



**FACULTY OF EDUCATION
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Statement of Original Authorship

Name of Candidate: YEW WONG CHIN

Registration No.: PGAX 00144


Name of Programme: MASTER OF EDUCATION

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**CONSTRAINTS ON WOMEN PURSUING HIGHER DEGREES IN LOCAL
UNIVERSITIES: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**

YEW WONG CHIN

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the constraints faced by the professional working women in the context of work-family-study conflict. This study is unique as it focuses on three informants from different ethnic groups reflecting the racial composition of Malaysian society.

In this study, the ethnographic methods of data gathering was used as this approach encourages the informants to speak freely without rigid restrictions. Three college lecturers sharing similar problems created a camaraderie, which brought out the best expression of their thoughts and actions.

In-depth analysis of the transcripts from the informants indicates that professional working women suffer various constraints in playing multiple roles as worker, mother, and student. The inter-relation of the three domains, namely work, family, and studies creates conflicts affecting each other as well as having spillover effects that run in a vicious cycle with reciprocal effects.

To reduce the degree of constraints, informants experimented role balancing, better time management, role 'compartmentalization', and lowering of their level of expectations in their roles. As a result, the informants being studied are nearer their goals of obtaining a higher degree, and in the process achieving a measure of self-actualization.

(Tajuk: Kekangan Terhadap Wanita-wanita yang Melanjutkan Pelajaran ke Peringkat Ijazah Tinggi di Universiti-universiti Tempatan: Satu Analisa Kualitatif)

ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini mengkaji kekangan yang dihadapi oleh wanita yang berkerjaya dalam konteks 'work-family-study conflict'. Kajian ini merupakan satu kajian yang unik di mana tumpuan adalah diberikan kepada tiga responden daripada tiga kumpulan etnik terbesar di Malaysia.

Di dalam kajian ini, teknik kajian etnografi telah digunakan bertujuan untuk menggalakkan responden bebas mengeluarkan pendapat. Tanpa kongkongan oleh apa-apa factor sampingan, ketiga-tiga responden ini telah berjaya berkongsi pendapat dalam perbincangan tentang konflik dari segi kerja, keluarga dan pembelajaran mereka.

Analisa data yang terperinci membuktikan bahawa wanita yang berkerjaya mengalami pelbagai kekangan dalam menjalankan peranan sebagai seorang pekerja, ibu dan pelajar dalam masa yang sama. Hubungkait antara tiga bidang ini mewujudkan konflik yang memberi kesan kepada satu sama lain dalam bentuk 'spillover effect'.

Untuk mengurangkan darjah kekangan, ketiga-tiga responden ini telah mempraktikkan keseimbangan peranan, pengurusan masa yang lebih efisien, pengkhususan peranan dan cuba mengurangkan kriteria yang perlu dipenuhi dalam setiap bidang. Hasilnya, responden yang dikaji ini telah hampir berjaya memperolehi ijazah sarjana atau kedoktoran dalam bidang mereka di samping di dalam proses merealisasikan impian mereka.

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