

AN INDIVIDUALISTIC APPROACH TO MODERN
EMPLOYABILITY: A STUDY ON GRADUATE'S
EMPLOYABILITY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------------|
| Copyright Page | ii |
| Declaration | iii |
| Acknowledgement | iv |
| Dedication | v |
| Table of Contents | vi - xi |
| List of Tables | xii - xiii |
| List of Figures | xiv |
| List of Abbreviations | xv |
| Preface | xvi |
| Abstract | xvii |
| CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.0 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 Research Background | 1 |
| 1.2 Problem Statement | 4 |
| 1.3 Research Objectives | 9 |
| 1.3.1 General Objectives | 9 |
| 1.3.2 Specific Objectives | 9 |
| 1.4 Research Questions | 11 |
| 1.5 Hypothesis of the Study | 12 |
| 1.6 Significance of the Study | 13 |
| 1.7 Chapter Layout | 15 |
| 1.8 Conclusion | 16 |
| CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 17 |
| 2.0 Introduction | 17 |
| 2.1 Review of the Literature | 17 |
| 2.1.1 Employability | 17 |
| 2.1.2 Openness to Changes at Work | 25 |
| 2.1.3 Work and Career Proactivity | 28 |

| | | |
|-----------|--|----|
| 2.1.4 | Career Motivation | 30 |
| 2.1.5 | Work and Career Resilience | 32 |
| 2.1.6 | Work Identity | 34 |
| 2.1.7 | Human Capital | 36 |
| 2.1.8 | Social Capital | 40 |
| 2.2 | Review of Relevant Theoretical Models | 43 |
| 2.2.1 | Harvey (2001) | 43 |
| 2.2.2 | Berntson (2008) | 44 |
| 2.2.3 | Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004) | 46 |
| 2.2.4 | Fugate and Kinicki (2008) | 47 |
| 2.3 | Proposed Theoretical Framework | 48 |
| 2.4 | Hypothesis Development | 49 |
| 2.4.1 | Relationship between <i>Openness to Change at Work</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 49 |
| 2.4.2 | Relationship between <i>Work and Career Proactivity</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 51 |
| 2.4.3 | Relationship between <i>Work and Career Resilience</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 52 |
| 2.4.4 | Relationship between <i>Career Motivation</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 53 |
| 2.4.5 | Relationship between <i>Work Identity</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 54 |
| 2.4.6 | Relationship between <i>Human Capital</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 55 |
| 2.4.7 | Relationship between <i>Social Capital</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 57 |
| 2.5 | Conclusion | 59 |
| CHAPTER 3 | RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 60 |
| 3.0 | Introduction | 60 |
| 3.1 | Research Design | 61 |
| 3.2 | Data Collection Methods | 62 |

| | | |
|---------|--|----|
| 3.2.1 | Primary Data | 62 |
| 3.2.2 | Secondary Data | 63 |
| 3.3 | Sampling Design | 65 |
| 3.3.1 | Target Population | 65 |
| 3.3.2 | Sampling Frame and Sampling Location | 65 |
| 3.3.3 | Sampling Element | 66 |
| 3.3.4 | Sampling Technique | 67 |
| 3.3.5 | Sampling Size | 68 |
| 3.4 | Research Instruments | 69 |
| 3.4.1 | Questionnaire Survey | 69 |
| 3.4.2 | Pilot Test | 70 |
| 3.5 | Constructs Measurement | 71 |
| 3.5.1 | Origin of Constructs | 71 |
| 3.5.1.1 | Modified Operational Definition of Construct..... | 72 |
| 3.5.2 | Scale of Measurement | 80 |
| 3.5.2.1 | Nominal Scale | 80 |
| 3.5.2.2 | Ordinal Scale | 80 |
| 3.5.2.3 | Likert Scale | 81 |
| 3.6 | Data Processing | 82 |
| 3.6.1 | Data Checking | 82 |
| 3.6.2 | Data Editing | 82 |
| 3.6.3 | Data Coding | 83 |
| 3.6.4 | Data Transcribing | 83 |
| 3.7 | Data Analysis | 84 |
| 3.7.1 | Descriptive Analysis | 84 |
| 3.7.2 | Scale Measurement | 85 |
| 3.7.3 | Inferential Analysis | 86 |
| 3.7.3.1 | Pearson's Correlation Coefficient | 86 |
| 3.7.3.2 | Multiple Regression Analysis | 88 |
| 3.8 | Conclusion | 89 |

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| CHAPTER 4 | DATA ANALYSIS | 90 |
| 4.0 | Introduction | 90 |
| 4.1 | Descriptive Analysis | 90 |
| 4.1.1 | Respondent Demographic Profile | 90 |
| 4.1.1.1 | Gender | 91 |
| 4.1.1.2 | Ethnicity | 92 |
| 4.1.1.3 | Age Group | 93 |
| 4.1.1.4 | Marital status | 95 |
| 4.1.2 | Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs | 96 |
| 4.2 | Scale Management | 116 |
| 4.2.1 | Internal Reliability Test for Pilot Test | 116 |
| 4.3 | Inferential Analysis | 118 |
| 4.3.1 | Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient | 118 |
| 4.3.2 | Multiple Regression Analysis | 133 |
| 4.4 | Conclusion | 140 |
| CHAPTER 5 | CONCLUSION | 141 |
| 5.0 | Introduction | 141 |
| 5.1 | Summary of Statistical Analyses | 141 |
| 5.1.1 | Descriptive Analyses | 141 |
| 5.1.1.1 | Respondent Demographic Profile | 141 |
| 5.1.1.2 | Central Tendencies Measurement of Construct..... | 142 |
| 5.1.2 | Scale Measurement | 145 |
| 5.1.2.1 | Internal Reliability Test | 145 |
| 5.1.3 | Summary of Internal Analyses | 145 |
| 5.1.3.1 | Pearson’s Correlation Analysis | 145 |
| 5.1.3.2 | Multiple Regression Analysis | 146 |
| 5.2 | Discussion of Major Findings | 148 |
| 5.2.1 | Relationship between <i>Openness to Change at Work</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 149 |
| 5.2.2 | Relationship between <i>Work</i> and <i>Career</i> | |

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Proactivity and Perceived Employability</i> | 150 |
| 5.2.3 Relationship between <i>Career Motivation</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 151 |
| 5.2.4 Relationship between <i>Work and Career</i> <i>Resilience and Perceived Employability</i> | 152 |
| 5.2.5 Relationship between <i>Work identity</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 153 |
| 5.2.6 Relationship between <i>Social Capital</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 154 |
| 5.2.7 Relationship between <i>Human Capital</i> and <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 155 |
| 5.3 Implications of the Study | 156 |
| 5.3.1 Managerial Implications | 156 |
| 5.4 Limitation of the Study | 159 |
| 5.5 Recommendation for the Future Study | 160 |
| 5.6 Conclusion | 161 |
| References | 162 |
| Appendices | 174 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Table 1.1: Number of Graduate Unemployed over Past Decade..... | 6 |
| Table 1.2: Retraining of Graduates and Youth..... | 7 |
| Table 2.1: Definitions of Employability | 20 |
| Table 3.1: The Origins of Eight Constructs in the Research..... | 71 |
| Table 3.2: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for <i>Openness to Change at Work</i> | 72 |
| Table 3.3: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for <i>Work and Career Proactivity</i> | 73 |
| Table 3.4: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for <i>Career Motivation</i> | 74 |
| Table 3.5: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for <i>Work and Career Resilience</i> | 75 |
| Table 3.6: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for <i>Work Identity</i> | 76 |
| Table 3.7: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for <i>Social Capital</i> | 77 |
| Table 3.8: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for <i>Human Capital</i> | 78 |
| Table 3.9: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 79 |
| Table 3.10: Rules of Thumb about Correlation Coefficient Size..... | 87 |
| Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents..... | 91 |
| Table 4.2: Ethnicity of the Respondents | 92 |
| Table 4.3: Age Group of the Respondents..... | 93 |
| Table 4.4: Marital Status of the Respondents..... | 95 |
| Table 4.5: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: <i>Openness to Change at Work</i> | 97 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table 4.6: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: | |
| <i>Work and Career Proactivity</i> | 99 |
| Table 4.8: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: | |
| <i>Career Motivation</i> | 101 |
| Table 4.8: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: | |
| <i>Work and Career Resilience</i> | 103 |
| Table 4.9: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: | |
| <i>Work Identity</i> | 105 |
| Table 4.10: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: | |
| <i>Social Capital</i> | 108 |
| Table 4.11: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: | |
| <i>Human Capital</i> | 111 |
| Table 4.12: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: | |
| <i>Perceived Employability</i> | 113 |
| Table 4.13: Internal Consistency (Coefficient alpha)..... | 116 |
| Table 4.14: Reliability Test..... | 116 |
| Table 4.15: Rules of Thumb about Correlation Coefficient Size..... | 118 |
| Table 4.16: Correlation between | |
| <i>Openness to Change at Work and Perceived Employability</i> | 119 |
| Table 4.17: Correlation between | |
| <i>Work and Career Proactivity and Perceived Employability</i> | 121 |
| Table 4.18: Correlation between | |
| <i>Career Motivation and Perceived Employability</i> | 123 |
| Table 4.19: Correlation between | |
| <i>Work and Career Resilience and Perceived Employability</i> | 125 |
| Table 4.20: Correlation between | |
| <i>Work Identity and Perceived Employability</i> | 127 |
| Table 4.21: Correlation between | |
| <i>Social Capital and Perceived Employability</i> | 129 |
| Table 4.22: Correlation between | |
| <i>Human Capital and Perceived Employability</i> | 131 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table 4.23: Model Summary..... | 133 |
| Table 4.24: ANOVA..... | 135 |
| Table 4.25: Coefficients..... | 136 |
| Table 5.1: Summary of the Result of Hypotheses Testing..... | 148 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Figure 2.1: Unemployment Rate by Different Academic Qualification..... | 39 |
| Figure 2.2: Model of employability- development and employment..... | 43 |
| Figure 2.3: Determinant of employability..... | 44 |
| Figure 2.4: Employability as a psycho- social construct..... | 46 |
| Figure 2.5: Dispositional measure of employability..... | 47 |
| Figure 2.6: Proposed Theoretical Model..... | 49 |
| Figure 4.1: Gender of the Respondents..... | 91 |
| Figure 4.2: Ethnicity of the Respondents..... | 92 |
| Figure 4.3: Age Group of the Respondents..... | 94 |
| Figure 4.4: Marital Status of the Respondents..... | 95 |

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

FMM : Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers

KSAs : Knowledge, skills, and abilities

DME : Dispositional measure of employability

NACE: National Association of Colleges and Employers

CV : *Curriculum Vitae*

HEI : Higher Education Institution

SPSS : Statistic Package for Social Science

PREFACE

In today's turbulent working environment, careers are no longer characterized by stability, vertical progression and job security as how it used to be, therefore causing a great deal of lateral movements across organizations, increased instability, and the issue that concerns majority of workers- unemployment. As a result, a new concept of 'employability' has emerged and many have claimed it to be crucial toward career success.

Generally, employability in our context can be defined as a form of work specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realize career opportunities. In other words, employability facilitates the movement between jobs, both within the organizations and the industry. Although the concept of 'employability' does not necessarily represents actual employment, we contend that it enhances an individual's likelihood of gaining employment.

As we explore into the vast literature on the concept of employability, a few theoretical framework of past studies were selected to test in our local context. For instance, in adopting Fugate and Kinicki's (2008) dispositional employability, this study seek to explore its variables of openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity, social capital, and human capital.

ABSTRACT

Changing career patterns and the erosion of job security have led to a growing emphasis on employability as being fundamental for employment success. The purpose of this research is to investigate the concept of employability to reveal necessary findings toward the issue of high unemployment among graduates. For instance in a recent study by Fugate et al. (2004), employability was defined as ‘a psycho-social construct comprised of three dimensions- adaptability, career identity, human and social capital. Thus this study seeks to empirically test Fugate et al.’s model in a sample of 150 of our graduates.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This is an introductory chapter that outlines our research problems with an overview of the study. It contains our research background, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, hypotheses of study, significance of study, and a conclusion to sum up the chapter.

1.1 Research Background

As we advance towards a world of dynamism, there is a majority of consensus among various parties over the years that a new business environment has already taken place. As Baruch (2004) places it, 'change has always been with us but it seems that the pace of change is accelerating'. One of these changes for instance, can be seen in the reshaping of the range of work settings in the United States by the changes in organizational and employment innovative (Smith, 1997).

Firstly, in today's competitive business environment, organizations are now driven by the need to be flexible and adaptable; therefore the promise of long-term job security by employers is out of the question (Clarke and Patrickson, 2008). The reason is clear, in order to remain competitive, many organizations are experiencing various transformations themselves such as reorganizing, implementing new technology, and even downsizing (Wanberg and Banas, 2000). As a result, organizational commitment and loyalty from employees now would not guarantee safe employment (i.e. job security) in return by employers like how it used to be.

This issue concerning job security, however, was found to have an interesting theory in the perspective of employees. Instead of being distressed over the changes made in job security by employers, Bagshaw (1996) suggests that employees have actually accepted this fact willingly and no longer has the desire for job security (as cited in Clarke and Patrickson, 2008). Accordingly, today's career pattern demonstrates a preference to attract to jobs where individuals can see clear opportunities for themselves (Clarke and Patrickson, 2008). In other words, the study has claim that employees of today do not seek for secure employment but are more interested in career-success related opportunities.

Next, the changing of economic climate as suggested by Boyer (n.d.), believes that it too has something to do with this changing of career direction apart from the erosion of job security. As a result, a new emphasis on being employable and transferable skills has emerged (Boyer, n.d.).

Since the decline of traditional viewpoint on organizational career during the past few decades, two new perspectives such as the *protean career* and *boundaryless career* have also emerged subsequently and still remained hotly debated in organizational literature. According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996), as summarized by Sullivan and Arthur (2006), *boundaryless career* refers to independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional organizational career arrangements, and that it has mobility across other boundaries such as occupational and cultural boundaries. This new career concept, however, was proven otherwise in a study by Briscoe, Hall and DeMuth (2006) where its relationship with mobility was not significant. For instance, the study has found that relatively higher protean attitudes or a boundaryless mindset has a lower mobility preference (Briscoe, Hall, and DeMuth, 2006).

Garavan (1999), as highlighted by Clarke and Patrickson (2008), then refers to *employability* as the 'emerging new deal' as opposed to the concept of *employment security*. This concept of employability was first introduced by Kantar (1989) about a decade ago, and it is perceived as the new form of psychological contract between

employers and employees which emphasizes mutual obligation and responsibility in developing human capital needs (as cited in Van der Heijden, 2005).

As boundaryless and protean careers are based on the assumption that responsibility for career and employability primarily lies with the individual, this new 'covenant' as described by Clarke and Patrickson (2008) shares the same responsibility between employer and employee for maintaining and enhancing employability in an 'adult-adult relationship' instead of the old 'parent-child relationship' of past employment contract. This new transfer of responsibility was often portrayed as 'empowering employees', offering a more balanced relationship between employer and employee (Clarke and Patrickson, 2008).

Mallon and Walton (2005) on the other hand, disagree. According to Mallon and Walton (2005), this new employment relationship does not necessarily reflect greater independence for employees or even a new balance of power as claimed, but instead it actually reflects a major transfer of risk from employers to employees (as cited in Clarke and Patrickson, 2008).

The changes made in today's organizational context do not only result in the erosion of job security and the transfer of career-management responsibilities that concerns employability, there is also a change in the definition of *career success* itself. According to Baruch (2004), one's career success was traditionally based on hierarchical, highly structured, and rigid structures, thus it has a clear linear direction of prescribed prospects or promotion. In today's environment however, the nature and notion of careers have changed as people now experience different ways of defining career success, for instance, it could be a sideways move, change of direction, of organization, and of aspiration (Baruch, 2004). In other words, employment and having a career are now seen less in terms of employment security within an organization, but more in terms of *individual employability* across relevant labour markets (as cited in Clarke and Patrickson, 2008), thus employability is too becoming a key benchmark for career success (as cited in Boyer, n.d.).

According to past studies, the major shift within the concept of employability lies in the change of psychological contract between employers and employees. From the organizational point of view, it moves from offering secure employment to providing opportunities for development; while it is a farewell to traditional organizational commitment for multiple commitments in the individual's perspective (Baruch, 2004). This shift towards more flexible and shorter-term employment contracts has meant that psychological contracts are increasingly transactional rather than relational (as cited in Clarke and Patrickson, 2008). As Van der Heijden (2005) put it, 'no one has ever promised you a rose garden'.

Finally, the introduction of employability into the business environment has not only impacted organizational career structures and employment; it has also become a concern to students in this era. For instance, according to the findings of Steward and Knowles (2000), the prime motivation in attending university today for the majority of students is no longer to study a particular subject in depth, but instead to enhance their employment prospects (as cited in Boyer, n.d.).

In sum, the changes of economic settings and the patterns of career success had *employability* argued to be the new psychological contract in which individuals recognise that *career self-management* will provide a greater likelihood of employment success. However, despite its widespread use across both the academic and popular management literature, what exactly constructs employability remains elusive (Clarke and Patrickson, 2008), thus setting a very ambiguous and dynamic working environment.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to a survey conducted by the Bureau of National Affairs in the United States, organizational change was a major concern for more than a third of the 396 organizations surveyed (Wanberg and Banas, 2000).

Kantar (1989), being the person who brought in the term ‘employability’, was among the first who had discussed on the consequences of changes in today’s career patterns (as cited in Van der Heijden, 2005). The new emphasis on ‘employability’ and the transfer of traditional career to a more flexible and ‘boundaryless’ perspective had caught great attention across organizational literature over the decade.

Firstly, although changes are norms at workplaces, the increasingly competitive environment has caused an increased rate of unemployment especially among graduates. In order to be globally competitive, organizations are heading toward being multidirectional, dynamic, and fluid (Baruch, 2004), consequently, employees face greater changes at a more rapid pace (Wanberg and Banas, 2000). For instance, the rapid globalization and development of technology have subsequently demanded employees to be highly skilled, thus making graduates of today difficult in seeking employment if they were perceived as lacking such *employability skills* (Shafie and Nayan, 2010).

Next, according to Boyer (n.d.), there is also much evidence to suggest that graduate recruitment of today has become increasingly more complex and critical as there is a realization of recruitment and selection procedures to be ‘best fit’ and ‘work ready’, in order to stay robust in the ever changing economic climate. For instance, an attractive academic performance was used to be the prime requirement for any employment, but because of the high expectations from today’s dynamic business environment, a graduate degree may not be as significant as it used to be. As Harvey (2000) places it, ‘a degree may once have been a passport into graduate employment;

however, as a result of organizational changes and the expansion in the number of graduates, this is no longer the case’.

These high recruiting requirements imposed on today’s graduates have caused huge unemployment among them. For instance, in a report by Malaysian National News Agency, it was revealed that there were 70 percent (%) of unemployed graduates in the country as against 34% in other nations (*Graduation Unemployed Due To Lack of Skills*, 2006). Earlier estimates had even put the number of jobless graduates in our country at between 18,000 and 82,000 (New Straits Times, 2005). The table below (Table 1.1) provides a good picture on the dramatic increase of unemployed graduates in our country over the past decade.

Table 1.1: Number of Graduates Unemployed over the Past Decade

| Year | Number of Unemployed Graduates (Degree holders) |
|----------------|--|
| 2004 | 4,594 |
| 2005 | 2,413 |
| 2006 | 56,750 |
| 2007 | 56,322 |
| 2008 | 47,910 |
| 2009 (March) | 57,701 |
| 2009 (October) | 81,046 |

Source: *Number of unemployed graduates soars.* (2009, December 13). Retrieved September 20, 2010, from <http://anilnetto.com/democracy/workers-rights/unemployed-graduates-in-malaysia/>

These high unemployment figures among graduates were also worsen by the increased supply of graduates every year. For instance, Malaysian undergraduates have increased roughly 40% in just 4 years from about 500,000 in year 2001 to 700,000 in year 2005 (Ahmad, 2005). As the number of unemployed graduates in our

country was yet to be solved, increased number of fresh graduates from universities in the country has burdened the statistic by adding into the rate of unemployment.

High unemployment among graduates is a gross waste that no nation can afford (Ahmed, 2009). For instance, according to a report from our country's annual budget allocation, millions of ringgits were spent to resolve the issue by retraining our unemployed graduates. Table 1.2 shows the estimated costs spent in programmes and initiatives set up by our government to enhance our graduate's employability.

Table 1.2: Retraining for Graduates and Youth

| Year | Programme | Estimated Cost (RM) |
|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2001 | Graduate Training Scheme | 150 million |
| 2004-2005 | Graduate Training Scheme | 265.2 million |
| 2008 | Najib's Stimulus Package #1 | 600 million |
| 2009 | Najib's Stimulus Package #2 | 700 million |

Source: Lim, T. G. (2009). *Unemployed graduates: Who prospers?* Retrieved September 10, 2010, from http://english.cpiasia.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1763:unemployed-graduates-who-prospers-&catid=141:lim-teck-ghees-contribution&Itemid=93

The issue of high unemployment among graduates however does not only occur in Malaysia, it has also become a common phenomenon in other nations such as Britain with a reported figure of 40,000 jobless graduates in the recent year of 2009 (Curtis and Lipsett, 2009) and Sri Lanka, who has suffered a serious graduate unemployment issue for the past 30 years since year 1973 (Weligamage and Siengthai, 2003). In most cases, high unemployment rate are usually the result of economy downturn like

in the case of United States where it suffers a rise of graduate unemployment from 5.7% to 8.2% in year 2008 (Fearn, 2009), as well as United Kingdom who also suffers a similar scenario due to recession (Curtis and Lipsett, 2009). However in our country, the preliminary investigation shows a different story.

One commentator writes: “It would be easy to blame a troubled economy. But the economy is not in bad shape, and the last time it was mainly to blame for unemployment in Malaysia was in the mid-1980s.” (Ahmad, 2005). Upon reviewing from various sources, we found that there were many ongoing debates for the past decade in determining the factors that contributes toward the high and rising unemployment rate among our graduates. For instance, Human Resources Minister reported in *The Star* newspaper in year 2005 that more than 65% of female graduates in Malaysia were unemployed because of lacking in social and communication skills, in addition to a poor command of language and low levels of self-confidence (as cited in Saari, 2010). According to the results conducted by a government survey in the same year, it shows a similar factor of ‘poor command of the English language with inadequate communication skills’ being cited, with other factors including ‘lacking of job experience’ and ‘the possession of qualifications that are not relevant to the job market’ (New Straits Times, 2005). These results were also found to be consistent with the factors of a study conducted half a decade later by the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) where poor command of English and an addition factor of lacking of industrial training were among the five factors why graduates were unemployed (Five reasons why graduates are unemployed, 2010).

These lacking example of individual characteristics in our graduates as shown previously fits in the problem definition of Fugate’s (2006) ‘dispositional employability’ where these individual characteristics facilitate adaptive behaviours necessary to maintain ongoing employment within rapidly changing employment environments (as cited in Crossman and Clarke, 2009).

In a nutshell, organizational changes are common especially in a competitive business environment although all of these have resulted in high unemployment among fresh graduates; it was the main issue of poor adaptability from our graduates to maintain an ongoing employment or even seeking employment, which was contributing into the high rate of unemployment. In other words, the high unemployment figure found in the past decade was not the primary issue we should be paying attention to; they were actually an indication or a symptom that hinted our actual problem which was the lacking of willingness to learn and proactive adaptability in a dynamic working environment.

As unable to seek employment does not necessarily represent the overall reason for unemployment, employee retrenchments due to poor adaptability also contributes toward the issue of unemployment. Therefore this study believes, by investigating the issue of adaptability which was the individualist's approach toward employability, would ultimately solve majority of the reasons for today's high and uprising unemployment among graduates.

In conclusion, the ever changing working climate had many organizations restructured to stay competitive; turning unemployment among graduates into a global issue for years with expensive costs involved trying to resolve the issue. The actual underlying problem however, lies within the issue of adaptability which was significant in determining today's employability.

1.3 Research Objectives

In order to have a better understanding on the antecedents of employability and its relationship with today's high graduate unemployment, past models of 'employability' would be put into testing.

1.3.1 General Objectives

Generally, the objective of this study is to examine the *perceived employability* among working fresh graduates by comparing past models of employability with freshly employed graduates; in which our adopted model of employability mainly consists Fugate (2006), and Fugate and Kinicki's (2008) *dispositional* approach to employability, along with its adopted variables of *openness to changes at work*, *work and career proactivity*, *career motivation*, *work and career resilience*, and *work identity*; the theory of career capital along with its adopted variables of *social capital* and *human capital*; and Berntson's (2008) concept of *perceived employability*'.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- 1) To examine the relationship between openness to changes at work with perceived employability.
- 2) To examine the relationship between work and career proactivity with perceived employability.
- 3) To examine the relationship between career motivation with perceived employability.

- 4) To examine the relationship between work and career resilience with perceived employability.
- 5) To examine the relationship between work identity with perceived employability.
- 6) To examine the relationship between social capital with perceived employability.
- 7) To examine the relationship between human capital with perceived employability.

1.4 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer several questions as shown below to address the researching issues.

- 1) Is openness to changes at work significantly explaining graduates' perceived employability?
- 2) Is work and career proactivity significantly explaining graduates' perceived employability?
- 3) Is career motivation significantly explaining graduates' perceived employability?
- 4) Is work and career resilience significantly explaining graduates' perceived employability?
- 5) Is work identity significantly explaining graduates' perceived employability?
- 6) Is social capital significantly explaining graduates' perceived employability?
- 7) Is social capital significantly explaining graduates' perceived employability?

1.5 Hypothesis of the Study

- H1: There is a significant relationship between openness to changes at work and perceived employability
- H2: There is a significant relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability
- H3: There is a significant relationship between career motivation and perceived employability
- H4: There is a significant relationship between work and career resilience and perceived employability
- H5: There is a significant relationship between work identity and perceived employability
- H6: There is a significant relationship between social capital and perceived employability
- H7: There is a significant relationship between human capital and perceived employability
- H8: The seven independent variables (openness to changes at work; work and career proactivity; career motivation; work and career resilience; work identity; social capital; human capital) are significant in explaining the variance in perceived employability.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study was important as it seeks to contribute toward the relevant literature field of employability and several involving parties by revealing the significance of the research's findings.

Graduates would be among the first to benefit from the study. By revealing the tested results between employability and several influencing factors such as career motivation or human capital, graduates will be provided with a much needed insight in guiding them toward employability. As many of the previous studies were mainly focusing on the definition and constitution of employability, as well as the responsibility of bearing the costs between employers and employees, this study would greatly benefit our graduates by revealing the important factors of employability perceived by employers in our local context. Next, these revealed traits of employability would also serve as awareness to all fresh graduates who would be seeking employment in the future, thus decreasing the chance of unemployment in the country and increasing the rate of career success among our graduates. The study's findings on the relationship of employability and employment would also help employed graduates to realize the importance of being proactive in self-career management in order to sustain and advance during employment apart from only seeking employment.

Next, business organizations would too be benefited with the results of the study. By proving the significant outcomes of our framework, business organizations would realize the several important factors that could lead individual toward career success. For instance, business organizations could understand the importance of dispositional factor of employability and thus, would serve as a reference in employee recruitment as well as areas of training and development to provide. As these factors would lead toward good employability, organizations will be sufficiently competent in countering today's dynamic environment. In other words, by providing business organizations an

insight toward the concept of employability, they will help to realize the importance of sharing part of the responsibility in developing and training employees in such relevant area without ambiguous high demand and expectations, thus too reducing the rate of unemployment among fresh graduates. As high employee turnover in an organization could result in negative outcomes such as recruitment costs, employers would learn to realize the important of supporting its employees to be adaptive in a competitive environment by offering guidance and directions for continuous self-learning for instance. In other words, business organizations could benefit from this study by realizing the need to be adaptive by helping their employees to stay competitive, thus increases employee motivation and productivity which eventually resulted in lower turnover rate and more competitive.

Finally, this good piece of information would too benefit academic institutions that played the major role of developing competent graduates before entering into the workplace. By understanding the current needs of current organizational and employment trend that could enhance a graduate's employability, which was the importance of being 'adaptable', academic institutions could increase its institutional reputation and effectiveness by producing competent graduates that could adapt well into the dynamic business environment. Most importantly, the study could help such institutions to produce quality education which could easily train and prepare its respective students into today's competitive working world.

As the concept of employability will be revealed in this study, the contribution toward reducing our country's high unemployment rate among graduates would too seek to improve the country's economy.

1.7 Chapter Layout

This research report consist a total of five chapters. In chapter one, we provide an overview of the study and explaining the research problem. It contains a brief introduction of our research; mainly our background of study, problem definition, objectives and significance of study.

Chapter two is where past literature concerning the subject is reviewed. Its contents under this chapter include review of the literature, review of relevant theoretical models, proposed theoretical framework, and the development of hypotheses.

Chapter three is where we share the overview of the study's research methodology. In this chapter, it includes our research design, data collection methods, sampling design, research instrument, and measurement construction, data processing, and data analysis.

Chapter four is where we present our research results. This chapter includes our descriptive analysis, scale measurement, and inferential analyses.

Finally, final discussions and conclusion of the study will be discussed in chapter five. This chapter includes the summary of our statistical analyses, discussions of major findings, implications of the study, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

1.8 Conclusion

Despite its widespread use across the academic and management literature, the construct of exactly what constitutes *employability* remains elusive (Clarke and Patrickson, 2008). Thus to better understand the concept of employability and what it takes to be employable in today's dynamic environment, a review of literature and a testing of framework should be conducted, in which will be revealed in the following chapters of this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This literature review discusses the following: (a) explanations of dependent variable and independent variables of the study, (b) summaries and discussions of various related researches and their differences, (c) proposed theoretical framework, as well as (d) hypothesis development of the study.

2.1 Review of the Literature

2.1.1 Employability

The concept of employability is not a particularly new concept. Based on Beveridge's (1909) study (as cited in Berntson, 2008), the earliest record of employability is from early 20th century, introduced with purpose of identifying persons that were able to work and getting those who could work into the labor market as many industries were facing labor shortage. However, Gazier (1999) argued that the earlier conceptualization of employability was very basic and primitive (as cited in Berntson, 2008). Workers were considered suitable for work if they were of the right age (15 to 64 year old), sufficiently healthy, and had no family constraints.

Gazier (2001) also claimed that during the 1950s and 60s the concept of employability became somewhat more broadened and diversified (as cited in Berntson, 2008). The main trends in defining the concept essentially involved including more people and groups in the definition, defining it on a

continuous scale, and taking on a macro-economic approach. Individual was viewed in terms of being more or less employable, from this point of view, was defined as having the individual skills and capacities that fit into the labor market and the probability and time for a given group to find a job.

The concept of employability has been expanded even more to include everyone in the labor market since the mid 1990s, focuses on the capacities and abilities of the individual. Being employable is determined by how well individuals fit into the labor market based on, for example their human and social skills (Berntson, 2008; Fugate, Kinicki, and Ashforth, 2004). Emphasis on the interaction between individual skills and labor market opportunities has developed the concept of *interactive employability*, discussed by Gazier (2001) and McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) (as cited in Berntson, 2008).

Most researches under the traditional career paradigm centred on the concept of person-job fit. Individuals were deemed employable if they had the fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to perform adequately in a particular job role (DiRenzo, 2010; Fugate et al., 2004). Employability literature utilizing *person-job fit* perspective implies that necessary KSAs are known and stable, which is incongruent with the highly uncertain employment environment and current employee-employer relationship (i.e. transactional relationship).

Framing employability in term of rigid KSAs is a liability to both employers and employees, as it suggests that employees are valuable only to the extent their current skill set matches their employer's current strategic objectives (Fugate et al., 2004; Fugate and Kinicki, 2008; Fugate, 2006). But, current economic pressures have forced organizations to become leaner and more boundaryless (Cappelli, 1999; Cross, Yan, and Louis, 2000; Fugate et al., 2004; Greenhaus et al., 2008; Miner and Robinson, 1994) which requires functionally flexible employees who have the ability to adapt to fluctuating

demands and navigate through a variety of work roles, duties, and responsibilities (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden, 2006).

Researchers also argue that employability is substitute for traditional job security as dynamism of today business environment results in organizations' inability to provide life-long employment. Individuals no longer depend on being employed in one organization throughout their working career; instead, today's workers anticipate employment with numerous organizations throughout their careers in transactional relationships that may enable them to remain employable and valuable to future employers (Berntson, 2008; Direnzo, 2010; Fugate, 2006). Individualization of labor reduces role of employers in managing employees' careers and increases the need for employees to take care of their career themselves (i.e. career self-management).

As the responsibilities and risks to manage own career shifting towards employees, it becomes indispensable to be able to get new employment when needed. Kanter (1993) and Oss (2001) introduced the term *employability security* to articulate that being able to find new employment when necessary is a way of finding security in a flexible working life (as cited in Berntson, 2008). Fugate et al. (2004) argue that active adaptability is vital for realizing career opportunities, by that definition, employability entails the ability to advance and gain promotion to higher career levels. Thus, employability could be argued to be an important driving force for individuals' career development, in term of getting higher up in a predefined hierarchy or corporate ladder. Although the phenomenon of employability has been referred to in various contexts in literature but there is no consensus on how employability should be viewed.

Table 2.1: Definitions of Employability

| References | Definitions |
|--|--|
| Berntson (2008) | Employability refers to an individual's perception of his or her possibilities of getting new, equal, or better employment. |
| Forrier and Sels (2003) | An individual's chance of a job in the internal and/or external labor market. |
| Fugate et al. (2004) | A form of work specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realize career opportunities. |
| Fugate (2006) | A constellation of individual differences that predispose individuals to (pro)active adaptability specific to work and careers. |
| Harvey (2001) | Employability is the ability of graduate to get a satisfying job. Employability is a process of learning. |
| Hillage and Pollard (1998) | Employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labor market to realize potential through sustainable employment. |
| Robinson (2000) | A basic set of skills necessary for getting, keeping and doing well on a job. |
| Rothwell and Arnold (2007) | The ability to keep the job one has or to get the job desires. |
| Sanders and De Grip (2004) | The capacity and the willingness to be and to remain attractive in the labor market. |
| Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2005) | The continuously fulfilling, acquiring or creating of work through the optimal use of competencies. |

Source: Berntson, E. (2008). *Employability perceptions: Nature, determinants, and implications for health and well-being*. Retrieved November 15, 2010 from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:198489/FULLTEXT01>

Table 2.1 summarizes different definitions of employability by various researches. For this study, three most relevant and preferred definitions have been selected:

(1) Fugate, Kinicki, and Ashforth (2004) define employability as a form of work specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realize career opportunity. Employability facilitates the movement between jobs, both within and between organizations. Fugate et al. (2004) contend that employability enhances an individual's likelihood of gaining employment, although it does not assure actual employment.

Several researchers have further studied on the implication of psycho-social construct's of employability introduced by Fugate et al (2004) and results show that employable people tend to demonstrate higher job satisfaction, career success (Guo, Niu, and Yang, 2009), reinforce the result of Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller's (2000) study (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004). Crant (1995) also found that employability (i.e. proactive behavior) enhances job performance, and career outcome (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004). Furthermore, Belschak and Hartog's (2010b) study argues that proactive employees (i.e. high employability) tend to be more committed to their organization to solve problem, develop and implement ideas on improvements in their organization, take initiative to share knowledge or help others, proactively search for feedback, and so on.

Fugate (2006) later refined and introduced a dispositional perspective of employability namely *dispositional employability*, defined as a constellation of individual differences that predispose individuals to (pro)active adaptability specific to work and careers.

(2) Harvey (2001), on the other hand conceptualizes employability in a much more specific subject and direct – employability of higher education institution’s graduate. Harvey (2001) defines employability as the ability of graduate to get a satisfying job. Harvey (2001) concurs that job acquisition should not be prioritized over *preparedness for employment* to avoid pseudo-measure of individual employability.

Harvey (2001) argues that employability is not a set of skills but a range of experiences and attributes developed through higher-level learning, thus employability is not a ‘product’ but a process of learning. Employability continues to develop because the graduate, once employed, does not stop learning (i.e. continuous learning). Thus employability by this definition is about learning, not least learning how to learn, and it is about empowering learners as critical reflective citizens (Harvey, 2001).

Harvey’s (2001) definition is important for it emphasizes employability of graduates, which is similar to our context, hence, able to provide insight about how to measure graduates’ employability and what are the differences between graduates and experienced individuals in labor market.

(3) Berntson (2008) argues that employability refers to an individual's perception of his or her possibilities of getting new, equal, or better employment. Berntson's study differentiates employability into two main categories – actual employability (objective employability) and perceived employability (subjective employability).

Objective employability, or actual employability, refers to an absolute level of employability for individual. Perceived employability, on the other hand, refers to individual's believed level of employability. Lazarus and Folkman, and Magnusson's studies (as cited in Berntson, 2008) show that when the labor environment is uncertain and unpredictable, the perception of being employable becomes very important as perceptions in general have impact on people's feeling, thoughts, behaviors, and physical conditions. Perception of employability provides the individual with a feeling of security and a feeling of independence towards environmental circumstances (Berntson, 2008), thus potentially fosters (pro)active adaptability specific to work and career context.

Due to the subjective nature of perceived employability, it could be argued that these beliefs are merely reflection of the individual's disposition and perception of employability represents the general self-evaluation of the individual. Among all self-concepts, perceived employability could especially be related to efficacy belief (i.e. self-efficacy), which concern individuals' general views on their abilities to perform tasks. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as individuals' beliefs about their abilities to solve tasks or take on certain roles, or more precisely, beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments (as cited in Berntson, 2008). However, Berntson's (2008) study shows that self-efficacy and perceived employability are two distinct constructs that measure related but different phenomena.

Study indicated that employability predicted subsequent self-efficacy rather than the converse, or a reciprocal relationship. Berntson (2008) explained that self-efficacy reflects a general belief about the self, whereas employability is related to more specific factors, such as different types of knowledge and skills, and situational factors. The enhancement of a general perception may not affect a specific perception like perceived employability, although the opposite can happen i.e. enhancement of a specific perception, may have spill-over effects on the general view of the self.

This study applies Berntson's (2008) perceived employability measure to predict Fugate et al.'s (2004) employability, which refers to a form of work specific (pro)active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realize career opportunities. For that reason, we suggest a reciprocal relationship between perceived employability and work specific (pro)active adaptability (i.e. employability).

There are several explanations for such suggestion. For instance, O'Connell, McNeely, and Hall's study (2008) proved that confidence and optimism about one's ability to apply current skills to a variety of settings may help fuel career success. Morrison and Hall (2001), note that adaptation is difficult for older workers who feel that their skills are becoming obsolete (as cited in O'Connell, McNeely, and Hall, 2008). When it comes to obsolete skills, the same may be true for workers of all ages. Just as self-confidence can influence goals and effort, confidence in the currency and transferability of one's skills may fuel one's ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Specifically, as an individual's confidence in the marketability of her skills increases, both the competence and confidence to adjust to changing circumstances should likewise be bolstered (O'Connell, McNeely, and Hall, 2008). Conversely, individuals with high actual employability (i.e. proactive adaptability, and ability to identify and realize career opportunities) will have higher self-efficacy and confidence, thus result in higher perceived employability.

Besides, these two approaches demonstrate a certain degree of commonality, for example, both incorporate individual factors (i.e. disposition, human capital, and social capital) into their definition of employability. Fugate (2006) introduced *dispositional measure of employability* (DME) and defined employability as a constellation of individual differences that predispose individuals to (pro)active adaptability specific to work and careers. While Berntson's (2008) perceived employability is built on the foundation of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and self-efficacy, thus included disposition in its conceptualization.

However, Berntson (2008) also integrated situational factors into his theoretical framework as opposed to Fugate et al. (2004) who only emphasize person-centered factors. Besides, both conceptualizations of employability do not guarantee employment but merely enhance the chances of getting employment. Moreover, perception of being employable affords the individual with a feeling of security and independence, as well as a sense of control towards environmental circumstances (Berntson, 2008), thus potentially fosters (pro)active adaptability specific to work and career context.

Therefore, we argue that there is a reciprocal relationship between perceived employability (i.e. Employability refers to an individual's perception of his or her possibilities of getting new, equal, or better employment.) and actual employability (i.e. proactive adaptability specific to work and careers) due to their commonalities. However, the two terminologies should not be used interchangeably as they express different concepts.

2.1.2 Openness to Changes at Work

According to past studies, having an ‘open attitude’ has been proven to be effective in dealing with difficulties or when facing a challenging situation. For instance, a study by Digman (1990) has found individuals who has ‘openness’ tend to exhibit flexibility when confronted with the challenges innate in an ambiguous situation (as cited in Fugate, Kinicki, and Ashforth, 2004). Consistent with the findings by Wanberg and Banas (2000), *openness to change* was found to relate positively with job satisfaction and negatively with work frustrations and intentions to quit. Also similar with the past findings of McCartt and Rohrbaugh (1995), openness to change also associated positively with comfort in unfamiliar or uncertain situations, as well as increased training proficiency across a variety of occupations (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004).

According to Garmon (2004), *openness* can be defined as being receptiveness or open-mindedness to others’ ideas or arguments, as well as receptiveness to diversity. In other words, *openness* refers to the willingness of individual to accept new ideas or changes, thus *openness to changes at work* here refers to the ability or willingness to accept organizational changes such as new system of management or company policies. This quality of *openness* however, could not assume to be possessed by every individual as not all are readily and willingly to accept new changes. For instance, Wanberg and Banas (2000) has found that when some employees are not bothered by organizational changes and may even see them as a growing and learning opportunity, others may react negatively to even the smallest of changes.

This negative response to changes could also be better known as *resistance to change*. Defined by Zaltman and Duncan (1977) as any conduct that serves to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure to alter the status quo (Coghlan, 1993), a resistance to change basically opposes the idea of being open or

willingness to change, therefore forming a resistance to stand their ground (as cited in Burke, Lake, and Paine, 2009). While it was consistently associated with negative impacts such as being laid off or quitting the job, past literature has revealed the main reason why individuals are being resistant to changes is because they are uncertain or could not see the advantages of changes (Burke, Lake, and Paine, 2009).

In a study by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) on the other hand, has suggested several traits or behavior that relates to openness to organizational changes. For instance, open individuals tend to experience positive feelings on changes, readily to accept changes at work, being positive to handle job and organizational changes effectively, and being able to adapt into dynamic working circumstances.

According to Fugate et al. (2004), openness is fundamental to *personal adaptability*, thus when displayed in individuals with high employability, these elements of personal adaptability will be cognitively and affectively united and directed to yield a powerful influence on the identification and realization of opportunities at work. This is because openness to change supports continuous learning which helps them to identify and realise career opportunities, and therefore enhancing personal adaptability (Fugate and Kinicki, 2008). Consistent with the suggestions of Miller et al. (1994), openness to organizational change involves two main criteria according to the study, which is the willingness to support the changes and being positive about the potential consequences of the change (as cited in Wanberg and Banas, 2000).

Finally according to Miller et al. (1994) as highlighted by Wanberg and Banas (2000), it is necessary and significant to encourage the behavior of openness to change toward employees as it could increase cooperation and deterring change resistance behaviors such as quarrelling and hostility, deliberating

restrictions of production, and poor cooperation with management. In other words, being openness to change does not only result in the effectiveness of adapting into dynamic working conditions successfully, it is also significant in supporting organizations in pursuing competitive advantages.

In conclusion, individuals who are open to new experiences and changes are basically adaptable to dynamic working circumstances, thus ultimately making them more employable.

2.1.3 Work and Career Proactivity

Survival in turbulent career environment requires workers to continually manage change – in themselves and their contexts. Thus a person’s ability and willingness to adapt is essential to career success (Hall, 2002; Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, and Plamondon, 2000) (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004). Historically, organizational scholars characterized employee adaptation as *reactive*, that is, as a response to environmental change. More recently, employees have been characterized as more *proactive*, as initiating change. For example, numerous person-centered constructs—proactive behaviors (Crant, 2000), personal initiative (Frese and Fay, 2001), proactive personality (Bateman and Crant, 1993; Crant, 1996), taking charge (Morrison and Phelps, 1999), proactive socialization (Saks and Ashforth, 1997), and so on—view employees as active agents who initiate improvement in their work situations (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004).

Bateman and Crant (1993) defined *proactive personality* as one who is relatively unconstrained by situational forces and who effects environmental change (as cited in Crant, 1996). Proactive personalities identify opportunities and act on them; they show initiative, take action, and persevere until they bring about meaningful change. Bateman and Crant (1993) argued that

proactivity differs from affective traits like well-being and from cognitive traits like locus of control. The proactive disposition is a tendency to initiate and maintain actions that directly alter the surrounding environment (as cited in Crant, 1996), for example, making suggestions on how to improve a business process to produce better results.

Rooted in the Bandura (1997) and Schneider's (1983) interactionist perspective, the proactive approach considers the possibility that individuals shape their desired environments (as cited in Benrtson, 2008; Crant, 1996). In the psychology and organizational behavior literatures, the theme of interactionism holds that behavior is both internally and externally controlled, and that situations are as much a function of persons as vice versa (Schneider 1983). Bandura (1977) claimed that reciprocal causal links exist between person, environment, and behavior (as cited in Berntson, 2008; Crant, 1996). For instance, Bindl and Parker (2010) pointed out that having more autonomy and freedom to take decision at work (i.e. empowerment) stimulates people to make use of this freedom and become proactive. Employees also interpret autonomy granted by their supervisor as a signal that they have the abilities needed to take initiative. This in turn increases a sense of confidence or self-efficacy that they are able to successfully affect their environment and, as a consequence of such an increase in experienced efficacy, employees are more likely to show proactive behavior (as cited in Belschak, F. and Den Hartog, 2010b).

Crant (2000) defines *proactive behavior* as taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones; it involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting to present conditions. Employees can engage in proactive activities as part of their in-role behavior in which they fulfill basic job requirements. For example, sales agents might proactively seek feedback on their techniques for closing a sale with an ultimate goal of improving job performance. Extra-role behaviors can also be proactive, such

as efforts to redefine one's role in the organization. For example, employees might engage in career management activities by identifying and acting on opportunities to change the scope of their jobs or move to more desirable divisions of the business.

According to Seibert, Crant, and Kraimer (1990) and Bateman and Crant (1993) proactive individuals are able to affect environmental change, remaining relatively unimpeded by situational constraints (as cited in McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, and Hall, 2007), thus implying a individualist's point of view. Proactive personality has also been linked to identifying and acting on opportunities, feelings of control, perseverance, self-efficacy, self-direction, coping, and information-seeking (as cited in McArdle et al., 2007), supported by Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) and Crant (2000) who argue that proactivity affords employees a measure of perceived control that those with passive or reactive orientations do not have (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004). Ashford and Black (1996), claim that desire to obtain a sense of control motivate individuals to reduce uncertainty and expand alternative courses of action and able to cope better with organizational change (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004).

2.1.4 Career Motivation

London (1983) described career motivation as multidimensional, inclusive of: (i) how one defines oneself by one's work (i.e. career identity), (ii) establishing clear and feasible career goals and effectively utilizing one's strengths (i.e. career insight), and (iii) adapting to changing circumstances (i.e. career resilience).

According to London (1983), the term career motivation encompasses the terms such as work motivation and managerial motivation; it also includes the

motivation associated with a wide range of career decisions and behaviors. These include searching for a job, deciding to stay with an organization, revising one's career plans, seeking training and new job experiences, and setting and trying to accomplish career goals.

Career motivation provides many benefits to workers, such as enhanced drive for work-related endeavors, persistence during periods of boredom or frustration, and sustained effort in facing challenges (Fugate, 2006). Kanfer and Heggstad (1997) argued that by setting goals, workers with high motivation control are more motivated at work, persist during periods of boredom or frustration, and sustain effort in the face of challenges (as cited by Fugate et al., 2008).

According to London and Noe (1997), career motivation describes employees as being reactive to situational demands (as cited by Fugate, 2004). Noe, Noe, and Bachhuber (1990) operationalized career motivation with an emphasis on personal career goals, and they showed that career motivation is positively related to job characteristics, individual and organizational career plans, and goals.

When employees have their defined career plans and goals, they are more likely to commit to the goals that they set. Goal commitment has been defined as determination to try for a goal and intention to put effort in attaining the goals and to persist in goal pursuit (Raabe, Frese, and Beehr, 2007).

According to Jolanta Kowal et al. (2009), motivation is considered as a state of human readiness to start a certain action. It is also the readiness of an employee to perform organization tasks. Motivation is the action's wish, consisting in appropriate application of both rewards and punishments.

London (1983) suggested that individuals who have career motivation will have desire for upward mobility; they would establish career paths to further their advancement possibilities, request to be considered for promotions, volunteer for important assignments, request and assume leadership roles, and request salary increases (as cited by Day and Allen, 2004). London (1983) also suggested that those who are high in career motivation might have greater career advancement opportunities since they work harder on career assignment that will affect their career.

Career motivation behaviors have been theorized to predict promotions and salaries, yet only one empirical study to date has shown career motivation to be associated with promotions (Jones and Whitmore, 1995). Furthermore, Day and Allen (2004) extended this line of research in the present study by relating career motivation with both objective and subjective career success. The results indicated that there are significant relationships between career motivation and current salary.

2.1.5 Work and Career Resilience

According to London and Noe (1997), career resilience is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, even when the circumstances are discouraging or disruptive (as cited in Liu, 2003). Career resilience is seen as primarily attitudinal and emotional - concerned with tolerating uncertainty and developing flexible aspirations as well as optimism, self-esteem and self reliance (Kidd, 1998).

Past studies also stated that career resilience is analogous to the concepts of hardiness, self-efficacy, career maturity, and flexibility (Brotheridge, 2008). Career resilience seems to reflect an underlying orientation or approach to life characterized by persevering, adapting, taking action, resolving problems as

they arise, and adopting a positive and confident approach to life (Brotheridge, 2008). Thus, career resilience can be viewed as self-efficacy, career maturity, being flexible and adopting positive attitude with high confidence level to solve the uncertainty or problems instead.

Strengthening career resilience results in more flexible and adaptable employees (Grzeda, 1999). In a study by London (1983, 1993), he asserted that employees should increase their career adaptability through a combination of career resilience, development activity, and networking (as cited by Ito and Brotheridge, 2005). Thus, individuals who develop career resilience will be better equipped to face the inevitable prospect of changing careers in the future (as cited in Grzeda, 1999).

Aspinwall and Taylor (1992) argue that resilient individuals have positive self-assessment and optimistic views of life facets (as cited in Fugate and Kinicki, 2008). Individual with positive self-evaluations tend to attribute career successes to personal competency but usually do not personalize reasons for career failures or missteps (Fugate, 2006). In other words, resilience individuals are optimistic to encounter uncertainty and adapting the changes of the environment or the organizations to attain self-achievement compare to pessimistic individuals.

Furthermore, Peterson (2000) stated that resilience individuals have positive expectation to the future and show confidence in their ability to handle objective and affective challenges, suggesting resilient people are also optimistic individuals (as cited in Fugate and Kinicki, 2008). In a study by Carver and Scheier (1998), dispositional optimism generalizes positive outcome expectancies and lead people to pursue their goals more doggedly, especially in the face of difficulty (as cited in Segerstrom and Solberg Nes, 2005). Moreover, Carver and Scheier (1994), as summarized by Fugate and Kinicki (2008), stated that employees who possess career optimism are likely

to perceive numerous opportunities in the workplace, view career changes as challenges and opportunities to learn, and persist in the pursuit of desired outcomes and goals. In other words, optimistic individual have the ability to take changes as chances to learn and persistent to pursuit the desired goals although they are in the face of difficulty.

2.1.6 Work Identity

Work identity describes one's self-definition in the career context; it provides direction for future opportunities and behaviors, at the same time organizing his or her past experience (Fugate, 2006). According to Fugate et al. (2004), work identity resembles constructs like role identity, occupational identity, and organizational identity in that they all refer to how people define themselves in a particular work context. In other words, people who define themselves as employable tend to exhibit attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with the perception that they are employable, which also influences their personal career goals and ambitions (DiRenzo, 2010).

Specifically, work identity refers to the extent to which one's career is central to one's identity. Research has found that people who have lesser work roles have lower career aspirations, do less career planning, and are less satisfied with their careers (Valcour and Ladge, 2008).

According to Defillippi and Arthur's (1994) study, work identity reflects the 'knowing-why' competencies identified by (as cited by McArdle et al., 2007). 'Knowing-why' competencies encompass attributes such as career motivation, personal meaning and individual values. Work identity is one's self-definition in the career context, describing 'who I am' or 'who I want to be'. Work identity acts as a cognitive compass that motivates one to actively adapt in

order to realize or create opportunities that match one's aspirations (Fugate et al., 2004).

Since identity influences the level of personal resources, such as time, energy, and attention, one devotes to his or her career's main roles; individuals with stronger career identity tend to devote more resources to their careers, thereby increasing their chances of achieving objective career success (Rothbard and Edwards, 2003).

The research done by McArdle et al. (2007) proposes that, by being proactive and adaptable and maintaining a strong work identity, employable individuals may be more likely to see the positive outcomes that can come from unemployment. As a consequence, unemployed people may use job loss as a time for critical reflection on career identity and direction. In other words, unemployment could serve as an opportunity to affect change and strengthen one's career identity, thus maintaining a positive self-esteem despite being unemployed.

Work identity works together with self-efficacy to facilitate identification of career opportunities and pursuit of career goals (Valcour et al., 2008). Bandura (1997) refers self-efficacy as individuals' beliefs about their abilities to solve tasks or take on certain roles (as cited by Berntson, 2008). Meanwhile, Stajkovic, and Luthans (1998) said that self-efficacy also represents an individual's confidence in his or her ability to be successful at specific tasks or within a given context (as cited by DiRenzo, 2010).

Self-efficacy determines how much effort people will put in and how long they will persist when they face obstacles. Given that assessments of subjective career success are guided by one's expectations and desired outcomes, career identity and self-efficacy should also lead people to assess their success more positively (Valcour et al., 2008).

McArdle et al.'s (2007) evidence has indicated the relationship between career self-efficacy and both job search and re-employment (as cited by DiRenzo, 2010). According to Rothwell et al. (2008), understanding of the skills necessary for one's career (i.e. career identity), as well as the belief in one's ability develop these skills (i.e. career self-efficacy) gives people the confidence to seek more extensive or better employment opportunities (as cited by DiRenzo, 2010).

2.1.7 Human Capital

The *human capital theory* was firstly introduced by Gary Becker in the 1960s, arguing that investing in human capital would subsequently provide higher returns (e.g. salary, wage, remuneration, and etc).

According to Becker (1964) as highlighted by DiRenzo (2010), human capital represents the individual's personal and professional experiences that can enhance one's career. In other words, it refers to the personal variables that may affect one's career advancement, such as education, work, experience, training, skills, and knowledge (McArdle et al., 2007). According to DeFillippi and Arthur (1994), human capital also comprises the competencies of 'knowing-how', which refers to the accumulation of career related skills and knowledge that contribute toward the both of organization's and the individual's knowledge base (as cited in DiRenzo, 2010). Therefore, from the perspective of human capital theory, individuals can actually build employability by developing their human capital via continuous learning as they are teachable and attainable.

In another concept by Van der Heijden and Van der Heijden (2006), the *human capital asset* or *occupational expertise knowledge* also determines

employability (as cited in Bertnson, 2008). Consistent with the theory of human capital, this concept refers to the extent to which an employee believes his or her competence is suited for the work he or she is doing through the possessed occupational knowledge of expertise (Bertnson, 2008). Yorke and Knight (2004) on the other hand, had discussed five broad approaches to embed employability, which are employability through the whole curriculum (i.e. transferable skills), *work-based learning* (WBL), interspersed within the curriculum (i.e. work experience), employability-related modules (i.e. career modules), and WBL in parallel with the curriculum (part-time work as a learning opportunity) (as cited in Beaven and Wright, 2006).

Human capital is a set of skills learned and accumulated through various paths such as working experiences, and this was found to be one of the crucial factors toward seeking employment over the years. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 76.3% of employers responding to their 2009 annual Job Outlook survey indicated that they prefer to hire students with experience for instance (Gault, Leach, and Duey, 2010).

As working experience develops a diversified set of job related skills, it therefore constitutes a major part of human capital and it has proven in various literature of its positive outcome on employability. For instance, in a study by Beaven and Wright (2006), employers were found to claim the validity of experience on fresh graduates' *curriculum vitae* (CV) as a critical element for their employability. Employers generally prefer to hire people who have workplace experience, especially those who can show what they have learned from it, so one simple way of increasing students' competitiveness in the labour market is to design work attachments into degree programmes such as internships or industrial training (Knight and Yorke, 2003).

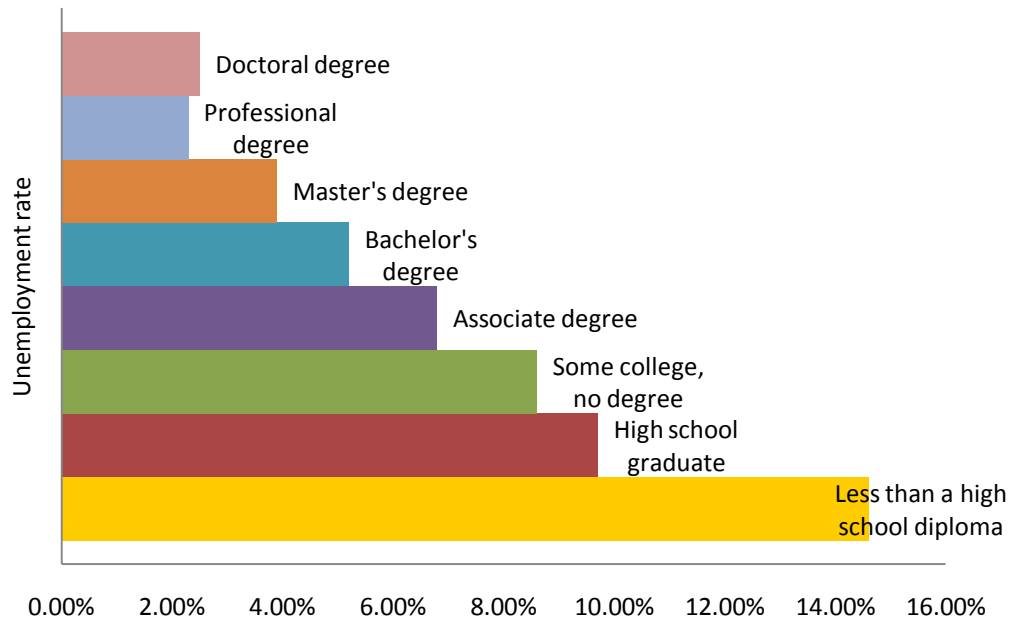
For another example, a recent study by Crossman and Clarke (2009) has found employers to favour graduates with international experience as they were perceived to have good benefits and outcomes such as networking potential, experiential learning opportunity, additional language acquisition, and the development of soft skills. Working experience is a good example of the significance of human capital in the role of seeking employment as it is one way for graduates to demonstrate what key employability skills they have acquired by providing this evidence of work-related or experiential learning (as cited in Crossman and Clarke, 2009).

Lastly, according to a study by Bernstein (1976), graduates with practical experience such as working experiences have positive changes in feelings of personal and social efficacy, also resulting in showing a greater sense of responsibility and career development which eventually leads toward high employability (as cited in Muhamad, Yahya, Shahimi, and Mahzan, 2009).

Next according to Groot and De Brink (2000), the human capital theory also leads to expect that investments in education and training increase internal mobility as it makes workers more employable. For instance, the study of Wolbers (2000) claim that it is a known fact that less well-educated people have higher unemployment rates than better educated people as employers prefer higher over lower educated workers for jobs during a job competition. Consistent with the empirical evidence of Benhard (2002) where unemployment rates decrease as educational level rises, Shafie and Nayan (2010) have also found that most employers in our country prefer to hire graduates from public universities as they are perceived to have the necessary academic qualifications and employability skills which are significant in the current job environment.

For an example, Figure 2.1 supports the evidence of higher unemployment among lower academic qualifications.

Figure 2.1: Unemployment Rate by Different Academic Qualification



Source: Bureau of Labour Statistics: Current Population Survey. (2009).

Retrieved October 10, 2010, from http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm

The theory of human capital consists mainly of transferable skills such as working experiences, soft skills, and education, therefore they are teachable skills and thus continuous learning would be part and parcel of the theory in determining effectiveness in employability. In conclusion, as individuals are in constant competition for limited opportunities and must improve continuously in order to succeed, human capital is a highly valued resource and the key to remain employable in a competitive environment, thus human capital can also be used as a logical representation of 'knowing-how' by organizations because it represents an individual's level resources that can facilitate success across job boundaries (DiRenzo, 2010).

2.1.8 Social capital

Defillippi and Arthur's study (as cited in McArdle et al., 2007) suggest that social capital reflects the interpersonal aspect of employability which incorporating 'knowing-whom' competencies that concerning formal and informal career-related networks. Knowing-whom competencies refer to the breadth and diversity of an individual's social network that can be drawn upon to foster career growth.

Inkpen and Tsang's study (as cited in DiRenzo, 2010) suggests that social capital is the aggregate of resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual. In other words, social capital represents the resources that are available within one's network of personal and professional relationships in the organization. It includes the relationships maintained in order to perform one's current job, as well as contacts drawn from personal experiences with family, friends, professional acquaintances, mentors, and etc.

Coleman's study (as cited in Berntson, 2008) suggest that social capital consists of a social structure that is productive in the sense that it facilitates the possibilities of undertaking certain actions. For instance, according to the Forret and Sullivan (as cited in DiRenzo, 2010), social capital provide individuals strategic advantages in their careers as it can lead to job opportunities, promotions, business leads, and venture capital. Besides that, Seibert's study (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004) suggest that social capital also provides individuals with better and easier access to career-related networks, informational resources and social support during the job search activity. Furthermore, Vinokur and Caplan's study (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004) suggest that social networks can be also an important source of encouragement and reassurance when the individual is rejected when finding employment.

In addition, according to the DeFillippi and Arthur's study (as cited in McArdle et al., 2007) suggest that social capital entails the career-related contacts and social networks that facilitate career success. This is supported by Ng et al.'s study (as cited in DiRenzo, 2010) which indicating that both social capital have a positive influence on career development and success.

Forret and Sullivan's study (as cited in DiRenzo, 2010) suggest that individuals can broaden and deepen these relationships through proactive career behaviors, which can lead to job opportunities and also can be drawn for career guidance and personal growth. For instance, individuals are likely to expand their network of professional contacts as they engage in career exploration. Stumpf et al.'s study (as cited in McArdle et al., 2007) suggest that career exploration is defined as purposive behavior that provides access to information about vocations, jobs, organizations, or oneself . For instance, individuals will be provided opportunities to develop personal relationships with a variety of different people by engaging in a number of different jobs and positions, or by seeking out career information from more experienced workers or mentors. This exposure increases the number of contacts in one's network and likely enhances the diversity of resources available within the network. As they continue to tap into this network over time, the relationships become stronger, adding to the depth of the network. As such, this can shows that exploration may drive social capital growth as individuals develop numerous personal contacts in their quest for greater information and clarity in their careers. Besides, this notion is consistent with evidence of significant correlations between career exploration and social supports (DiRenzo, 2010; Rogers, Creed, and Glendon, 2008; Zikic and Saks, 2009).

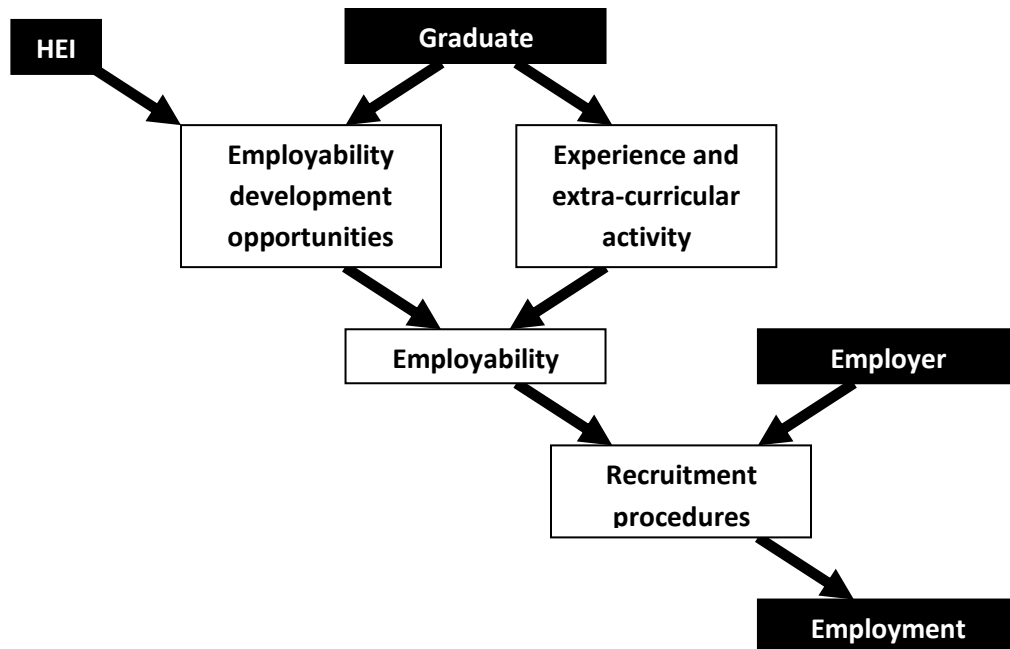
Moreover, according to the DiRenzo (2010), social network also can expand as a result of career planning. For example, Jokisaari and Nurmi's study (as cited in DiRenzo, 2010) suggest that after establishing specific goals, individuals tend to be highly motivated and determined and will likely reach

out to contacts who can help realize these goals . Therefore, individuals may tend to generate new contacts that can provide them access to desired job. Besides, according to the DiRenzo (2010), individuals foster relationship with existing contacts in hopes of developing career options that can enable them to achieve personally valued goals. There is supported by the evidence which indicating that career planning leads to the development of social capital (DiRenzo, 2010; Gould and Penley, 1984; Noe, 1996; Wolff and Moser, 2006, 2009).

2.2 Review of Relevant Theoretical Models

2.2.1 Harvey (2001)

Figure 2.2: Model of employability-development and employment



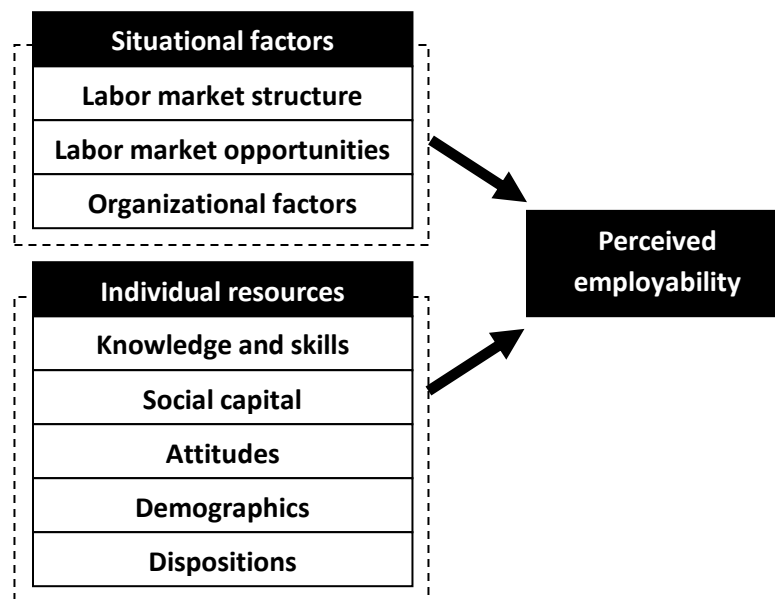
Adapted from: Harvey, L. (2001). Defining and measuring employability. *Quality in Higher Education*, Vol. 7, No.2, 97-109.

Harvey (2001) presented a straight-forward model of how graduates develop their employability, facilitated by *higher education institutions* (HEI), and approved by employers to get employment. Higher education institutions are responsible to provide students with employability development opportunities, for example soft-skills training, and allow students to participate in extra-curricular activities. But it is completely depend on the students to utilize and capture opportunities provided to foster their employability.

Employability, however, does not promise employment. Graduates have to perform well throughout recruitment procedures by potential employers in order get job, because employers have the power to make final decision regarding any hiring take place in their organizations.

2.2.2 Berntson (2008)

Figure 2.3: Determinant of employability



Adapted from: Berntson, E. (2008). *Employability perceptions: Nature, determinants, and implications for health and well-being*. Retrieved November 15, 2010 from <http://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:198489/FULLTEXT01>

Berntson (2008) adopted an interactionist’s perspective to interpret perceived employability, and he argues that individual’s perception of being employable is affected by both individual and situational factors thus combine both

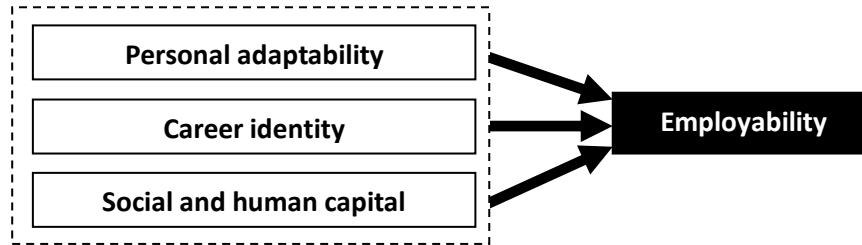
individualist and situationalist's points of view. Ekehammar (1974) defined individualists as those who argue that situational factors have very little impact on the perception of a situation, and therefore maintain that perceptions could be looked upon as nothing but individual factors, while situationalists claim the vice versa (as cited in Berntson, 2008).

Situational factors discussed include (i) labor market structure, (ii) labor market opportunities, and (iii) organizational factors. While individual resources refer to (i) knowledge and skills (i.e. human capital), (ii) social capital, (iii) attitudes, (iv) demographics, and (v) dispositions.

This study pointed out the importance of mere employability perception, as feeling employable provides individuals with a sense of security and control over one's career, aligned to the concept of *employability security*. Such perception potentially affects the individuals' ability to handle stress, commitment towards organizations and proactivity at work (Berntson, 2008). Berntson (2008)'s theoretical model however has a weakness. Even though, he claims that mere perception of being employable is becoming increasingly important because it provides individual with sense of control in a flexible working life, as a sort of labor market security, but he did not explain how the belief will increase individual's actual employability and in the end facilitate job acquisition. It is important to understand how perceived employability affects actual employability, as the outcome or result of employability (i.e. employment) is viewed as the most significant for employees.

2.2.3 Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004)

Figure 2.4: Employability as a psycho-social construct



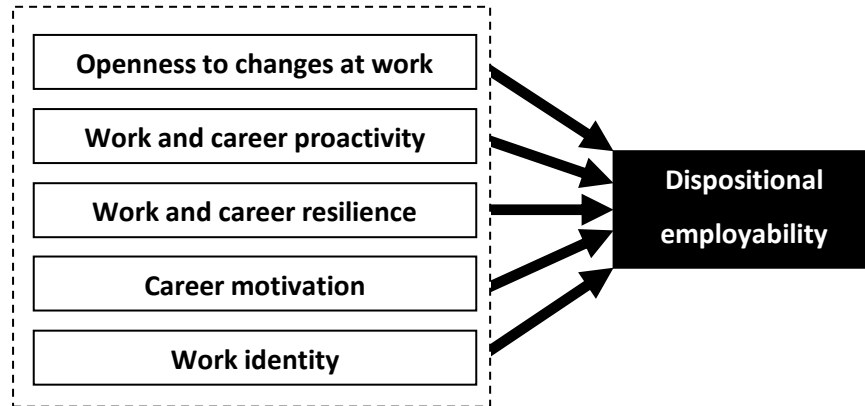
Adapted from: Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., and Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65, 14-38.

Fugate et al. (2004) provide not only the conceptual foundation for the construct of employability, but it also provides the conceptual glue that integrates the component dimensions of employability (i.e. career identity, personal adaptability, and social and human capital). Fugate et al. (2004) argued that employability captures the aspects of each of the three dimensions that facilitate the identification and realization of career opportunities within and between organizations.

According to Fugate et al. (2004), employability has meaning only when the component dimensions are considered collectively rather than independently. In other words, it means that one's perceived ability to identify and realize career opportunities (i.e. one's perceived employability) is derived from their career identity, personal adaptability, and social and human capital. However, it makes more sense to say that social and human capital cause employability, rather than to say that employability causes social and human capital.

2.2.4 Fugate and Kinicki (2008)

Figure 2.5: Dispositional measure of employability



Adapted from: Fugate, M., and Kinicki, A. J. (2008). A dispositional approach to employability: Development of a measure and test of implications for employee reactions to organizational change. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 81(3), 503-527.

Objective of Fugate and Kinicki's (2008) study is to provide an initial validation of a *dispositional measure of employability* (DME). While many personal characteristics potentially influence the propensity to identify and realize career opportunities, five dimensions deemed critical and representative of the active and adaptable nature of dispositional employability were chosen by Fugate et al. (2008): openness to changes at work, work and career resilience, work and career proactivity, career motivation, and work identity.

This study however, only emphasizes too much on dispositions at the expense of other important factors that potentially influence individuals' employability, such as situational factors.

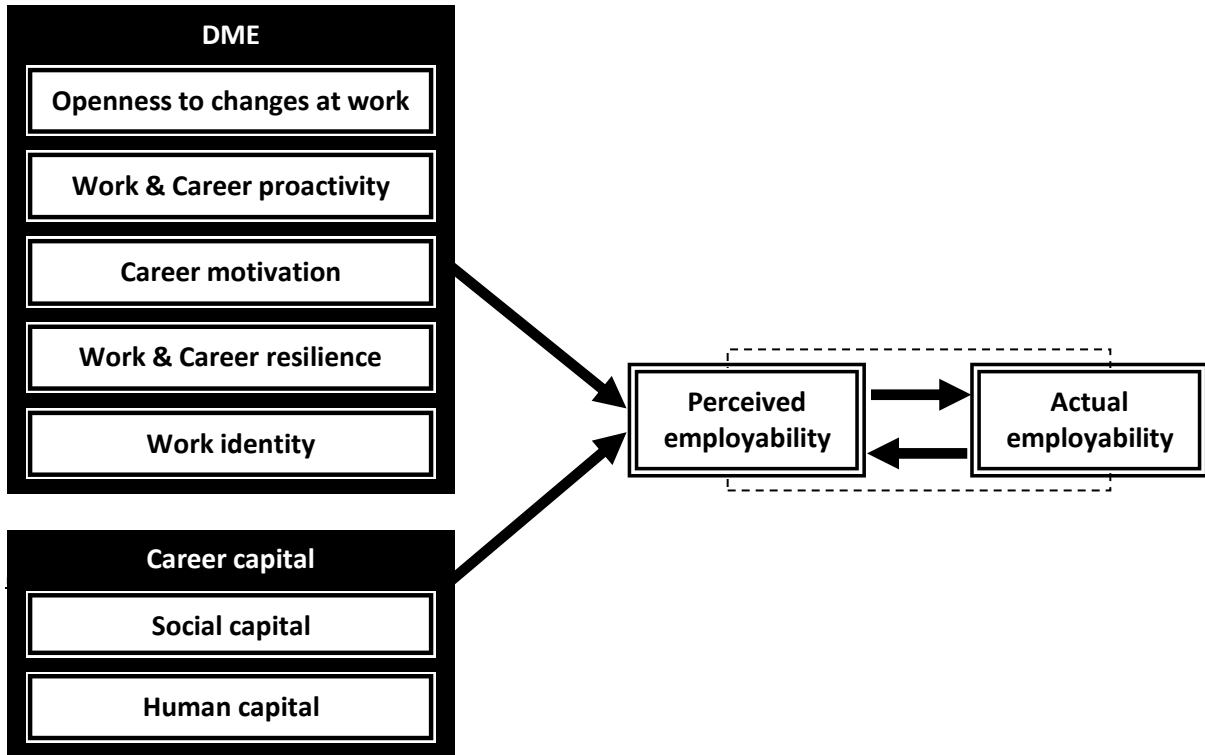
2.3 Proposed Theoretical Framework

Figure 2.6 shows the proposed theoretical model of the study, as a result of adaptation and modification of several relevant theoretical models and constructs. *Dispositional measure of employability* (DME) by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) is adapted as a complete measurement of disposition in work and career context, consists of (i) openness to change at work, (ii) work and career proactivity, (iii) career motivation, (iv) work and career resilience, (v) career identity. The second part of the model, *career capital* is adapted from DiRenzo (2010). Career capital as conversed by DiRenzo (2010) consists of (i) social capital, (ii) human capital, and (iii) psychological capital. However, only social and human capitals are included in this model whereas psychological capital is not, to avoid duplication as it displays characteristics similar to disposition in work and career context (Fugate and Kinicki, 2008) mentioned earlier.

Meanwhile, dependent variable (i.e. perceived employability) is taken from Berntson's (2008) theoretical framework. As perceived employability (Berntson, 2008) is deemed to share similar elements in conceptual foundation with actual employability (Fugate et al., 2004), thus it is reasonable to presume perceived employability (Berntson, 2008) will result in actual employability (Fugate et al., 2004). For instance individual with high perceived employability would tend to demonstrate higher proactivity adaptability at work, perceive challenging situations as opportunities rather than threats, therefore have higher ability to identify and realize career opportunities. Reciprocally, individuals with higher actual employability are likely to perceive their possibility to be employed as high.

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationships between the seven independent variables and dependent variable. Therefore, eight hypotheses have been developed to allow comprehension of the examination.

Figure 2.6: Proposed Theoretical Model



2.4 Hypotheses Development

2.4.1 Relationship between Openness to Change at Work and Perceived Employability

According to Wanberg and Banas (2000), despite numerous case studies, theoretical reviews, and applied articles in the past have suggested factors that may be associated with an individual's openness to organizational changes, strong empirical work was still not sufficient in this area.

The concept of *openness to change* in the context of organizational changes in our study was mainly adopted from Fugate (2006), and Fugate and Kinicki's (2008) model of dispositional employability. According to the study, openness to change is fundamental to personal adaptability as it enables realization of career opportunities and being optimistic to new experiences (Fugate and Kinicki, 2008).

Consistent with various past studies, the concept of openness was found to associate positively with employability. For instance, in a study by Armenakis, Harris, and Mossholder (1993), high level of openness to change was argue to be significant in helping individuals to face organizational changes readily (as cited in Wanberg and Banas, 2000). Then in another study by McCartt and Rohrbaugh (1995), open individuals are found to take changes as a new challenge rather than a threat, and welcomes new technologies and processes (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004).

As Fugate et al. (2004) argues, people that are open to new experiences and changes are adaptable and, in the face of flux, ultimately more employable. Accordingly, individuals whom are 'open to changes' tend to perceived

themselves as employable as they are willing to accept challenges at work. Therefore in our study, hypotheses were formed between *openness to changes at work* and perceived employability:

H₀ : There is no significant relationship between openness to change at work and perceived employability.

H₁ : There is significant relationship between openness to change at work and perceived employability.

2.4.2 Relationship between Work and Career Proactivity and Perceived Employability

According to Fugate (2006), work and career proactivity is a feature of adaptability at work and is similar to proactive coping. Proactive coping consists of individual efforts to identify potential stressors and to acquire the skills and resources necessary to deal with stressors should they occur. In terms of employability, work and career proactivity subsumes the acquisition of information related to possible opportunities and challenges associated with one's status quo and future opportunities. It also includes preparation to cope with and/or exploit said opportunities and challenges should they occur. For example, considering the implications of a possible downsizing or merger of organization one currently works in, or exploring the benefits of taking difficult assignment that others are not willing to.

Moreover, individuals with high employability assess their value in the marketplace, comparing their skills and experience with current job opportunities and requirements at regular intervals (Fugate, 2006; Fugate et al., 2004). One benefit of this activity is that it may serve as a form market feedback, informing the individual of the value of his/her current skill set and

experience in the eyes of the market. Thus, work and career proactivity has important implications for identifying and realizing opportunities (i.e. actual employability). Proactive people tend to predict future and prepare for possible situations, hence, and they are more likely to see themselves as employable within or across organizational boundaries. Therefore in our study, hypotheses were formed between *work and career proactivity* and perceived employability:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability.

2.4.3 Relationship between Work and Career Resilience and Perceived Employability

Waterman et al. (1994), Collard et al. (1996), and Griffith (1998) advocate that building a career-resilient workforce is important in response to the changes in today's workplaces (as cited in Liu, 2003). One has to manage his or her own career development and devote to continued learning in order to maintain employability. As a benefit, with the competitive skills required in the workforce, one can find a job whenever it is needed.

Collard et al. (1996) asserted that employees should be dedicated to continuous learning in order to keep their profession current, and be future-focused so they can foresee customer needs and prepare for the market trend (as cited in Liu, 2003).

Work and career resilience fosters the identification and realization of career opportunities (i.e. perceived employability) in turbulent environments. Moreover, work and career resilience is believed to be positively related to actual employability, because individuals who have perceived employability are proactively adaptable (i.e. actual employability) to their work context.

Work and career resilient individuals tend to have higher self-evaluations and more optimistic in terms of their work and careers (Fugate, 2006). Fugate (2006) also argued that positive self-evaluations will lead to positive attitudes and optimism, thus fostering positive expectations about future events. Resilient people also tend to perceived availability of career opportunities at workplace. In other words, work and career resilience enhance employees' confidence in their abilities to handle challenges and changes in their working places and tend to perceive themselves as employable. Therefore, hypotheses were developed as below:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between work and career resilience and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between work and career resilience and perceived employability.

2.4.4 Relationship between Career Motivation and Perceived Employability

Career motivation builds on the concepts of motivation control and learning goal orientation (Fugate and Kinicki, 2008). Individuals with higher career motivation have more interested in mastering new skills and are therefore more likely to actively pursue learning and training opportunities by acquiring

new skills, mastering new situations, and improving one's competence (Fugate and Kinicki, 2008; Fuller and Marler, 2009).

Besides that, individuals with higher career motivation are more likely to plan for their future, and they also have a willingness to change to meet situational demands. As a result, career motivation is a critical determinant of continuous learning, which is a critical aspect of employability (Fugate, 2006).

As a result, individuals with high career motivation tend to have perception of being employable, as they possess are more motivated to equip skills and knowledge viewed as valuable by employers. Therefore in our study, hypotheses were formed between *work and career proactivity* and perceived employability:

H₀ : There is no significant relationship between career motivation and perceived employability.

H₁ : There is significant relationship between career motivation and perceived employability.

2.4.5 Relationship between Work Identity and Perceived Employability

Work identities provide a compass for the individual and thereby offering them a motivational component to employability (Fugate et al., 2004). Besides, according to Fugate et al. (2008), work identity also provides a strong influential foundation to employability. The study done by Fugate et al. (2004) suggests that when people define themselves as employable, they will perform behaviors which are consistent with their self-perception. In other

words, work identities direct, regulate, and sustain one's behavior that helps them achieve their desired goals.

Meijers's study suggests that work identity is the assimilation of the one's work experiences and translate into meaningful or useful structures as a whole (as cited by Fugate et al., 2004). However, according to the Fugate (2006), work identity need melds with the other individual differences (e.g. dispositions, knowledge, skills, and abilities) that facilitate the identification and realization of career opportunities, thus leading to higher employability. Individuals possess clear work identity are more committed to work and career and have high self-efficacy and evaluate themselves as employable. Therefore in our study, hypotheses were formed between *work identity* and perceived employability:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between work identity and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between work identity and perceived employability.

2.4.6 Relationship between Human Capital and Perceived Employability

According to Becker (1964) as summarized by DiRenzo (2010), human capital represents an individual's personal and professional experiences that can boost one's career. As human capital refers to the personal variables that affect one's career advancement such as education, working experiences, skills and knowledge, these personal variables were found to be strongly related to employability by various past studies.

For instance, Harvey (2000) has found that employers have been proclaiming the need for highly educated and skilled individuals for their business in order to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving, global economy; which was also consistent with past studies where least well-educated employees were proven to experience a higher risk of unemployment when compared to better educated workers (Benhard, 2002; Wolbers, 2000).

Apart from education level, other personal variables under human capital such as working experience and soft skills are consistently found to relate toward employability in various past literature. For instance, Knight and Yorke (2003) has found employers prefer to hire individuals who have workplace experience while Shafie and Nayan (2010) found employers are concerned about finding good workers who have basic academic skills and higher order thinking skills such as learning, creativity, decision making and problem solving.

Possessions of human capital also provide individuals with sense of efficacy. Individuals believe they are viewed as assets by employers and need not depend on employment (i.e. job security) provided by current employers, and might leave organization to pursue better career opportunities. Therefore in our study, hypotheses were formed between *human capital* and perceived employability:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between human capital and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between human capital and perceived employability.

2.4.6 Relationship between Social Capital and Perceived Employability

According to the in Berntson (2008), social capital has been considered as an important element for an individual's ability to find employment. In other words, social capital is an individual resource consisting of those contacts that are of value when finding employment. Besides, social structure carries with norms, trust, knowledge, relationships and nodes to other people and this structure forms an available network that is valuable when finding employment (Berntson , 2008; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Seibert, Kraimer, and Liden, 2001).

Fugate et al. (2004) emphasize the role of social capital in the formation of employability. Fugate et al. (2004) claim the strength and size of a personal network is considered essential in order to be employable, and through work and contact with other people, career opportunities arise, consistent with McArdle et al.'s (2007) findings.

Social capital provides individuals with greater and better access to career-related information (as cited in Drenzo, 2010). In other words, Forret and Sullivan's study (as cited in Drenzo, 2010) suggest that social support provide individuals a strategic advantage in their careers as it can often lead to job opportunities, promotions, business leads, and venture capital. Furthermore, evidence suggests that managers typically find their desired jobs via informal networks instead of traditional job search avenues (Boxman, de Graaf, and Flap, 1991; Drenzo, 2010).

Additionally, Parker and Arthur's study (as cited in Drenzo, 2010) suggest that expanding social capital can create career communities that foster personal development and provide career support to individuals. McIntosh's study (a cited in McArdle et al., 2007) suggest that individuals who have

strong social support are more likely to feel valued and have higher self-esteem, reinforces Higgins and Kram's study (as cited in Fugate et al., 2004) which suggest that social support increase an individual's capacity to identify and realize career opportunities across organizations and industries, throughout one's entire career.

In addition, social capital is also found to positively related to re-employment (McArdle et al., 2007; Zicik and Klehe, 2006). Besides, Eby et al. (2003) tied social capital to one's ability to realize career opportunities and sustain appropriate levels of employment both within and outside one's current organization. Moreover, Ng et al.'s study (as cited in as cited in Direnzo, 2010) suggest that the hypothesized relationship between social capital and employability is consistent with meta-analyses indicating the positive influence of social capital on career development. Furthermore, De Vos and Soens (2008) found a strong positive relationship between social capital and perceived employability. Therefore hypotheses are formed between *social capital* and perceived employability

H₀: There is no significant relationship between social capital and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between social capital and perceived employability.

2.5 Conclusion

Literature reviews of relevant theoretical models and variety of approaches to employability provides conceptual background to strengthen the argument of this research. More importantly, the formulation of hypotheses will allow qualitative and quantitative testing to proceed. Research methods will be discussed in detailed at the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research project requires the most suitable techniques or methods to come out with an accurate result. To complete this research, methodologies are developed to refine the study that enables researchers to generate information needed. It is important to have a well-designed research methodology as the degree of accuracy and usefulness of a research is directly affected by the methodology.

Research methodology is used to govern the range of choices as to how the data will be collected, analyzed, reported, and concluded (Maunch and Park, 2003). It is planned, scientific, and value-neutral (Zikmund, 2003). The following topics in the rest of this chapter describe how the research is carried out in terms of research design, data collection methods, sampling design, research instrument, operational definition of constructs, data processing, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Quantitative research method is adopted in this research. This technique studies large group of people and making generalizations from the samples being studied to broader group beyond these samples. An advantage of it would be inexpensive for study as only a smaller group of people is used to represent the large group or the whole population (Swanson and Holton III, 2005).

After determining and considering the purpose of this research study, which is to investigate the perceived employability among fresh graduates, it is appropriate to categorize this research as exploratory research as well as causal research. First, the journals related to employability were studied to provide understanding about the concept. Then, fresh graduates' perceived employability was examined against their individual characteristics and career-related capitals, in order to determine the relationship between the variables.

Exploratory research is an initial research conducted to clarify and define the nature of a problem (Zikmund, 2003). It is an essential step to be carried out when researchers have limited amounts of information or knowledge of the research issue, and to avoid beginning the research study with inadequate information and knowledge. Because of the limited knowledge on employability, study of journals related to the topic is necessary for researchers to gain the related knowledge more in-depth.

The purpose of exploratory research process is to progressively narrow down the scope of the research topic, and to transform discovered problems into defined ones, incorporating specific research objectives (Zikmund, 2003). After intensive exploration on employability topics, the researchers decided to investigate how one's perceived employability can help one's to cope with the changing workplace environment.

On the other hand, a causal research is conducted to identify cause-and-effect relationships among variables when the research problem has already been narrowly defined (Zikmund, 2003). This study focus on investigating and examining the factors that affect one's perception on their employability and how they think they can handle today's turbulent workplace environment.

There are four basic categories of techniques for obtaining insights and gaining a clearer picture of a problem: secondary data analysis, pilot studies, case studies, and questionnaire surveys.

In this research, questionnaire survey was chosen as a tool to examine the factors that affect one's perceived employability. The researchers examined a small sample that was representative of the whole population in order to obtain a more in-depth and rich description.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Data can be collected through two main sources which include primary data and secondary data (Cooper and Schindler, 2006). Both sources of data will be used to answer this research's hypotheses and research questions.

3.2.1 Primary Data

The primary data is defined as the information gathered through interaction with other people through meetings, one-to-one interview, focus groups, and surveys. Primary data are the data gathered and assembled specifically for research projects at hand (Zikmund, 2003). The purposes of the primary data researching are to improve the understanding and perform a direct assessment of the research topic by obtaining first hand information.

In this research, the primary data are collected using questionnaire survey. A questionnaire, also known as self-administered survey is handed out to certain targets or segments of people to gather data and information desired. For the purpose of this research, 150 copies of questionnaire were distributed.

The reason of using questionnaire is to ensure completeness and consistency of information gathered. It is also the only feasible way to reach a large number of interviewee; the result will be used as input for statistical analysis. It is done in a structured manner, where all of the interviewees will provide their perception through the questionnaires distributed to them, and it makes sure that no critical points are being left out.

Questionnaire used for this research was constructed by adopting and then modifying the questionnaire of several related research journals. Compared to

constructing own questionnaire, adopting questions from other researches' well-developed questionnaire could ensure higher validity of the questions used to ask the targeted respondents. It is known that the higher the validity means the more accurate the measure can represent a concept.

3.2.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data are the information gathered from sources already existed (Sekaran, 2003). The secondary data are usually historical, already assembled, and do not require access to respondents. This type of data is easier to be obtained in a faster way, and less expensive than acquiring primary data. However, it may be outdated and may not exactly meet the researchers' needs because they were initially collected for other purposes. Nevertheless, it often proves to be of great value in exploratory research.

In this study, secondary data were collected from online journals and articles through online databases provided by Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman's Main Library. Different journals offer review of different views, comments, and arguments made by different authors and academicians. A detailed secondary research was carried out on this topic through books, online newspapers, and dissertations done by other researchers. The Final Year Projects found in the library, which were done by former Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman's undergraduates, were also one of the references used for this research.

3.3 Sampling Design

3.3.1 Target Population

Population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekaran, 2003).

The main objective of this research is to analyze the perceived employability among Malaysian working fresh graduates from higher learning institutions. Therefore, the target population for this research will be Malaysian fresh graduates from higher learning institutions who are new to the working environment.

3.3.2 Sampling Frame and Sampling Location

According to the Sekaran (2003), sample is defined as subgroup or subset of the population. Besides, it also can be defined as a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey. A sampling frame is the list of elements from which the sample may be drawn from the appropriate population. However, in this research paper, sampling frame is irrelevant; non-probability technique was used in selecting the sample.

The selected area was in Klang Valley where this area has a greater amount of higher level institutions than other places. The institutions selected were Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (Sungai Long campus), INTI International College Subang, SEGi College (Kuala Lumpur campus), Taylor's University lakeside campus, and others.

3.3.3 Sampling Element

Our respondents are working fresh graduates from higher learning institutions. Candidates must meet three conditions or requirements before qualified as valid respondents. Proper selection of respondent is essential for the study to achieve its research objectives.

Working fresh graduates, in our research context refer to graduates who:

- (i) were freshly graduated from their respective institutions within 12 months;
- (ii) currently employed;
- (iii) have worked for not more than one year.

In other words, graduates who were graduated for more than 12 months or have more than one year of working experience would not be deemed as ‘working fresh graduate’ in our research context.

The reason why ‘working fresh graduates’ were chosen as our target sampling was because we believe the employability level of fresh graduates depends on demanding level or preferences of employers. In other words, the study perceives freshly employed graduates to have met the necessary requirements of employability among current employers.

In order to meet our research objective of reducing the current high unemployment rate among our graduates, examining the traits and testing of our theoretical framework by using freshly employed graduates as target is crucial as it is a good source for the study’s further investigation and be used as benchmark for current undergraduates when positive relationship is revealed.

3.3.4 Sampling Technique

There are two major categories of sampling technique: probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is used when every element of the population has a known, non-zero probability of selection (Zikmund, 2003). On the other hand, non-probability sampling is adopted when elements of the population do not have a known or predetermined chance of being selected as subject for the purpose of survey (Sekaran, 2003).

There are few types of probability sampling techniques: (i) simple random sampling; (ii) stratified sampling; (iii) systematic sampling; (iv) cluster sampling. However, non-probability sampling is used, instead of probability sampling because of unavailability of sampling list which defines every element in a population.

There are four types of non-probability sampling techniques which are (i) convenience sampling, (ii) judgment sampling, (iii) snowball sampling and (iv) quota sampling. The types of non-probability sampling that were used in this research are judgment sampling and snowball sampling.

Judgment sampling is a procedure that an experienced individual selects the sample based on his or her judgment about some appropriate characteristics required of the sample members. Questionnaires were distributed to the valid respondents who have met the three requirements of respondents through personal e-mail; they were asked to fill up the questionnaire form in an online survey website that was created for this research.

Snowball sampling is refers to a variety of procedures in which initial respondents are selected in a structured way, but additional respondents are then obtained from information provided by the initial respondents. Besides asking the chosen respondents to fill up the questionnaire, the initial

respondents were also asked to forward the questionnaire to their friends who also meet the requirements of respondents. From 150 sets of questionnaire, we limited 50 sets to acquaintanceship (i.e. family member, relative, and friends) to allow them to pass to those people they know well who also possess similar characteristics as them.

3.3.5 Sampling Size

Sample size is the number of respondents included in a research. In this research, we have obtained a sample size of 150 to represent the targeted population. The sample size of this study is rather small due to academic requirement (i.e. undergraduates are only required to collect 100 to 150 sets of questionnaires in completion of final year project) and limitation of time and cost.

3.4 Research Instruments

For this study, the research instrument used is the self-administrated questionnaire from several journals. This is because adopting questions from other researches' well-developed questionnaire could ensure higher validity of the questions used to ask the targeted respondents.

A survey was conducted to find out the respondents' dispositional individual characteristics and their career capital, as well as their perceived employability. Self-administrated questionnaire was used as a tool in collecting primary data and to obtain responses which were then evaluated.

3.4.1 Questionnaire Survey

According to Zikmund (2004), questionnaires are used to gather primary data because it is quick, inexpensive, efficient, and is an accurate way of assessing information about the population and it is the least time consuming method. Questionnaires have to be carefully developed, tested, and mistakes need to be corrected before it can be distributed to larger amount of respondents.

It is absolutely necessary that the layout of the questionnaire is made simple so that the respondents can easily understand, and answer them without taking much of their time. The reason is because the form of questions asked, the language used, and the length of the questionnaire will affect the response rate.

The questionnaire of this research was sequenced accordingly into three sections namely Section A, B, and C.

Section A collects the respondents' demographic data which consists of elements such as gender, age, ethnicity, and marital status.

Section B consists of seven independent variables, which is of this research's main purpose: to determine the individual dispositional characteristics and career capitals that affect the respondents' perceived employability. Each variable comprises of three to ten questions that are required to be answered by the respondents.

Section C consists of six questions asking about the respondents' perceived employability.

3.4.2 Pilot Test

After designing the questionnaire, reliability analysis was done to ensure measurements are reliable for our research. Pilot test is a survey which is done on a small group of respondents to make sure the questions being asked in the questionnaire are reliable.

30 sets of questionnaires have been distributed and recollected for the purpose of pilot testing. Respondents were asked to comment and suggest changes to the questionnaire. Most of the feedbacks directed to the comprehensibility of items; therefore we modified some of the items to improve their clarities.

Pilot test minimizes the mistakes made in the questionnaire as well as difficulty before making progress to distribute it out to the 150 targeted respondents. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested as well using reliability test with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software.

3.5 Constructs Measurement (Scale and Operational Definitions)

3.5.1 Origin of Constructs

Table 3.1: The Origins of Constructs in the Research

| Constructs | Adopted from |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Openness to Change at Work | Fugate and Kinicki (2008) |
| Work and Career Proactivity | Fugate and Kinicki (2008) |
| Career Motivation | Fugate and Kinicki (2008) |
| Work and Career Resilience | Fugate and Kinicki (2008) |
| Work Identity | Fugate and Kinicki (2008) |
| Social Capital | DiRenzo (2010) |
| Human Capital | DiRenzo (2010) |
| Perceived Employability | DiRenzo (2010) |

Source: Developed for research

3.5.1.1 Modified Operational Definition of Construct

Table 3.2: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for
Openness to Change at Work

| | |
|-----|--|
| Q5. | I feel changes at work generally have positive implications. |
| Q6. | I feel that I am generally accepting of changes at work. |
| Q7. | I would consider myself open to changes at work. |
| Q8. | I can handle job and organizational changes effectively. |
| Q9. | I am able to adapt to changing circumstances at work. |

Source: Developed for research

As shown in Table 3.2, there are five items which use to measure the openness to change at work. These five items were developed by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) and researchers adopt these five items for this research. Respondents are asked to measuring these five items by rating on the five-point Likert's scale with the range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree(5).

Table 3.3: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for
Work and Career Proactivity

Q10. I stay abreast of developments in my company.

Q11. I stay abreast of developments in my industry.

Q12. I stay abreast of developments relating to my type of job.

Source: Developed for research

Referring to Table 3.3, there are three items which used to measure the work and career proactivity. These three items were developed by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) and researchers adopt these three items for this research. Respondents are asked to measure these three items by rating on the five-point Likert's scale with the range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Table 3.4: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for *Career Motivation*

| | |
|------|---|
| Q13. | I have participated in training or schooling that will help me reach my career goals. |
| Q14. | I have a specific plan for achieving my career goals. |
| Q15. | I have sought job assignments that will help me obtain my career goals. |

Source: Developed for research

Based on the Table 3.4, three items were used to measure career motivation. These three items were developed by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) and researchers adopt these three items in measuring career motivation. Respondents are asked to measure these three items by rating on the five-point Likert's scale with the range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Table 3.5: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for
Work and Career Resilience

Q16. I am optimistic about my future career opportunities.

Q17. I feel I am a valuable employee at work.

Q18. I have control over my career opportunities.

Q19. My past career experiences have been generally positive.

Q20. I take a positive attitude toward my work.

Source: Developed for research

From the Table 3.5, five items used in measuring work and career resilience were adopted from journal of Fugate et al. (2008). Respondents are asked to measure these five items by rating on the five-point Likert's scale with the range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Table 3.6: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for *Work Identity*

| | |
|------|---|
| Q21. | I define myself by the work that I do. |
| Q22. | I am involved in my work. |
| Q23. | It is important to me that others think highly of my job. |
| Q24. | It is important to me that I am successful in my job. |
| Q25. | The type of work I do is important to me. |
| Q26. | It is important to me that I am acknowledged for my successes on the job. |

Source: Developed for research

As shown in Table 3.6, these are six items were developed by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) and were used in measuring work identity. Researchers adopt these six items to measure one's work identity for this research. Respondents are asked to measuring these six items by rating on the five-point Likert's scale with the range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree(5).

Table 3.7: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for *Social Capital*

| | |
|------|---|
| Q27. | I know a lot of people within the organization. |
| Q28. | I am well connected within the organization.. |
| Q29. | I have a lot of contacts within the organization. |
| Q31. | I know a lot of people outside the organization. |
| Q32. | I am well networked with individuals outside of my organization. |
| Q33. | I do not have many professional contacts. |
| Q34. | I have close ties with my extended family and friends. |
| Q35. | I have a wide network of relationships with individuals from different civic and social groups, clubs, and organizations (e.g., religious and/or recreational organizations). |
| Q36. | I am well-connected in my community. |
| Q37. | I am well-connected with individuals outside of my current industry. |

Source: Developed for research

Referring to Table 3.7, there are eleven items which used to measure social capital. These eleven items were developed by DiRenzo (2010) and researchers adopt these eleven items for this research. Respondents are asked to answer these eleven items by rating on the five-point Likert's scale with the range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Table 3.8: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for *Human Capital*

| | |
|------|---|
| Q38. | I have a diversified set of job related skills. |
| Q39. | I remain current on the trends and developments in my profession. |
| Q40. | Continuous learning is an element of my career. |
| Q41. | I have up to date job related skills. |
| Q42. | I have job related knowledge and skills that I can easily apply or transfer to other employment settings. |

Source: Developed for research

Based on the Table 3.8, five items were used to measure human capital. These five items were developed by DiRenzo (2010) and researchers adopt these five items in measuring human capital. Respondents are asked to measure these five items by rating on the five-point Likert's scale with the range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Table 3.9: Modified Operational Definition of Construct for *Perceived Employability*

| | |
|------|--|
| Q43. | I believe I could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer. |
| Q44. | I believe I could easily obtain another job that is in line with my level of education and experience. |
| Q45. | I believe I could easily obtain another job that would give me a high level of satisfaction. |
| Q46. | There are many opportunities available for me in my company. |
| Q47. | My company views me as an asset to the organization. |
| Q48. | Given my skills and experience, the company that I work for views me as a value-added resource. |

Source: Developed for research

From the Table 3.9, there are six items were developed by Marco S. DiRenzo (2010) and researchers adopt these six items in measuring perceived employability. Respondents are asked to respond these six items by rating on the five-point Likert's scale with the range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

3.5.2 Scale of Measurement

A scale is a tool or mechanism by which individuals are distinguished as to how they differ from one another on the variables of interest to our study (Sekaran, 2003). In other words, a scale is a continuous spectrum or series of categories. The purpose of scaling is to represent, usually quantitatively, and item's, a person's, or an event's place in the spectrum (Zikmund, 2003). In this research, nominal scale, ordinal scale, and interval scale (i.e. Likert scale) were used.

3.5.2.1 Nominal Scale

Nominal scale is a qualitative categorization according to un-ordered distinctions. It is the simplest type of scale. The numbers or letters assigned to objects serve as labels identification or classification (Zikmund, 2003). Sekaran (2003) defines scale as a tool that allows the researchers to assign subjects to certain categories or groups such as gender. Question 1 (gender), 3 (ethnicity), and 4 (marital status) in Section A of the questionnaire are designed according to nominal scale.

3.5.2.2 Ordinal Scale

Ordinal scale enables researchers to determine if the object has more or less characteristic than other objects. The points on an ordinary scale do not indicate equal distance between the rankings. In conclusion, ordinary scale allows entities to be placed into groups that are in order. In section A of the questionnaire, the respondents will answer their age (20 years old and below, 21 – 23 years old, 24 – 26

years old, 27 – 29 years old, or 30 years old and above). Therefore, this question can assign numerical scores to the outcome of the age variable. One question was used for ordinal scale in the questionnaire design.

3.5.2.3 Likert Scale

Likert scale is used to measure of attitude designed to allow respondents to indicate whether how strongly they agree or disagree with carefully constructed statements that range from very positive to negative toward as attitudinal object (Zikmund, 2003). All questions in Part B and C of the questionnaire use Likert scale to allow respondents to indicate to what extent they agree or disagree with the particular statement (i.e. the question). For each of the questions which use Likert scale, there are five responses that may be checked and numerical score was assigned to each of the questions as follow:-

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

3.6 Data Processing

After we have processed the questionnaires that collected from respondents, the survey questionnaires will be analyzed. There are several steps involved in analysis, such as checking, editing, coding, and transcribing, as well as specifying any special or unusual treatments of data before they are analyzed.

3.6.1 Data Checking

The first step is to ensure all the questionnaires are fully completed. We checked whether there is any omission. Before the questionnaire is distributed, a pilot test was conducted in order to make certain of the appropriateness of questionnaire. Thus, thirty questionnaires were distributed and data collected were used as input for reliability tests. Reliability test was conducted to make sure the reliability and consistency of measurements.

3.6.2 Data Editing

The second step is editing the data by reviewing the questionnaire to identify the unreadable, incomplete, inconsistent, unsatisfactory, or ambiguous answers which will be discarded instead of filling in missing value to minimize response bias, thus reinforcing the accuracy and the precision of the data.

3.6.3 Data Coding

The third step is assigning a code to represent a specific response to a specific question with the data record and column position that the code will occupy (Malhotra, 2004).

The first question in Section A of the questionnaire, “Male” is coded as 1 and “Female” is coded as 2. For question 2, “20 years old and below” is coded as 1, “21 – 23 years old” is coded as 2, “24 – 26 years old” is coded as 3 and etc. As for question 3, “Chinese” is coded as 1, “Malay” is coded as 2, “Indian” is coded as 3 and etc. Lastly, question 4 “Single” is coded as 1, “Married” is coded as 2, and etc.

In Section B and C, starting from question 5 to question 48 , “Strongly Disagree” is coded as 1, “Disagree” is coded as 2, “Neutral” is coded as 3, “Agree” is coded as 4 and “Strongly Agree” is coded as 5.

For completion of this research, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software will be used for data coding and for the final step, data transcribing.

3.6.4 Data Transcribing

The final step is transferring the coded data from the questionnaires or coding sheets directly into computers by keypunching (Malhotra, 1993). Coded data will be transcribed into SPSS software Version 17 for data analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is an application of reasoning to understand, clear and interpret the data or information that have been collected through the questionnaires (Zikmund, 2003). Therefore, data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed statistically by using the Software Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 17.0 for Student Version). Besides, it also enables us to present our data or information better through graphical presentation (e.g. bar chart, histogram).

SPSS was also used to test the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable using methods such as Pearson Correlation analysis and Multiple Regression analysis. Hypothesis findings of this research can be evaluated using SPSS to determine whether the hypothesis is supported by our research.

3.7.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is the transformation of raw data into comprehensive information. It is used to determine the main tendencies of the variables. According to Burns and Bush (2006), certain measures like mean, mode, standard deviation and range are forms of descriptive analysis used to describe the sample data matrix in such a way as to portray the typical respondent and to reveal the general patterns of responses.

In other words, through descriptive analysis, researchers are able to describe and discover the characteristics of respondents. In this research, we will use the descriptive statistic to carry out the frequency distribution of demographic and they will be display in several graphical forms such as histogram, pie chart, and others. The descriptive analysis was conducted to gather the details

about the four personal particulars of the respondents such as gender, marital status, age, and ethnicity.

3.7.2 Scale Measurement (Reliability Test)

We used the reliability test in order to determine whether the survey that we conduct is reliable. Reliability is the degree to which the measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results (Sekaran, 2003).

Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. The reliability of the pretest findings obtained using questionnaire can be assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The coefficient of reliability test varies from 0 to 1, and value of 0.6 or above generally indicates satisfactory internal consistency reliability.

3.7.3 Inferential Analysis

All of the eight hypotheses in this study will be tested using inferential analysis by Pearson's Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis.

3.7.3.1 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

In Pearson's Correlation analysis, correlation indicates the strength and direction of linear association between two random variables. It ranges from -1.00 to +1.00, with 0 representing absolutely no association between two variables while -1.00 or +1.00 is possible and represents a perfect association between two variables (Hair et al., 2007). The larger the correlation coefficient means the stronger the linkage or the level of association. Besides, correlation coefficient can be either positive or negative, depends on the direction of the relationship between variables. Hair et al. (2007) proposed Rules of thumb about coefficient range and strength of association as table below:

Table 3.10: Rules of Thumb about Correlation Coefficient Size

| Coefficient range | Strength of Association |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ± 0.91 to ± 1.00 | Very strong |
| ± 0.71 to ± 0.90 | High |
| ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 | Moderate |
| ± 0.21 to ± 0.40 | Small but definite relationship. |
| ± 0.01 to ± 0.20 | Slight, almost negligible |

Source: Hair, Jr., Money, A. H., Samouel, P., and Page, M. (2007). *Research Methods for Business*. West Sussex: John Wiley Sons.

In this research, it used to measure the co-variation or association (Zikmund, 2003) between the variables like perceived employability among working fresh graduates and seven elements of employability on hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. This method is chosen because correlation can be compared without regarding the amount of variation exhibited by each variable separately. The test will be done at 5% or 1% significance level. For instance, the null hypotheses (H_0) would be rejected if the significance value, p , obtained was less than the value of alpha that has been set at 0.05 or 0.01.

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| If, $p < 0.05$, reject H_0 | If, $p < 0.01$, reject H_0 |
| If, $p < 0.05$, accept H_1 | If, $p < 0.01$, accept H_1 |

3.7.3.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

According to the Zikmund (2003), Multiple Regression analysis allows for the simultaneous investigation of the effect of two or more independent variables (in our context, the proposed components of employability) on a single interval-scale dependent variable (perceived employability among employing fresh graduates). Besides, multiple regression model allow researcher to have a clearer view and better understanding on which construct will have higher impact on dependent variable. The decision rule for the test is if P-value is lesser than 0.05 (or 0.01), accept H_1 , and if p-value is more than 0.05 (or 0.01), reject H_1 .

In this research, we use this statistical test to perform simultaneous investigation of the effect of seven independent variables (in our context, the proposed components of employability) and a single interval-scaled dependent variable (perceived employability among working fresh graduates).

3.8 Conclusion

Research methodologies were used in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. Computer software, such as SPSS, was used to assist in doing the analysis and interpretation.

First, questionnaire survey is used to obtain more accurate information from the larger group of respondents. Other than primary data, secondary data such as case studies and journals were used to help researchers to better understand the topic being investigated.

Target population, sampling frame and location, sampling elements, sampling techniques, and sample size were discussed in the earlier parts. Scales used in constructing the measurement were also explained. Other than that, data preparation processes such as checking, editing, coding, and transcribing were discussed.

In the next chapter, the data that have been analyzed will be interpreted and explained to readers to help them understand the respondents' demographic profile, including the results, as well as the hypotheses as to whether they are or are not accepted.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, respondents' demographic profile and frequency analysis, scale measurement, and inferential analyses are discussed.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

4.1.1 Respondent Demographic Profile

In the questionnaire survey, each respondent was asked four questions regarding their demographic profile, including gender, age, ethnicity, and marital status. This part provides an analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents based on frequency analysis.

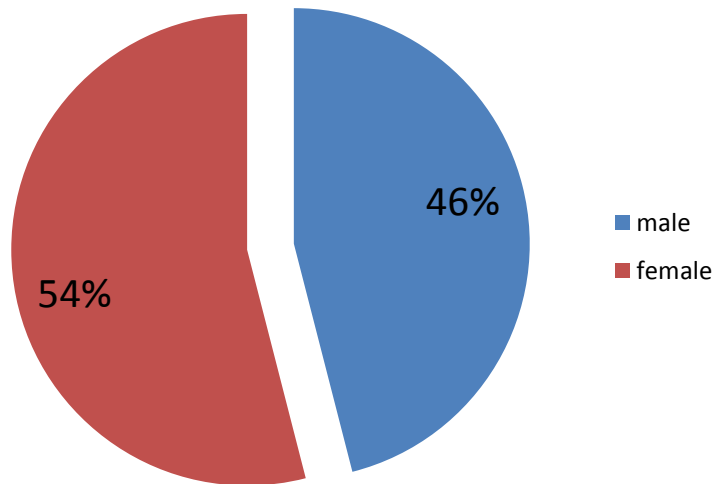
4.1.1.1 Gender

Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------------|--------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Valid | Male | 69 | 46.0 | 46.0 | 46.0 |
| | Female | 81 | 54.0 | 54.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Figure 4.1: Gender of the Respondents



Source: Developed for research

Table 4.1 shows that majority of the respondents are female (54%), while 46% of the respondents are male. In other words, from the 150 respondents, 81 of them are female while 69 of them are male.

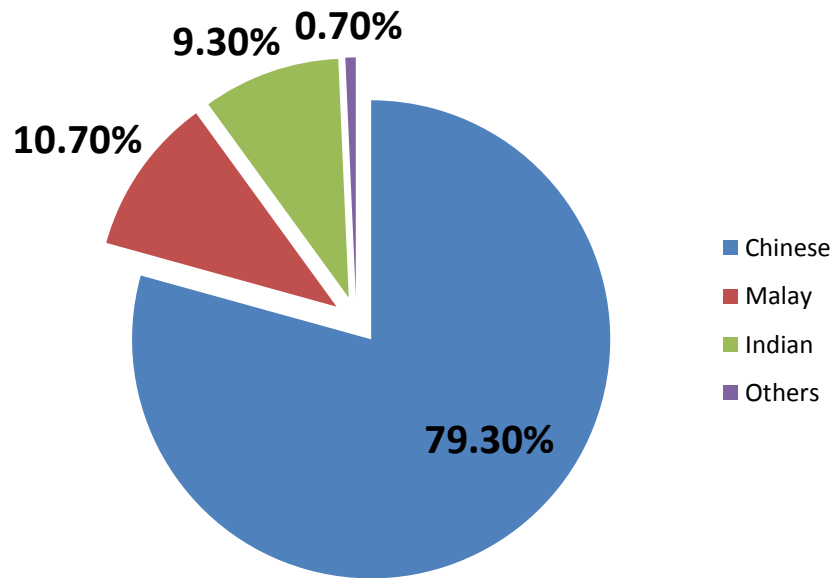
4.1.1.2 Ethnicity

Table 4.2: Ethnicity of the Respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Valid | Chinese | 119 | 79.3 | 79.3 | 79.3 |
| | Malay | 14 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 88.6 |
| | Indian | 16 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 99.3 |
| | Others | 1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Figure 4.2: Ethnicity of the Respondents



Source: Developed for research

Table 4.2 shows that the highest proportion of respondents are Chinese (79.3% or 119 respondents), followed by Indian (10.7% or 16 respondents), Malay (9.3% or 14 respondents), and others (0.7% or 1 respondent). Majority of the respondents are Chinese, because most students in the selected higher learning institution are Chinese.

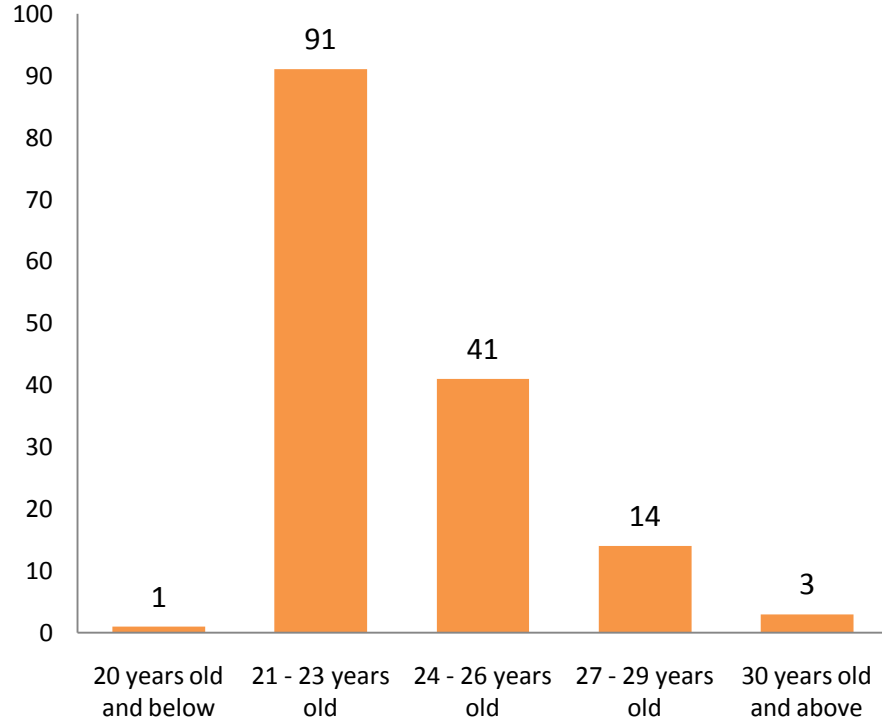
4.1.1.3 Age Group

Table 4.3: Age Group of the Respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Valid | 20 years old and below | 1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| | 21 - 23 years old | 91 | 60.7 | 60.7 | 61.4 |
| | 24 - 26 years old | 41 | 27.3 | 27.3 | 88.7 |
| | 27 - 29 years old | 14 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 98.0 |
| | 30 years old and above | 3 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Figure 4.3: Age Group of the Respondents



Source: Developed for research

Table 4.3 shows age groups of the respondents. The majority of the respondents falls under the age group 21 – 23 years old (accounted for 60.7% or 91 respondents), followed by the age group of 24 – 26 years old (27.3% or 41 respondents), 27 – 29 years old (9.3% or 14 respondents), 30 years old and above (2% or 3 respondents), and 20 years old and below (0.7% or 1 respondent). Most respondents are 21 to 23 years old, because the common age group of working fresh graduates are within this range.

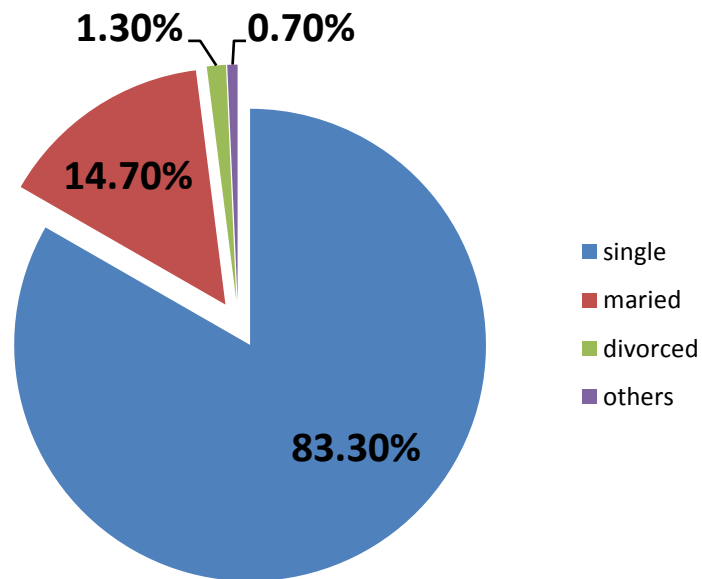
4.1.1.4 Marital status

Table 4.4: Marital Status of the Respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Valid | Single | 125 | 83.3 | 83.3 | 83.3 |
| | Married | 22 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 98.0 |
| | Divorced | 2 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 99.3 |
| | Others | 1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Figure 4.4: Marital Status of the Respondents



Source: Developed for research

Question 4 in the questionnaire asks about the respondents' marital status. The results are shown in Table 4.4. Majority of the respondents are single (who accounted for 83.3% or 125 respondents), followed by married respondents (14.7% or 22 respondents), divorced respondents (1.3% or 2 respondents), and others (0.7% or 1 respondent).

4.1.2 Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs

Measurement of central tendencies is used to discover the mean scores for the eight interval-scaled constructs. A total of 44 items (questions) with particular mean score were obtained from the SPSS output. All of the items/questions are being asked using 5-point Likert scale with 1 indicating "strongly disagree", 2 indicating "disagree", 3 indicating "neutral", 4 indicating "agree", and 5 indicating "strongly agree".

Table 4.5: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: *Openness to Changes at Work*

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| I feel changes at work generally have positive implications. | 1% | 7% | 21% | 59% | 11% | 3.7133 | 0.81378 |
| I feel that I am generally accepting of changes at work. | 1% | 3% | 23% | 60% | 13% | 3.8133 | 0.71781 |
| I would consider myself open to changes at work. | 1% | 3% | 25% | 58% | 13% | 3.8133 | 0.71781 |
| I can handle job and organizational changes effectively. | 0% | 4% | 33% | 48% | 15% | 3.7400 | 0.75467 |
| I am able to adapt to changing circumstances at work. | 0% | 4% | 25% | 51% | 19% | 3.8667 | 0.76559 |

Source: Developed for research

The percentage, mean, and standard deviations of responses for each of the items for *openness to changes at work* are shown in Table 4.5.

Majority of the respondents (59%) agreed that they feel changes at work generally have positive implications, while 21% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. 60% of the respondents agreed that they feel they are generally accepting of changes at work, while 23% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. Meanwhile, 58% of the respondents agreed that they would consider themselves open to changes at work, while 25% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. 48% of the respondents agreed and 33% of them neither agreed nor disagreed that they can handle job and organizational changes effectively. Finally, 51% of the respondents agreed that they are able to adapt to changing circumstances at work, 25% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement.

“I am able to adapt to changing circumstances at work” is the item with highest mean (mean = 3.8667), followed by “I feel that I am generally accepting of changes at work” and “I would consider myself open to changes at work” (means are both 3.8133). The item with third highest mean is “I can handle job and organizational changes effectively” (mean = 3.7400). “I feel changes at work generally have positive implications” has the lowest mean among the others (mean = 3.7133).

The item “I feel changes at work generally have positive implications” has the highest standard deviation, which is 0.81378. The item with second highest standard deviation (0.76559) is “I am able to adapt to changing circumstances at work”.

Both “I feel that I am generally accepting of changes at work” and “I would consider myself open to changes at work” have the lowest standard deviation (0.71781).

Table 4.6: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: *Work and Career Proactivity*

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| I stay abreast of developments in my company. | 0% | 3% | 27% | 53% | 16% | 3.8133 | 0.73628 |
| I stay abreast of developments in my industry. | 0% | 6% | 33% | 51% | 11% | 3.6467 | 0.75206 |
| I stay abreast of developments relating to my type of job. | 1% | 3% | 25% | 58% | 13% | 3.8133 | 0.71781 |

Source: Developed for research

The percentage, mean, and standard deviations of responses for each of the items for *work and career proactivity* are shown in Table 4.6.

There were as much as 53% of the respondents agreed that they stay abreast of developments in their company, while 27% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. 51% of the respondents agreed that they stay abreast of developments in the industry they involved in, while 33% of them neither agreed nor disagreed. 57% of the respondents agreed and 23% of them strongly agreed that they stay abreast of developments relating to their type of job.

“I stay abreast of developments relating to my type of job” is the item with highest mean (mean = 4.0133), followed by “I stay abreast of developments in my company” (means = 3.8133). The item with the lowest mean is “I stay abreast of developments in my industry” (mean = 3.6467).

The item “I stay abreast of developments in my industry” has the highest standard deviation, which is 0.75206. The item “I stay abreast of developments in my company” has the second highest standard deviation, which is 0.73628. The item with lowest standard deviation is “I stay abreast of developments relating to my type of job”; the standard deviation value is 0.70460.

Table 4.7: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: *Career Motivation*

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| I have participated in training or schooling that will help me reach my career goals. | 0% | 5% | 21% | 54% | 19% | 3.8800 | 0.77650 |
| I have a specific plan for achieving my career goals. | 0% | 3% | 27% | 52% | 19% | 3.8867 | 0.73764 |
| I have sought job assignments that will help me obtain my career goals. | 0% | 6% | 27% | 53% | 14% | 3.7533 | 0.76795 |

Source: Developed for research

The percentage, mean, and standard deviations of responses for each of the items for *career motivation* are shown in Table 4.7.

Most of the respondents (54%) agreed and 21% of them neither agreed nor disagreed that they have participated in training or schooling that will help them reach their career goals, while 19% of them strongly agreed with that statement. 52% of the respondents agreed and 27% of them neither agreed nor disagreed that they have a specific plan for achieving their career goals, while 19% of them strongly agreed with that statement. Finally, 53% of the respondents agreed that they have sought job assignments that will help them obtain their career goals, while 27% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement.

“I have a specific plan for achieving my career goals” is the item with highest mean (mean = 3.8867), followed by “I have participated in training or schooling that will help me reach my career goals” (means = 3.8800). The item with the lowest mean is “I have sought job assignments that will help me obtain my career goals” (mean = 3.7533).

The item that has the highest standard deviation (0.77650) is “I have participated in training or schooling that will help me reach my career goals”. The item “I have sought job assignments that will help me obtain my career goals” has the second highest standard deviation, which is 0.76795. The item “I have a specific plan for achieving my career goals” has the lowest standard deviation (0.73764).

Table 4.8: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: *Work and Career Resilience*

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| I am optimistic about my future career opportunities. | 0% | 5% | 21% | 61% | 13% | 3.8200 | 0.71418 |
| I feel I am a valuable employee at work. | 0% | 3% | 29% | 51% | 16% | 3.8000 | 0.74185 |
| I have control over my career opportunities. | 0% | 7% | 26% | 52% | 15% | 3.7400 | 0.79790 |
| My past career experiences have been generally positive. | 0% | 2% | 32% | 50% | 16% | 3.8000 | 0.72353 |
| I take a positive attitude toward my work. | 0% | 1% | 14% | 63% | 22% | 4.0533 | 0.64284 |

Source: Developed for research

The percentage, mean, and standard deviations of responses for each of the items for *work and career resilience* are shown in Table 4.8.

There were as much as 61% of the respondents agreed and 21% neither agreed nor disagreed that they are optimistic about their future career opportunities. 51% of the respondents agreed and 29% of them neither agreed nor disagreed that they feel they are valuable employees at work, while 16% of them strongly agreed with that statement. 52% of the respondents agreed and 26% of them neither agreed nor disagreed that they have control over their career opportunities, while 15% of them strongly agreed with that statement. Half of the respondents (50%) agreed and 32% of them neither agreed nor disagreed that their past career experiences have been generally positive. Finally, 63% of the respondents agreed that they take a positive attitude toward their work, while 22% of them strongly agreed with that statement.

“I take a positive attitude toward my work” is the item with highest mean (mean = 4.0533), followed by “I am optimistic about my future career opportunities” (means = 3.8200). The item with the lowest mean is “I have control over my career opportunities” (mean = 3.7400).

The item that has the highest standard deviation (0.79790) is “I have control over my career opportunities”. The item with second highest standard deviation (0.74185) is “I feel I am a valuable employee at work”. The item “I take a positive attitude toward my work” has the lowest standard deviation (0.64284).

Table 4.9: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: *Work Identity*

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| I define myself by the work that I do. | 0% | 2% | 18% | 61% | 19% | 3.9600 | 0.66434 |
| I am involved in my work. | 0% | 3% | 13% | 67% | 17% | 3.9667 | 0.65964 |
| It is important to me that others think highly of my job. | 1% | 4% | 29% | 47% | 18% | 3.7600 | 0.84090 |
| It is important to me that I am successful in my job. | 0% | 1% | 18% | 60% | 21% | 4.0067 | 0.66045 |
| The type of work I do is important to me. | 0% | 5% | 17% | 58% | 20% | 3.9627 | 0.75170 |
| It is important to me that I am acknowledged for my successes on the job. | 0% | 3% | 23% | 59% | 15% | 3.8600 | 0.70502 |

Source: Developed for research

The percentage, mean, and standard deviations of responses for each of the items for *work identity* are shown in Table 4.9.

There were as much as 61% of the respondents agreed that they define themselves by the work they do, while 19% strongly agreed and 18% neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. 67% of the respondents agreed and 17% of them strongly agreed that they are involved in their work. There were less than half of the respondents (47%) agreed that it is important to them that others think highly of their job, while 29% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. 60% of the respondents agreed and 21% of them strongly agreed that it is important to them that they are successful in their job, while 18% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. 58% of the respondents agreed that the type of work they do is important to them. Finally, 59% of the respondents agreed that it is important to them that they are acknowledged for their successes on the job, while 23% of them neither agreed nor disagree and 15% of them strongly agreed with that statement.

“It is important to me that I am successful in my job” is the item with highest mean (mean = 4.0067), followed by “I am involved in my work” (means = 3.9667). The item with the lowest mean is “It is important to me that others think highly of my job” (mean = 3.7600).

The item that has the highest standard deviation (0.8409) is “It is important to me that others think highly of my job”. The item with second highest standard deviation (0.75170) is “The type of work I do is important to me”. The item “It is important to me that I am successful in my job” has the lowest standard deviation (0.66045).

Table 4.10: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: *Social Capital*

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| I know a lot of people within the organization. | 0% | 0% | 21% | 73% | 6% | 3.8533 | 0.49679 |
| I am well connected within the organization. | 0% | 0% | 26% | 71% | 3% | 3.7733 | 0.49354 |
| I have a lot of contacts within the organization. | 0% | 0% | 32% | 64% | 4% | 3.7200 | 0.53244 |
| I have extensive contacts within the industry I work. | 0% | 0% | 49% | 49% | 2% | 3.5267 | 0.53966 |
| I know a lot of people outside the organization. | 0% | 5% | 49% | 44% | 2% | 3.4467 | 0.53966 |
| I am well networked with individuals outside of my organization. | 0% | 8% | 59% | 31% | 2% | 3.2733 | 0.63348 |
| I do not have many professional contacts. | 7% | 48% | 45% | 0% | 0% | 3.6133 | 0.61072 |

Source: Developed for research

Table 4.10: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: *Social Capital* (Continued)

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| I have close ties with my extended family and friends. | 0% | 5% | 26% | 61% | 8% | 3.7133 | 0.68871 |
| I have a wide network of relationships with individuals from different social groups, clubs, and organizations. | 0% | 3% | 20% | 44% | 3% | 3.4600 | 0.60899 |
| I am well-connected in my community. | 0% | 2% | 51% | 43% | 4% | 3.4800 | 0.59888 |
| I am well-connected with individuals outside of my current industry. | 0% | 1% | 49% | 49% | 1% | 3.5067 | 0.54028 |

Source: Developed for research

The percentage, mean, and standard deviations of responses for each of the items for *social capital* are shown in Table 4.10.

There were as much as 73% of the respondents agreed that they know a lot of people within their organizations, while 21% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. 71% of the respondents agreed and 26% of them neither agreed nor disagreed that they are well connected within their organizations. 64% of the respondents agreed that they have a lot of contacts within their organizations, while 32% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. 49% of the respondents equally agreed and neither agreed nor disagreed that they have extensive contacts within the industry they work. There were 49% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and 44% of them agreed that they know a lot of people outside their organization. More than a half of the respondents (58%) neither agreed nor disagreed that they are well networked with individuals outside of their organizations, while 31% of the respondents agreed with that statement.

There were 48% of the respondents disagreed that they do not have many professional contacts, while 45% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. 61% of the respondents agreed that they have close ties with their extended family and friends, while 26% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. Half of the respondents (50%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 44% of them agreed that they have a wide network of relationships with individuals from different civic and social groups, clubs, and organizations, such as religious and recreational organizations. Meanwhile, 51% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and 43% of them agreed that they are well connected in their community. Finally, 49% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and another 49% of them also agreed that they are well connected with individuals outside of their current industry.

“I know a lot of people within the organization” is the item with highest mean (mean = 3.8533), followed by “I am well connected within the organization” (mean = 3.7733). The item with the third highest mean is “I have a lot of contacts within the organization” (mean = 3.7200). The item “I know a lot of people outside the organization” has the second lowest mean (mean = 3.4467). The item “I am well networked with individuals outside of my organization” is the item with lowest mean among all (mean = 3.2733).

The item that has the highest standard deviation (0.68871) is “I have close ties with my extended family and friends”. The item with second highest standard deviation (0.63348) is “I am well networked with individuals outside of my organization”. The item “I know a lot of people outside the organization” is the item with third highest mean (mean = 0.62965). The item “I know a lot of people within the organization” has the second lowest standard deviation (0.49679). The item “I am well connected within the organization” has the lowest standard deviation (0.49354).

Table 4.11: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: *Human Capital*

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| I have a diversified set of job related skills. | 0% | 5% | 20% | 65% | 10% | 3.8000 | 0.67556 |
| I remain current on the trends and developments in my profession. | 0% | 10% | 29% | 49% | 12% | 3.6400 | 0.82965 |
| Continuous learning is an element of my career. | 1% | 5% | 21% | 56% | 17% | 3.8400 | 0.79495 |
| I have up to date job related skills. | 0% | 5% | 27% | 61% | 7% | 3.7000 | 0.68297 |
| I have job related knowledge and skills that I can easily apply or transfer to other employment settings. | 0% | 5% | 23% | 62% | 10% | 3.7600 | 0.70168 |

Source: Developed for research

The percentage, mean, and standard deviations of responses for each of the items for *human capital* are shown in Table 4.11.

There were as much as 65% of the respondents agreed that they have a diversified set of job-related skills, while 20% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. Meanwhile, 49% of the respondents agreed and 29% of them neither agreed nor disagreed that they remain current on the trends and developments in their professions. 56% of the respondents agreed that continuous learning is an element of their career, while 29% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. 61% of the respondents agreed that they have up-to-date job-related skills, while 27% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. Finally, 62% of the respondents agreed that they have job-related knowledge and skills that they can easily apply or transfer to other employment settings, while 23% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement.

“Continuous learning is an element of my career” is the item with highest mean (mean = 3.8400), followed by “I have a diversified set of job related skills” (mean = 3.8000). The item “I remain current on the trends and developments in my profession” is the item with lowest mean among all (mean = 3.6400).

The item that has the highest standard deviation (0.82965) is “I remain current on the trends and developments in my profession”. The item with second highest standard deviation (0.79495) is “Continuous learning is an element of my career”. The item “I have a diversified set of job related skills” has the lowest standard deviation (0.67556).

Table 4.12: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: *Perceived Employability*

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| I believe I could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer. | 0% | 3% | 19% | 63% | 15% | 3.9133 | 0.69453 |
| I believe I could easily obtain another job that is in line with my level of education and experience. | 0% | 5% | 19% | 61% | 16% | 3.8733 | 0.72627 |
| I believe I could easily obtain another job that would give me a high level of satisfaction. | 0% | 2% | 29% | 57% | 12% | 3.8000 | 0.66555 |
| There are many opportunities available for me in my company. | 0% | 3% | 35% | 43% | 19% | 3.7733 | 0.79551 |
| My company views me as an asset to the organization. | 0% | 5% | 27% | 33% | 34% | 3.9533 | 0.90736 |

Source: Developed for research

Table 4.12: Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs: *Perceived Employability* (Continued)

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Given my skills and experience, the company that I work for views me as a value-added resource. | 0% | 4% | 23% | 47% | 26% | 3.9467 | 0.80923 |

The percentage, mean, and standard deviations of responses for each of the items for *employability* are shown in Table 4.12.

There were as much as 63% of the respondents agreed that they believed they could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer. 61% of the respondents agreed that they believed they could easily obtain another job that is in line with their level of education and experience. Meanwhile, 57% of the respondents agreed that they believed they could easily obtain another job that would give them a high level of satisfaction. Less than half of the respondents (43%) agreed that they are many opportunities available for them in their company.

There were only 34% of the respondents strongly agreed that their company views them as an asset to the organization; 33% of them agreed that their company views them as an asset to the organization. Finally, there were less than half of the respondents (47%) agreed that, given their skills and experience, the company that they work for views them as a value-added resource.

“My company views me as an asset to the organization” is the item with highest mean (mean = 3.9533), followed by “Given my skills and experience, the company that I work for views me as a value-added resource” (mean = 3.9467). The item “I believe I could easily obtain another job that would give me a high level of satisfaction” is the item with second lowest mean (mean = 3.8000). The item “There are many opportunities available for me in my company” is the item with lowest mean among all (mean = 3.7733).

The item that has the highest standard deviation (0.90736) is “My company views me as an asset to the organization”. The item with second highest standard deviation (0.80923) is “Given my skills and experience, the company that I work for views me as a value-added resource”. The item “I believe I could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer” has the second lowest standard deviation (0.69453). The item “I believe I could easily obtain another job that would give me a high level of satisfaction” has the lowest standard deviation (0.66555).

4.2 Scale Measurement

4.2.1 Internal Reliability Test for Pilot Test

Table 4.13: Internal Consistency (Coefficient alpha)

| Coefficient Alpha | Level of Reliability |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 0.80 to 0.95 | Very good reliability |
| 0.70 to 0.80 | Good reliability |
| 0.60 to 0.70 | Fair reliability |
| < 0.60 | Poor reliability |

Source; Hair, J.Money, A.Samouel, P. & Babin, B. (2003). *Essential of Business Research Methods. Wiley International Edition: Lelyn Publishing LLC, (page 172).*

Table 4.14: Reliability Test

| No. | Constructs | Coefficient Alpha | No. of items |
|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | Openness to Changes at Work | 0.827 | 5 |
| 2. | Work and Career Proactivity | 0.777 | 3 |
| 3. | Career Motivation | 0.698 | 3 |
| 4. | Work and Career Resilience | 0.835 | 5 |
| 5. | Work Identity | 0.922 | 6 |
| 6. | Social Capital | 0.826 | 11 |
| 7. | Human Capital | 0.825 | 5 |
| 8. | Perceived Employability | 0.896 | 6 |

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Referring to Table 4.14, reliability test and Cronbach's alpha were applied to observe the 44 items which used to measure the eight constructs in the questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the internal consistencies and stability of the multi-item scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient closer to the value of 1 signifies greater internal consistency of the particular items.

The construct of *openness to changes at work* is measured using 5 items, and the alpha coefficient is 0.827. Besides that, the construct of *work and career proactivity* is measured using 3 items and the alpha coefficient is 0.777. Meanwhile, 3 items are used to measure *career motivation* and the alpha coefficient is 0.698. The construct of *work and career resilience* is measured using 5 items and the alpha coefficient is 0.835. The construct of *work identity* is measured using 6 items with alpha coefficient of 0.922. Besides that, 11 items are used to measure *social capital* and the alpha coefficient is 0.826. The construct of *human capital* is measured using 5 items with alpha coefficient of 0.825. Lastly, *perceived employability's* alpha coefficient is 0.896 and is measured using 6 items.

In conclusion, the reliability coefficient (coefficient alpha) of all examined constructs in this research is acceptable. All the constructs show a Cronbach's Alpha value of more than 0.6 which signifies consistencies and stabilities of the measurement thereby allows proceeding to distribute it out to the 150 targeted respondents.

4.3 Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis is used to provide generation of conclusion regarding the characteristics of the population based on the sample data (Burns and Bush, 2000). Furthermore, it aims to examine the individual variables and its relationships with other variables.

4.3.1 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Hair et al. (2007) proposed Rules of thumb on coefficient range and strength of association as shown in table below:

Table 4.15: Rules of Thumb about Correlation Coefficient Size

| Coefficient range | Strength of Association |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ± 0.91 to ± 1.00 | Very strong |
| ± 0.71 to ± 0.90 | High |
| ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 | Moderate |
| ± 0.21 to ± 0.40 | Small but definite relationship |
| ± 0.01 to ± 0.20 | Slight, almost negligible |

Source: Adopted from Hair, Jr., Money, A. H., Samouel, P., & Page, M. (2007). *Research Methods for Business*. West Sussex: John Wiley Sons.

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no significant relationship between openness to change at work and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between openness to change at work and perceived employability.

Table 4.16: Correlation between
Openness to Change at Work and Perceived Employability

| | | openness | employability |
|---------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|
| openness | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .608** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 |
| employability | Pearson Correlation | .608** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 150 | 150 |

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

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Direction of relationship

From the table above, there is positive relationship between openness to change at work and perceived employability because of the value for correlation coefficient is positive. The openness to change variable has a 0.608 correlation with the perceived employability variable. This means, when perceived openness to change at work is high, perceived employability is high.

Strength of relationship

The value of this correlation coefficient (0.608) is fall under coefficient range from ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 . Therefore, the relationship between openness to change at work and perceived employability is moderate.

Significance of relationship

Based on the result provided, p-value is 0.000 which is lesser than alpha value 0.01. Therefore, null hypothesis (H_0) is not accepted but alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. As a result, there is significant relationship between openness to change at work and perceived employability.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no significant relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability.

Table 4.17: Correlation between
Work and Career Proactivity and Perceived Employability

| | | proactivity | employability |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------|
| proactivity | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .628** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 |
| employability | Pearson Correlation | .628** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 150 | 150 |

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

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Direction of relationship

From the table above, the Pearson Correlation sign is positive 0.628. It indicates that there is positive relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability. In other words, the work and career proactivity variable has a 0.628 correlation with the perceived employability variable.

Strength of relationship

The relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability is moderate. It is because the value of this correlation coefficient (0.628) is fall under coefficient range from ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 .

Significance of relationship

The relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability is significant. It is because the p-value 0.000 is less than alpha value 0.01. Therefore, null hypothesis (H_0) is not accepted but alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

H₀: There is no significant relationship between career motivation and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between career motivation and perceived employability.

Table 4.18: Correlation between
Career Motivation and Perceived Employability

| | | motivation | employability |
|---------------|---------------------|------------|---------------|
| motivation | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .574** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 |
| employability | Pearson Correlation | .574** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 150 | 150 |

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

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Direction of relationship

Based on the result provided, there is positive relationship between career motivation and perceived employability because the value for correlation coefficient is positive. The career motivation variable has a 0.574 correlation with the perceived employability variable.

Strength of relationship

The value of this correlation coefficient which is 0.574 is fall under coefficient range from ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 . Therefore, the relationship between career motivation and perceived employability is at the moderate level.

Significance of relationship

From the table above, p-value is 0.000 which is lesser than alpha value 0.01. Therefore, null hypothesis is not accepted and alternative hypothesis is accepted. As a result, there is a significant relationship between the career motivation and perceived employability.

Hypothesis 4

H₀: There is no significant relationship between work and career resilience and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between work and career resilience and perceived employability.

Table 4.19: Correlation between
Work and Career Resilience and Perceived Employability

| | | resilience | employability |
|---------------|---------------------|------------|---------------|
| resilience | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .626** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 |
| employability | Pearson Correlation | .626** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 150 | 150 |

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

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Direction of relationship

There is positive relationship between work and career resilience and perceived employability because the work and career resilience variable has a positive correlation value of 0.626.

Strength of relationship

The relationship between work and career resilience and perceived employability is moderate. This is because the value of this correlation coefficient (0.626) is fall under coefficient range from ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 .

Significance of relationship

Based on the result provided, the p-value 0.000 is less than alpha value 0.01. Null hypothesis (H_0) is not accepted and alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is significant relationship between work and career resilience and perceived employability.

Hypothesis 5

H₀: There is no significant relationship between work identity and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between work identity and perceived employability.

Table 4.20: Correlation between
Work Identity and Perceived Employability

| | | identity | employability |
|---------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|
| identity | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .618** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 |
| employability | Pearson Correlation | .618** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 150 | 150 |

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

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Direction of relationship

From the table above, the Pearson Correlation sign is positive 0.618. Therefore, there is positive relationship between work identity and perceived employability because the value for the correlation coefficient is positive.

Strength of relationship

The value of this correlation coefficient (0.618) is fall under coefficient range from ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 . Therefore, the relationship between work identity and perceived employability is at the moderate level.

Significance of relationship

Null hypothesis (H_0) is not accepted and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is because the p-value 0.000 is less than alpha value 0.01. Therefore, the relationship between work identity and perceived employability is significant.

Hypothesis 6

H₀: There is no significant relationship between social capital and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between social capital and perceived employability.

Table 4.21: Correlation between
Social Capital and Perceived Employability

| | | scapital | employability |
|---------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|
| scapital | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .168* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .039 |
| | N | 150 | 150 |
| employability | Pearson Correlation | .168* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .039 | |
| | N | 150 | 150 |

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

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Direction of relationship

Based on the result provided above, there is positive relationship between social capital and perceived employability because the value of correlation coefficient is positive. The social capital variable has a 0.168 correlation with the perceived employability variable.

Strength of relationship

The value of this correlation coefficient (0.168) is fall under coefficient range from ± 0.01 to ± 0.20 . Therefore, the relationship between social capital and perceived employability is slight, almost negligible.

Significance of relationship

There is significant relationship between social capital and perceived employability. This is because p-value is 0.039 which is lesser than alpha value 0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis (H_0) is not accepted but alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

Hypothesis 7

H₀: There is no significant relationship between human capital and perceived employability.

H₁: There is significant relationship between human capital and perceived employability.

Table 4.22: Correlation between
Human Capital and Perceived Employability

| | | hcapital | employability |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| hcapital | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .574 ^{**} |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 |
| employability | Pearson Correlation | .574 ^{**} | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 150 | 150 |

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

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Direction of relationship

From the table above, the Pearson Correlation sign is positive 0.574. Therefore, there is positive relationship between human capital and perceived employability because the value of correlation coefficient is positive. In other words, the human capital variable has a 0.574 correlation with the perceived employability variable.

Strength of relationship

The relationship between human capital and perceived employability is moderate. This is because the value of this correlation coefficient (0.574) is fall under coefficient range from ± 0.41 to ± 0.70 .

Significance of relationship

Based on the result provided, the p-value is 0.000 which is lesser than alpha value 0.01. Therefore, null hypothesis (H_0) is not accepted but alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. As a result, there is significant relationship between human capital and perceived employability.

4.3.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Hypothesis 8

H₀: The seven independent variables (openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity, social capital and human capital) are not significantly explaining the variance in perceived employability.

H₁: The seven independent variables (openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity, social capital and human capital) are significantly explaining the variance in perceived employability.

Table 4.23: Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .831 ^a | .691 | .676 | .22168 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Openness to Change at Work, Work and Career Proactivity, Career Motivation, Work and Career Resilience, Work Identity, Social Capital, Human Capital

b. Dependent Variable: Perceived Employability

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

The R value is the correlation coefficient between the dependent variable and the independent variables. According to the Table 4.23, the value of correlation coefficient(R) of seven independent variables (openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity, social capital and human capital) with the dependent variable (perceived employability) is 0.831. Therefore, there is positive and high correlation between seven independent variable and dependent variable.

Besides that, Table 4.23 also indicates the coefficient of determination (R square) which can help in explaining variance. The R square figure of the seven independent variables is 0.691. This also mean that independent variables (openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity, social capital and human capital) can explain 69.1% of the variation in dependent variable (perceived employability). However, it is still leaves 30.9% (100% - 69.1%) unexplained in this research. In other words, there are other additional variables that are important in explaining perceived employability that have not been considered in this research.

Table 4.24: ANOVA

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 15.601 | 7 | 2.229 | 45.351 | .000 ^a |
| | Residual | 6.978 | 142 | .049 | | |
| | Total | 22.579 | 149 | | | |

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Openness to Change at Work, Work and Career Proactivity, Career Motivation, Work and Career Resilience, Work Identity, Social Capital, Human Capital
- b. Dependent Variable: Perceived Employability

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

Based on Table 4.24 (ANOVA), the p-value is 0.000 which lesser than alpha value 0.01. Besides that, the F-statistic is significant at the value of 45.351. Therefore, the model is a good descriptor of the relation between the dependent and predictor variables. As a result, the independent variables (openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity, social capital and human capital) are significant explain the variance in perceived employability. Null hypothesis (H_0) is not accepted but alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

Table 4.25: Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | -.878 | .449 | | -1.954 | .053 |
| openness | .128 | .056 | .143 | 2.290 | .024 |
| proactivity | .172 | .053 | .204 | 3.284 | .001 |
| motivation | .122 | .048 | .152 | 2.554 | .012 |
| resilience | .206 | .065 | .196 | 3.188 | .002 |
| identity | .169 | .067 | .164 | 2.519 | .013 |
| scapital | .070 | .111 | .031 | .627 | .532 |
| hcapital | .383 | .073 | .277 | 5.215 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Perceived Employability

Source: Data generated by SPSS version 17.0

The seven independent variables are the factors that determine perceived employability. This can be represented by the equation as below:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + b_7X_7$$

Based on the Table 4.25, the regression equation for the perceived employability (PE) is:

$$PE = - 0.878 + 0.128(OCW) + 0.172(WCP) + 0.122(CM) + 0.206(WCR) + 0.169(WI) + 0.070(SC) + 0.383(HC)$$

Where:

Y = Perceived Employability (PE)

a = Regression Constant

X₁ = Openness to Change at Work (OCW)

X₂ = Work and Career Proactivity (WCP)

X₃ = Career Motivation (CM)

X₄ = Work and Career Resilience (WCR)

X₅ = Work Identity (WI)

X₆ = Social Capital (SC)

X₇ = Human Capital (HC)

From the Table 4.25, *human capital* is the first and most significant independent variable in this research since its t-value is 5.215 and p-value is 0.000, which is lower than alpha value 0.01. This also shows that human capital is significant to predict perceived employability. Besides that, human capital is the predictor variable that contribute the highest to the variation of the perceived employability because Beta value (under standardized coefficients) for this predictor variable is the largest (0.277) if compare to other predictor variables (openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity and social capital).

Besides, *work and career proactivity* is second most significant independent variable where it carries out the t-value 3.284 and the p-value 0.001, which is lower than the alpha value 0.01. This shows that work and career proactivity is significant to predict perceived employability. In addition, work and career proactivity contribute the second highest to the variation of the perceived employability because Beta value (under standardized coefficients) for this predictor variable is the second largest (0.204).

The third most significant independent variable is *work and career resilience*, where the t-value is 3.188 and the p-value is 0.002 that lesser than alpha value of 0.01. This represent that the work and career resilience is significant to predict perceived employability. Besides, work and career resilience contribute the third highest to the variation of the perceived employability because Beta value (under standardized coefficients) for this predictor variable is the third largest (0.196).

Career motivation is significant to predict perceived employability in which the t-value is 2.554 and the p-value is 0.012 that lesser than alpha value of 0.05. Career motivation's Beta value is 0.152 in which mean that it contributes the fifth highest to the variation of perceived employability.

Work identity is the fifth most significant independent variable where it carries out the t-value 2.519 and the p-value 0.013, which is lower than the alpha value 0.05. This shows that work identity is significant to predict perceived employability. In addition, work identity contributes the fourth highest to the variation of the perceived employability because Beta value (under standardized coefficients) for this predictor variable is the fourth largest (0.164).

Besides that, *openness to change at work* is also significant in explaining one's perceived employability in which the t-value is 2.290 and the p-value 0.024, which is lesser than the alpha value 0.05. Beta value of openness to change at work is 0.143 where contribute the second lowest to the variation of the perceived employability if compared to other predictor variables.

Lastly, in this research, *social capital* is not significant in explaining one's perceived employability. This is because p-value for social capital is 0.532 which is more than alpha value 0.05. Besides, in the Pearson Correlation analysis has showed that there is slight, almost negligible relationship between social capital and perceived employability. Therefore, slight, almost negligible relationship between social capital and perceived employability may lead the social capital is not significant to predict perceived employability. Social capital contributes the lowest to the variation of the perceived employability because Beta value (under standardized coefficients) for this predictor variable is the smallest (0.031) if compared to other predictor variables.

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the data collected from the questionnaire survey were summarized and the SPSS outputs were interpreted. The analysis was divided into three parts which included descriptive analysis, scale measurement, and inferential analysis. The analysis' results and interpretations will be used in order to proceed to the next chapter for discussions, conclusions, and implications of the overall research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes and discusses the research results which include descriptive and inferential analysis which have been presented in the previous chapter. Furthermore, reasons or evidences will be given to support hypothesis. Implications and recommendations are also highlighted. In addition, the limitation of research study will be mentioned in. In the last section of this chapter, will be the overall conclusion of the entire research project.

5.1 Summary of Statistical Analyses

5.1.1 Descriptive Analyses

5.1.1.1 Respondent Demographic Profile

Based on the analysis of respondents' demographic profile, most of the respondents are female (54%). Majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 21 to 23 years old. This is because the common age group of working fresh graduates are within this range. Lastly, majority of the respondents are Chinese (79.3%) and single (83.3%).

5.1.1.2 Central Tendencies Measurement of Construct

In the aspect of *openness to change at work*, the statement of “I am able to adapt to changing circumstances at work” is the highest mean which is 3.8667, followed by “I feel that I am generally accepting of changes at work” and “I would consider myself open to changes at work” (means for both are 3.8133). The statement of “I feel changes at work generally have positive implications” has the lowest mean among the others (mean = 3.7133). On the other hand, the item “I feel changes at work generally have positive implications” has the highest standard deviation, which is 0.81378. Both of the statements “I feel that I am generally accepting of changes at work” and “I would consider myself open to changes at work” have the lowest standard deviation (0.71781).

For the construct of *work and career proactivity*, the statement of “I stay abreast of developments relating to my type of job” is the item with highest mean (mean = 4.0133), followed by “I stay abreast of developments in my company” (means = 3.8133). The item with the lowest mean is “I stay abreast of developments in my industry” (mean = 3.6467). On the other hand, the item “I stay abreast of developments in my industry” has the highest standard deviation, which is 0.75206. The item with lowest standard deviation is “I stay abreast of developments relating to my type of job”; the standard deviation value is 0.70460.

In the construct of *career motivation*, “I have a specific plan for achieving my career goals” is the item with highest mean (mean = 3.8867), followed by “I have participated in training or schooling that will help me reach my career goals” (means = 3.8800). The item with the lowest mean is “I have sought job assignments that will help me

obtain my career goals” (mean = 3.7533). On the other hand, the statement that has the highest standard deviation (0.77650) is “I have participated in training or schooling that will help me reach my career goals”. The statement of “I have a specific plan for achieving my career goals” has the lowest standard deviation which is 0.73764.

In the aspect of *work and career resilience*, the statement of “I take a positive attitude toward my work” is the item with highest mean (mean = 4.0533), followed by “I am optimistic about my future career opportunities” (means = 3.8200). The item with the lowest mean is “I have control over my career opportunities” (mean = 3.7400). On the other hand, the item that has the highest standard deviation (0.79790) is “I have control over my career opportunities”. The item “I take a positive attitude toward my work” has the lowest standard deviation (0.64284).

In the aspect of *work identity*, the statement of “It is important to me that I am successful in my job” is the item with highest mean (mean = 4.0067), followed by “I am involved in my work” (means = 3.9667). The item with the lowest mean is “It is important to me that others think highly of my job” (mean = 3.7600). On the other hand, the item that has the highest standard deviation (0.8409) is “It is important to me that others think highly of my job”. The item “I am involved in my work” has the lowest standard deviation which is 0.65964.

For the *social capital* construct, the statement of “I know a lot of people within the organization” is the item with highest mean (mean = 3.8533), followed by “I am well connected within the organization” (mean = 3.7733). The item “I know a lot of people outside the organization” has the second lowest mean (mean = 3.4467). The item “I am well networked with individuals outside of my organization” is

the item with lowest mean among all (mean = 3.2733). On the other hand, the item that has the highest standard deviation (0.68871) is “I have close ties with my extended family and friends”. The item with second highest standard deviation (0.63348) is “I am well networked with individuals outside of my organization”. The item “I am well connected within the organization” has the lowest standard deviation which is 0.49354.

In the construct of *human capital*, the statement of “Continuous learning is an element of my career” is the item with highest mean (mean = 3.8400), followed by “I have a diversified set of job related skills” (mean = 3.8000). The item “I remain current on the trends and developments in my profession” is the item with lowest mean among all (mean = 3.6400). On the other hand, the item that has the highest standard deviation (0.82965) is “I remain current on the trends and developments in my profession”. The item with second highest standard deviation (0.79495) is “Continuous learning is an element of my career”. The item “I have a diversified set of job related skills” has the lowest standard deviation which is 0.67556.

For the construct of *perceived employability*, the statement of “My company views me as an asset to the organization” is the item with highest mean (mean = 3.9533), followed by “Given my skills and experience, the company that I work for views me as a value-added resource” (mean = 3.9467). The item “There are many opportunities available for me in my company” is the item with lowest mean among all (mean = 3.7733). On the other hand, the item that has the highest standard deviation (0.90736) is “My company views me as an asset to the organization”. The item “I believe I could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer” has the second lowest standard deviation which is 0.69453. The item “I believe I could easily

obtain another job that would give me a high level of satisfaction” has the lowest standard deviation which is 0.66555.

5.1.2 Scale Measurement

5.1.2.1 Internal Reliability Test

Reliability test and Cronbach’s alpha were applied to observe the 44 items which used to measure the internal consistencies of eight constructs in the questionnaire. The alpha coefficient of openness to change at work (5 items) is 0.827, work and career proactivity (3 items) is 0.777, career motivation (3 items) is 0.698, work and career resilience (5 items) is 0.835, work identity (6 items) is 0.922, social capital (11 items) is 0.826, human capital (5 items) is 0.825 and perceived employability (6 items) is 0.896. According to Sekaran (2003), all the constructs employed are found to have the internal consistency reliability if the result passed the minimum accepted level of 0.6.

5.1.3 Summary of Inferential Analyses

5.1.3.1 Pearson’s Correlation Analysis

The computed correlations between perceived employability and openness to change at work (0.608), work and career proactivity (0.628), career motivation (0.574), work and career resilience (0.626), work identity (0.618), social capital (0.168) and human capital(0.574).

All the constructs are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, except the social capital which is significant at the 0.05 level. Hence, the results proved that the openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity, social capital and human capital has significant positive relationship with perceived employability.

5.1.3.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regressions are used to examine the nature of relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable, the strength of relationships, and the significance of the relationships of several independent variables on dependent variable.

Based on the results of multiple regression analysis, $R^2=0.691$ means that 69.1 percent of the variation in perceived employability is explained by openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity, social capital and human capital. Besides that, the F-value of 45.351 is significant at the 0.01 level means that this model is a good descriptor of the relation between the perceived employability and predictor variables (openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity, social capital and human capital). In other words, the independent variables (openness to change at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, work identity, social capital and human capital) are significantly explaining the variance in perceived employability.

The multiple regression equation is formed as following:

$$PE = - 0.878 + 0.128(OCW) + 0.172(WCP) + 0.122(CM) + 0.206(WCR) + 0.169(WI) + 0.070(SC) + 0.383(HC)$$

Where:

| | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|
| PE | = | Perceived Employability |
| OCW | = | Openness to Change at Work |
| WCP | = | Work and Career Proactivity |
| CM | = | Career Motivation |
| WCR | = | Work and Career Resilience |
| WI | = | Work Identity |
| SC | = | Social Capital |
| HC | = | Human Capital |

5.2 Discussion of Major Findings

Table 5.1: Summary of the Result of Hypotheses Testing

| Hypotheses | Supported | Not Supported |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| There is significant relationship between <i>openness to change at work</i> and <i>perceived employability</i> . | $\beta= 0.608$ $p= 0.000 < 0.01$ | |
| There is significant relationship between <i>work and career proactivity</i> and <i>perceived employability</i> . | $\beta= 0.628$ $p= 0.000 < 0.01$ | |
| There is significant relationship between <i>career motivation</i> and <i>perceived employability</i> . | $\beta= 0.574$ $p= 0.000 < 0.01$ | |
| There is significant relationship between <i>work and career resilience</i> and <i>perceived employability</i> . | $\beta= 0.626$ $p= 0.000 < 0.01$ | |
| There is significant relationship between <i>work identity</i> and <i>perceived employability</i> . | $\beta= 0.618$ $p= 0.000 < 0.01$ | |
| There is significant relationship between <i>social capital</i> and <i>perceived employability</i> . | $\beta= 0.168$ $p= 0.039 < 0.05$ | |
| There is significant relationship between <i>human capital</i> and <i>perceived employability</i> . | $\beta= 0.574$ $p= 0.000 < 0.01$ | |

Source: Developed for research

5.2.1 Relationship between Openness to Change at Work and Perceived Employability

H₁: There is significant relationship between openness to change at work and perceived employability.

Based on the result from Chapter 4, there is significant positive and moderate relationship between openness to change at work and perceived employability which carries correlation coefficient value of 0.608 and p-value of 0.000 which is significant at the alpha value 0.01.

The finding in this research showed that openness to change at work and perceived employability is positively linked. The concept of openness was found to associate positively with employability is being supported by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) in which suggest that openness to change is essential to personal adaptability as it enables realization of career opportunities and being optimistic to new experiences.

Furthermore, according to the Armenakis et al.'s (1993) study, high level of openness to change was considered essential in helping individuals to face organizational changes readily (as cited in Wanberg and Banas, 2000). Other than that, people that are open to new experiences and changes are adaptable and, in the face of flux, ultimately more employable (Fugate et al., 2004). Therefore, people need to be open to change at the workplace in order for them to survive and competitive in the today's turbulent working environment. As the openness to change at work refers to the ability or willingness to accept organizational changes such as new system of management or company policies which enables realization of career opportunities and being optimistic to new experiences or challenges, the positive relationship between openness to change at work and perceived employability was supported.

5.2.2 Relationship between Work and Career Proactivity and Perceived Employability

H₁: There is significant relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability.

Based on the finding, the relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability is significant because it carries p-value of 0.000 which is lesser than alpha value 0.01. Besides that, it showed that work and career proactivity and perceived employability is positively related in which it carries correlation coefficient value of 0.628.

The research finding is in line with past research studies. For instance, a person's ability and willingness to adapt is essential to career success (Hall, 2002; Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, and Plamondon, 2000). Therefore, survival in turbulent career environment requires workers to continually manage change in order enable them to identify or realize career opportunities.

Furthermore, the finding also supported by Crant (2000) which defines that proactive behavior as taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones. It involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting to present conditions. Therefore, it is shown that employees will engage in proactive activities as part of their in-role behavior in which they can fulfill basic job requirements. Lastly, the finding also supported by Fugate (2006) who suggested that work and career proactivity is a feature of adaptability at work. Therefore, in terms of employability, work and career proactivity subsumes the acquisition of information related to possible opportunities and challenges associated with one's current position and future opportunities. So, based on the previous study, the positive relationship between work and career proactivity and perceived employability was convincing.

5.2.3 Relationship between Career Motivation and Perceived Employability

H₁: There is significant relationship between career motivation and perceived employability.

Pearson Correlation analysis shows a significant positive correlation between career motivation and perceived employability which carries correlation coefficient value of 0.574 and the p-value of 0.000 which is lesser than alpha value of 0.01.

This research outcome is being supported by London's (1983) study which defined that career motivation is associated with a wide range of career decisions and behaviours (e.g. searching for a job, deciding to stay with an organization, and setting and trying to realize career goals and opportunities). Furthermore, London (1983) also suggested that those who are high in career motivation have greater career advancement opportunities since they will work harder on career assignment which will affect their career. Therefore, individuals with high career motivation are more actively identifying and realizing career goal and opportunities. Lastly, Fugate (2006) also suggested that individuals with higher career motivation are more likely to plan for their future, and they also have a willingness to change to meet situational demands. Therefore, career motivation is a critical determinant of continuous learning, which is a critical aspect of employability.

As a conclusion, the motivation is considered as a state of human readiness to start a certain action. In other words, individuals would establish their career paths in order to further their advancement possibilities. Therefore, the positive relationship between career motivation and perceived employability was supported.

5.2.4 Relationship between Work and Career Resilience and Perceived Employability

H₁: There is significant relationship between work and career resilience and perceived employability.

Research outcome has showed that there is significant positive relationship between work and career resilience and perceived employability which carries correlation coefficient value of 0.626 and p-value of 0.000 which is significant at the alpha value 0.01.

This finding is being supported by Grzeda (1999) which suggest that strengthening career resilience results in a more flexible and adaptable employees with traits that are preferred by their employer. Meanwhile, Waterman et al. (1994), Collard et al. (1996), and Griffith (1998) advocate that building a career-resilient workforce is essential in response to the today's turbulent working environment (as cited in Liu, 2003).

Furthermore, London (1983, 1993) asserted that employees should increase their career adaptability through a combination of career resilience, development activity, and networking (as cited in Ito & Brotheridge, 2005). Thus, individuals who develop career resilience will be better equipped in facing the inevitable prospect of changing careers in the future (Grzeda, 1999).

Work and career resilient individuals tend to have higher self-evaluations and more optimistic in terms of their work and careers (Fugate, 2006). Therefore, resilient people tend to perceived availability of career opportunities at workplace in which enhance employees' confidence in their abilities to handle challenges and changes in their working places. So, the positive relationship between work career resilience and perceived employability was convincing.

5.2.5 Relationship between Work identity and Perceived Employability

H₁: There is significant relationship between work identity and perceived employability.

The results in Chapter 4 have showed that there is significant positive and moderate relationship between work identity and perceived employability which carries correlation coefficient value of 0.618 and p-value of 0.000 which is significant at the alpha value of 0.01.

The finding in this research is supported by several past studies. For instance, according to the Fugate et al., 2004, work identity acts as a cognitive compass that motivates one to actively adapt in order to realize or create opportunities that match one's aspirations. In other words, individuals with stronger career identity tend to devote more resources to their careers, thereby increasing their chances of achieving objective career success (Rothbard and Edwards, 2003).

This research finding also has been supported by Fugate et al. (2007)'s study which suggest that work identity provides a strong influential foundation to employability. Besides, Fugate et al.(2004)'s study suggest that when people define themselves as employable, they will perform behaviors which are consistent with their self-perception. In other words, work identities direct, regulate, and sustain one's behavior that helps them achieve their desired goals.

Therefore, as the work identity refers to the extent to which one's career is central to one's identity which facilitates the identification and realization of career opportunities, the positive relationship between work identity and perceived employability was proved.

5.2.6 Relationship between Social Capital and Perceived Employability

H₁: There is significant relationship between social capital and perceived employability.

Based on the result from Chapter 4, there is significant positive relationship between social capital and perceived employability which carries correlation coefficient value of 0.168 and p-value of 0.039 which is significant at the alpha value 0.05.

The finding in this research showed that social capital and perceived employability is positively linked. This result outcome has been supported by previous research in which social capital is an individual resource consisting of those contacts that are of value when finding employment. (Berntson , 2008; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001).

In addition, Forret & Sullivan's study(as cited in Direnzo, 2010) also suggest that social support provide individuals a strategic advantage in their careers as it can often lead to job opportunities, promotions, business leads, and venture capital. Higgins & Kram's study(as cited in Fugate et al., 2004) also support the research outcome which suggest that social support increase an individual's capacity to identify and realize career opportunities across organizations and industries, throughout one's entire career.

This research outcome is also in line with the De Vos and Soens' (2008) study. They found a strong positive relationship between social capital and perceived employability. However, researcher found a slight, almost negligible relationship between social capital and perceived employability in this study. This is mainly because the target respondents for this research are working fresh graduates while previous study focusing on current employees

in the workplace. Working fresh graduates may lack of the interaction, communication, and connection with the people within and outside the organization since they are still new in the workplace.

Therefore, as social capital refer to the accumulation of individual's formal and informal network within and outside the organization which provides individual a strategic advantage in their careers, the positive relationship between social capital and perceived employability was supported.

5.2.7 Relationship between Human Capital and Perceived Employability

H₁: There is significant relationship between human capital and perceived employability.

Based on the finding, the relationship between human capital and perceived employability is significant because it carries p-value of 0.000 which is lesser than alpha value 0.01. Besides that, it showed that human capital and perceived employability is positively related at the moderate level in which it carries correlation coefficient value of 0.574.

The result outcome is in line with several previous research studies. For instance, according to the Becker (1964) as cited in DiRenzo (2010), human capital represents an individual's personal and professional experiences that can boost one's career. Besides, it is also supported by Benhard's (2002) study where least well-educated employees were proven to experience a higher risk of unemployment when compared to better educated workers.

Furthermore, Knight and Yorke (2003) have found that employers prefer to hire individuals who have workplace experience rather than those do not have

working experience. Shafie and Nayan (2010) also reveal that employers are more willing to find good workers who have basic academic skills and higher order thinking skills such as learning, creativity, decision making and problem solving.

Therefore, as human capital refers to the accumulation of career related skills and knowledge which is important to one's career future, the positive relationship between human capital and perceived employability was convincing.

5.3 Implications of the Study

5.3.1 Managerial Implications

As our research result shows that high employability relates positively with dispositional behaviour such as proactivity, business organizations should start realizing the need to be proactive and appreciate proactivity in order to stay ahead of its competitors.

According to a study by Belschak and Den Hartog (2010b), *proactivity* was being introduced as a scientific concept in various studies about 15 years ago, such as Morrison and Phelps's (1999) idea of taking charge and Michael Frese's (2001) concept of personal initiative. The study also further reveals that proactive behaviour would lead a 'win-win' situation where employees and the organization flourish (Belschak and Den Hartog, 2001b). Consistent with a recent study by Thomas et al. (2010), proactive employees also tend to exhibit increased work performance such as better performance on core tasks and had more entrepreneurial success compared to other non-proactive

employees. Therefore, it is both important and beneficial for employers to start promoting a culture of being proactive in the workplace.

Belschak and Den Hartog (2010a) have given an insight on the traits of proactive behaviour. According to the study, a proactive behaviour consists of anticipatory, self-initiated and change-oriented behaviour (Belschak and Den Hartog, 2010a). Therefore, employees should be encouraged to learn how to anticipate changes, opportunities or problems in order to plan ahead and prepare for potential threats without being prompted. On the other hand, employers should allow more autonomy and flexibility for their employees to perform assigned responsibilities; however sufficient supervision and guidance are necessary to ensure employees are working toward organizational goals. For instance in a study by Bindl and Parker (2010) found that having more autonomy and freedom to take decisions at work stimulates employees' abilities needed to take initiative. In other words, empowered employees are more motivated to demonstrate proactive behaviour.

Modern workplaces need flexible and responsible employees who go beyond narrow task requirements and who approach work proactively (Frese, 2008). As we are running in the era of ambiguous, dynamic, and highly competitive business environments, employees of such quality are needed to take up increasingly complex work tasks. Known as being the 'new employee', Grant and Ashford (2008) describe them to be engaging in self-started, future-oriented behaviour without the need for constant supervision and instructions by others. According to Belschak and Den Hartog (2010b), there is a large range of different examples of being proactive, such as feedback seeking, making suggestions for improvements, whistleblowing, and also more self-directed activities such as managing one's career.

Apart from the benefits of being proactive, another crucial factor for employees to be proactive is because the change in today's career patterns has reduced the role of employers in managing their employees' careers, thus

increases the need to take care of their own careers. In sum, employees of today should learn to proactively make a difference without only reacting to cues from the environment and organizations on the other hand, should see the importance of proactive behaviour on the part of their employees as crucial in surviving today's dynamic business world. Therefore, employers should give support to employees in every way to promote proactivity.

On the other hand, while proactive behaviour is needed and encouraged to practice among employees and employers, being excessively proactive potentially lead toward negative consequences. For instance in a recent study by Bolino et al. (2010), proactive behaviours may potentially contribute toward employees' stress, increased tension between employees, and even harm the entire organization by reducing its learning capability, hindering socialisation, process, and diminishing its ability to develop leaders. Thus, employees should only be encouraged to be proactive and must not be overly exploited by employers.

Study done by Seibert et al. (2001) also found a critical pitfall – voicing one's concerns at work was detrimental to an employee's career success; individuals who voice too many concerns received lower promotions and lower salaries than those who voice fewer concerns. Campbell (2000) explained the phenomenon as 'initiative paradox' (as cited in Belschak and Den Hartog, 2010); on one hand, employers expect their employees to behave proactively, but on the other hand, they often punish proactive employees if their proactive initiatives are not in line with the company's values and interests. For instance, voicing too many concerns may be perceived as annoying or undermining by one's supervisor and contribute to an employee's image of being a 'complainer', resulting in bad evaluation. Management must avoid 'initiative paradox' as it erodes motivation to be proactive.

Undergraduate students, on the other hand, should be able to demonstrate proactive behaviors to improve their chances to get employment upon graduation. They should realize that knowledge on books is generally outdated the moment it was printed, and therefore students must learn to gain work and career-related knowledge ‘outside the book’, and synchronize to the real world so to possess the most ‘up to date’ knowledge. Students are also advised to utilize employability development opportunities during their higher education, to possess skills and other competencies essential to future employment. Graduates do not stop learning, but instead learn more to familiarize with respective industries in order to stay competitive in market.

In conclusion, business organizations should value employees being proactive such as listening to their opinion and suggestions while constantly giving feedback to help employees in self-improvements. While, graduates should adjust their mentality and be proactive in order to stay employable.

5.4 Limitation of the Study

There are a number of limitations of this study. First, the study adopted individualists’ perspective and neglected the significance of situational factors. Even though individual factors play the most important role in deciding one’s perception and behavior, there are arguments claims environment affects how people interpret and react to a particular situation.

Second, Fugate (2006), Fugate et al. (2004), and Fugate and Kinicki (2008) are not able to operationalize the term *employability*. As a consequence, this study is not able to examine the relationship between perceived employability and actual employability but only able to provide argument and reason without quantitative evidence. Moreover, definitions of employability are too diverse in term of contextualization and operationalization, this might creates difficulties and confusions

for practitioners, for example organizations and employees to utilize employability literature to achieve betterment.

Third, because of different contextualization, measurements and items adopted from other researches may not be entirely precise in our context. However, we did not try to adjust the items due to the concern of not being able to produce valid measurements. Therefore, variation is expected in quantitative research result as compared to reality.

Forth, due to limited financial resource we are not able to have direct access to many research papers that deemed to be important and related to this study. Even though we are able to access these information through secondary sources, but secondary sources' authors might not be able to include all information that are potentially vital to our study.

Finally, this study only able to cover a very small sample (150 respondents) caused by time constraint. Such a small sample size might not be strong enough to represent the population of all Malaysian graduates.

5.5 Recommendation for Future Study

First, future study should include situational factors, thus embrace interactionism to study how individuals are affected by environment and how individuals proactively alter the work and career environment. The study should also look into whether employable individuals will demonstrate consistency in their proactive behavior under different circumstances, for example, extreme level of working stress and reactive organizational culture.

Second, researchers should try to operationalize *employability* in term of absolute level of ability to identify and realize career opportunities, as proactive people may not be able to realize opportunities even though they are willing to do so, due to lack of capabilities.

Third, employability researchers should achieve consensus on how should we view employability and to develop a generally accepted definition of employability, thus allow more researches to take place to explore more benefits and implications of employability towards organizations' performance.

Forth, measurements and items adopted from other researches should be adjusted to fit into the research's context. Validity test should be done to assure the validity of the measures. Future researches should expand sample size to better represent the population for better and more accurate results.

5.6 Conclusion

From the study, we have revealed how employability was positively related to Fugate and Kinicki's (2008) dispositional approach such as proactivity. Although proactive behavior leads towards various beneficial outcomes to both employers to sustain competitiveness and employees to achieve career success, further empirical studies should be conducted to help realize the concept of employability.

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APPENDICES

The Questionnaire

Dear Respondents,

We are the final year students from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) currently pursuing Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons) degree. As part of our coursework for the subject UBMZ 3016 Research Project, we are required to conduct a research survey. The title of our research project is “Perceived Employability among Employing Fresh Graduates”.

We would be grateful if you could spend a few minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire. We assure that all information collected is strictly for academic purposes and will be kept confidential. Thank you for your kind assistance. If there is any doubt, please do not hesitate to contact:

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SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please specify your answer by placing a (√) on the relevant answers provided. The following questions will be used only in determining our sample demographics.

1. Gender
 - Male
 - Female
2. Age
 - 20 years old and below
 - 21 – 23 years old
 - 24 – 26 years old
 - 27 – 29 years old
 - 30 years old and above
3. Ethnicity
 - Chinese
 - Malay
 - Indian
 - Others
4. Marital Status
 - Single
 - Married
 - Divorced
 - Widow
 - Others

SECTION B

Based on your dispositions, please indicate the most appropriate opinion/response with the scale below.

- (1) Strongly Disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly Agree

| <u>Part I: Openness to Changes at Work</u> | |
|--|-------------------|
| Q5. I feel changes at work generally have positive implications. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q6. I feel that I am generally accepting of changes at work. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q7. I would consider myself open to changes at work. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q8. I can handle job and organizational changes effectively. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q9. I am able to adapt to changing circumstances at work. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |

| <u>Part II: Work and Career Proactivity</u> | |
|---|-------------------|
| Q10. I stay abreast of developments in my company. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q11. I stay abreast of developments in my industry. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q12. I stay abreast of developments relating to my type of job. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |

| <u>Part III: Career Motivation</u> | |
|--|-------------------|
| Q13. I have participated in training or schooling that will help me reach my career goals. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q14. I have a specific plan for achieving my career goals. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q15. I have sought job assignments that will help me obtain my career goals. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |

| <u>Part IV: Work and Career Resilience</u> | |
|---|-------------------|
| Q16. I am optimistic about my future career opportunities. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q17. I feel I am a valuable employee at work. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q18. I have control over my career opportunities. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q19. My past career experiences have been generally positive. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q20. I take a positive attitude toward my work. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |

| <u>Part V: Work Identity</u> | |
|--|-------------------|
| Q21. I define myself by the work that I do. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q22. I am involved in my work. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q23. It is important to me that others think highly of my job. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q24. It is important to me that I am successful in my job. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q25. The type of work I do is important to me. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q26. It is important to me that I am acknowledged for my successes on the job. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |

| <u>Part VI: Social Capital</u> | |
|--|-------------------|
| Q27. I know a lot of people within the organization. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q28. I am well connected within the organization. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q29. I have a lot of contacts within the organization. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q30. I have extensive contacts within the industry I work. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q31. I know a lot of people outside the organization. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q32. I am well networked with individuals outside of my organization. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q33. I do not have many professional contacts. (R)* | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q34. I have close ties with my extended family and friends. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q35. I have a wide network of relationships with individuals from different civic and social groups, clubs, and organizations (e.g., religious and/or recreational organizations). | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q36. I am well-connected in my community. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q37. I am well-connected with individuals outside of my current industry. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |

| <u>Part VII: Human Capital</u> | |
|--|-------------------|
| Q38. I have a diversified set of job related skills. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q39. I remain current on the trends and developments in my profession. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q40. Continuous learning is an element of my career. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q41. I have up to date job related skills. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q42. I have job related knowledge and skills that I can easily apply or transfer to other employment settings. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |

SECTION C: EMPLOYABILITY

The questions below ask about your self-perceived employability. Based on your experiences and understanding, please indicate the most appropriate opinion/response with the scale below.

- (1) Strongly Disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly Agree

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Q43. I believe I could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q44. I believe I could easily obtain another job that is in line with my level of education and experience. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q45. I believe I could easily obtain another job that would give me a high level of satisfaction. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q46. There are many opportunities available for me in my company. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q47. My company views me as an asset to the organization. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Q48. Given my skills and experience, the company that I work for views me as a value-added resource. | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |