The Study on Personality Traits and Subjective Career Success on Women in Manufacturing Industry

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Abstract

This is a conceptual paper aimed to examine the relationship between personality traits and subjective career success on women's participation in Malaysia manufacturing industry. The study reviews the literature on personality traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness as predictor of subjective career success (career satisfaction). Eventually, the career perspective indicates that subjective career success is limited towards women due to their attitude, behavior and personality. Hence, this study conducted the role of personality traits on women subjective career success due to the inconsistent finding of the past studies. This research will conducted by using the survey approach with a structured questionnaire and English version-self-administered. The survey will distribute to 700 employees in middle management such as officer, executive, engineer and above based on purposive sampling focused on the manufacturing industry in Electric and Electronic (E&E) manufacturer around Northern Region of Malaysia. Overall, this paper drawn to enrich the literature on women career success with recommendation for future research in Malaysia manufacturing industry.

Keywords: Subjective career success, personality traits, women, manufacturing industry

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Women participation in labour force in Malaysia already recognized since sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995) with the main objective to create awareness towards women contribution on national economic growth. The “National Policy for Women” indicate the equal opportunities between gender in the organization to improvise women satisfaction in life and career at any sector in Malaysia (Subramaniam, 2011, Ahmad, 1998). Moreover, a fewer study on women subjective career success has been done in non-western context whereby the male-dominated workplace is exist in Malaysia supported by Abu Bakar and Marican (2014). Additionally, Mohd Rasdi (2009) pointed out that the need of study in the individual psychological (personality) is important due to challenges in the contemporary career such as male-dominated field, job-competency and work commitment (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012). The inconsistent finding from previous studies endeavour researcher to get clear understanding on women personality perceived subjective career success in the manufacturing industry.

The global financial crisis affected manufacturing sector in Malaysia and most multinational corporations (MNCs) bear the highest production cost and due to this reason the implementation of cost reduction affected the employees psychology (personality), job security and career development in the organization (Wong & Mohd Rasdi, 2015). Moreover, women participation rate in manufacturing industry depicted negative trend from year 2011 until 2013 by 18.30%, 17.30% and 16.70% respectively (DOSM, 2014). A study conducted by Johari, Mat, Mat, Othman and Hayati (2013) implies that the perception of women that manufacturing industry are male dominated field found that women felt uncompetitive with men on the skills and abilities.
The scholars indicate that subjective career success positively effect to the changes of employees psychology (personality) and individual career satisfaction (Tan, 2010, Smith, 2012; Valk, Velde, Engen, & Godbole, 2014). Therefore, women need to compete continuously emotionally and physically with men in the industry to achieve the career satisfaction (subjective career success).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Subjective Career Success
Gattiker and Larwood (1986) refer the subjective career success (SCS) as individual perception towards his or her career preferences and experience in occupation. Furthermore, SCS defined as individual accomplishment and exerted through personal values (Enache, Sallan, Simo, & Fernandez, 2011) captured as career satisfaction by most of the scholar (Heslin, 2005, Hofmans, Dries, & Pepermans, 2008, Tan, 2010, Haines, Hamouche, & Saba, 2014). Past studies indicate that women and SCS have positive interaction with their personal value and assessment in the working environment. Women tend to value career success based on personal satisfaction towards own accomplishment instead of monetary rewards subject to priority towards family members (Enache et al., 2011). Nabi (2001) justified that SCS relevant on women career success despite of objective career success (OCS) because individual with high salaries and position in workplace tend to feel not success in their career compared with individual satisfied with positive interaction on peer, colleagues, family and spouse (Tlaiss, 2013).

2.2 Personality Traits
Personality traits for this paper reflect on the big five personality consist of five dimensions known as OCEAN that is openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (McShane & Von Glinow, 2005). According to Goldberg et al. (2006) and Zainal, Nasurdin and Hoo 2011), the big five personality traits represent the individual personality in many study related to subjective career success.

Neuroticism prominent to individuals with high level of emotional unstable and characterize with high level of depression, anxiety and anxiety. Therefore, individual with high neuroticism tender to have negative work experience in organizational and lack of positive personality and psychological (Zainal et al., 2011). However, the scholar Tan (2010) exhibited that no significant relationship towards SCS due to individual perceived extraversion more salient personality in predicting SCS.

Extraversion refers to individuals with sociability skills and easygoing. This contradicts with neuroticism, individual posses high extraversion able to have good social interaction among people and ambitious. As agreed by most scholar that extraversion positively related with SCS (Tan, 2010) surprisingly contradicted with finding by Zainal et al. (2011) which indicates negative relationship due to background of the sample manager for his study and no significant relationship (Powers, 2012; Wille, De Fruyt and Feys, 2013) in predicting SCS.

Openness to experience reflect to individual willingness to seek new experience accordance to activities and environment such as flexible, creative and curious (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). According to Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2007) found inconsistent finding between openness to experience in predicting the SCS. In addition, Boudreau, Boswell and Judge (2001) and Tan (2010) revealed openness to experience unable to predict SCS and contradict with the finding from Zainal et al. (2011) which indicate positive relationship in predicting SCS.

Conscientiousness indicates that the individuals with commited, achievement-oriented and perfectionist personality. Previous study agreed conscientiousness have positive correlated with SCS (Powers, 2012) and revealed the strongest dimension in personality predicted SCS (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007).
Agreeableness depicted individuals with soft interpersonal characteristics. Individuals with positive agreeableness personality are likeable, soft-hearted, caring and generous. The positive relationship and significant relationship between agreeableness and SCS on the study in the hotel industry (Zainal et al., 2011) but negatively predicted SCS due to small sample size (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001) and lack of interpersonal skills in networking with member in organization (Wille et al., 2013).

Furthermore, Table 2.1 below outline the dimension and characteristic for personality.

### Big Five Personality Traits Model Dimensions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Definition and Characteristics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>Illustrate the instability and feel of anxiety posed by individuals affected by the environment or workplace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>Individual characteristics towards good relationship, sociable and outgoing with others and environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to experience</td>
<td>An Individual who able to accept another opinion, adjustment activities due new concept and environment changes. The individual with this trait are creative and innovative, curious and openness to other sensitivity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Individuals who rigid with punctuality, perfectionist and very efficient. The individual characteristic under this trait are well organized, systematic, ambitious and sensitive with punctuality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>These traits portray the tendency of an individual tolerance with other and easy to work with the unit member in an organization. The characteristic of individuals under this trait such as caring, empathic and courteous.</td>
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</table>

Sources: Adapted from McCrae and Costa (1997) and McShane and Von Glinow (2005).

### 3.0 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The independent variable for the study is personality traits and the dependent variable is a subjective career success. Moreover, personality traits consist of five dimensions that are neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness. The study of personality adapted the instrument of International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) which consists of 50-items and coefficient alpha, 0.82 originated from Goldberg (1990). On the other hand, the subjective career success being measure based on career satisfaction consist of 5-items using Perceived Career Success (PCS) adapted from Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990) with coefficient alpha 0.88. In addition, the proposed of the framework aim to examine the relationship between personality and subjective career success in the manufacturing industry to capture a clear understanding of women personality.
The Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) suit with this study prior to the relationship between individual traits (personality) and subjective career success in the manufacturing industry. The SCCT reveal the interaction between individual traits and associate with individual career (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Wong & Mohd Rasdi, 2015). According to Tan (2010) as the assumption postulate from SCCT, personality determined the level of individual subjective career success. Subsequently, SCCT related with the individual personality, behavior as predicted the career related behaviors (Tan, 2010). In addition, the SCCT portrayed individual interest in chosen career on related industry and associated with this study whose represent women in the manufacturing industry which known as male dominated field. SCCT recognize the importance of individual behavior and personal disposition in order to shape individual career satisfaction (Wong & Mohd Rasdi, 2015).

4.0 SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY
This study contributes to theoretical evolution and provide significant implication on enriched the literature towards women career success. According to Herrbach and Mignonac (2012), women tend to define career success based on subjective career success that affect the level of career satisfaction and conclude women perception on attraction in retaining themselves with the organization. Hence, this study provides understanding towards significant attribute (personality) that portray women in manufacturing.

5.0 CONCLUSION
This study intends to explore the issue of subjective career success among women by conducting the empirical study. Thus, the study will be based on the framework as proposed earlier and inline in supporting the literature in order to examine the uniqueness of women personality lead to level of career satisfaction. Therefore, the finding of the study could benefit to human resources practitioners, academician and students for future references. Thus, further study should consider other industry such as education, hospitality and telecommunication industry.

REFERENCES


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