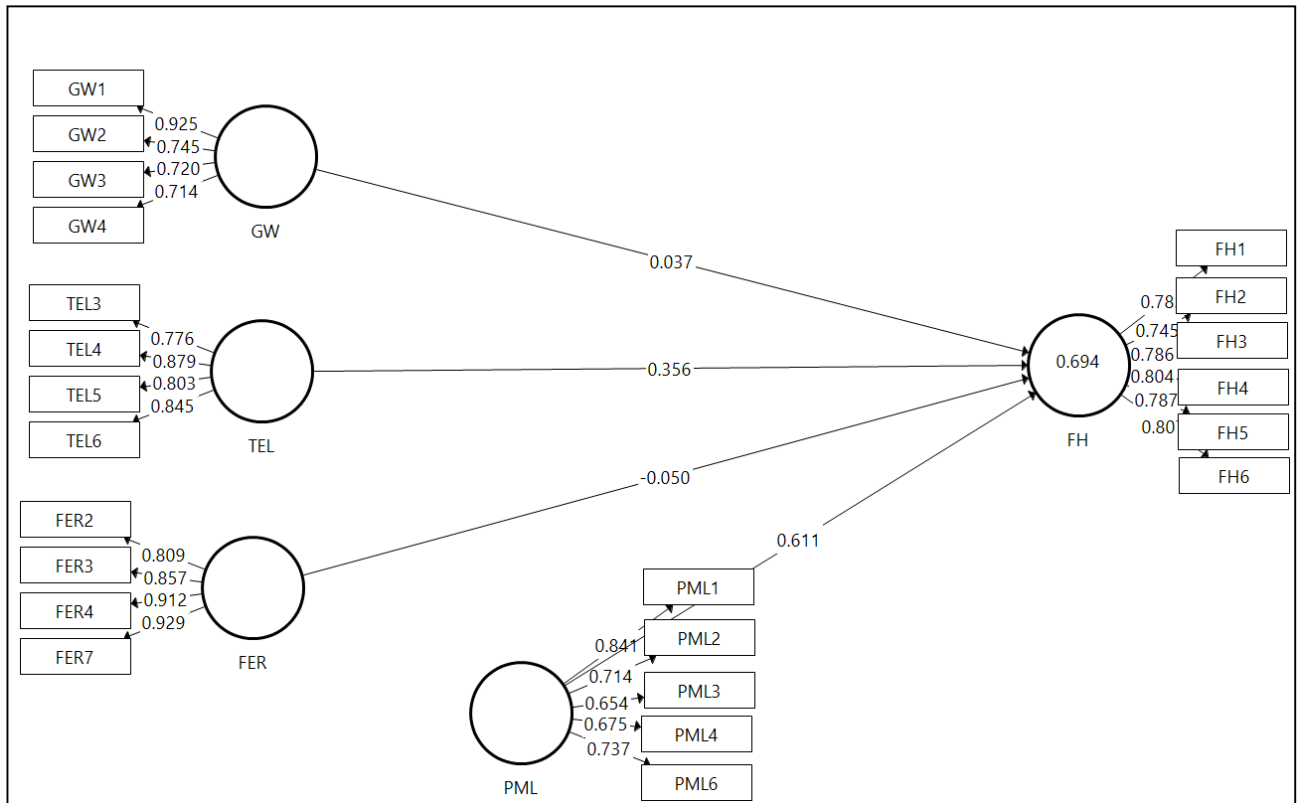
Appendix 4.3

Figure 4.3 : Results of Bootstrapping and Path Coefficients
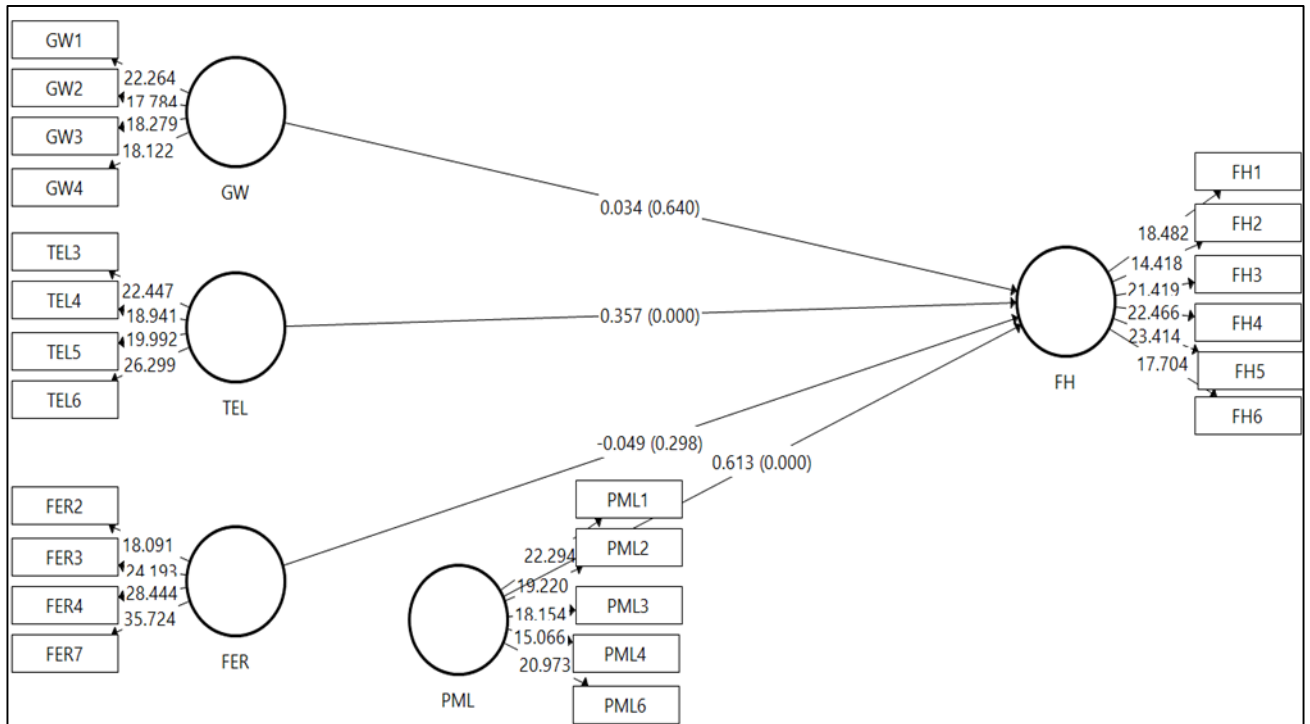
Appendix 4.4

Table 4.7: Results of Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-Values	Decision
H1 : Gender Wage Gap	0.034	0.027	0.074	0.468	0.639	Reject
H2 : Female Employment Rate	-0.049	-0.052	0.047	1.042	0.298	Reject
H3 : Paid Maternal Leave	0.613	0.621	0.072	8.513	0.000	Support
H4: Tertiary Education Level	0.357	0.356	0.05	7.078	0.000	Support
H5 : Working Experience	0.192	0.192	0.037	5.26	0.000	Significant
H6 : Age	0.175	0.176	0.033	5.329	0.000	Significant
H7 : Marital Status	0.136	0.136	0.037	3.646	0.000	Significant

Appendix A: Questionnaire

A Study on the Factors Affecting women happiness level in Malaysia

FINAL YEAR PROJECT
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondents,
We are undergraduate students of Bachelor of Financial Economics (Hons), from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). The purpose of this survey is to discover the factors affecting women happiness level in Malaysia. Your answers will be kept PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL and used solely for academic study purpose only.
Thank you for your participation.

A Study on the Factors Affecting women happiness level in Malaysia

*Required

Section A: Demographic
Please tick on the appropriate box or fill in the blank for each of the questions given below.

What is your gender? *

◯ Female

◯ Male

What is your marital status? *

◯ Single

◯ Married

◯ Widowed

◯ Divorced

◯ Other: _____

Nationality *

○ Malaysian

○ Non- Malaysian

What is your age group? *

○ 25 years old and below

○ 26 – 35 years old

○ 36 – 45 years old

○ 46 – 55 years old

○ 56 – 65 years old

○ above 65 years old

What is your highest educational level? *

○ High school or below

○ Certificate or Diploma

○ Bachelor's degree

○ Postgraduate education

○ Professional certificate

Working experience *

○ Less than 1 year

○ 1 – 3 years

○ 4 – 6 years

○ 7 – 9 years

○ 10 years and above

In the following part, you are required to indicate the extent of your (dis)agreement with each statement based on a scale of 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=slightly disagree; 4=neutral; 5=slightly agree; 6=agree; 7=strongly agree response framework. Please tick one column per line to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Section B: Female Happiness .This section is seeking your opinion about gender wage gap. *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I laugh a lot.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that life is very rewarding.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I'm always committed and involved.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I think I look attractive.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am optimistic about future.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I often experience joy and elation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section C: Gender Wage Gap. This section is seeking your opinion about gender wage gap. *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Gender wage gap is a serious issue in Malaysia.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I suffer from gender wage gap problem.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I have lower pays (Wage) compared to male colleague.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My company practices gender wage inequality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My wage is not equal to my male colleague.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I should have same wage level with male colleague.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section D: Tertiary education level. This section is seeking your opinion about tertiary education level. *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am upset because of my education attainment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My education attainment is enough for my career.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am willing to further my studies in future.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have the ability to always improve my education attainment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My higher education level improves my living quality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have more opportunities to improve my education level.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E: Female employment rate. This section is seeking your opinion about female employment rate. *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In my company there are more male employees compare to female employees.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have advantages in certain areas compare to my male colleague.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My company continuously increasing female employment rate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have many job opportunities in different sectors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is difficult for me to find a job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am highly skilled employee.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In my company, female employment rate is considerably high.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section F: Paid maternal leave. This section is seeking your opinion about paid maternal leave. *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In my company, paid maternal leave is a women right.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

My company looking for to increase maternal leave.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My company always encourage female staff to have longer maternal leave.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My company is not willing to hire pregnant women.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My employer will fire me if I'm pregnant.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My company provide enough maternal leave.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐