



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**The Mediating Effect of Proactive Behaviour in the Relationship between
Quality of Work Life and Career Success among Married Academicians in
Selected Public Institutions of Higher Learning in Sarawak**

Ling Nyuk Ping

**Master of Science
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The Mediating Effect of Proactive Behaviour in the Relationship
between Quality of Work Life and Career Success among Married
Academicians in Selected Public Institutions of Higher Learning in
Sarawak

Ling Nyuk Ping

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2018

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Name of Student: Ling Nyuk Ping

Date: 25 June 2018

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated with deepest love to my family, especially to my mother and sister.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the mediating effect of proactive behaviour in the relationship between quality of work life (QWL) and career success. Self-administered questionnaires were employed for data collection among 304 married academicians from two selected Public Institutions of Higher Learning in Sarawak. Data were analysed by using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Results indicated that there were positive significant effects between QWL, proactive behaviour, and career success. A partial mediation effect of proactive behaviour was established on the relationship between QWL and career success. Findings can be used by management of academic institutions and human resources practitioners to design and implement appropriate initiatives to promote career development of academicians. The study offers a new insight into how proactive behaviour plays a positive role in mediating the relationship between QWL and career success among academicians in the Malaysian context. Therefore, it can be concluded that QWL can positively influence career success among academicians. However, if they also have proactive behaviours, they will be urged to achieve higher levels of career success.

Keyword: Quality of Work Life, Career Success, Proactive Behaviour

Kesan Pengantara Perilaku Proaktif dalam Hubungan antara Kualiti Kehidupan Bekerja dan Kejayaan Kerjaya dalam Kalangan Ahli Akademik Berkahwin di Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Awam Terpilih di Sarawak

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kesan pengantara perilaku proaktif dalam hubungan antara kualiti kehidupan bekerja dan kejayaan kerjaya. Soal selidik yang dikendali sendiri telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data dalam kalangan 304 orang ahli akademik yang berkahwin dari dua buah Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Awam terpilih di Sarawak. Data telah dianalisis dengan menggunakan “Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)” dengan bantuan program aplikasi “Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS)”. Hasil analisis ini menunjukkan bahawa terdapat kesan yang positif dan signifikan antara kualiti kehidupan bekerja, perilaku proaktif, dan kejayaan kerjaya. Perilaku proaktif memberi kesan perantara separa dalam hubungan antara kualiti kehidupan bekerja dan kejayaan kerjaya. Dapatan kajian ini boleh digunakan oleh pihak pengurusan institusi akademik dan pengamal sumber manusia untuk mereka bentuk dan melaksanakan inisiatif yang sesuai bagi mempromosikan pembangunan kerjaya ahli akademik. Kajian ini memberikan pandangan baru tentang bagaimana perilaku proaktif memainkan peranan yang positif dalam mengantara hubungan antara kualiti kehidupan bekerja dan kejayaan kerjaya dalam kalangan ahli akademik dalam konteks Malaysia. Justeru itu, dapat disimpulkan bahawa kualiti kehidupan bekerja dapat mempengaruhi kejayaan kerjaya secara positif dalam kalangan ahli akademik. Sekiranya mereka juga mempunyai perilaku yang proaktif, mereka akan menjadi lebih bersemangat untuk mencapai tahap kejayaan kerjaya yang lebih tinggi.

Kata kunci: *Kualiti Kehidupan Bekerja, Kejayaan Kerjaya, Perilaku Proaktif*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CS	Career Success
D ²	Mahalanobis Distance
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
GOF	Goodness-of-Fit
IFI	Incremental Fit Index
MCAR	Missing Completely at Random
ML	Maximum Likelihood
PB	Proactive Behaviour
PNFI	Parsimony Normed Fit Index
QWL	Quality of Work Life
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling

SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
UiTM	Universiti Teknologi MARA
UNIMAS	Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
χ^2	Chi-Square
χ^2 / df	Normed Chi-Square

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the scope of the Master thesis entitled “The Mediating Effect of Proactive Behaviour in the Relationship between Quality of Work Life and Career Success among Married Academicians in Selected Public Institutions of Higher Learning in Sarawak”. The research study reported herein, and it is divided into eight sections. The first section provides the issues related to the background of the study. Section 1.2 discusses the problem statement. The third section introduces the research objectives and the fourth section identifies the research hypotheses. Section 1.5 discusses about the scope of the study. Section 1.6 and Section 1.7, respectively explains the definition of terms used and the contributions of the study. Finally, the summary is presented in the Section 1.8.

1.1 Research Background

Universities are organisations which generate scientific knowledge in contributions to the development of society. University performance is important to be the evaluation on the level of economic development in a country. It is also the ability for the citizens to compete in the global economy which can affect the productivity of the country. Thus, it is necessary to maintain and improve the levels of the quality of work life (QWL) for academicians so that they serving as the bedrocks of every academic institution are able to exhibit high performance. As a result, this may increase the sustainable economic development. Spending about more than one-third of their lives at their workplaces, people nowadays are having

more concerns on the concept of QWL (Horst, Broday, Bondarick, Serpe, & Pilatti, 2014). A review of the past studies on QWL shows that QWL do influence employees' organisational behaviours include organisational commitment, job satisfaction, career advancement, and work performance (Acheampong, Muhammed, & Agyapong, 2016; Asfar, 2014; Fatehi, Amini, Karimi, & Azizi, 2015; Huang, Lawler, & Lei, 2007; Kermansaravi, Navidian, Rigi, & Yaghoubinia, 2015; Lee, Singhapakdi, & Sirgy, 2007; Muindi, 2016; Ojedokun, Idemudia, & Desouza, 2015; Parsa, Idris, Abu Samah, Abdul Wahat, & Parsa, 2014; Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel, & Lee, 2001, Sirgy, Reilly, Wu, & Efraty, 2008; Tabassum, 2012). QWL plays a prominent part in motivating individuals and improving job satisfaction among people (Royuela, Jordi, & Jordi, 2009). When employees receive good QWL, they experience greater self-esteem, greater growth and development, improved job satisfaction, involvement, and performance besides showing stronger commitment to the goals of organisation. As a result, this decreases the rate of absenteeism and turnover as well as boost the overall effectiveness of the organisations. Therefore, it can be said that QWL provided by the management of academic institutions to academicians plays a significant role for academicians to perform their roles well at universities.

Human capitals are the most crucial assets in organisations as people are perfectly capable of contributing to the success of the organisations (Varghese & Jayan, 2013). Achieving career success among employees is a primary concern for both individuals and organisations. This is because individuals' personal success contributes to positive outcomes, such as developing human resources and achieving organisational success (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005; Richard, 2005). In literature, career success has been found to be influenced by individual difference factors, including demographic background, cognitive ability,

dispositional traits, human capital, social capital, motivation, career commitment, proactive behaviour, and networking behaviours (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Grimland, Vigoda-Gadot, & Baruch, 2012; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007; Judge, Klinger, & Simon, 2010; Ng & Feldman, 2010; Poon, 2004; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Traavik & Richardsen, 2010; Wolff & Moser, 2009). Situational determinants also play an important role in contributing to career success, such as supervisor-subordinate relationship, career mentoring, and employer support for development (Maurer & Chapman, 2013; Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991). Furthermore, Feldman and Ng (2007) found out that non-work context can also influence career success, such as family support and societal constraints (Juntunen et al., 2001; Lirio et al., 2007). Within the Malaysian context, there is some limited evidence that both individual and situational factors contributed to career success. For example, employees attribute their career success to factors such as education, career centrality, health consciousness, religiosity, and institutional support (Ismail, Mohd Rasdi, & Abdul Wahat, 2005). Based on Rasdi, Ismail, and Garavan's study (2011), demographic and human capital factors have been found to predict objective career success whereas subjective career success is predicted by demographic, individual, and structural factors. Therefore, given the growing empirical support for explaining the determinants of career success, it is an important to have more complete understanding of how QWL and proactive behaviour contribute to academicians' career success in this study.

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) provides a theoretical framework for understanding career development of academicians. SCCT acts as a foundation for forging linkages between QWL and career success through the mediating effect of proactive behaviour.

SCCT is an expansion of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, which emphasises on the reciprocity and interactions between individuals' cognitive process and their environment. This means that people, their behaviours, and their environment act as interlocking mechanisms that interact and influence each other bi-directionally. There is great empirical support for using SCCT in explaining the relations of self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations to vocational interests and personal goal formation for career-related pursuits (Gainor & Lent, 1998; Lent, Brown, Nota, & Soresi, 2003; Nauta & Epperson, 2003; Townsend, Busenitz, & Arthurs, 2010). As such, SCCT focuses on how the core social cognitive-person variables (self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals) interact with other person, behaviour, and contextual variables (predispositions, gender, ethnicity, social supports, and barriers) to shape the course of career development. Therefore, in this study, it can be understood in terms of SCCT, person inputs (proactive behaviour) and contextual influences (QWL) contribute to subsequent performance attainments (career success).

There are numerous challenges and demands on academic institutions due to increased knowledge and specialisation, interdisciplinary collaboration, advancement in technology, sophistication of university education have important roles to play. All these trends affect the teaching profession and skill requirement as well as organizational commitment and work performance. In view of this, academicians should exercise their personal agency with greater independence so that they can act proactively to achieve success in career. Therefore, it is important to determine the mediating role of proactive behaviour on the path of QWL and career success among academicians, particularly given the trend that academicians should be involved in career self-management process. Most of studies merely examined the

direct relationship between independent variables (QWL and proactive behaviours) and career success (Acheampong et al., 2016; Fatehi et al., 2015; Fuller & Marler, 2009; Kermansaravi et al., 2015; Kim, Hon, & Crant, 2009; Li, Harris, Boswell, & Xie, 2011; Muindi, 2016; Ng et al., 2005; Parsa et al., 2014; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001; Spurk, Volmer, Hagmaier, & Kauffeld, 2013; Tabassum, 2012; Tan, Yahya, Othman, & Pangil, 2013; Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010). Furthermore, past study revealed that personality had a moderating effect on the relationship between QWL and job satisfaction (proxy measure of career success) (Muindi, 2016). It can be seen that previous empirical researches have paid negligible attention on the mediating hypothesis. Hence, this study intends to examine the mediating effect of proactive behaviour in the relationship between QWL and career success among married academicians.

1.2 Problem Statement

Within the career development literature, SCCT has wide applicability as it has been studied within various domains and contexts such as computer science, general occupational choice, career goals and aspirations, vocational interests, and other career outcomes (Brown, Garavalia, Fritts, & Olson, 2006; Gore & Leuwerke, 2000; Luzzo, Hasper, Albert, Bibby, & Martinelli, 1999; Rottinghaus, Gaffey, Borgn, & Ralston, 2006). This is because of its integration of multiple constructs under one theoretically-sound and unifying framework (Lent & Savickas, 1994). Most studies have highlighted the importance of SCCT's propositions such as self-efficacy and outcome expectations on corresponding vocational interests and other career outcomes (Gainor & Lent, 1998; Lent, et al., 2003; Nauta & Epperson, 2003; Townsend et al., 2010). However, less is known about person inputs and