

# The Mental Health of Indonesian Male Breadwinners: Family Harmony as a Moderator Between Perceived Stress and Psychological Well-Being

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These days, despite the increasing attention directed to mental health, men are typically placed on the back burner of these discussions due to the social stigma that men are supposed to be strong breadwinners. Multiple studies have found a negative association between perceived stress and psychological well-being, ergo, it is important to expand these studies to include the well-being of male breadwinners. Other literature has also suggested that the presence of a harmonious family might help buffer the effects of stress on well-being. Therefore, this study consisting of 304 participants aimed to understand the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being, and whether family harmony can moderate this relationship in male breadwinners. Results from linear regression models found that perceived stress predicted psychological well-being in male breadwinners ( $R^2 = .30, p < .01$ ), and the moderated regression models also showed family harmony to be a significant moderator between perceived stress and psychological well-being in male breadwinners ( $R^2 = .40, \beta = -.04, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.06, -.02]$ ). Aside from adding to the body of research on stress and family psychology, the practical implications of this study highlight the need for family-centered therapy and workplace policies that support the well-being of male breadwinners.

*Keywords:* male breadwinner, perceived stress, psychological well-being, family harmony

In recent generations, the topic of mental health is more prevalent than ever before. There is a rise in mental health acknowledgment as an integral part of overall health (Mance, 2022). Be that as it may, there is surprisingly very little research done on the mental health of men. This may be caused by societal views of men that expect them to adhere to harmful outdated gender roles prohibiting them from showing any kind of “weakness” to be strong breadwinners (Dyer, 2021).

In the book “Troubled Men”, discussing the psychology, emotional conflicts, and therapy of men (Fine, 1988), men are noted to be infamously reluctant to openly express their feelings, especially if they are characteristically tender feelings. Men do not easily communicate with others because they are often regarded as the “strong and silent type.” This is most likely due to the mainstream ideology of masculinity (Brannon, 1976), which dictates that men must avoid anything that seems remotely feminine; men must seek out respect, especially as breadwinners; men are expected to always remain calm by being the “strong and silent type” (as aforementioned); and men must have the virtue of risk-taking and adventure, even to the point of violence when need be.

Taken from a book on male psychology (Levant & Wong, 2017), these ideologies are products of sociocultural beliefs about what it means to be a man, which are then appraised within the community. Although these pillars of masculinity could certainly lead

to harming others and oneself, men may still adhere to such unhealthy gender roles to avoid social punishment and gain social rewards for being masculine (p. 140). The same set of norms that push for self-reliance and emotional control make it challenging for men to seek help or even acknowledge their struggles.

According to Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, the age of 30 to the late 40s would be the phase of Generativity vs. Stagnation, which is considered to occur during middle adulthood (Malone et al., 2016). This stage starts when the individual has established their own family and career. These individuals strive to do well in both work and family settings to ensure their future success. This period is described as a time when an individual is satisfied with family life and occupation amongst other life milestones, but because of this, they also face the burden of financial obligation when they have yet to secure a high income while facing crucial family-related choices.

A review of the assumptions surrounding men’s mental health (Smith et al., 2016) explains how there is an issue of men being less open to talking about psychological problems due to negative societal stereotypes. Therefore, they might downplay their struggles and escape through addiction or unsafe practices, causing practitioners to erroneously recognize symptoms for a different mental evaluation. A more recent study (Shepherd et al., 2023), adding to Smith et al.’s (2016) theories, posits that masculine socialization

and masculine hegemony are partly responsible for the men's reluctance to reveal their mental distress. They described masculine socialization as the learned values and behaviors from other men, which typically favor "aggression, stoicism, individuality, and self-sufficiency" (p. 1). Meanwhile, masculine hegemony was identified as the cultural expectation for men to be immune to emotions and vulnerability.

This mental health crisis for men should warrant a state of alarm because deteriorating mental health can lead to the development of mental disorders, which then increases the risk of suicidality (Yeh et al., 2019). Hence, if that is the picture of poor mental health, then the perspective of good mental health would not only be the absence of mental illnesses but also a state of psychological well-being. In itself, psychological well-being is conceptually defined as the state of an individual thriving in every aspect of human life despite challenges (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryff, 1995).

In this generation where the fight for equality is higher than ever before, men who are stereotypically called to be breadwinners are facing a dilemma. They would like to do things that are more meaningful to them, but they simultaneously wish to provide for their family financially (Stone, 2022). Despite the increasing number of women joining the workforce, and even replacing their husbands as the family breadwinner, there are still some families who uphold the male-breadwinning model.

The combined feeling of inadequacy faced by male breadwinners with the burden of societal gender roles creates the expectation that they should be all-capable breadwinners, leading to feelings of stress. Every individual has different thresholds for stress; what may be considered a normal occurrence for one may be a source of distress for another (Selye, 1978), which is why stress is subjective to the perceiver. Perceived stress is conceptually defined as the subjective responses of individuals when faced with stressful occurrences (Cohen et al., 1983).

According to a study by Casipong et al. (2022), breadwinners were found to be sensitive to social support, especially from their family members. Although they are undoubtedly motivated by their love for their family to work hard, they are still susceptible to work-related stressors and challenges. Their stress could also be exacerbated by their sense of responsibility to provide for their family. How-

ever, having their family as the closest connection to receiving support can enhance their subjective well-being despite facing stress. Even in the face of pandemic stress, engaging with family members managed to buffer the effects of stress (Bates et al., 2021).

Generally, relationships hold the most pivotal role in shaping well-being in multiple cultures (Delle Fave et al., 2016, as cited in Demirci, 2021; Wissing et al., 2019). Another definition of psychological well-being is to flourish (Diener et al., 2010, as cited in Demirci, 2021), and harmonious family relationships have frequently been found to facilitate that (Bethell et al., 2019; Kaya & Önder, 2023; Wang et al., 2019). The concept of family harmony itself could be defined as a family relationship with its own identity built on communication and tolerance to resolve conflict, while also enjoying quality time spent with each other (Kavikondala et al., 2016).

Interdependence and this interpersonal harmony are essential for people's well-being in Eastern societies (Demirci, 2021), and it has been recorded decades ago (Kwan et al., 1997). Although Indonesia is located in Southeast Asia, its culture of valuing interpersonal relations is still aligned with most Eastern countries. While studies on stress and family relations are scarce, findings by Kavikondala et al. (2016) suggest that family harmony has a buffering effect against stress, which could preserve the individual's well-being. Hence, it has become the main focus of this research.

## Current Study

This study observed the breadwinner male population. As the topic previously touched upon, male breadwinners face their own unique set of problems (Crowley, 1998), but this issue is rarely discussed due to misconceptions surrounding men's mental health (Smith et al., 2016). Selye (1978) wrote that stress is an inseparable part of life; any emotion and activity could be a source of stress. However, it is how an individual adapts to stress that impacts their overall well-being. On that account, there was a more prominent gap on whether family harmony can buffer the effects of perceived stress to keep it from affecting an individual's overall well-being, leading to several research questions for this study: 1) Could the perceived stress of the male breadwinner predict their psychological well-being? 2) Could family harmony moderate the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being in male breadwinners?

***Research Question 1: Could the perceived stress of the male breadwinner predict their psychological well-being?***

Although there have been numerous definitions of stress, Cohen et al. (1997) have consolidated the various perspectives on stress to define it as a process when demands of stressors exceed an individual's capabilities, resulting in adverse physical and mental health risks for an individual. Prior to this definition, Cohen et al. (1983) developed a global measure of perceived stress based on the subjective responses of individuals towards specific stressful occurrences.

In the transactional model of stress and coping, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) discovered that a person's interpretation or reaction towards the stressor has the most significant impact on their stress levels compared to the stressful situation itself. The broad understanding of stress is a person's state when an event exceeds their adaptive resources to cope (Monat & Lazarus, 1991). Therefore, the primary appraisal of the model is to assess how the event will affect a person's psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being is a broad construct encompassing all quality-of-life dimensions (Eiroa-Orosa, 2020). Ryff (1995), the developer of the six-factor psychological well-being model, described psychological well-being as "a breadth of wellness that includes ... self-acceptance, positive relationships with other people, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth" (p. 99). Many studies have found that perceived stress could have damaging effects on psychological well-being (see Ceri & Cicek, 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Nazir et al., 2020). Even though it has been proven that stress is inversely related to psychological well-being, prior studies typically center specific professions. Therefore, this study would like to add a new perspective in which the focus would be the general perceived stress of male breadwinners and its relation to their psychological well-being.

H1: Perceived stress predicts the psychological well-being of male breadwinners.

***Research Question 2: Could family harmony moderate the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being in male breadwinners?***

While stress initially seems to be closely related to psychological well-being, many studies have found that there is more than meets the eye in their

relationships. One interesting finding from a study on dual-earner families (Schwartzberg & Dytell, 1996) pointed out the significance of family matters in predicting fathers' psychological well-being. Although both work and family stressors could predict fathers' depressive symptoms, the study highlights how one significant predictor was a "lack of spousal support" (p. 216). They also discovered an unexpected negative relationship between the support from their child and the fathers' depression, wherein "the greater the reported lack of support from children, the lower the level of reported depression." (p. 216).

Family psychology is grounded in the theory that families are structured by relational systems that interact with their environment, such as demographic cultures (Thoburn & Sexton, 2015). Within Asian contexts, family harmony could be tied to the relational models theory and Confucian ethics (Chuang, 2005). It was also concluded that the communal sharing model is fundamental for family relationship quality. In Chinese families, the facets of family harmony partially draw from the family strengths model while adding traits of forbearance and family identity (Kavikondala et al., 2016). According to an Indonesian perspective, family harmony is marked by a general sense of happiness and overall satisfaction when there is a lack of tension and disappointment (Gunarsa, 2002). Alternatively, another Indonesian perspective believes that family harmony is achieved through the synthesis of both husband and wife as a married couple, basing their relationship on sincerity and shared values even in the face of differences (Walgito, 1991).

A study by Demirci (2021) conducted a correlational analysis of the relationships between "family harmony, interdependent happiness, harmony in life, and flourishing." Their results indicated a positive relationship between all the variables, consistent with past findings. In a study exploring the facets of well-being in China (Wang et al., 2019), family harmony was strongly associated with the happiness, meaning, purpose, and social dimensions of well-being. The participants reported that family harmony made them feel satisfied and valuable; it also increased their worldview optimism. A qualitative study analyzing the factors determining people's well-being also included family harmony for the participants (Xu & Liu, 2023). Meanwhile, ruptured family relationships were correlated with decreased life satisfaction and heightened depres-

sion in older Chinese parents (Chen & Zhou, 2021).

However, it is important to note that although prior studies have focused on family harmony as an antecedent to well-being, some have found poor well-being preceding family harmony (Ni et al., 2019). In this case, it is not a matter of causality but merely a trend in research of one being put first over the other. Keeping in mind that family harmony is especially related to psychological well-being in Asian contexts (see Chen & Zhou, 2021; Demirci, 2021; Kaya & Önder, 2023), the combination of these concepts creates a reason to believe family harmony could play a role in the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being. This assumption is backed by the stress-buffering hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985), which states that social support could act as a stress buffer because it filters a person's reaction to stress. Such support may lessen the harmful impacts of stress by providing resources to deal with the problem or by putting it into the perspective of a bigger picture. In terms of emotional support, it could counterbalance the threats of stress against self-esteem by serving as a reminder to the person of their worth. However, instead of focusing on social support, this study will highlight the social environment instead, namely the family.

Within family-oriented cultures, individuals rely on their families as their central source of emotional support when they face work-related stress (Fiorilli et al., 2019). The strongest reference point for this study would be the conclusion drawn from Kavikondala et al. (2016), where a strong negative correlation between family harmony and depressive symptoms, yet a weak correlation with stressful events was found. This implies family bonds could serve as a safety net against stressors because the bonds are independent of the stressors. Additionally, the interaction between family harmony and stress was the link to explain depressive symptoms. Therefore, the researchers proposed family harmony might act as a buffer to keep the individual from developing depressive symptoms in the face of stress.

H2: Family harmony moderates the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being in male breadwinners.

## Method

A non-experimental quantitative moderation analysis was used for this study, assessing three variables: perceived stress, psychological well-being,

and family harmony. Data collection was conducted in the Jakarta metropolitan area of Indonesia through an online survey. Since this study was conducted online, there were no tools needed aside from a working device to fill in the questionnaire for the participants to utilize at their disposal.

## Participants

Participants were mainly recruited through social media platforms and word-of-mouth; this included messaging app broadcasts, social media posts, and referrals. There were 304 participants in total. Criteria for participants included: adult males between the age of 30–40 years old, married with children between the age of 3–12 years old, act as the breadwinner of the family, live within the Jakarta metropolitan area, and live with their nuclear family (no extended family members in the household).

The age restriction (30–40 years old) was chosen because this period aligns with key developmental stages in adulthood, where men typically face peak career demands and family responsibilities. Additionally, focusing on the Jakarta metropolitan area hopes to limit extraneous variables from living conditions, family and work cultures, and commuting times. This restriction on the children's age of the participants is due to the consideration that parents have usually adapted better to new parenthood after their child reaches the age of three. Furthermore, the Indonesian education system typically spans from 3 to 12 years old, equating to a child's school age. Beyond 12 years old, children typically begin adolescence, and this age group has different sets of problems for the parents to handle. The geographical limitation was decided with the consideration that the Jakarta metropolitan area is the center of business trade in Indonesia, with the largest working population in the country. These specific criteria aimed to minimize confounding variables possibly affecting the study.

## Measurements

### *Demographic questionnaire*

The demographic questionnaire included questions to assess their age, city address, commuting time from their workplace to their home, marital status, occupational status, income range, spending range, wife's occupational status, percentage of wife's earnings to total household income, number of children, the age of the youngest and oldest child (if they only had one child, they could state the same age as their youngest).



***Perceived Stress (Dependent Variable)***

Perceived stress was measured by the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen et al., 1983), which had been translated into Indonesian (Nadyastuti et al., 2021). There are a total of 10 items in the scale, and none of the items are reverse-scored. Participants indicated their answers using the 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "Never" and 5 being "Very Often." Perceived stress is operationally defined as the total score on the PSS, wherein higher scores indicate greater perceived stress. The translated version of the PSS had high reliability with the value of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  scoring at .91.

***Psychological Well-Being (Independent Variable)***

Psychological well-being was measured by the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS; Ryff, 1989), which had been translated into Indonesian (Salamah et al., 2023). There are 42 items across six dimensions (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance) in the scale, with 20 items reversed-scored. Participants indicated their answers according to the 7-point scale with the lowest being "Strongly Disagree" and the highest being "Strongly Agree." Psychological well-being is operationally defined as the total score on the PWBS, wherein higher scores indicate greater psychological well-being. The translated version of the PWBS had high reliability with the value of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  scoring at .91.

***Family Harmony (Moderating Variable)***

Family harmony was measured by the Family Harmony Scale (FHS-24; Kavikondala et al., 2016), which had been translated into Indonesian (Fauziah et al., 2021). There are 24 items across five dimensions (communication, conflict resolution, forbearance, family identity, and quality time) in the scale, with none of the items reverse-scored. Participants could indicate their answer according to the 5-point scale with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 5 being "Strongly Agree." Family harmony is operationally defined as the total score on the FHS-24, wherein higher scores indicate greater family harmony. The FHS-24 had high reliability with the value of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  scoring at .91.

***Procedure***

This study used Google Forms as a platform to gather responses from the participants through questionnaires. Upon clicking the link provided in the study announcement, participants were given an informed consent form where they could indicate

their consent by ticking the box at the very end of the page. Afterward, they were given a demographic questionnaire to assess their eligibility for participation. If participants fulfilled all the criteria for this study, they were directed to the next page containing the first set of questionnaires. If they failed to meet even one of the criteria, they were automatically directed to the end of the form with the description that they did not fulfill the criteria for this study.

Participants who were directed to the next page of the study were presented with the PSS first, followed by the PWBS second, and then the FHQ last. After participants had finished answering all the questions on the final page, they were thanked for their participation, and a link was included for them to share with other people. The entire sequence was expected to be completed within 20 minutes or less.

***Results***

This study aimed to study the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being, and whether family harmony moderates this relationship in male breadwinners. The measurements used in this study were tested for reliability and were found to be reliable in all dimensions. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen et al., 1983) has a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .83, the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS; Ryff, 1989) has a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .82, and the Family Harmony Scale (FHS-24; Kavikondala et al., 2016) has a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .83.

A total of 304 participants were included in the data analysis. Based on their demographics, most of the participants were between the ages of 33 and 35 years old (43.8%), lived in Jakarta (57.2%), spent 30 – 60 minutes for work commute (76.3%), were high-school graduates (59.9%), with bachelor's graduates numbering at (35.2%), worked as private sector employees (87.5%), earned Rp 5.000.000 – Rp 10.000.000 a month (69.7%) and spent as much as that amount (60.5%), and had housewives (56.9%, instead of working wives) as well as two children (54.6%).

This study hypothesized that perceived stress predicts the psychological well-being of male breadwinners; and that family harmony moderates the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being in male breadwinners. The data analyzing procedure was done through PROCESS by Hayes using the moderated regression analysis (Model 1).

Based on the categorization of the participants in Table 1 (see Appendix A), it was found that most of the participants in this study reported low perceived stress (98.0%), high psychological well-being (88.8%), and high family harmony (98.7%).

Classical assumption tests were conducted for normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity to determine the relationship between variables. Normality tests showed that the residual data (Kolmogorov-Smirnov = 1.29,  $p = .101$ ) were normally distributed. Linearity tests showed that the relationship between perceived stress ( $p < .01$ ) and family harmony ( $p < .01$ ) with psychological well-being was linear. There were also no signs of heteroscedasticity based on the tests on perceived stress ( $p = .832$ ) and family harmony ( $p = .090$ ), neither were there signs of multicollinearity for both perceived stress and family harmony with psychological well-being as the dependent variable (Tolerance = .710, VIF = 1.408).

Based on the correlations in Table 2 (see Appendix B), psychological well-being has a statistically significant negative correlation with perceived stress ( $r = -.545$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and a statistically significant positive correlation with family harmony ( $r = .504$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, perceived stress was also found to be significantly negatively correlated with family harmony ( $r = -.538$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Additionally, linear regression models for perceived stress and psychological well-being also showed a significant linear correlation ( $R^2 = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which indicates that perceived stress predicts psychological well-being with a 30% rate.

Table 3 (see Appendix C) shows the analysis results through a moderated regression model with PROCESS© (Hayes, 2013). The model included perceived stress and family harmony as predictors of psychological well-being. The moderated regression model was found to be significant with  $R^2 = .40$  ( $p < .001$ ). The effect of family harmony interacting with perceived stress on psychological well-being is shown to be significant ( $\beta = -.04$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI  $[-.06, -.02]$ ).

Figure 1 illustrates how all three levels of family harmony (low, moderate, high) show a downward trend, indicating a negative relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being at all levels of family relationships. The relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being in the group reporting high family harmony (FH = 119.52) has the same model as the group reporting low family har-

mony (FH = 103.30), yet psychological well-being levels were consistently higher in the former compared to the latter. The same goes for the group reporting moderate family harmony (FH = 111.41), which has the slope placed between the high and low groups. This trend was observed to be the same across all the dimensions of psychological well-being and family harmony. This suggests that when family harmony is lower, the impact of perceived stress on psychological well-being is stronger. As family harmony increases, this effect weakens. Therefore, it can be concluded that family harmony significantly moderates the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being. However, the interaction pattern stays the same, the only difference being the intensity of the relationship.

### Discussion

The findings of this study showed that perceived stress predicts psychological well-being, and family harmony significantly moderates the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being. This supported both hypotheses, wherein perceived stress predicts the psychological well-being of male breadwinners (H1), and family harmony moderates the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being in male breadwinners (H2). Therefore, the results are consistent with past literature that found perceived stress could affect psychological well-being (see Ceri & Cicek, 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Nazir et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the findings from this study supported Kavikondala et al.'s (2016) implication that family harmony has a buffering effect against stress, protecting an individual's psychological well-being. However, their implication was drawn based on stressful events being weakly correlated with family harmony. In contrast, this study found family harmony to be significantly correlated with perceived stress. That being said, it is still in line with another study that found family support to be a protective factor that moderates the negative effects of stress, while also being significantly negatively correlated with it (Tselebis et al., 2020).

The transactional model of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), one of the theoretical bases of this study, explains how stress affects well-being since it depends on the cognitive appraisal and coping resources in response to stress. It explains why the results of this study align with past literature despite being assessed on an unexplored demographic

(i.e. male breadwinners). The role of family harmony as a moderator is grounded in the social buffering hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985), another one of the theoretical bases of this study, which posits that social relationships could mitigate the negative effects of stress. Although research focusing on the role of family harmony as a moderator toward stress is nonexistent, there is a high chance that this study could be generalized to other populations. However, variance might occur due to cultural differences between collectivists and individualists (Triandis, 1995).

While this study highlights family harmony as a key moderator between perceived stress and psychological well-being, an alternative explanation could be the role of economic security in shaping well-being. A stable income may reduce financial stress, provide a sense of achievement, and allow men to support their families, reinforcing their role as successful providers. This aligns with Erikson's psychosocial theory, where middle adulthood is characterized by generativity; in this context, the ability to contribute meaningfully to one's family.

Given that the study was conducted in the Jakarta Metropolitan Area, Indonesia's largest economic hub, participants likely have greater economic opportunities compared to those in smaller cities or rural areas. Furthermore, urban areas like Jakarta offer better infrastructure, healthcare access, and social services, which can improve quality of life and buffer the negative effects of stress. However, while economic security provides a foundational sense of stability, it does not necessarily replace the emotional and relational support provided by strong family bonds.

It should be noted that the scores from the participants of this study leaned more toward the positive spectrum. The vast majority of the sample's perceived stress levels were low to begin with, and their psychological well-being and family harmony were mostly high as well. This phenomenon might be explained by the aforementioned theory from the book "Troubled Men" (Fine, 1988), which mentions how men tend to be in denial of their problems; hence, they may minimize or dismiss their feelings altogether (Shepherd et al., 2023).

Moreover, the burden of feeling responsible for providing and holding the role of head in their family for Indonesian men (BPS RI, 2023), could have worsened their repression of stress (Adamson et al., 2020). The possibility of misreporting their feelings in

the answers due to self-report bias was possible since this study utilized self-report questionnaires. Coupled with the tendency for Indonesians to highly value family relations (Serrato & Melnick, 1995), samples might have wished to rate their family in a positive light, leading to answers based on social desirability.

Limitations in this study include the exclusivity of male breadwinners who are at the age of peak productivity. Therefore, generalizability needs to be taken with caution. Husbands in general, especially those who are non-breadwinners, may result in different steepness in the graph between perceived stress, psychological well-being, and family harmony. The location of this study also focuses on the Jakarta metropolitan area, which is undoubtedly an urban area. Populations in rural areas might also yield different results considering the dissimilarity in culture, occupations, and limitations to structural and digital developments.

In addition, one of the criteria for participation was that men had to live with their nuclear family without any extended family members in the household. Therefore, the results do not reflect individuals who are considered the sandwich generation. This refers to "a generation of people who are caring for their aging parents while supporting their children" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), a trend that is on the rise in Indonesia (Natalia, 2024).

Similarly, the age restriction for children only accounts for individuals with preschool to school-age children, a developmental period that contrasts with newborns and adolescents. Further limitations of the study's design include the aforementioned potential for self-report bias. Therefore, future research could consider exploring mixed-method approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of male breadwinners' experiences.

Future studies on this topic could enhance the generalizability of these findings by expanding the population to include breadwinning men of all ages, rather than limiting to a decade age span. It would be interesting to note how perception of family importance relates to their well-being depending on how far along they are in their career path. Addressing the geographical limitation, especially focusing on the difference in cultures, rural occupations (e.g. fieldwork, handicrafts, etc.), and the current state of developments, would surely enrich the perspective on this subject.

Moreover, their involvement with their chil-

dren as fathers should also be taken into account. Female breadwinners are often associated with dual responsibilities, that of being a breadwinner and a parent (Sánchez-Mira, 2021). Considering the increasing awareness of the importance of paternal involvement in a child's life, this aspect of family dynamic should also account for the men's evaluation of their family harmony and well-being.

As previously mentioned in the limitations, qualitative interviews mixed with quantitative findings could provide in-depth insights into participants' lived experiences. It would be even more ideal if the interviews included the breadwinner's spouse and children to uncover biases in self-reported data. Conducting longitudinal studies on this topic might distinguish correlation from causation in relationships like stress, well-being, and family dynamics. This approach can reveal how family harmony evolves and whether its moderating effect on stress strengthens or weakens over the years.

## Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned data analysis and discussion, it could be concluded that perceived stress predicts the psychological well-being of male breadwinners, which supports this study's first hypothesis. Furthermore, family harmony moderates the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being in male breadwinners, which supports the second hypothesis. Although individuals who experience higher perceived stress typically see a reduction in psychological well-being, having higher harmony within their family can mitigate the effects of stress and lessen its impact on their psychological well-being.

This study could serve as a brief overview of the male breadwinner population regarding their perceived stress, psychological well-being, and family harmony. It could serve as an illustration on how families as a whole unit could support these men who typically hide their struggles and deal with their mental burden alone. Despite stress being an inevitable part of life, it does not have to be detrimental to one's well-being. Moreover, it adds to the body of research on family harmony by creating links towards perceived stress and psychological well-being, specifically for the male breadwinner population.

Practical implications from this study could be applied to family psychologists and the general public. By shedding light on the buffering effects of family harmony against the deleterious impact of

stress, men who have taken a hit to their well-being and have started to lose meaning in their lives may benefit from turning to the closest interpersonal system with an individual, namely their family. Educators can offer psychoeducation to highlight the importance of fostering healthy family dynamics.

Family psychologists or therapists can focus on strengthening familial bonds as a form of stress reduction. Workplaces could also implement employee assistance programs that include family-centered counseling and design family-friendly policies to enhance the well-being of male breadwinners. Specifically on workplace mental health policies, employers could consider offering work-from-home options or flexible schedules to allow more family time, issuing paid parental leave for breadwinning fathers, and encouraging employees to invite their families to organizational events or recreational activities.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the need to support the mental health of male breadwinners by strengthening family harmony as a buffer against stress. These findings call for greater collaboration between families, mental health professionals, and workplaces to foster supportive environments. Future research should further explore the diverse factors that shape male breadwinners' well-being across different life stages and contexts.

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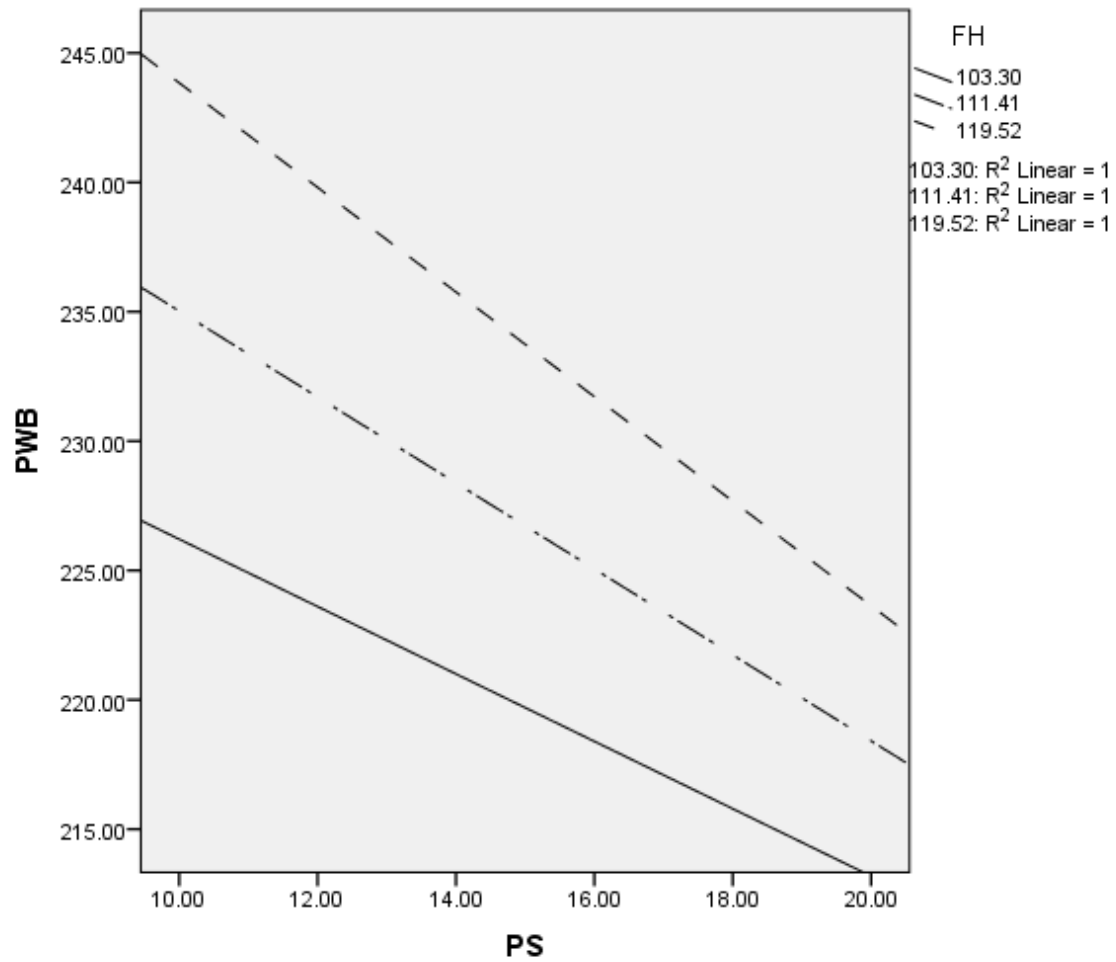
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## THE MENTAL HEALTH OF INDONESIAN MALE BREADWINNERS

**Figure 1**

*The Moderating Effect of Family Harmony on the Interaction Between Perceived Stress and Psychological Well-Being*



*Note.* PWB = Psychological well-being, PS = Perceived Stress, FH = Family Harmony



## Appendix A

Table 1

*Participant Categorization*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Perceived Stress	Low	298	98.0%
	Moderate	6	2.0%
	High	0	0.0%
Psychological Well-Being	Low	0	0.0%
	Moderate	34	11.2%
	High	270	88.8%
Family Harmony	Low	1	0.3%
	Moderate	3	1.0%
	High	300	98.7%

*Note.*  $N = 304$

# THE MENTAL HEALTH OF INDONESIAN MALE BREADWINNERS

## Appendix B

**Table 2**

*Correlations*

<b>Variable</b>	Psychological Well-Being	Perceived Stress	Family Harmony
Psychological Well-Being	1		
Perceived Stress	-.545**	1	
Family Harmony	.504**	-.538**	1

*Note.* \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## Appendix C

Table 3

*Moderated Regression Analysis with PROCESS©*

Variable	$\beta$	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	LLCI	ULCI
			.63	.40	67.48***		
Perceived Stress	3.28**	2.94				1.09	5.47
Family Harmony	1.53***	6.39				1.06	2.01
Perceived Stress*Family Harmony	-.04***	-4.45				-.06	-.02

*Note.*  $N = 304$ ; dependent variable = Psychological Well-Being; \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$  dan \* $p < .05$ ; The significance of the estimates is based on a 95% confidence interval; Perceived Stress  $\rightarrow$  Psychological Well-Being