



# New Public Management in A Pluralistic Society Perception of Gender Equity, Social Support, and Happiness: A Case Study of China Xiamen Donghai University

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## Abstract

**Background and Aim:** This research objectives were: (1) To explore the relationship between perceived gender equity and social support, (2) To explore the relationship between social support and happiness, (3) To explore the relationship between perceived gender equity and happiness, (4) To explore the relationship between perceived gender equity, social support, and happiness.

**Materials and Methods:** The research was quantitative. The population of this study was the teaching staff of China Xiamen Donghai University. The samples were selected from its universities, a total of 320, and the whole population was the sample in this study. The survey period was from February 28, 2023 t, to March 14, 2023. The research tool was a questionnaire. The basic data of the samples were analyzed by using a ready program.

**Results:** The result found that (1) The relationship between perceived gender equity and social support was positively correlated with social support, indicating that the higher the perception of gender equity, the higher the social support, (2) The relationship between social support and happiness had a positive correlation with happiness, indicating that the higher the social support, the higher the happiness, (3) Gender equity perception had no significant positive correlation with happiness, which meant that the two would not have mutual influence, but according to the coefficient, the two were still positive, (4) the relationship between perceived gender equity, social support and happiness could positively influence happiness through social support, that was, social support suddenly had a complete mediating effect.

**Conclusion:** The relationship between perceptions of gender equality social support and that happiness is mediated by social support. This indicates the rich mediating effect of social support on happiness in this context.

**Keywords:** New Public Management; Perception; Pluralistic Society; Gender Equity; Social Support; Happiness

## Introduction

Rhodes (1997) believed that the new public management was a manifestation situation among many new forms of governance. The main characteristics were the ability to obtain the same efficiency as the private sector to a certain extent, the introduction of commercial principles and management techniques, and the provision of public services through private enterprise. Advocates of new public management believed that new public management provided a more feasible scheme for the realization of public goals through more flexible organization, flatter management level, and decentralization of decision-making (Hood, 1991). In the workplace, gender diversity usually refers to the equal treatment of people of different genders. Although non-binary people were also included, the discussion was usually about equality between men and women in terms of numbers, pay, advancement, and so on. Cultural factors played a central role in achieving gender diversity in the workplace. Women were just as ambitious as men and were willing to make some sacrifices in life, but many were unsure whether the culture would support their rise. The assessment and management style of the existing workplace culture was still consistent with the male-dominated culture of the society, which to some extent affects the promotion of women.

Gender equity was the basic requirement of human rights protection, but for a long time, whether in the East or the West, there were many differences and unequal treatment between men and women in legal





and social status (Zhang, 2014). Take the national administrative team as an example, Justin Trudeau, the newly inaugurated Canadian prime Minister, announced that his new cabinet would be 50/50 between men and women. After a century, Couldada finally had an "equal rights cabinet". Compared with other countries, only 25% of the heads of the United States were women, while 33% of the British cabinet were women, which was a big breakthrough (Weng, 2015). Meanwhile, there has been a lot of recent news about gender inequality. On November 14, 2022, a screenshot of a public recruitment list for primary and secondary school teachers caused controversy on Weibo. On the list, the posts of primary school Chinese teachers were divided into primary school Chinese (1) for male recruitment and primary school Chinese (2) for female recruitment, and half of the same popster for different genders. Couldddidates for the same position had obvious differences in educational background and school background between men and women (Guangxi News Network, 2022). The method of recruiting half of the same post with different genders was used to highlight the "fair" behavior in the school recruitment work. Drawing a line with gender would undoubtedly prevent some of the more excellent post-qualified talents from being recruited. According to the "Xiamen Teacher Recruitment Qualification Review List", the sixth place in the position of "primary school Chinese teacher (male)" got 20.13 points to enter the qualification review, while the sixth place in the position of "primary school Chinese teacher (female)" got 56 points in the written test, a difference of 35.87 points. Some netizens questioned whether the score gap between male teachers and female teachers on the list was too large, suggesting gender discrimination (Xiamen News Network, 2022). All these examples showed that gender equity still had serious inequities. Therefore, it was important to explore the perception of gender equity. At the same time, this study believed that from the perspective of human resources, if gender discrimination led to the insufficient use and development of gender manpower, both enterprises and society would suffer great losses. Although the perception of gender equity was getting more and more attention in the workplace, the research on this topic was rarely discussed, which led to the motivation of further research in this study.

Previous studies have found that social support was an important variable interfering with job stress, job burnout, and job performance (Azman et al., 2013; Khalaf, M.A., & et al., 2014; Yang, 2012), or mostly discuss its impact on life satisfaction, life stress, and happiness (Luarn, et al., 2015; Hamid & Mohd, 2014; Lou, et al., 2010; Li, 2015), but few studies had studied its mediating effect between perceived gender equity and happiness. However, social support was the driving force for the connection between employees and the organization. It was rooted in the sense of dependence between employees or between employees and the organization. Through human-computer interaction and assistance, not only satisfied the emotional needs of employees, but also helped employees identify their common obligations and improved their adaptability in the face of challenges, pressures, and difficulties. Therefore, this study believed that employees with high social support could slow down the relationship between their perceived gender equity and happiness, and then improve their happiness, which had important significance for theoretical development and practical management. To sum up, according to this research gap, this research would further explore and analyze it, which was another research motivation.

## Objectives

1. To explore the relationship between perceived gender equity and social support.
2. To explore the relationship between social support and happiness.
3. To explore the relationship between perceived gender equity and happiness.
4. To explore the relationship between perceived gender equity, social support, and happiness.

## Literature review

### Pluralistic Society

A pluralistic society refers to a society with multiple operating mechanisms. People in a pluralistic society have multiple choices and opportunities, and a pluralistic society must be democratic. The pluralistic





society corresponded to the monorail society, in which the social mechanism was monotonous and the individual lacked room for choice, so the monorail society must be authoritarian.

### **New Public Management**

New public management was a modern public administration management model with performance management, organizational reform, privatization and contract outsourcing, public choice and government failure, e-government, strategic management, policy entrepreneurs and benchmarking management, inter-governmental relations, ns, and decentralization as the core contents. It aimed to improve the efficiency and quality of public services and promote the modernization process of public administration. Although there were still some problems and disputes in the new public management, it provided a new idea and direction for the future development of public administration.

### **Gender Equity**

Gender equity means that men and women should enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and resources in education, employment, pay, promotion, promotion opportunities, for leadership, training, etc. This equity should not be limited by gender roles but should be based on an individual's abilities, skills, experience, and other personal characteristics. Gender equity was essential to the development and progress of society. It contributed to the economic and social advancement of women promotedotes social equality and inclusive development. At the same time, gender equity could also increase productivity and creativity, and bring more opportunities and benefits to businesses and society. Accordingly, this study defined gender equity perception as "employees' perception of fairness in the treatment they received in the organization compared with that of the opposite sex".

### **Social Support**

Social support refers to the material and spiritual support that individuals get from social networks when facing difficulties. This support could come from family, friends, organizations, or communities. Social support was considered an important component of social capital and had a significant impact on the well-being and health of individuals and communities. In this study, social support was defined as "the emotional or physical assistance received by an individual in the process of interacting with social networks, which enhanced an individual's ability to reduce life stress, and enhanced his or her ability to adapt to good life and happiness."

### **Happiness**

There were different views on the definition of happiness at home and abroad, which were often discussed from the perspectives of Eastern and Western philosophy and social science. Happiness refers to the evaluation of life as a whole, including self-satisfaction with life, friendly relationships, interpersonal relationships, community activities, sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, and self-actualization, and could be affected by external environmental factors or personal background factors. At the same time, this study defined happiness as: "one's subjective satisfaction with the current situation of life, and had a positive emotional state".

### **Conceptual Framework**

The research title "New Public Management in A Pluralistic Society Perception of Gender Equity, Social Support, and Happiness: A Case Study of China Xiamen Donghai University" designed with the conceptual framework as follows;



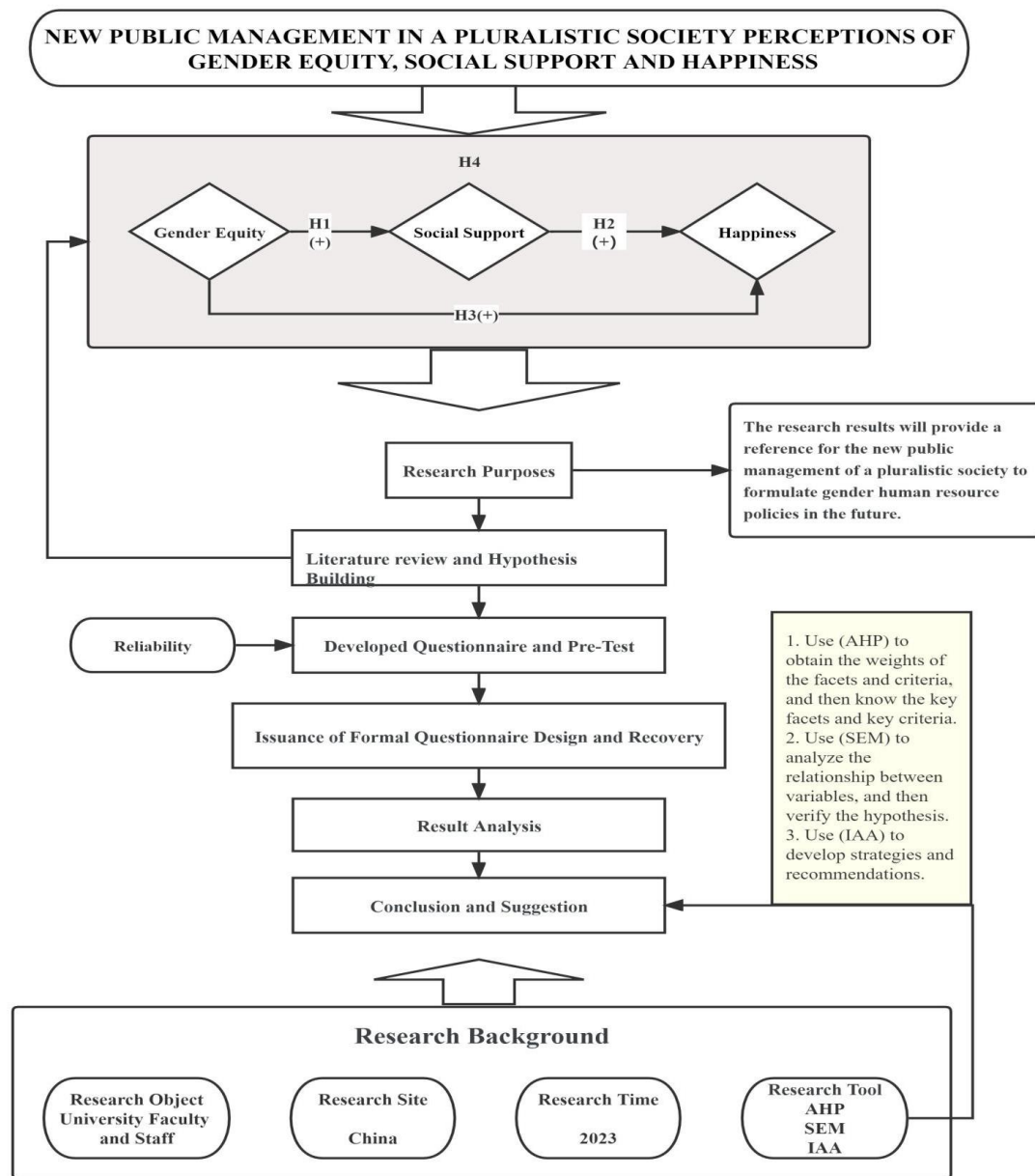


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework

## Methodology

**Format of Research:** This paper adopted the quantitative analysis method. Quantitative analysis was a major research method in the field of social science, which was based on mathematics and statistics to understand explained social phenomena through the analysis of data.

**Population and Samples:** The scope of this study was China Xiamen Donghai University, China, and 320 teaching staff were the research objects.

**Research Instruments:** This study adopted the questionnaire survey method. The questionnaire was a widely used method in social investigation at home and abroad. A questionnaire was a form used for statistics and surveys to express questions in the form of questions.





**Data Collection:** By combining the data collection methods of paper questionnaires and network questionnaires, we could obtain more comprehensive and accurate data and provide strong support for the research.

**Data Analysis:** Analytic Hierarchy Process, AHP

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), developed by Thomas L. Saaty in 1971, was mainly applied to uncertain situations and decision problems with many evaluation criteria (Deng Zhenyuan, 2005). AHP was a multi-objective or standard decision-making method.

## Results

1. To explore the relationship between perceived gender equity and social support, for the "whole", the perception of gender justice had a positive correlation with social support, indicating that the higher the perception of gender justice, the higher the social support.

2. To explore the relationship between social support and happiness, for the "whole", gender equity perception had no significant positive correlation with happiness, which meant that the two would not affect each other, but according to the coefficient, the two were still positive.

3. To explore the relationship between perceived gender equity and happiness, for the "whole", social support had a positive correlation with happiness, which meant that the higher the social support, the higher the happiness.

4. To explore the relationship between perceived gender equity, social support, and happiness, The relationship between social support and happiness, for the "whole", social support had a positive correlation with happiness, which meant that the higher the social support, the higher the happiness.

## Discussion

Gender equity increased trust and cooperation. In a gender-equitable society, people were more likely to trust each other's wishes and actions, which promoted social harmony. At the same time, gender equity could also promote mutual assistance and cooperation among people, because people were more likely to be aware of the positive impact of gender equality on society as a whole. Gender equity could increase people's sense of belonging and identity. In gender-equitable societies, people were more likely to feel like they belonged to a social group and had a stronger sense of identity and belonging to society as a whole. This sense of belonging and identity could motivate people to contribute more to and support society. Therefore, to increase social support, we need to do more to promote gender equity.

Gender equity perception could promote the career development and job satisfaction of university staff. In a gender-equitable work environment, faculty and staff were more likely to receive equal opportunities and equal treatment, which would help them achieve self-worth and professional development. At the same time, the job satisfaction of faculty and staff would also be improved, as they would have access to better working conditions and better career development opportunities. The perception of gender equity could promote the sociability and interpersonal relationships of university staff. In a gender-equitable environment, faculty and staff were more likely to connect and interact with people of different genders, which would help them expand their social circle and build broader relationships. Socializing and interpersonal relationships could increase the sense of belonging and satisfaction of faculty and staff, thereby enhancing their well-being.

At work and in daily life, whether it was instrumental support (e.g., people around you give you information and advice, people around you do chores, etc.) or emotional support (e.g., people around you understand you, people around you were willing to listen to you, etc.) could help reduce work-family conflict, so it was also important. Gender equity perception had no significant positive correlation with happiness, but gender equity perception could affect happiness through social support. This result not only increased the depth of literature on gender equity perception but also had practical significance. Enterprises should effectively understand the needs of employees between work and family and how to achieve the



balance between the two. And then formulate appropriate gender human resources policies and improve their happiness. Although social support had been used as an interfering variable in past studies (Wang & Tsai, 2014; Yang, 2012; Hsu, et al., 2010), however, did not discuss whether it had a mediating effect on perceived gender equity and happiness, and in this study, the empirical social support did have a mediating effect. This result not only added depth to the literature on social support but also had practical significance for both instrumental and emotional support. Enterprises should improve their support systems and policies, and create a good working atmosphere.

## Recommendation

### 1. Recommendations for Practical Use

In a pluralistic society, gender equity was an important part of promoting social justice and development. New public management proposes to improve the management and efficiency of the public sector by introducing market mechanisms and successful management methods of the private sector, to improve the quality and efficiency of public services. To achieve gender equity, the following measures could be taken:

Develop gender-sensitive policies: Public policies should take into account gender differences and take measures to eliminate or reduce gender discrimination. For example, the development of policies conducive to family and career balance to provide women with better career development opportunities.

Increase women's equal opportunities in political and professional participation: Provide women with the same opportunities as men to participate in political and professional development. Governments could set quotas to encourage women's participation in politics and decision-making.

Strengthen education and training for gender equality: raise public awareness and awareness of gender equality through education and training, and foster a sense of gender equality.

Combat gender-based violence: Combat gender-based violence such as domestic violence and sexual harassment, and provide a safe living environment for women.

Provision of gender-sensitive services and support: The public sector should provide services and support tailored to women's needs, such as maternity and infant care and domestic violence shelters.



Figure 2 Recommendations for Practical Use

Through these measures, we could build a more gender-equitable society and improve women's social status and happiness. This would help promote social justice and development and promote social prosperity and progress.



This study proposes strategies through IAA analysis. Since the first quadrant had a high degree of importance but a low degree of agreement, it indicates that employees attach great importance to the feelings of work and life, but they did not agree with this feeling. Therefore, this study only puts forward suggestions for the first quadrant.

The suggestions of this study were as follows: (1) Establish a friendly organizational atmosphere (such as equal treatment of men and women, emphasis on gender equality, fair competition for promotion opportunities), so as to enhance employees' confidence and commitment to the organization; (2) Organize family recreational activities (such as taking family members abroad), so that employees could not only work and family, but also promote the emotional connection between supervisors and family members, so as to understand each other and the work environment; (3) Establish a convenient office system (such as electronic documents), so that employees could work more efficiently, and then ease the time conflict caused by work and family; (4) Establish an enterprise administrative support network (for example, the problems encountered by employees at work could be immediately dealt with and responded to), so as to improve the enthusiasm and centripetal force of employees; (5) Timely job rotation, so that employees could mitigate the negative effects caused by long-term stress (such as burnout).

## 2. Recommendations for Future Research

Therefore, this study believed that there were three future research directions: first, expand the sampling scope by region (such as Singapore, Japan, and Thailand) or industry (such as manufacturing, science, and technology and education), and compare the differences; Second, to increase the sample of ethnic groups with different sexual orientations, such as bisexual, gay and transgender people; The third was to increase the research variables, such as organizational climate, personality traits, and its role identification.

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