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### **THE INFLUENCE OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT ON TAIWANESE EXPATRIATES' BURNOUT AND TURNOVER INTENTION IN CHINA: GUANXI AS A MODERATOR**

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# The Influence of Work-Family Conflict on Taiwanese Expatriates' Burnout and Turnover Intention in China: *Guanxi* as a Moderator

Kuo-Shu YUAN<sup>1</sup>, Tung-Ju WU<sup>2</sup>, Margaret FLYNN<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

*Guanxi* has been shown to play an important role in the management of Taiwanese expatriates assigned to China. In this study, we examined the relationships between expatriates' work-family conflict, burnout, and intent to return early and the moderate role of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* in these relationships from the perspective of job demands-resources model. We used a two-waved data from a sample of 257 Taiwanese expatriates in China, and the results supported the moderating hypotheses of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi*. Besides, burnout mediated the effect of work-family conflict on intent to return early, only when Taiwanese expatriates perceived low levels of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi*. Finally, *Guanxi* would be a buffer for expatriate assignment management in the Chinese context.

*Keywords:* burnout, China, expatriate, *Guanxi*, Taiwan, turnover, work-family conflict.

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## Introduction

Taiwanese investment in China has been growing because of their cultural similarity and geographical proximity (Chiu *et al.*, 2009; Lin, Lu, & Lin, 2012; Shih, Chiang, & Hsu, 2010). Because of the Taiwan-China wage gap narrowing and a labor surplus in the Taiwanese job market (Lin & Wei, 2005; Tien & Lin, 2003), the incentive for Taiwanese workers to work in China is increasingly shifting from being financial to a question of job security. Therefore, expatriate workers must adjust to a different home and professional life, and their retention determines the success of their adjustment and assignment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas *et al.*, 2005; Shaffer & Harrison, 1998).

Arthur and Bennett (1995) indicated work-family conflict as a crucial factor affecting expatriate adjustment and assignment. Although work and family are both central in life, work and home, role expectations are almost always incompatible (van der Zee, Ali, & Salome, 2005; Jensen & Knudsen, 2017). Work-family conflict can be divided into two forms: work interfering with family (e.g., neglecting family responsibilities because of additional job tasks) and family interfering with work (e.g., being less attentive at work because of problems with parents, spouse, or children) (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996).

Work-family conflict has been demonstrated to correlate positively with burnout (Lambert & Hogan, 2010; Takeuchi, Yun, & Tesluk, 2002). However, only a few studies have discussed expatriates' burnout and adjustment (Bhanugopan & Fish, 2006; Silbiger & Pines, 2014; Wang, 2016). Adjusting to a different workplace environment; working with subordinates or colleagues from different cultural backgrounds (Firth *et al.*, 2014); and handling possible family relocation, spouse cohabitation and adjustment, and domestic responsibility assignment (Brown, 2008) – as well as problems arising at the intersection between family and professional life – may gravely undermine the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of expatriates (Pines, 2005). This underlines the need to further investigate the relationship between expatriates' work-family conflict and burnout, which affects their overseas adjustment and assignment success (i.e., no intent to return nearly to their home country) (Lee & Kartika, 2014; Silbiger & Pines, 2014).

The present study investigated a sample of Taiwanese expatriates in China to determine whether burnout mediated the effect of work-family conflict on their intent to return to Taiwan prematurely. Moreover, “*Guanxi*” (Chinese type of networks and relationships that facilitate business) plays a crucial role in expatriate assignment failure (i.e., returning to home country early) (Law *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, this study identified changes in the relationships among work-family conflict, burnout, and intent to return early using supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* within personalized networks of influence as a boundary condition, given that supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* is dominant in Chinese society.

In summary, this study examined the relationships among work-family conflict, burnout, supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi*, and intent to return to the home country early. The research questions were to determine (1) whether expatriates' burnout mediated the effects of their work-family conflict on their intent to return early to the home country; (2) the moderating effect of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* on the work-family conflict-intent to return early and work-family conflict-burnout relationships; (3) the relationships among work-family conflict, burnout, and intent to return early depending on the level of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi*.

## Hypothesis Development

### *Work-family conflict, burnout, and intent to return early*

Previous studies have identified spouse role as a crucial factor in overseas adjustment and assignment success (Konopaske, Robie, & Ivancevich, 2005; Kupka & Cathro, 2007). This was an essential factor that affected the intent of an expatriate's spouse to relocate are work commitment, importance of family members, and career planning (Brown, 2008; Kupka & Cathro, 2007). Several studies found that 21% to 41% of the spouses of Taiwanese expatriates working in China were unwilling to relocate (Ko, 2008), indicating that the vast majority of married Taiwanese expatriates in China live without their spouse. Therefore, Taiwanese expatriates encounter family problems such as spouse support, home visit frequency, and career planning (Jaw & Liu, 2004), which differ from those of their counterparts from other countries (e.g., spouse adjustment) (Jaw, 2006). For example, an excessive workload may distract an expatriate from their family, resulting in problems such as spousal estrangement and lower home visit frequency. Excessive demands from family members or the spouse, however, may reduce expatriates' work commitment, hampering their adjustment and assignment success (Lin *et al.*, 2012). That is, these conflicts from work and family could also deplete the mental resources that expatriates have during their workday, which can lead to their burnout, rendering them depressed, unconfident, and giving them a low sense of achievement regarding their assignment (Silbiger & Pines, 2014).

Based on these discussions it can be concluded that stresses from work interfering with family and family interfering with work both would increase expatriates' intent to return and induces burnout, which increases their likelihood of adjustment and assignment failure (Rosenbusch, Cerny, & Earnest, 2015). Therefore, this study hypothesized that burnout mediates the effect of work-family conflict on intent to return early. Hypothesis 1 was presented accordingly:

*H1: Expatriate burnout mediates the relationship between work-family conflict and intent to return early.*

*H1a: Expatriate burnout mediates the effects of work interfering with family on intent to return early.*

*H1b: Expatriate burnout mediates the effects of family interfering with work on intent to return early.*

### *Moderating effect of supervisor-subordinate Guanxi*

*Guanxi* is fundamental to employee management within Chinese organizations (Alston, 1989) and can facilitate expatriate intent to complete an assignment in the host country (Law *et al.*, 2000). The establishment of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* entails developing - through well-established personal networks - mutual understanding, commitment, and obligations in a tacit manner (Tsang, 1998), and it determines resource allocation, job promotion, and the distribution of financial rewards (Chen *et al.*, 2009; Law, *et al.*, 2000). Unlike leader-member exchange, which prevails in the Western corporate world and emphasizes the exchange of work-related resources (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* involves the reciprocation of nonwork-related resources. Examples included inquiring after each other's wellbeing, gifting on holidays, and the exchange of personal favors (Law *et al.*, 2000). Such relationships are typically maintained at the expense of moral principles or legal limits (Hui & Graen, 1997; Xin & Pearce, 1996). Thus, this study proposed that the relationship between expatriates and their supervisors would affect the relationships among work-family conflict, burnout, and intent to return early.

The job demands-resources model (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001) stated that, similar to job or social resources, supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* improved job fatigue and commitment (Hu, Schaufeli, & Taris, 2016). Therefore, a robust supervisor-expatriate relationship may prompt the supervisor to go beyond company policy by assigning more tasks and resources or acquiescing in requests for work time reductions. This could mitigate the negative impact of work interfering with family or family interfering with work conflict on burnout and intent to return early. In addition, supervisors' work-related or nonwork-related support can also reduce the intent to return early that arises from burnout. The following hypotheses were presented accordingly:

*H2: Supervisor-subordinate Guanxi moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and intent to return early.*

*H2a: When supervisor-subordinate Guanxi is high, the positive relationship between work interfering with family and intent to return early will be weakened.*

*H2b: When supervisor-subordinate Guanxi is high, the positive relationship between family interfering with work and intent to return early will be weakened.*

*H3: Supervisor-subordinate Guanxi moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and burnout.*

*H3a: When supervisor-subordinate Guanxi is high, the positive relationship between work interfering with family and burnout will be weakened.*

*H3b: When supervisor-subordinate Guanxi is high, the positive relationship between family interfering with work and burnout will be weakened.*

*H4: Supervisor-subordinate Guanxi moderates the positive relationship between burnout and intent to return early. That is, when supervisor-subordinate Guanxi is high, the positive relationship between burnout and intent to return early will be weakened.*

Finally, this study tried to argue that stable supervisor-expatriate relationships in the Chinese corporate context have profound implications (Hu et al., 2016). Specifically, if Guanxi would be a buffer for the stress from work and family incompatibility, it might help to reduce the negative influence of expatriates' work-family conflict, neutralizing the mediating role of burnout in the relationship between work-family conflict and intent to return early. Hypothesis 5 was presented accordingly:

*H5: Supervisor-subordinate Guanxi moderates the mediating effects of burnout on the relationship between work-family conflict and intent to return early.*

*H5a: Supervisor-subordinate Guanxi moderates the mediating effects of burnout on the relationship between work interfering with family and intent to return early.*

*H5b: Supervisor-subordinate Guanxi moderates the mediating effects of burnout on the relationship between family interfering with work and intent to return early.*

## **Methodology**

### *Sample*

A cross-sectional questionnaire was administered by e-mail to married Taiwanese people working in China. 247 responses were collected at two points in time. The mean age of the subjects was 37.56 years; the majority were male (87%), held a master's degree (61%), and worked in the manufacturing sector. Thirty-six percent lived with their spouse in China, 54% had one child or more, and 17% held a managerial position. The mean time they had been working overseas was 1.63 years.

### *Measurement*

The ten-item scales of work-family conflict (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1997) were used to measure the level of subjects' work interfering with family (5 items) and family interfering with work (5 items) on a 5-point Likert scale

(1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is .86 and .83, respectively. A shorter version of the Burnout Measure (Pines, 2005), which comprises 10 adjectives of emotion, was used to measure the level of subjects' physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = never; 7 = always). The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .89. A six-item scale of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* (Law *et al.*, 2000) was used to measure the level of relationship between the subjects and their Chinese supervisors on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .77. A three-item scale of intent to return early (Takeuchi, Yun, & Tesluk, 2002) was used to assess the subjects' intent to return early on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .81.

### *Analytic strategies*

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 17. A structural equation model (SEM) was adopted to test the measurement model and hypothesized indirect effects of work-family conflict. The model-fit indices used were  $\chi^2$ , the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and the comparative fit index (CFI).

A hierarchical regression model was used to test the hypothesized moderating effects of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* after controlling for sex (0 = female; 1 = male), age (years), education level (0 = college; 1 = graduate school), relocating with the spouse (0 = no; 1 = yes), having a child (0 = no; 1 = yes), and managerial position (0 = subordinate; 1 = supervisor). The simple slope test was used to examine the main effects of work-family conflict on intent to retain early and burnout at different levels of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi*.

Finally, bootstrapping was used to evaluate the hypothesized moderating mediation model that demonstrated how supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* can enhance or constrain these effects, and estimate the statistics and 95% confidence interval of the conditional indirect effects of work interfering with family and family interfering with work.

## **Results**

*Table 1* presented the results of confirmatory factor analysis of the baseline model and three alternative models. The proposed five-factor baseline model had a favorable fit ( $\chi^2(424) = 712.57$ , RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .05, TLI = .92, CFI = .93). None of the alternative models met the fit standards. Moreover, the  $\chi^2$  test suggested that the factor structure of the baseline model had a better fit than those of the four-factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2(4) = 136.75$ ,  $p < .001$ ), three-factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2(7)$

= 319.41,  $p < .001$ ), and one-factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2 (10) = 762.14, p < .001$ ). Table 2 presented the mean and standard deviation of the main variables.

Table 1: Measurement and structural models test

Measurement models							
Models	$\chi^2$	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	SRMR	TLI	CFI
1. Baseline model (including WIF, FIW, BO, SSQ, and IRE)	712.57	424	-	.06	.05	.92	.93
2. Four-factor model (combining WIF and FIW into one factor)	849.32	428	136.75***	.11	.09	.87	.87
3. Three-factor model (combining WIF and FIW into one factor; BO and IRE into one factor)	1031.98	431	319.41***	.15	.13	.73	.76
4. One-factor model (combining all the items into one factor)	1474.71	434	762.14***	.20	.18	.68	.71
Structural models							
5. Baseline structural model: Indirect model	602.14	248	-	.05	.04	.94	.95
6. Direct model	633.72	246	31.58***	.08	.06	.90	.92

Note. n = 274; \* $p < .050$ , \*\* $p < .010$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; WIF = work interfering with family, FIW = family interfering with work, BO = burnout, SSQ = supervisor-subordinate Guanxi, IRE = intent to return early, df = degree of freedom.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations among focused variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	37.56	6.73	-						
2. International assignment tenure	1.63	.77	.33***	-					
3. Work interfering with family	3.27	.78	-.08	-.13	(.86)				
4. Family interfering with work	2.79	.64	-.04	.07	.34**	(.83)			
5. Burnout	3.14	1.05	-.13	-.16	.38***	.39***	(.89)		
6. Supervisor-subordinate Guanxi	3.66	.81	.26**	.29**	-.30**	-.22*	-.20*	(.77)	
7. Intent to return early	2.51	.83	.12	.23*	.36***	.31**	.46***	-.29**	(.81)

Notes. n = 274; \* $p < .050$ , \*\* $p < .010$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; M = mean, SD = standard deviation; the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was presented in parentheses on the diagonal.



The results of structure equation model (Hypothesis 1) showed that the indirect-effect models of work interfering with family and family interfering with work had a favorable fit ( $\chi^2(248) = 602.14$ , RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .04, TLI = .94, and CFI = .95 in table 1). The  $\chi^2$  test suggested that the indirect-effect models compared favorably with the direct-effect models ( $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 31.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Both work interfering with family and family interfering with work positively affected burnout ( $\gamma = .23$ ,  $p < .010$ ;  $\gamma = .26$ ,  $p < .010$ , respectively), which also exerted a positive effect on intent to return early ( $\beta = .41$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Bootstrapping with a sample of 5,000 demonstrated that both work interfering with family and family interfering with work had significant indirect effects on intent to return early (estimate = .09,  $p < .050$ , 95% CI [.05, .12]; estimate = .011,  $p < .010$ , 95% CI [.13, .22], respectively), supporting H1.

Then, hierarchical regression model was conducted to evaluate the moderating effects of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* (Hypothesis 2 to Hypothesis 4). As Table 3 suggested, supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* moderated the effects of work interfering with family ( $\beta = -.22$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and family interfering with work ( $\beta = -.13$ ,  $p < .05$ ) on burnout. It also moderated the effects of work interfering with family ( $\beta = -.17$ ,  $p < .010$ ), family interfering with work ( $\beta = -.12$ ,  $p < .050$ ), and burnout ( $\beta = -.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ) on intent to return early.

Figure 1 to 5 illustrated the analysis results of the simple slopes representing the moderating effects of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi*. When supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* was high, work interfering with family did not have a significantly positive effect on burnout ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $p > .050$ ) and intent to return early ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $p > .050$ ), as did family interfering with work on burnout ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $p > .050$ ). However, family interfering with work had a significantly positive effect on intent to return early ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p < .050$ ). Moreover, with high supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi*, burnout did not had a significantly positive effect on intent to return early ( $\beta = .10$ ,  $p > .050$ ). When supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* was low, work interfering with family had a significantly positive effect on burnout ( $\beta = .47$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and intent to return early ( $\beta = .34$ ,  $p < .001$ ), whereas family interfering with work had a significantly positive effect on burnout ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and intent to return early ( $\beta = .36$ ,  $p < .001$ ), as did burnout on intent to return early ( $\beta = .54$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These results supported the moderating hypotheses (Hypothesis 2 to Hypothesis 4).

Table 3: Hierarchical regression model: the moderating effects of supervisor-subordinate Guanxi

Variables	Burnout		Intent to return early	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)
Age	.13 (.11)	.11 (.12)	.21** (.07)	.19* (.08)
Gender	.20** (.04)	.16* (.06)	.03 (.11)	.05 (.12)
Education	.09 (.21)	.09 (.20)	.08 (.17)	.07 (.17)
Relocating with spouse	.17* (.10)	.19* (.09)	.12* (.04)	.16* (.03)
Having a child	.15* (.11)	.13 (.13)	.18** (.09)	.15* (.11)
Managerial position	.07 (.18)	.10 (.17)	.09 (.14)	.11 (.13)
International assignment Tenure	-.10 (.09)	-.12 (.08)	.07 (.11)	.04 (.12)
WIF	.34*** (.03)	.30*** (.02)	.19* (.04)	.20* (.04)
FIW	.23** (.02)	.25** (.03)	.24** (.04)	.27** (.03)
SSG	-.12 (.09)	-.11 (.07)	-.10 (.09)	-.08 (.08)
BO			.36*** (.02)	.38*** (.03)
SSG × WIF		-.22** (.03)		-.17** (.02)
SSG × FIW		-.13* (.03)		-.12* (.06)
SSG × BO				-.27*** (.02)
$\Delta R^2$	.29***	.08*	.32***	.11**

Notes. n = 274; \*p < .050, \*\*p < .010, \*\*\*p < .001; WIF = work interfering with family, FIW = family interfering with work, BO = burnout, SSQ = supervisor-subordinate Guanxi.

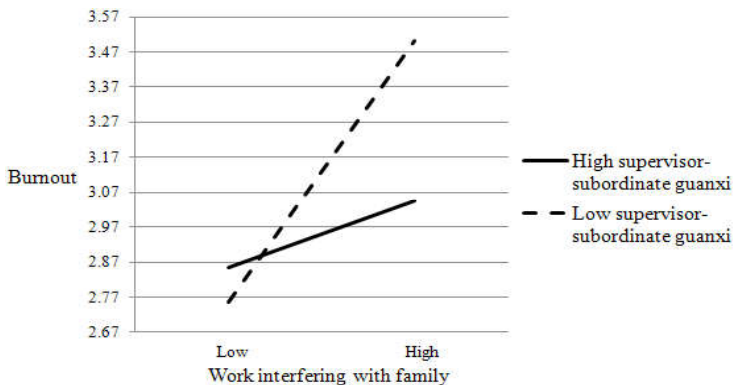


Figure 1: Moderating effect of supervisor-subordinate Guanxi on work interfering with family-burnout relationship

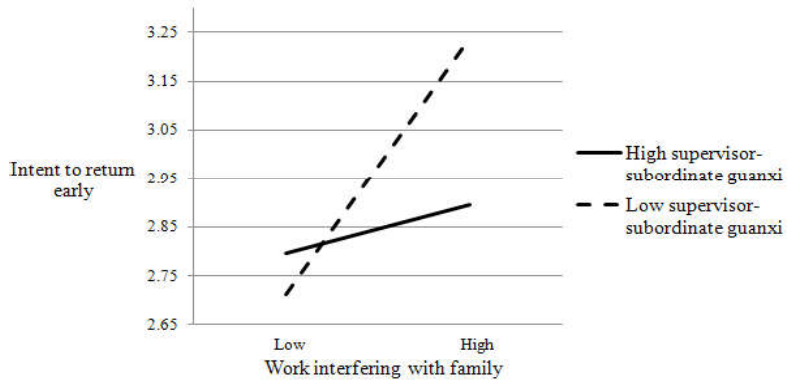


Figure 2: Moderating effect of supervisor-subordinate Guanxi on work interfering with family-intent to return early relationship

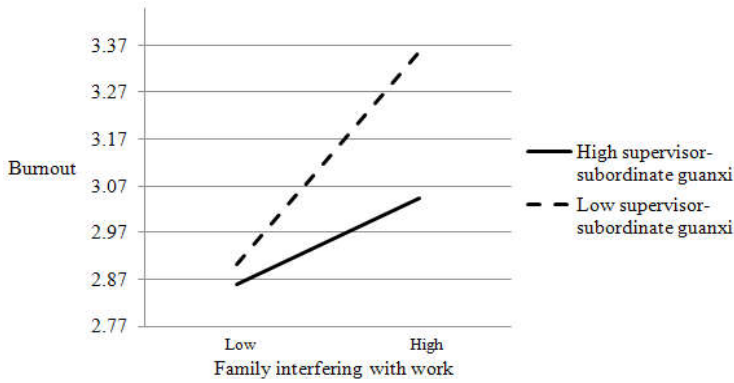


Figure 3: Moderating effect of supervisor-subordinate Guanxi on family interfering with work-burnout relationship

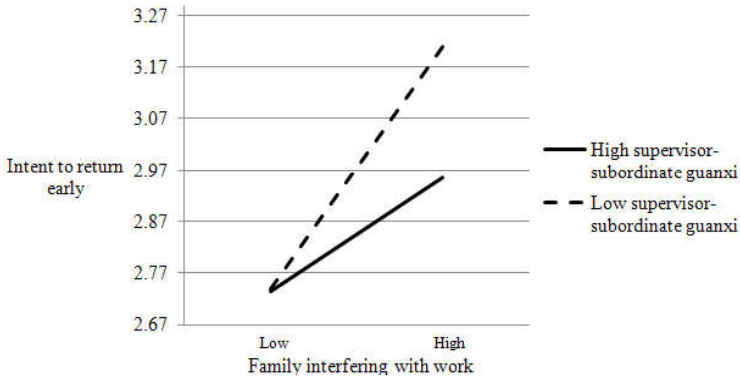


Figure 4: Moderating effect of supervisor-subordinate Guanxi on family interfering with work-intent to return early relationship

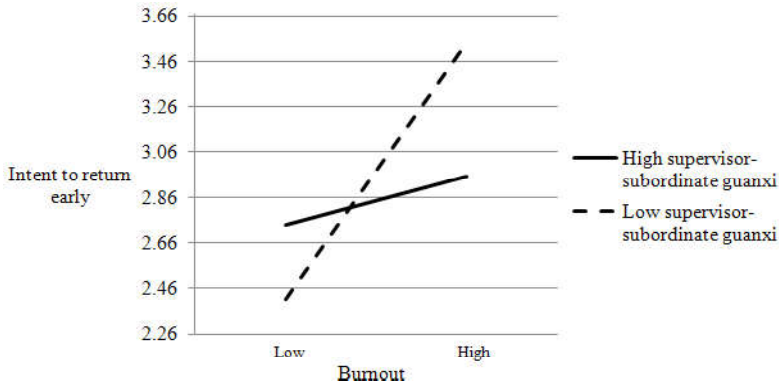


Figure 5: Moderating effect of supervisor-subordinate Guanxi on burnout-intent to return early relationship

The conditional indirect effects of work interfering with family and family interfering with work (Hypothesis 5) were tested through bootstrapping. As Table 4 showed, when supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* was lower, work interfering with family and family interfering with work had an indirect effect on intent to return early (estimate = .19,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [.16, .31]; estimate = .024,  $p < .010$ , 95% CI [.09, .27], respectively). Moreover, when supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* was higher, work interfering with family and family interfering with work did not had significant indirect effects on intent to return early (estimate = .04,  $p > .050$ , 95% CI [-.11, .09]; estimate = .10,  $p > .050$ , 95% CI [-.06, .13], respectively). Thus, these results supported *Hypothesis 5*.

Table 4: Moderated mediation results for work interfering with family and family interfering with work across level of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi*

Moderator	Work interfering with family					
	Level	Conditional indirect effect	SE	z	95% confidence interval	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
Supervisor-subordinate <i>Guanxi</i>	Lower	.19	.05	3.7	.16	.31
	Higher	.04	.03	1.4	-.11	.09
Moderator	Family interfering with work					
	Level	Conditional indirect effect	SE	z	95% confidence interval	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
Supervisor-subordinate <i>Guanxi</i>	Lower	.24	.10	2.5	.09	.27
	Higher	.10	.06	1.6	-.06	.13

Notes. n = 274.

### Discussion

This study used a sample of Taiwanese expatriates in China to investigate the relationship among work-family conflict, burnout, supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi*, and intent to return early. The expatriates’ work interfering with family and family interfering with work positively affected their burnout and intent to return early, which was consistent with previous studies. Moreover, burnout mediated the effects of work interfering with family and family interfering with work on intent to return early. Previous studies on expatriates’ stress have been extensively documented, but their burnout due to excessive work stress is relatively less understood (Silbiger & Pines, 2014). The Expatriates may also encounter heavier work stress as the competitive gap between their home and host country narrows (Lin *et al.*, 2012). Future research should be conducted into work-family conflict-induced burnout, which affects expatriates in a variety of ways, particularly within Chinese society (Hu *et al.*, 2016; Wu, Tsai, & Tai, 2016).

In the present study, a regression analyses suggested that expatriate-supervisor *Guanxi* moderated the positive relationships among work-family conflict, burnout, and intent to return early and that between burnout and intent to return early. Therefore, if expatriates *get along* well with their supervisors, their job burden or family stress might be lower, which can reduce their probability of burnout and intent to return early. Such relationships can also increase an expatriate’s access to privileges (Law *et al.*, 2000); however, it would not improve family interfering with work-induced intent to return early or help to address family problems associated with, for example, the feelings or career planning of the expatriate’s spouse. Regardless of its strength, the expatriate-supervisor *gaunxi* would also moderate work-family conflict (work interfering with family and family interfering with work) and burnout, except for work interfering with family-induced intent to return early.

As to the moderating mediation model of *Guanxi*, work interfering with family and family interfering with work were discovered to have indirect effects on expatriates' intent to return early, but only when the expatriate-supervisor *Guanxi* was weak. Above all, the findings of this study highlighted the significance of *Guanxi* to human resource management within Chinese business organizations and can be used to inform the management of expatriates in a manner that facilitates their overseas adjustment and improves their assignment success. Expatriates may then achieve retention or perform better during their assignment. This outcome can be achieved by building an informal communications network within the organization to expedite information sharing (Lam *et al.*, 2015) or by periodically hosting informal gatherings to ensure that employees feel valued even when off duty (Ngo, Foley, & Loi, 2009).

This study had several limitations and proposed the corresponding directions for future research. First, the internal validity of the cross-sectional questionnaire used in this study was limited. This limitation can be addressed by adopting an experimental design that includes manipulation of the relationship between events or activities and ascertaining whether this manipulation lessens the negative effect of work-family conflict on expatriates' outcomes. Second, the findings used a sample of Taiwanese expatriates in China; whether they could be generalized to non-Taiwanese expatriates necessitates further research. Third, the scales used in this study were all self-reported and inevitably caused common method variance. Administering the instruments at different temporal points or applying a dyadic design (i.e., expatriates and their spouses) for the work-family conflict scale may improve the results of the study.

## Conclusion

This study surveyed a sample of Taiwanese expatriates in China to determine the relationships among work-family conflict, burnout, supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi*, and intent to the return early. When supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* was weak, burnout mediated the effect of work interfering with family and family interfering with work on intent to return early. The findings highlighted the importance of supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* resources. That is, although supervisor-subordinate *Guanxi* may go beyond work ethics and company rules, developing a comprehensive understanding of this Chinese-styled relationship and utilizing it judiciously could facilitate the management of expatriates, particularly those working for Chinese organizations.

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