

DETERMINANTS OF PROACTIVE CAREER BEHAVIOUR AMONG FEMALE WORKERS: PROACTIVE PERSONALITY AS A MODERATOR

Chew Sze Cheah^{1*}, Sin Yee Cheong², Cheng Ling Tan³, Jian Ai Yeow⁴

^{1,2,4} Faculty of Business, Multimedia University, Melaka, Malaysia

³ Graduate School of Business, University Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

*Corresponding Author: cheah.chew.sze@mmu.edu.my

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Abstract: Nowadays, the increasing trend of female labour force participation in Malaysia signifies a positive impact on Malaysia gross domestic product (GDP) which helps to boost the economy. Many companies begin to realise the significance of women in the organization as they will help to improve the quality of engagement and mutual understanding between organizations and the community. Nevertheless, the proactive career behaviour of women becomes more vital to be understood for encouraging and retaining women in the workplace. Female employees slowly become an important contributor to today's economy and yet, there is scare of researches on this related topic. In this, the researchers are motivated to study the determinants of proactive career behaviour among female employee. This study is based on 150 female employees who work in the private sectors in Peninsular Malaysia. The motivating factors include future work self, career adaptability, perceived career barriers, dispositional hope and proactive personality. The moderator role of proactive personality was also assessed in the model. Descriptive and inferential statistics are used to determine the relationship between those variables. In this research, the result has shown that future work self and proactive personality are significant influence the proactive career behaviour of female employees. Contrary to our expectation, there is insufficient evidence to support moderating effects in the study. This study contributes some implication to management to act to foster the proactive behaviour of female employees. Common method variance and generalisation issue due to small sample size are some of the limitations. Thus, some recommendation for future research were laid out in the study.

Keywords: career adaptability, future work self, proactive career behaviour, proactive personality

Introduction

Empowering women in leadership position not only can be leveraging on diversity as a source of strength but also optimise the untapped talent. As the literacy rate for Malaysian women marked 96.3 per cent in 2017 and it was considered the second-highest as compared against the ASEAN countries (Department of Statistic, 2020a). Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) has a positive impact on Malaysia gross domestic product (GDP) which lead to the growth of Malaysia economy. Department of Statistic Malaysia (2020b) reported that LFPR was reaching 55.7 per cent in the year 2019 as compared to man LFPR was 80.9%. Despite all the effort and interventions has been initiated by the government since the year 2011, under-representation of women in the top management, particularly on the corporate boards remains as a major concern for corporations, government and policymakers (Amran et al, 2014). Why are fewer women finishing up in senior positions than men? Is that because there are fewer mentors? Less time with managers? Or are they not as proactive as men in talking to senior leaders? Numerous reasons have been proposed but one claim that remains suggests variations in the behaviour of men and women. However, Turban, Freeman & Waber (2017) argue that gender inequality is due to bias, not behavioural differences.

While most of the studies discussed the progress of advancement of women in Malaysia within the context of national policy, plans and corporate setting (Ahmad-Zaluki, 2012; Ismail et al., 2013; Amran et al, 2014; Zainal et al, 2013), but they are merely addressing the issue from the individual perspective. For instance, without the active engagement from female worker towards her career advancement, can the policy and plans sustain the momentum of advancing the agenda of women at work and in leadership?

In reality, although there are many barriers faced by female employees, many female employees still choose to strive hard to get a higher position. This can be seen in the common phenomena where there is an increasing trend of women in a higher position (Yuen, 2020, March 08). This shows that female employees have proactive career behaviour to manage their career. Thus, it encourages the researcher to study the individual factors that motivate female employees to have proactive career behaviour. There were many kinds of research study on the proactive behaviour and career success (Ashford & Black, 1996; Thompson, 2005) but lesser research in proactive career behaviour (Chughtai, 2019; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Seibert, et al., 2001; Smale et al., 2019). Women could be 'blamed' for failing to attain leadership positions due to lack of career preparation, lack of confidence or poor political skills (Coleman, 2020). In the Malaysia context, there is scarce of researches concern about the proactive career behaviour of women in the workplace. Uncovering the predictor of proactive career behaviour among the female employee enables the policymaker to delve into the issue of low representation of women in a higher position.

Literature Review

Proactive Career Behaviour

Proactive career behaviour is defined as individuals undertake some deliberate actions to find out their career goals (De Vos, Clippelaar, & Dewilde, 2009). Individuals with proactive career behaviour will focus on future potential outcomes over short term benefits (Parker & Collins, 2010) and therefore is difficult to be justified in the future. The rising trend of non-linear careers

had successfully drawn attention from researchers to focus on how individuals actively manage their career future (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001; Tharenou & Terry, 1998). Since the career paths become nonlinear, individuals need to put in more effort in ensuring their employability throughout the path of their career (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). Most modern careers no longer include lifelong employment within a limited range of organizations (Sylva, Mol, Den Hartog & Dorenbosch, 2019). Besides, they need to ensure their jobs and careers in line with their current and future needs and also personal values (Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). As a result, employees nowadays play their roles actively and becomes more proactive in their workplace (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). From a contemporary career point of view, individuals are increasingly challenged to adopt a proactive approach. (Sylva et al., 2019). Initially, proactive career behaviour was categorised into four types of behaviours which are proactive career planning behaviour, proactive skill development behaviour, proactive consultation behaviour and proactive networking behaviour (Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998). However, recent studies only focus on the behaviour in general without specifically assessing distinct behaviour (De Vos et al., 2009; Strauss et al., 2012). Furthermore, according to Stajkovic (2006), general measures have been increasingly recognized in organizational psychology. It is more useful for future research as it can predict work-related outcomes and provides a more budgeted assessment compared to examining each specific measure (Judge, Erez, Bono & Thoresen, 2003). In the study of Lunn (2007), women academics felt so discouraged and disappointed that their career advancement was to be stopped at some stage. They believe women can not obtain top-level management positions because these positions are based on political nominations but not on merit or competition. While women are struggling with all these obstacles in the workplace, the proactive career behaviour of female employees is critical. It is, therefore, crucial to study the factors motivating women to have a proactive career attitude to encourage more women to participate in the workforce.

Underlying Theories

The combination of the self-regulation theory, career construction theory and hope theory are the backbones of the research framework of this study. Self-regulation theory states that an individual takes an action based on the plan, goals and feedback (Carver & Scheier, 1982). People normally assess the environment and collect information before planning an action (Frese & Zapf, 1994). This theory also suggests that future-oriented behaviour i.e. future work-self motivates people to strive hard towards the desired future (Strauss, Griffin, Parker, 2012). Future work-self converts the imagined future to a current goal. Bandura (2001) proposed that behaviour is guided by setting goals and predicted outcomes rather than being pulled by a doubtful future state. Thus, when there are perceived career barriers in the workplace, workers will be encouraged to overcome those difficulties to achieve a better goal in their career. Since self-regulation theory enables an individual to realize his expected self, an individual who has high proactive personality will expect a better side of himself and set a higher career goal. Moreover, this theory implies the importance of the individual that keeps monitoring and control himself for overriding his pre-existing thought, behaviour and feeling (Presbitero, 2015).

The career construction theory allows people to explain their past, present and future self to make sense of work and life in general. Individuals have to understand why their careers are so relevant by linking their life issues and purposes (Zhang, Hirschi, Herrmann, Wei & Zhang, 2017). Boundaryless and non-linear seems to describe the career patterns nowadays, therefore

career construction theory focuses on two types of self-regulatory resources that motivate individuals to handle issues and to makes individual better fit with the environment during career development (Savickas 2005, 2013). Firstly, career adaptivity is defined as the individual's willingness to involve person-environment integration process which motivates people to carry out career construction actions (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Furthermore, to the extent of career adaptivity, it requires individuals to have adaptive abilities to overcome challenging tasks in their career transformation (Cai et al., 2015).

Dispositional hope refers to more relatively stable expression of hope regardless of how long the time and situations pass by (Snyder et al., 1991). Snyder (2002) proposed hope theory which stated that dispositional hope formed on an individual's learning history which begin from childhood. Dispositional hope brings positive impact on vital life outcomes in learning, health psychological development (Snyder, 2002; Alarcon, Bowling & Khazon, 2013). According to Hirschi (2014), dispositional hope causes an individual to have proactive career behaviour. Thus, dispositional hope is an important resource that encourages people to manage career proactively.

Future Work Self

Future work self refers to an individual wish to become in the future (Markus & Nurius, 1986). It influences someone's current behaviour to pursue his wish and attain the desired future (Oyserman & James, 2011). Future work self constitutes the future desired aspects of self-concept (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015; Zhang et al., 2017). Strauss, Griffin & Parker (2012) stated that future work self salience is the degree of the clear and easy imagination of future work self. Future work self helps people to conceive of desirable futures and emphasizes differences between current and ideal states. Recognizing these differences helps people to consider possible barriers and difficulties in achieving their future career goals (Guan et al., 2017). The salience of the future work self creates a motivational disparity, encourage new opportunities to be explored and call for a mental simulation of the future (Yang, Li, Su & Zhang, 2019). Women continue to face challenges when it comes to progress in the workplace. Thus, future work self will stimulate women's creativity to explore the way to overcome it. Empirical research has shown that people who know specifically what they are going to do in future appear to be more ambitious and career-oriented to achieve future goals (Guan et al., 2017; Strauss et al., 2012; Taber & Blankemeyer 2015). Further, future work self will promote the proactive behaviours of individuals when they recognize current employment as a suitable platform for their future career development (Cai et al., 2015). Thus, the first hypothesis is developed:

H1: Future work self significantly influences the proactive career behaviour of female employees.

Career Adaptability

Super & Knasel (1979) defined career adaptability as how adult adapts the challenges in the competitive workplace. Savickas (2005) later explained the career adaptability as a psychosocial theory that indicates an individual's readiness for facing challenging tasks, occupational transformations and personal traumas. Career adaptability, based on career construction theory, characterizes the resources that individuals acquire and use to effectively engage in adaptive behaviour throughout their careers (Haynie, Flynn & Herda, 2020). When

an individual can cope with tasks related to career management, it will help the individual to identify his strength and knowledge for overcoming the circumstances faced in the workplace. There are four dimensions in career adaptability which are a concern, control, confidence, and curiosity that aid in work-related transitions (Savickas, 2013). Career adaptability shows that the individual is ready to face tough tasks, job changes and personal traumas (Savickas, 2005). Women will undoubtedly face barriers to achieving their career goals (sex discrimination, gender payable difference). For them, adaptability to their career is therefore important as preparing them to face and solve obstacles calmly. Taber and Blankemeyer (2015) observed that career adaptability encourages someone to engage necessary behaviours to get the desired outcome. Hence, the second hypothesis is laid out:

H2: Career adaptability significantly influences the proactive career behaviour of female employees.

Perceived Career Barriers

Barriers mean the variance between the ability of individuals and their career achievements. A career barrier is defined as a situation that makes career development difficult (Swanson & Woitke, 1997). Lent, Brown & Hackett (2000) suggested that perceived career barriers are the factors that affect the process of formation and implementation of career decisions. For instance, Ulas and Yildirim (2019) have reaffirmed that perceived career barriers have considerably affected the decision-making self-efficacy of final year undergraduate students. Strauser et al. (2020) have identified internal and external factor of perceived career barriers. Internal factors were defined as being within a person and how he perceives his physical, cognitive, emotional and social performance. External factors can be described as living outside individuals and tackle environmental factors such as jobs and family attitudes, exposure to and availability of appropriate work, education and financial services (Strauser et al., 2020). Numerous studies have attempted to explain the perceived carrier barriers to gender differences. Russell & Rush (1987) discovered that college women feel that femininity and family concern and limited education and working experience are perceived barriers in attaining career success. Women always perceive the career barrier as obstacles throughout the pathway of career success (Domenico & Jones, 2006). Women always see their children as a potential barrier throughout the career development process (Brown & Barbosa, 2001). Sex discrimination and gender differences in determining the occupations are some common barriers that women faced, which they feel that those barriers are uncontrollable (Stitt-Gohdes, 1997). Jeon and Lee (2019) found that career barriers perceived by female college students adversely influenced career planning behaviours. Some other barriers that inhibit the women to be successful in the workplace are insufficient occupational knowledge and skills, transportation problem and substandard academic achievement (Domenico & Jones, 2006). In the UK, the key problems or obstacles were seen as a masculine culture; discrimination and the glass ceiling; gender stereotyping; and the challenges of balancing work and family life (Coleman, 2020). In Malaysia, the main barriers that inhibit women to enter the workplace are work-life balance and gender issue (United Nations Development Programme, 2010). Since women always perceive barriers in their workplace, thus the third hypothesis is formed:

H3: Perceived career barriers significantly influence the proactive career behaviour of female employees.

Dispositional Hope

Hope is an important resource for the positive development of human in academic accomplishment and psychological adjustment (Snyder, 2002). National career development association (2013) reported that hope becomes more significance in developing positive career. Dispositional hope stables over time and situations (Snyder et al., 1991). Everyone will face a bottleneck in the pathway of striving toward the career goal. Moreover, imagining personal goals and perceiving progress in attaining those goals (hope) is vital to create meaningful work and life (Snyder, 2002). The higher degrees of dispositional hope, which require more pathways towards desired goals and higher motivation, will benefit directly people with greater positive impact and life satisfaction. (Muyan-Yılık, & Demir, 2019). This shows that hope can be a resource in proactive motivation as a person who is high in hope pretend to see the goal achievement more meaningful (Parker et al, 2010). Hirschi (2014) suggested a constructive relationship between dispositional hope and proactive career behaviour. He also notes that dispositional hope is a valuable tool for workers to proactively shape their careers, partially because of their greater concern about their professional future. Women who are unable to withstand the work pressure and overcome it, they will be easily given up and become demotivated to work hard in pursuing their career goals. Thus, hope is important for women as a motivational resource for them to strive hard and engage more in proactive career behaviour. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is developed:

H4: Dispositional hope significantly influences the proactive career behaviour of female employees.

Proactive Personality

Proactive personality refers to an individual will not be restricted by situational forces and able to influence to make changes of environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Proactive personality is an intrinsic characteristic of a person to be self-motivated to engage in various events and situations (Seibert, Kraimer & Crant, 2001). People who has high proactive personality will not be restricted by situational factors in the environment (Parker, Bindl & Strauss, 2010). Moreover, they suggested proactive personality not only has an impact on the changes in the environment but also within the individual. A highly proactive personality will encourage individuals to pursue their careers by drawing up their career plans (Valls et al., 2020). Numerous research has been proved that proactive personality is a crucial component in producing related positive career outcomes such as proactive behaviour (Fuller, Marler & Hester, 2006), career success (Fuller Jr, & Marler, 2009; Seibert, Kraimer & Crant, 2001) and life satisfaction (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2010). Women with high proactive personality can stimulate their proactive career behaviour compared to others, therefore the following hypothesis is developed:

H5: Proactive personality significantly influences the proactive career behaviour of female employees

There was no direct support of proactive personality as a moderator on proactive career behaviour but numerous studies on proactive personality as a moderator on other individual related constructs were examined (Fuller, Marler & Hester, 2006; Harvey, Blouin & Stout, 2005; Jafri, Dem & Choden, 2016; Vandenberghe & Ok, 2013). However, indirect shreds of evidence were found to support the assumed moderator role of proactive personality on

proactive career behaviour. For instance, Presbitero (2015) proved that proactive personality has a moderating effect on the relationship between proactive career planning and proactive career enacting. Thus, we believe that a moderator is appropriate to make the relationship more reliable and meaningful. Women who have proactive personality always keep on striving hard rather than just stay in a comfortable zone. Taking this idea a step further, the present research postulates the moderating role of proactive personality in the relationship discussed above. It is conjectured, therefore, that:

H5: The relationship between future work self and proactive career behaviour will be stronger when female employees have high proactive personality.

H6: The relationship between career adaptability and proactive career behaviour will be stronger when female employees have high proactive personality.

H7: The relationship between perceived career barriers and proactive career behaviour will be stronger when female employees have high proactive personality.

H8: The relationship between dispositional hope and proactive career behaviour will be stronger when female employees have a high personality.

Methods

This study used a quantitative method and has adopted a cross-sectional survey to investigate the determinants of proactive career behaviour among female workers in the private sector from various industries. In this study, non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed and a total of 196 questionnaires were distributed but only 150 questionnaires were returned incomplete and yield response rate at 76.53%. Several Likert scales are used in this questionnaire as one of the remedy tools to prevent common method variance. There were total 67 validated measurement items were adopted and adapted from related previous works of literature (Strauss et al., 2012; Oser, Riding & Stanley, 2012; Bateman & Crant, 1993; Hirschi et al., 2014).

All collected data were examined using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and followed by using the Partial Least Square approach to evaluate the produced hypotheses via Smart PLS 3.0 software. The two-stage approach that includes the measurement model and the structural model was introduced. Besides, the bootstrapping method with the 5000 resample was applied to analyse the significance levels of the constructs' loading and path coefficients (Hair et al., 2017).

Findings and Discussion

Respondents Profile

In this study majority of the respondents was at their age of 21-35 (71.3%). Most of them (55.3%) was from Chinese followed by the Malay respondents (22.7%) and 22 per cent of Indian respondents. Majority of the respondents (60%) still single and those married majority of them have no kid (62.7). About 67.4 per cent of them have been attached to the current employer for less than 5 years. A clear majority of respondents are diploma holder and higher qualifications. About 62.7 per cent of respondents were holding executive position and non-executive positions followed by middle management position (10.3%) and therefore 78.6 per

cent of them earning the monthly income less than RM5000. The respondents were majority from service industry (40.7%) followed by retails industry (27.3%) and manufacturing (14.7%).

Measurement Model Assessment

To ensure the indicator's reliability, the rule of thumb is the loading for indicator must be more than 0.5 as suggested by Hair et al. (2017). As a result, the items with low loading such as Dispositional Hope (DH3, DH5, DH7, DH11) and Proactive Career Behaviour (PCB2, PCB3) which has a loading less than 0.5 were deleted. To examine the convergent validity, Hair et.al (2014) suggested average variance extracted (AVE) which is a mean-variance extracted for the items loading on a construct were all above the recommended value of 0.5 or higher (Hair et al., 2017). All AVE values for this study were higher than the threshold value 0.5 ranging from 0.588 to 0.891 as exhibited in Table 1. In other words, the convergent validity for all construct has been fulfilled. As can be seen in Table 1, all the composite reliability values ranging from 0.874 to 0.931 exceeds the cut off value of 0.6 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). As such, based on the composite reliability, it can conclude that all the measurements are reliable.

Table 1 Measurement Model

Construct	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR
Future Work Self	FWS1	0.861	0.712	0.925
	FWS2	0.836		
	FWS3	0.869		
	FWS4	0.813		
	FWS5	0.838		
Career Adaptability	CA1	0.891	0.764	0.928
	CA2	0.875		
	CA3	0.874		
	CA4	0.856		
Perceived Career Barriers	CB1	0.764	0.601	0.931
	CB2	0.751		
	CB3	0.788		
	CB4	0.776		
	CB5	0.778		
	CB6	0.762		
	CB7	0.748		
	CB8	0.807		
	CB9	0.798		
Dispositional Hope	DH1	0.758	0.616	0.927
	DH2	0.834		
	DH3	Deleted		
	DH4	0.546		
	DH5	Deleted		
	DH6	0.785		
	DH7	Deleted		
	DH8	0.849		
	DH9	0.785		
	DH10	0.758		

	DH11	Deleted		
	DH12	0.836		
Proactive Personality	PP1	0.726	0.584	0.933
	PP2	0.847		
	PP3	0.718		
	PP4	0.810		
	PP5	0.766		
	PP6	0.752		
	PP7	0.775		
	PP8	0.838		
	PP9	0.786		
	PP10	0.588		
Proactive Career Behaviour	PCB1	0.650	0.584	0.874
	PCB2	Deleted		
	PCB3	Deleted		
	PCB4	0.714		
	PCB5	0.844		
	PCB6	0.828		
	PCB7	0.769		

To assess the discriminant validity of the constructs, Henseler et al. (2015) have proposed a technique which is the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) of correlations based on the multitrait-multimethod matrix. While the discriminant validity has a problem when the HTMT value is greater than HTMT0.90 value of 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001) and the HTMT0.85 (Kline, 2015), all values as Table 2 shows were lower than the recommended value of 0.85 indicating that discriminant validity has been ascertained. Additionally, all the confidence interval of HTMT values did not include value 1 in the interval range rest assured the constructs are empirically distinct (Henseler et al., 2015). In sum, the measurement model of the study demonstrated adequate convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 2 HTMT Criterion

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Career Adaptability						
2.Dispositional Hope	0.627					
3.Future Work Self	0.592	0.517				
4.Perceived Career Barriers	0.751	0.689	0.508			
5.Proactive Career Behaviour	0.289	0.238	0.545	0.265		
6.Proactive Personality	0.698	0.787	0.575	0.734	0.344	

Structural Model Assessment

Table 3 presents the result of the hypothesis test in the structural model. The significance of path coefficients is used to make up the decision to support hypotheses. The result revealed that among the five direct relationships, future work self ($\beta = 0.465$, $t = 5.085$, $p < 0.01$) and proactive personality ($\beta = 0.212$, $t = 2.062$, $p < 0.05$) were found showing significant impact on Proactive Career Behaviour. Hence, H1 and H5 are supported. On the other hand, for moderating effect, proactive personality that posited earlier as moderator did not have sufficient evidence to support H6 to H9. The R^2 value of proactive career behaviour was 0.271 indicating that 27.1% of the variance in proactive career behaviour is explained by its predictors. The result achieved an acceptable level of explanatory power (>0.26) as recommended by Cohen (1988) indicating a substantial model.

Table 3 Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	p-value	Decision	R^2
H1: Future work self (FWS) -> PCB	0.465	0.092	5.085	0.000	Supported	0.271
H2: Career Adaptability (CA) -> PCB	0.038	0.110	0.349	0.727	Not support	
H3: Perceived Career Barriers (CB)-> PCB	0.012	0.099	0.122	0.903	Not support	
H4: Dispositional Hope (DH) -> PCB	-0.131	0.103	1.268	0.206	Not support	
H5: Proactive Personality (PP)--> PCB	0.212	0.103	2.062	0.040	Supported	
H6: FWS*PP -> PCB	0.058	0.093	0.627	0.265	Not support	
H7: CA*PP -> PCB	-0.077	0.127	0.606	0.272	Not support	
H8: CB*PP -> PCB	-0.107	0.134	0.795	0.213	Not support	
H9: DH*PP -> PCB	0.040	0.112	0.353	0.362	Not support	

The finding revealed that future work self significantly influences the proactive career behaviours among the women workers. The significant and positive direct effect of future work self on proactive career behaviour is congruent with the previous findings (e.g., Guan et al., 2017; Strauss et al., 2012; Taber & Blankemeyer 2015). Future work self plays a significant role in inspiring positive job behaviours among female workers, likely due to the observed disparity between one's present self and the perceived potential future work self. Besides that, proactive personality is found to have a significant effect on proactive career behaviour. This result is synced with previous studies (e.g. Fuller et al., 2006; Parker et al., 2010; Valls et al., 2020). Proactive female employees will actively be involved in career planning and exploring the opportunity for career advancement compared to those who do not exhibit proactive personality.

Contrary to our expectation, the lack of support for the moderating effect of hypotheses demonstrates that the role of proactive personality as a moderator was still not as strong as expected. One potential explanation for this might be due to the benefits of career proactivity being more universal than we anticipated. There are still some effects then we are not able to

rule out completely in the study such as age, gender and career stage (Smale et al., 2019) among the women employee which may influence their perception towards proactive career behaviour. For example, junior women are more engaged in proactive career advancement behaviours such as seeking opportunities and using specific strategies to achieve goals compare to senior women (O'Neil, Brooks & Hopkins, 2018).

Conclusion

Practically, to foster proactive career behaviour among female employees, an organisation can contemplate doing two things. First, the management should prepare some strategies to help female workers improve their self-clarification and reflexivity by reflecting on and improving their potential selves in their future careers and by exploring how their skills, needs and interests are important in this regard. A career construction interview based on the theory of career construction (Savickas, 2013) could be used to do so. This self-exploration interview will enhance the clarity of one's future working life and thus provide a general sense of purpose and meaning in one's life. Second, a proactive personality may be a predictor for recruiting new female comers. Management is recommended to apply the personality test to eligible employees with a high level of proactive personality. It is more suitable to be used in the managerial role of candidates as key stakeholders in their attempts to achieve the goals of the organization and to establish plans that are consistent with the strategic direction of the business. When female managers have a proactive career mindset, they take care of their succession planning and actively search for opportunities for advancement growth in the business.

One of the limitations is that the target respondents focus mainly on the three states which were Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka in the Peninsula of Malaysia, which may not be sufficiently generable. Future researchers are therefore encouraged to increase their sample size by collecting more data from more regions in Malaysia. This is because there might be a disparity between thought and perception of various people that are based in different areas. This may also help to uncover the hidden factors that motivate women to engage in proactive career behaviour.

Secondly, the study is based on self-report data which was obtained from a single source and may subject to common method variance. Although the study conducted using different Likert scales in the questionnaire as one of the remedy tools to prevent common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2012), however common method variance cannot completely rule out. Future research will, where possible, collect data from multiple sources. For example, supervisors may assess the proactive career behaviour of employees based on their actual performance, but do not tend to rank them higher than they should be.

Thirdly, this study used a unidimensional measure of proactive career behaviour and therefore did not differentiate between proactive career planning behaviour, proactive skill development behaviour, proactive consultation behaviour and proactive networking behaviour (e.g. Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998). Thus, an interesting avenue for future study may then be to analyze the relationship between the determinants and the various dimensions of proactive career behaviour to decide how these determinants apply to these dimensions.

Finally, there are still many other determinants yet to uncover as the determinants of this study only able to explain 27% variances on proactive career behaviour. Future researchers should

explore more on organisation factors such as leadership style for instance, Servant leadership style may drive workers to take responsibility for their careers by engaging in proactive career behaviours (Chughtai, 2019).

In a nutshell, as the number of women occupies the half population of Malaysia (DOSM, 2020b), it can't be denied that women's social position had a significant impact on country's political and economic scenario. When the government has a better understanding of the factors that motivate female employees to have proactive career behaviour, some useful policies will be laid out to retain and a female employee. Management should consider the factors and adjust their policies for encouraging women to strive harder to perform better and shape a positive environment in the workforce.

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