

1-1-2022

The career resilience of senior women managers: A cross-cultural perspective

Uma Jogulu

Edith Cowan University, u.jogulu@ecu.edu.au

Esmé Franken

Edith Cowan University, e.franken@ecu.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks2022-2026>



Part of the [Human Resources Management Commons](#), and the [Psychology Commons](#)

[10.1111/gwao.12829](https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12829)

Jogulu, U., & Franken, E. (2022). The career resilience of senior women managers: A cross-cultural perspective. *Gender, Work & Organization*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12829>

This Journal Article is posted at Research Online.

<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks2022-2026/583>

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

WILEY

Gender and Resilience at Work

The career resilience of senior women managers: A cross-cultural perspective

Uma Jogulu | Esmé Franken 

School of Business and Law, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, Western Australia, Australia

Correspondence

Esmé Franken, School of Business and Law, Edith Cowan University, 270 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup, WA 6027, Australia.
Email: e.franken@ecu.edu.au

Funding information

Open access publishing facilitated by Edith Cowan University, as part of the Wiley - Edith Cowan University agreement via the Council of Australian University Librarians.

Abstract

This article examines how cultural contexts influence the demonstration of resilient behaviors of women senior managers in large organizations. We compare the experiences of Malaysian and Australian women overcoming key challenges and obstacles in their career journeys by engaging in the resilience strategies of network leveraging, learning, and adaptability. Our findings reveal the unique, complex, and contextual nature of career resilience, and show how resilience can be demonstrated, often differently, across culture and context. Our study adds to the existing body of literature in the areas of careers, gender in the workplace, and resilience, by highlighting how senior women sustain and navigate their career paths within the constraints of their socio-cultural contexts. Practical and scholarly implications are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Asia Pacific region, contemporary careers, contextual influences, resilience, role conflict, women senior managers

1 | INTRODUCTION

Capable and qualified women remain underrepresented in senior management positions (Madsen, 2017; OECD, 2017), particularly in non-Western countries (Karam & Afiouni, 2014; Sidani et al., 2015). It is often challenging for women to build long-term job security and a steady career progression, as their career pathways can be complex, fragmented, and non-linear (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). While the majority of scholarship on women and leadership is situated in

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

© 2022 The Authors. *Gender, Work & Organization* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Western contexts (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007), research within non-Western contexts is relatively new and emerging (Cho et al., 2015; Peus et al., 2015). Understanding women's careers across cultures is important as diversity categories such as gender, cultural background, tenure, and age help shape and explain career strategies women engage in. Furthermore, societal features that exist across cultures may present different career opportunities, challenges, and experiences for women compared to men (Wood & Eagly, 2002).

The role and function of *resilience* is also missing in such studies on women's careers, and we still do not exactly know how established notions of diversity markers, such as being a woman in a senior managerial role, may influence resilient behaviors. Such knowledge is important in the identification of factors associated with women's representation, as well as strategies for its enhancement.

Resilience, including its role in career development, has been under-researched from a culturally and contextually nuanced perspective (see Ungar, 2011). It is a uniquely experienced phenomenon, and is informed by context, personal background, values, and the economic and social structural aspects of societies (Ungar, 2010, 2011). Much research on resilience does not explicitly recognize its uniqueness. In career scholarship, there appears to be an implicit understanding that it is experienced a certain way, producing fixed outcomes (Han et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2020). Careers are personal journeys and individuals navigate them by drawing on behavior, skills, and competencies developed through their past experiences and within their situated role in society. Drawing on such resources to navigate complex career pathways is what we refer to in this paper as *career resilience*.

Further to this, we use a general definition of *employee resilience* to underpin our orientation toward the concept of career resilience: the capacity "to utilize resources to continually adapt and flourish ... even when faced with challenging circumstances" (Kuntz et al., 2016, p. 460). This capacity is "contextually and culturally embedded" (Kossek & Perrigino, 2016; Ungar, 2012, p. 3). For example, context and culture shape how women negotiate their gender role expectations within their caring responsibilities as well as how women successfully integrate personal ambition and family life. Our respondents' experiences highlight how contextual factors, produced by the social reproduction of masculine norms of a given society, influence and shape women's career journeys as well as their resilience strategies, helping them to navigate complexities and obstacles which arise along the way.

Dimensions of resilience have different emphases in different contexts, depending on the contextual demands, constraints, and traditions (Franken, 2019; Kossek & Perrigino, 2016). As such, the pathways to growth and development are not perfectly linear and predictable, and are instead often dynamic, complex, and difficult to prepare for. We argue that despite this, the women in our study still exemplify resilience, as they represent the achievement of positive outcomes and human flourishing, amidst challenges and hardships.

Given the scarce participation of women in senior decision-making positions (Dezsö & Gaddis Ross, 2012), it is necessary to understand the proven capabilities, and thus, the resilience, of women who have "shattered the ceiling", and have managed to reach senior positions. These capabilities reveal the career obstacles and challenges that are overcome by women, and how resilience is shown in the process. We seek to provide insight into such capabilities, and the experiences in which they are embedded, by exploring the stories of 36 women in senior management positions. Our study is guided by the following research question:

1.1 | How does cultural context impact the career resilience of women senior managers?

To this end, we aim to deepen contextual, and particularly cultural, understandings of women's career pathways, including successes, challenges, and shocks. Specifically, we explore women's career experiences across the cultural contexts of Australia and Malaysia, and find that career resilience is enacted in both shared and distinct ways.

2 | WOMEN'S CAREER RESILIENCE

The trend of women's underrepresentation in leadership has been largely attributed to family choices, but there are studies that have challenged this dominant view, recognizing that factors such as poor job flexibility (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010), the dominance of “boys' clubs” or male-dominated networks (Windsor & Ayeung, 2006), and a lack of adequate role models (Sealy & Singh, 2010) are common barriers. Despite the existence of such factors, women continue to resist and persist (Christman & McClellan, 2012). Resilience is one pathway through which this resistance and persistence takes place.

Cultural context, as referred to in this paper, is not only used to describe aspects of culture in a given society, but a broader, complex, set of cultural practices (see Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005). Cultural values, beliefs, and pressures can create a layer of difficulty in navigating careers (Dutta, 2017; Fouad & Arbona, 1994). Women, in particular, are likely to face significant obstacles in career progression given entrenched and gendered societal values and expectations. For example, in addition to external barriers, perceived demands for traditional “respectability” can restrict women from beneficial, but often male-dominated, social networks (Fernando & Cohen, 2014). Resilience helps individuals to progress in their careers through providing the capacity to overcome obstacles, learn, and grow (Kuntz et al., 2017).

Resilience has been viewed as a higher-level concept for coping (Leipold & Greve, 2009). Like the coping process, resilience involves a constant interaction between an individual and their environment and is therefore dynamic and contextual (Armstrong et al., 2005; Masten et al., 1988). Despite the existence of efforts to confound these two related phenomena, we conceptualize resilience as separate from coping, such that it extends beyond the ability to cope with crises—it is a sustained capacity that is developed, and enacted, on a daily basis (Kuntz et al., 2017; Yost, 2016). It is a deeply embedded proactive capacity, rather than a reaction to an external threat. Therefore, resilience is not just about coping with, but also about thriving in response to, setbacks or periods of adversity (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011).

Despite aligning with the above conceptualization, we also recognize that much resilience scholarship has been subject to hyper-individualization (Johnson et al., 2015), where it is viewed as the individual's responsibility to shape, develop, and “work on” their own resilience, via various strategies promoted by management consultants and popular psychologists. It has also been commonly treated as a trait-based phenomenon, as an aspect of one's personality (e.g., Coutu, 2002). We instead view the concept as structural, situational, and contextual in nature. These forces influence how resilience is manifested and expressed by individuals.

For women worldwide, career advancement into senior positions is a difficult feat. The ubiquitous work/family narrative, and the associated “choices” a woman may make about her work life, provide only a small explanation for why women's career progression tends to be slower than that of men. In addition, resilience efforts do not always assume positive outcomes, particularly when the barriers and limitations placed on women are too entrenched and impermeable (Arora & Rangnekar, 2014). We recognize this, yet choose to tell a positive story, of women who managed to progress to senior management position and who, we argue, happened to show resilience in the process.

2.1 | Culture

This study captures the experiences women holding executive positions in the contexts of Malaysia and Australia. These countries are not natural comparators and have diverse social and cultural landscapes in terms of values, religion, family, and work philosophies (Ralston et al., 2008), making the comparison an intriguing one. We focus this comparison on identifying how career resilience is influenced by context and explaining the patterns that may be shared or distinct across cultures. While a number of different contexts have been explored such as the UK and Western Europe, the specific cases of Malaysian and Australian senior women and the comparison between them has not yet been explored in the organizational and career scholarship (Linehan, 2002; Terjesen, 2005).

The Malaysian culture, and the country more generally, is heavily influenced by Islam, whereas Australia would consider itself almost secular. Such differences may deeply influence gender norms. There is established literature reporting on how religion influences women's employment and careers through family obligations because major monotheistic religious traditions prescribe different roles for women and men (Ghazal Read, 2004; Hartman & Hartman, 1996; Sherkat, 2000). Traditionally, religious and societal practices in Malaysia tolerate and accept the notion of inequality, and this persists today (CPA Australia, 2019).

Compared to their Western counterparts, women in Asia generally face more explicit barriers and limitations in their career progression due to a higher degree of career-restrictive cultural norms and traditions (Mansor, 1994; Omar & Davidson, 2001; Toh & Leonardelli, 2012). In Asian cultures including Malaysia, the power distribution between men and women is rather overtly unequal (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; House et al., 2004).

Traditionally, the role of women in Malaysia is one "oriented toward family matters rather than self-fulfillment" (Abdullah et al., 2008, p. 454). Efforts and initiatives to bolster women's workforce participation have been established, and participation levels have increased steadily over the last decade, sitting at 50.8% (International Labor Organization, 2020). Even so, traditionalist assumptions persist, whereby the role of woman is 'homemaker' (Elias, 2011, p. 532). As such, Malaysian women may find themselves caught in a tension between being 'appropriately' dedicated to family and successful in managing the demands of a career.

In Australia, challenges for women likely overlap with those above, but there are unique characteristics too which influence women's experience of work. Although workforce participation for women in Australia has been relatively commonplace since the mid to late 20th century, their choices have often been compromised by social structures and expectations regarding life and career pathways (Poole & Langan-Fox, 1997). The institution of marriage and the often accompanied family responsibilities were (and arguably, still are) factors which disrupt, and sometimes terminate, a woman's work and career trajectory (Poole & Langan-Fox, 1997). Over the years, these barriers have posed critical challenges for women when establishing credibility and leadership identity at work (Sinclair, 2013). Even now, a hiatus in one's career, can result in a return to lower pay, a more casualized position (even in the same organization), fewer hours and a reduction in responsibilities (Ministry for Women, 2018). Historical characteristics, including norms of stoicism and machoism, have also contributed to the construction and consolidation of workplace stereotypes and biases (Bastalich et al., 2007). These experiences, and the associated structural and psychological barriers, can impact the nature and advancement of women's careers, including their career resilience.

Historical and societal features vary between Malaysia and Australia, yet barriers and obstacles for women in work persist in both contexts. We seek to understand the differences and similarities in how Malaysian and Australian women respond to the social structural aspects of the context, through their career resilience. As such, we deem it as a worthwhile contribution to gender at work and career scholarship to study these cultures alongside each other, recognizing both the contextually nuanced behaviors as well as the more universal acts that women engage in to navigate their career paths. Culture, including the differences and similarities between groups, is detailed, complex, and hard to delineate. Our study attempts not to essentialize or place limitations or prescriptions on culture, but instead analyze the differences and similarities as they emerge from the data.

2.2 | Careers across culture and context

Having a career holds various meanings for individuals based on their socio-cultural experiences, early socialization, gender (Cheatham, 1990; Wajcman & Martin, 2002), and how it is perceived as relating to leadership (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Eagly & Chin, 2010). Early career scholarship almost exclusively focused on a career as a process of attaining one's occupation of choice (Farmer & Chung, 1995) and saw the process as ongoing throughout an individual's life (Watts, 1996) until they attain the highest level in the hierarchy. More recently, however, a career has been identified as a process that is beyond work, employment and job transitions, and captures a wider repertoire of life experiences (Savickas, 2011). It has been argued that this is particularly the case with women managers

(Olesen, 2000) in that experiences and demands beyond the job itself indeed influence career trajectories. The turbulent and changing nature of work means that individuals are required to self-manage and personally 'own' their career decisions more than ever before (Fernando & Cohen, 2014). There is thus a heightened need for ongoing career resilience to respond to such a variety of challenges and situations.

Additionally, discussions have questioned whether careers are gender neutral (Martin, 2000; Ross-Smith & Kornberger, 2004), or whether Asian cultures and traditions exacerbate the poor representation of women in senior roles (Omar & Davidson, 2001; Rowley & Yukongdi, 2009; Yukongdi & Benson, 2005, 2006), through, for example, the reproduction of 'inequality regimes' in the workplace (Acker, 2006). With the recognition of greater complexities in cultures and organizations, various forms of career have come to the fore, and new pathways of career resilience have emerged as a result. For example, Christman and McClellan (2012) describe both feminine and masculine responses and behaviors as essential components of career resilience, that is, a combination of both perseverance (typically masculine) and relationship building (feminine).

Over the decades, barriers to career advancement for women have often been associated with well-established terms such as the "glass ceiling," "sticky floor," or "concrete walls" (Burke & Vinnicombe, 2005). Progress has occurred since, however, with modest levels of progression and advancement in senior-level management and executive jobs over the last 20 years (Burke & Vinnicombe, 2005). Social structure and the sexual division of labor mean that such terms are still used frequently, and barriers persist despite macro-level progress (Epstein, 2018). Horizontal segregation across occupations has also become entrenched as a result of such forces. Despite the existence of barriers, women may not identify that they are gendered until they become salient as part of the social structure and culture of an organization (Britton, 2017). The sectors and occupations explored in this research, such as transport, manufacturing, and aviation, are known to be traditionally male dominated (Germain et al., 2012; Wright, 2016). In such contexts, the barriers may be more explicit and visible than in organizations where manifestations of masculinity (and the associated barriers and challenges for women) are more subtle and implicit. In nursing, for example, women tend to be the majority, but men are still overrepresented in senior, higher paid, positions (Clow et al., 2014).

In this study, we view a 'career' as inclusive of both work and family spheres. Women's careers, in particular, are often changeable and context-dependent (Mayrhofer et al., 2008; O'Neil et al., 2008). Among myriad factors, fluctuations in family circumstance and responsibilities are likely to play a role, and women exemplify resilience by responding and adapting to such changes (Maher, 2013). Understanding careers from a contextual and nuanced perspective unravels previously suppressed aspects of organizational life. Selecting and transitioning through careers thus becomes part of a holistic developmental process that dynamically encompasses various options and trajectories.

2.3 | Career resilience

In the context of career scholarship, resilience involves capabilities such as risk taking, independence, tolerance of uncertainty, and self-efficacy (Jiang et al., 2020; London, 1983). We draw on these understandings, but define it as a broader capacity of individuals "to utilize resources to continually adapt and flourish ... even when faced with challenging circumstances" (Kuntz et al., 2016, p. 460). This view relates to daily behaviors that enable individuals to swiftly respond to challenges and subsequently adapt in their environment.

Extending the above conceptions, Kossek and Perrigino (2016) present a relevant and multi-faceted view of what they term "occupational resilience," whereby not only the individual (and their personality, skills, circumstances, and abilities) but the wider social context also shapes resilience capacity. The authors proceed to argue that resilience at work (or in occupations) is a "dynamic phenomenon that occurs across career stages" and involves both work and non-work domains (p. 732). As such, career resilience is not only about personal traits such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and tolerance of uncertainty (Kossek & Perrigino, 2016; London, 1983). It also encompasses, and is shaped by, the resources available, demographic characteristics, and family circumstances, among other factors.

Another factor that likely shapes career resilience is gender, as the female workforce is subject to unique demands on resilience, such as the balance of work and nonwork, including family and caring responsibilities and societal expectations regarding women's role both at work and in the home. Kossek and Perrigino (2016) report on Maher's (2013) study in nursing, often a gendered occupation, and argue that occupational context might influence resilience through the degree of work–family conflict experienced. Kossek and Perrigino (2016) establish a much needed emphasis on the social context of resilience, which is under-examined in management studies, where there is often a heightened focus on the individual as independent of complex factors such as social status, gender, race, and sexuality (Kelan, 2008).

In practice, resilience at work can be demonstrated through three core behaviors: network leveraging, learning, and adaptability (Näswall et al., 2019). Such behaviors are essential for growth and development throughout one's career (Franken, 2019). They help individuals sustain well-being during challenges, and thrive post-challenge or crisis. The behavioral view of resilience is similar, but also distinct from, personal resilience (Näswall et al., 2019). It is also unique in that it can be enabled and influenced by factors in the environment, such as supervisor and social support (Näswall et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2016). Such resilience also be harmed, by toxic line manager behaviors (e.g., Franken & Plimmer, 2019).

Network leveraging involves collaborating with peers, sharing knowledge, and seeking support from mentors. Research has found that the inability to network, and the lack of mentorship, can contribute to senior women's career derailment (Schmidt, 2009). Networking, sharing resources, and relating to peers at work are key factors for career growth and satisfaction (Wolff & Moser, 2009).

Learning plays a key role in resilience and relates to critical thinking, problem solving, and being open to new experiences (Näswall et al., 2019). Career resilience is likely to be demonstrated by the willingness to take risks, and being focused more on learning rather than performance goals (Jiang et al., 2020; Ng, 2010). Knowledge of one's skillset is also important for career progression as it enables utilization and enactment of relevant skills (Shipper & Dillard Jr., 2000).

Adaptability is the third core behavior of resilience in the workplace, and is likely to be beneficial for one's ongoing career resilience (Khilji & Pumroy, 2019). Adaptability relates to openness to change, as well as the ability to swiftly respond to changes in circumstances (Näswall et al., 2019). Moving on from setbacks with a sense of optimism is also central here (Hicks & Knies, 2015).

Context and culture shape how these behaviors are developed, and exercised. Such behaviors may manifest in unique, unexplored ways, depending on the research context. Through this study, we show how women's career resilience is both shaped by, and navigated within, social structural aspects of context. Like traditional understandings of career development (Super, 1980), we view career resilience as nuanced, and complex; not fixed, and predictable. It is therefore beneficial that the career resilience of women, across cultures and contexts, is explored qualitatively.

3 | METHODOLOGY

We view organizations as being socially constructed through networks of conversations and dialogs (Hazen, 1993). Social construction theory proposes that there is no one “reality”, because reality is interpreted (Gergen & Davis, 1997). This is based on the view that people have unique and distinct understandings of the world and expectations emphasizing gender differences (Struch et al., 2002). As such, this study adopted a qualitative approach to explore the experiences of senior women and their career resilience. We sought to explore our research phenomenon in an open, unguided manner (Hollstein, 2011). A qualitative framework also allowed us to develop and consolidate conceptualizations related to our broader research aims and build a comprehensive picture of how the senior women in two different contexts made sense of their organizational worlds.

Since we wanted to increase the chances of understanding how senior-level women in managerial roles socially construct their organizational realities especially when comparing a developed context with a developing context, a snowball sampling approach was used (Vogt, 1999) with the aim of recruiting a wide range of women who met a specific set of criteria. The criteria were: (a) the women senior level managers had to have decision-making responsibilities for both resources and budgets, (b) they had to be part of the senior management team; specifically, they had to have people reporting to them, and (c) they had to have held the position for at least 3 years, because it was expected and anticipated that a 3-year period would allow the participants sufficient time to understand the dynamics associated with a senior level management team.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 39 senior-level female managers—24 in Malaysia and 15 in Australia—for 60–75 min each. The majority of the respondents in the Malaysian sample were identified as Muslim (18 respondents) which is expected because it is the largest religious group in the country (62%). Most respondents acknowledged to be married (21 respondents) which reflects strong connections to religion that promote family structure as foundation of the community and the role of women is to preserve their religiosity. Combined, the respondents represented a broad range of industries and senior roles within the organizations. The respondents were sought from similar sectors but drawn from different organizations within these identified sectors. There participants were drawn from financial and insurance services, manufacturing, aviation, transport postal and warehousing, informational media, and telecommunications sectors in both Australia and Malaysia. Although the sample in this study is small, in qualitative research the focus of the analysis was to elicit contextual richness over generalizability (Table 1).

The data collection in this study was guided by an interview schedule. We focused the questions on career experiences, challenges, and obstacles faced by senior women managers to identify and understand their experiences of resilience. We also asked questions to understand their organizational context and culture to better explain the women's contextual realities. Participants were also asked about career strategies that had failed them. During interviews, similarly worded questions were repeated to hear the managers' voices and pick up on the deeply entrenched cultural and traditional values that constitute many barriers to career progression. Relatively easy questions preceded the more difficult questions which required deep thought and decision-making, reflecting a funneling approach. Open questions allowed the women to reflect openly and then for resilient strategies and capabilities to emerge naturally, as part of their career narrative. Direct quotations from the interviews are included in the findings sections to highlight the experiences of these Australian and Malaysian senior-level managers (Tables 2 and 3).

TABLE 1 Summary background information on the participants ($n = 36$)

	Malaysian	Australian
Age (mean)	49 years	42 years
Partner	86%	53%
Children	71%	41%
Dependent children	39%	11%
Income (mean) ^a	\$150,000	\$230,000
Time in current position (mean)	7.9 years	3.4 years
Time in current organization (mean)	6.2 years	4.9 years
Ethnicity	Malay, Chinese, Indian	Anglo-European
No. of staff (mean)	120	90

^aIncome is based on Australian dollars.

TABLE 2 Demographic characteristics of respondents in Malaysia

Respondent name	Job title	Company classification	Age group (years)	Highest educational qualification	Marital status	Religion
Aminah	General manager	Financial & Insurance Services	35–39	B. Information Technology	Married	Muslim
Anita	Deputy general manager	Financial & Insurance Services	35–39	B. Science (Travel & Tourism Mgt)	Single (widow)	Muslim
Zeena	Vice President	Financial & Insurance Services	40–44	MBA	Married	Hindu
June	General manager	Financial & Insurance Services	35–39	B. Science (Chemistry)	Married	Christian
Juliana	Deputy general manager 2	Manufacturing	45–49	B. Science	Married	Muslim
Alice	Chief operations manager	Manufacturing	50–54	B. Engineering (Mechanical)	Married	Muslim
Surya	General manager	Aviation	40–44	BA (Economics)	Single	Hindu
Mariam	Senior manager	Aviation	45–49	B. Science, MBA	Married	Muslim
Sofia	Senior manager	Manufacturing	45–49	B. Engineering (Electrical)	Married	Buddhist
Zaharah	Assistant managing director	Manufacturing	40–44	MSc (Physics)	Married	Muslim
Hashimah	Senior manager operations	Manufacturing	Under 60	B. Eng (Electrical & Electronic)	Married	Muslim
Suzie	Deputy finance manager	Financial & Insurance Services	51–55	MBA (Accounting)	Married	Muslim
Mariana	Senior manager finance	Financial & Insurance Services	41–45	ACCA (UK)	Single	Christian
Zaitun	General manager	Financial & Insurance Services	45–49	B. Business Admin (Banking and Finance)	Married	Muslim
Rosma	Deputy manager recruitment	Aviation	45–49	B. Business Management (HR)	Married	Muslim
Rashida	Chief executive officer	Manufacturing	40–44	Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK	Married	Muslim
Azizah	Deputy vice president	Transport, Postal & Warehousing	45–59	B. Education Masters of Education	Married	Muslim
Nurul	Deputy manager	Transport, Postal & Warehousing	40–44	B. Science (Physics & Mathematics)	Married	Muslim
Maimun	General manager Human Resources	Informational Media & Telecommunications	50–54	B. IT (Multimedia & Internet), B. Business (eBusiness) Honors	Married	Muslim
Shafikah	General manager information	Informational Media & Telecommunications	40–44	B. Business (IT)	Married	Muslim

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Respondent name	Job title	Company classification	Age group (years)	Highest educational qualification	Marital status	Religion
Salmah	Deputy manager	Transport, Postal & Warehousing	45–49	MBA (Human Resources)	Married	Muslim
Haruni	Deputy manager	Transport, Postal & Warehousing	40–44	BA (Honors)	Married	Buddhist
Anizah	General manager Human Resources	Transport, Postal & Warehousing	50–54	B. Accounting	Married	Muslim
Siti	Assistant senior manager 2	Transport, Postal & Warehousing	50–54	BA (Psych), MBA	Married	Muslim

4 | DATA ANALYSIS

Using the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software package NVivo 11 the verbatim interview transcripts were coded using the principles of thematic analysis (Cassell & Simon, 2004) and the Gioia method (Gioia et al., 2013) with reference to the literature on resilience and women's careers. In the first instance, we identified themes according to how they might be used to inform a response to the research question:

4.1 | How does cultural context shape the career resilience of women senior managers?

This 'first order coding' involved descriptive interpretations of the data. At this stage, following Gioia et al.'s (2013, p. 20) recommendation, we sought to 'adhere faithfully to informant terms'. For the second stage of coding, we created second-order themes (Gioia et al., 2013) moving toward a more theoretical understanding of the data. This process involved further iteration using the existing resilience conceptualization guiding this research (Kuntz et al., 2017). For example, as shown in Figure 1, we conceptualized interviewees' narratives highlighting their career experiences and advancement journeys.

5 | FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the resilient strategies for career progression expressed by the senior women managers interviewed, using representative quotations for purposes of explanation (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). We present and discuss the findings based on the conceptualization of resilient behaviors used in this study: network leveraging, learning, and adaptability (Kuntz et al., 2017), to reflect the contextual realities that exist in the career experiences of the women we interviewed. The following findings show how context shapes the formation of resilient behaviors for senior women in both countries. These findings suggest that there were both differences and similarities between Malaysian and Australian women in terms of the nature of and degree to which each engaged in resilient behaviors.

TABLE 3 Demographic characteristics of respondents in Australia

Respondents name	Job title	Company classification	Age group (years)	Highest educational qualification	Marital status	Religion
Pauline	Chief of operations	Informational Media & Telecommunications	45–49	B. Business (Accounting), MPA	Married	NA
Natalie	Senior manager	Aviation	55–59	B. Commerce (Accounting), MBA (Executive)	Married	Christian
Linda	General manager international network	Aviation	35–39	B. Science (Computer Science), MBA (General)	Partnered	NA
Claire	Senior manager finance	Financial & Insurance Services	40–44	B. Business (Accounting), ACCA, CPA	Single	NA
Ashley	Senior manager	Financial & Insurance Services	40–44	B. Hotel Management, MPA, CPA	Partnered	NA
Sally	Group general manager people services	Financial & Insurance Services	35–39	B. Management (HRM), Master of Arts	Single	NA
Kerrie	General manager human resources	Financial & Insurance Services	45–49	MA (Applied Psych)	Partnered	NA
Helen	Senior manager	Manufacturing	40–44	MBA	Single	Christian
Stephanie	General manager	Manufacturing	40–44	B. Computer Engineering	Single	Christian
Jodie	Senior manager communications	Transport, Postal & Warehousing	35–39	B. Commerce (International Business)	Single	NA
Suzzane	Senior manager	Transport, Postal & Warehousing	35–39	B. Engineering (Chemical), MBA	Single	NA
Lily	Group general manager recruitment	Transport, Postal & Warehousing	40–44	B. Science (Civil Engineering); MBA (International)	Partnered	NA
Daniella	General manager	Informational Media & Telecommunications	40–44	B. ICT, MIT	Single	NA
Emily	General manager, airport operations	Aviation	55–59	B.IT, MIT	Married	Christian
Jenvive	Senior manager	Informational Media & Telecommunications	40–44	ACCA	Partnered	NA

5.1 | Network leveraging

Network leveraging was a more dominant behavior for Australian women. They leveraged networks proactively and strategically, often for self-progression purposes. Networking was not limited to the workplace for these women—it extended beyond, often resulting in social connections and mentoring partnerships outside the organization. The Malaysian women, on the other hand, tended to network more conservatively within their own workplace, operating in line with professional (and also cultural) norms and expectations. Because there tends to be explicit pressure for

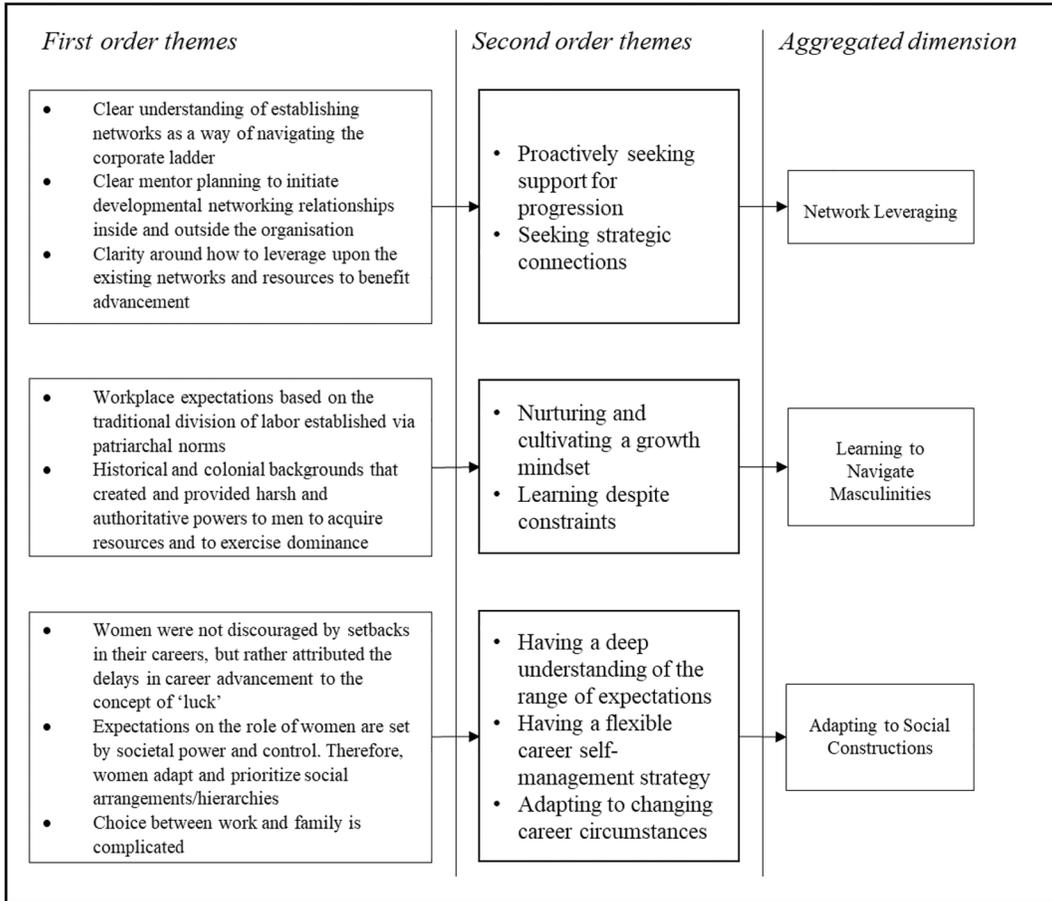


FIGURE 1 Ordered themes

these Malaysian women to be home for non-work responsibilities, the act of networking and socializing outside of work may be seen as a deviant behavior, so is less common than in the Australian context.

Within the broader behavior of network leveraging, the role of formal and informal mentorship emerged. Both the Malaysian and Australian women shared experiences of mentorship. The role of a mentor predominantly lies in giving career advice, creating learning opportunities, and protecting mentees' efforts for career advancement (Zellers et al., 2008). As indicated by the respondents, mentors may use their power to provide access to resources and create opportunities for workplace promotion (Crawford & Smith, 2005) supporting mentees' learning by creating an environment for workplace socialization and networking in order to positively impact their career progression (Eby et al., 2008; Hansman, 2002; Zambrana et al., 2015). These differences and similarities in relation to network leveraging are evidenced further in the sections to follow.

One particular strategy from the Australian context was matter-of-fact approach to “cut through the politics” and focus on relationships. This is perhaps because sexism is recognized as present in Australian culture, informed largely by masculine ‘frontier society’ values of self-sufficiency, courage, and individualism (Anahita & Mix, 2006; Connell, 1993; Lake, 1996):

I tend to be very honest and cut through the politics and, in some ways, I don't think that's hurt me at all. My best skills are probably around developing relationships and I think that has helped me in management and my career. –Natalie (Australia (A))

The above respondent also explained how her pragmatic approach allowed her to authentically navigate her career in the male-dominated workplace:

... I'm very pragmatic and I don't sweat the small stuff. So, I've been seen as someone who can get things done. –Natalie (A)

Looking out for opportunities and developmental relationships were also present in respondents' experiences. This is consistent with the modern notion that individuals are expected to take charge of their career progression and promotion by drawing on resources both inside and outside of the organization (Baruch & Rousseau, 2019):

I think absolutely you have to manage your own career because other people really aren't going to do it for you. So, if you're going to sit in the corner and feel like you've missed out and all the opportunities have passed you by, it's probably your fault because you've not grabbed them. –Kerrie (A)

Many of the respondents in both cultural contexts highlighted formal and informal mentor relationships with others. Such relationships appeared to develop and exemplify resilience and gave the women confidence in their ability to advance by leveraging available networks. Mentoring is a potentially effective practice to facilitate personal and career-related learning (Kram & Murphy, 2014; Parker et al., 2014). Mentoring also endorses professional identity (Kram & Isabella, 1985) through developmental networks and relationships people create over time for career progression:

I suppose one of the biggest things I always keep in the back of my mind is to try and network as much as I possibly can, and I've also set up a couple of professional mentors in the areas I want to get into. To make sure I understand realistically what's involved in that area so that I don't step into something and have to work in an area that I'm not interested in. –Sofia (Malaysia (M))

The role of networks, and mentorship within such networks, reinforces the necessity of interdependency rather than independency (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) for career resilience. This challenges conceptions of career resilience which focus on independence as a core attribute (Jiang et al., 2020). The Australian women were particularly clear about the importance of leveraging networks and building relationships with others for their career progression. These women clearly had greater access to resources including outside of existing networks, which aligns with Ungar's (2008) findings that the scope and volume of resources can differ across culture and context, and may be greater in Western countries.

5.2 | Learning to navigate masculinities

The Australian women in our sample tended to use learning as an individual resource to break out of constraints and challenge the status quo, that is, push boundaries and deviate from expectations, whereas the Malaysian women were more concerned with learning discretely within the constraints of their context, perhaps lacking empowerment to challenge the status quo and being more focused on maintaining group harmony (Noordin & Jusoff, 2010).

Risk-taking and being open to opportunities, were key aspects of learning displayed by Australian senior managers. Pauline, below, describes the importance of 'making moves' and not playing it safe when it comes to career progression:

I think being opportunistic and not always being safe about the paths you are taking. I think if you want security then you may not take the moves. I've forced moves regularly because that's given me breadth of experience and knowledge rather than just waiting for the next person above me to move on. –Pauline (A)

In the Malaysian context, respondents also recognized the challenges existing in the environment. Alice, below, explains how she responds to 'testing' language used in her workplace:

So you have to be able to hold your own and the language that's used around here is deliberately testing and revolting just to see how you respond. And that doesn't necessarily mean that you have to stoop to their level, and far from it. I almost think you do the opposite. –Alice (M)

Furthermore, a Malaysian respondent noted that she worked in a male-dominated industry where she felt pressure to act as "one of the boys." This experience demonstrates how an ideal manager is viewed (Sinclair, 2013), and is saturated with attributes that are distinctly seen as male whereby gender roles emerge from the reproductive role women have traditionally played in society (Wood & Eagly, 2002). Here, the salience of the masculine nature of workplaces, and management, is very strong. Women in the Malaysian context thus learned to respond to the way workplaces are constructed, but tended not to actively challenge these norms.

In regard to the masculine perceptions in the workplace and how these can be navigated, experiences of the Australian women shed further light. Australian respondent Sally said that in her previous job in the United Kingdom she never used to go to work thinking "I am a woman". But, at her present workplace in Australia, she was conscious of her gender. She said: "People around here make me feel that way."

In contrast, another Australian respondent witnessed how women would wear black suits so that they were not visible among the men in the workplace. In a proactive step forward, Annie had personally funded herself to attend a workshop about managerial appearance and colors at work, concluding that "It's OK to wear pink and red and bright colors in the workplace and to be noticed, instead of trying to blend into the black suits."

This approach does come with added challenges too as, according to Ely and colleagues (2011), women who comply with feminine stereotypes are more easily liked but not easily respected at work. However, Isabel warns about the problem of rejecting femininity and becoming an 'ice queen', in her example below:

We need to make sure that the women aren't ice queens and haven't got to their senior positions because they've parked their emotions. –Isabel (A)

Learning to navigate masculinities corresponds strongly to the resilience capacity of situational awareness (McManus et al., 2008), particularly when viewed through a cross-cultural lens where situations, constraints, and norms tend to differ considerably. Similar to network leveraging, the Malaysian women of the study tended to engage with learning carefully, and sometimes more discretely, potentially in attempts to honor traditional expectations of harmony and collective norms (Kennedy, 2002). The Australian approach was more about challenging masculine norms to evoke change. In both cases, the nature of learning appeared to be heavily informed by situation and context.

5.3 | Adapting to social constructions

Both Australian and Malaysian women showed strong adaptability to the pressures and demands of their contexts. Women from both groups reported pressures to adapt to expectations around family and motherhood, and how this might potentially conflict with career progression. Malaysian participants referred quite frequently to the role of luck and good fortune, which allowed them to adapt, persist, and move on.

The Malaysian women we interviewed revealed a rather optimistic mindset when it came to facing setbacks in their careers. Many of these setbacks were a result of power distance and entrenched views on the role of women in society, but there was an overarching belief among these women that it simply was not yet their time to “succeed.” As such, they looked ahead to a time when they would experience “luck” in their careers. These responses show that they are aware of the realities in their contexts and adapt accordingly to those realities.

Most of our Malaysian respondents live in family arrangements with strong ties to religious values, bringing entrenched gendered expectations, which may equate to less personal power in seeking career advancement through resilient strategies touted in Western, and more secular, contexts (Essers & Benschop, 2009; Syed & Pio, 2010). In the Malaysian sample, the nature of adaptability was affected and in fact limited by their contextual conditions. The women relied more on luck and serendipity than adaptive measures in their direct control:

I would say promotion in any company is just pure luck. You can apply for a job and they already have someone in mind before you even apply. –Surya (M)

Some of the Malaysian respondents also identified with the view that senior management was not a career they had envisaged because they were aware of the need to keep their options open and remain versatile. Most of the Malaysian respondents had not expected to be in senior management roles because being so is perceived as a violation of women's role in society:

It was probably something that I had as an ambition, if you like, but I didn't feel that I had the confidence to get there. –Anita (M)

Family responsibilities were a major factor that Malaysian women had to adapt to and account for in their careers:

The most important barrier is commitment to family and personal responsibilities. –Surya (M)

Extended family structures in collectivist cultures such as Malaysia come with expected responsibilities such as looking after children, aging parents and/or relatives. These culturally embedded responsibilities were not necessarily ‘forced’, rather they were viewed as demands to continuously adapt to:

It is sometimes the women's personal choice to care for family more than a forceful decision from her husband. –Zeena (M)

Stop–start careers, as a result of changing family circumstances, are not considered a viable option in the Malaysian context. If family demands increase, such women tend to resource any shortage with domestic help because they are primarily responsible for family and relationship stability. These responsibilities are often not perceived as forced, because they are culturally and contextually implied. For the Malaysian women we interviewed, there was no recognition that they could simply pick and choose between a career or a family, as may be more the case in Western contexts (Gray & O'Brien, 2007).

The balance between work and family complicates careers for Australian women too, but having a family was seen as more of a choice than in the Malaysian sample. Linda, a respondent working in Australia, said:

Probably like if we want to have children, that's probably a big thing because I do probably worry that that's going to affect my career and I don't want it to.

Another respondent also identified the need to balance personal life with organizational life, and the role of individual factors such as personality:

Your personality and your own ethics drive you to behave the way you do in a role. I find it hard to let go and to find a balance between work life and my personal life. I think I need to really work out how to balance that a bit more. –Natalie (A)

The Malaysian women showed adaptability *within* the constraints they experience, such as traditional conceptions regarding a women's role in society and in work, and the strength of community and family. Succeeding was often associated with serendipity or luck. In contrast, the Australian women seemed to adapt in a more planned and strategic way and rather than adapting within constraints, they adapted in ways that challenged constraints and extended beyond traditional expectations. Further, such adaptation was often in relation to the job and workplace, rather than to society, as experienced by the Malaysian women. In Australia, societal barriers to women's advancement exist, but are arguably more implicit than in Malaysia. Thus, these implicit barriers and markers of oppression tend to manifest most explicitly in the workplace itself, through daily interactions, policies and practices, hiring strategies, and behavioral norms.

5.4 | Career resilience: Final remarks

The above findings illustrate that network leveraging, learning, and adaptability, were often experienced and enacted in differently by the Australian and Malaysian women interviewed, with some minor similarities. Network leveraging was enacted in a proactive and strategic manner by the Australian group, while the Malaysian women tended to network within the confines of their workplaces and/or social groups. Both groups referred to mentorship as a key element of network leveraging which helped them in their career progression. Our respondents evidenced the learning aspect of resilience through the way that they navigated the masculine contexts in which they worked. The Malaysian women engaged in learning in societally acceptable ways, however, the Australian women tended to engage in learning more explicitly, through pushing boundaries and challenging masculine norms. Both groups of women reported expectations to adapt to family versus work tensions. Malaysian women saw their progress as more serendipitous and associated with luck, which appeared to be a helpful mindset in adapting to setbacks.

Given the differences between the Malaysian and Australian women in this study, with respect to the ways in which they demonstrated resilience, it is likely that cross-cultural differences exist outside of this comparison, too. Within the Asia-Pacific region, for example, the social order and respect of authority in Japan (Kolmaš, 2020), may both constrain and enable resilience in a culturally nuanced manner. Parallel to this example, strong gendered traditions and a collectivist orientation present in other cultures of Pacific Island and East Asian nations (Chattier, 2019; Woodhams et al., 2015) likely influence resilience, such that network leveraging may be prominent, particularly among family or inner network circles, and adaptability is constrained within traditional norms expectations, but nonetheless present and persistent.

Finally, it is important to highlight the impact that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had on women's careers in particular. Women have been particularly impacted by increased caring demands as children remain in remote learning. The reduction of working hours and job losses have also been more common among women than men (ABS, 2020; Collins et al., 2020)—a serious impediment to career progression. The fragility of economies generally mean that advancement and promotions may be harder to come by. As such, resilience may only go so far in predicting women's career advancement in the current era.

6 | CONCLUSION

This paper has presented experiences of career resilience for senior women managers in both Malaysia and Australia. Our findings across these two cultural settings show important differences and similarities contributing to understandings of women senior managers' resilience, and the impact of cultural context. They also support those of existing resilience scholars, illustrating that resilience is not fixed, linear or predictable (Kuntz et al., 2017; Ungar, 2008). We confront notions of career resilience, and resilience generally, which may be informed by white, masculine norms, Western values, and privileged access to resources (Gill & Orgad, 2018; Holmes, 2021). Specifically, our study identified dimensions of network leveraging, learning, and adaptability and also expanded these dimensions by illustrating their variations across cultural contexts.

Understanding resilience as a culturally and contextually embedded phenomenon that is not universally applicable allows researchers to enrich, deepen, and refine resilience scholarship through exploratory enquiry (Ungar, 2012). It also provides insight to organizations to inform support and development of resilience in employees, throughout their careers. Focusing on the role of gender and two cultural contexts, this study has contributed to this understanding through examining the culturally nuanced ways in which career resilience can be expressed and enacted by senior women managers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Open access publishing facilitated by Edith Cowan University, as part of the Wiley–Edith Cowan University agreement via the Council of Australian University Librarians.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research data are not shared.

ORCID

Ésmé Franken  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6869-3155>

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, Kalthom, Noraini M. Noor, and Saodah Wok. 2008. "The Perceptions of Women's Roles and Progress: A Study of Malay Women." *Social Indicators Research* 89(3): 439–55. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-008-9242-7>.
- Acker, Joan. 2006. "Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations." *Gender & Society* 20(441): 441–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243206289499>.
- Anahita, Sine, and Tamara L. Mix. 2006. "Retrofitting Frontier Masculinity for Alaska's War Against Wolves." *Gender & Society* 20(3): 332–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243206286319>.
- Armstrong, Mary I., Shelley Birnie-Lefcovitch, and Michael T. Ungar. 2005. "Pathways Between Social Support, Family Well Being, Quality of Parenting, and Child Resilience: What We Know." *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 14(2): 269–81. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-005-5054-4>.
- Arora, Ridhi, and Santosh Rangnekar. 2014. "Workplace Mentoring and Career Resilience: An Empirical Test." *The Psychologist-Manager Journal* 17(3):205–20. <https://doi.org/10.1037/mgr0000021>.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2020. *Gender Indicators, Australia*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/gender-indicators-australia/latest-release>.
- Ayman, Roya, and Karen Korabik. 2010. "Leadership: Why Gender and Culture Matter." *American Psychologist* 65(3): 157–70. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018806>.
- Baruch, Yehuda, and Denise M Rousseau. 2019. "Integrating Psychological Contracts and Ecosystems in Career Studies and Management." *Academy of Management Annals* 13(1): 84–111. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2016.0103>.

- Bastalich, Wendy, Suzanne Franzway, Judith Gill, Julie Mills, and Rhonda Sharp. 2007. "Disrupting Masculinities: Women Engineers and Engineering Workplace Culture." *Australian Feminist Studies* 22(54): 385–400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08164640701578765>.
- Britton, Dana M. 2017. "Beyond the Chilly Climate: The Salience of Gender in Women's Academic Careers." *Gender & Society* 31(1): 5–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243216681494>.
- Burke, Ronald, and Susan Vinnicombe. 2005. "Advancing Women's Careers." *Career Development International* 10(3): 165–167. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430510732012>.
- Cassell Catherine, and Gillian Symon, eds. 2004. *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Chattier, Priya. 2019. "Beyond Development Impact: Gender and Care in the Pacific Seasonal Worker Programme." *Gender & Development* 27(1): 49–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2019.1570733>.
- Cheatham, Harold E. 1990. "Africentricity and Career Development of African Americans." *The Career Development Quarterly* 38(4): 334–46. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.1990.tb00223.x>.
- Cho, Yonjoo, Gary N. McLean, Iratrachar Amornpipat, Wei-Wen Chang, Gertrude I. Hewapathirana, Mayuko Horimoto, Mimi M. Lee, Manikoth N. N. Othman J, and Hamzah S. R 2015. "Asian Women in Top Management: Eight Country Cases." *Human Resource Development International* 18(4): 407–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2015.1020717>.
- Dana E. Christman, and Rhonda I. McClellan. 2012. "Discovering Middle Space: Distinctions of Sex and Gender in Resilient Leadership." *The Journal of Higher Education* 83(5): 648–70. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2012.0035>.
- Clow, Kimberley A., Rosemary Ricciardelli, and Wally J. Bartfay. 2014. "Attitudes and Stereotypes of Male and Female Nurses: The Influence of Social Roles and Ambivalent Sexism." *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science. Revue Canadienne Des Sciences Du Comportement* 46(3): 446–55. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034248>.
- Collins, Caitlyn, Liana C. Landivar, Leah Ruppanner, and William J. Scarborough. 2020. "COVID-19 and the Gender Gap in Work Hours." *Gender, Work, and Organization* 28(S1): 101–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12506>.
- Connell, Robert W. 1993. "The Big Picture: Masculinities in Recent World History." *Theory and Society* 22(5): 597–623. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00993538>.
- Corden, Anne, and Roy Sainsbury. 2006. *Using Verbatim Quotations in Reporting Qualitative Social Research: Researchers' Views* (pp. 11–14). York: University of York.
- Coutu, Diane L. 2002. "How Resilience Works." *Harvard Business Review*, 80(5), 46–56.
- CPA Australia. 2019. *Gender Equality in the Malaysian Workplace* 2019. <https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/-/media/corporate/allfiles/document/professional-resources/business-management/malaysian-gender-equality-preliminary-report.pdf?la=en&rev=8fc83afc478b45c480d35709e9c83425>.
- Crawford, Kijana, and Danielle Smith. 2005. "The We and the Us: Mentoring African American Women." *Journal of Black Studies* 36(1): 52–67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934704265910>.
- Dezső, Cristian L., and David G. Ross. 2012. "Does Female Representation in Top Management Improve Firm Performance? A Panel Data Investigation." *Strategic Management Journal* 33(9): 1072–89. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.1955>.
- Dutta, Debalina. 2017. "Cultural Barriers and Familial Resources for Negotiation of Engineering Careers Among Young Women: Relational Dialectics Theory in an Asian Perspective." *Journal of Family Communication* 17(4): 338–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2017.1363045>.
- Eagly, Alice H., and Jean L. Chin. 2010. "Diversity and Leadership in a Changing World." *American Psychologist* 65(3): 216–24. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018957>.
- Eby, Lillian T., Tammy D. Allen, Sarah C. Evans, Thomas Ng, and David L. Dubois 2008. "Does Mentoring Matter? A Multi-disciplinary Meta-Analysis Comparing Mentored and Non-mentored Individuals." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 72(2): 254–67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2007.04.005>.
- Elias, Juanita. 2011. "The Gender Politics of Economic Competitiveness in Malaysia's Transition to a Knowledge Economy." *The Pacific Review* 24(5): 529–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2011.596564>.
- Ely, Robin J., Herminia Ibarra, and Deborah M. Kolb. 2011. "Taking gender into account: Theory and design for women's leadership development programs." *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 10(3): 474–93.
- Epstein, Cynthia F. 2018. "Women and Elites." In *Access to Power: Cross-National Studies of Women and Elites*, edited by Cynthia F. Epstein and Rose L. Coser. Routledge.
- Essers, Caroline, and Yvonne Benschop. 2009. "Muslim Businesswomen Doing Boundary Work: The Negotiation of Islam, Gender and Ethnicity within Entrepreneurial Contexts." *Human Relations* 62(3): 403–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726708101042>.
- Farmer, Helen, and Barry Chung. 1995. "Variables Related to Career Commitment, Mastery Motivation, and Level of Career Aspiration Among College Students." *Journal of Career Development* 21(4): 265–78. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02106151>.
- Fernando, Weerahannadige, Dulini Anuvinda, and Laurie Cohen. 2014. "Respectable Femininity and Career Agency: Exploring Paradoxical Imperatives." *Gender, Work & Organization* 21(2): 149–64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12027>.

- Fouad, Nadya A., and Angela M. Byars-Winston. 2005. "Cultural Context of Career Choice: Meta-Analysis of Race/Ethnicity Differences." *The Career Development Quarterly* 53(3): 223–33. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2005.tb00992.x>.
- Fouad, Nadya A., and Consuelo Arbona. 1994. "Careers in a Cultural Context." *The Career Development Quarterly* 43(1): 96–104. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.1994.tb00851.x>.
- Fourie, C., and L. J. Van Vuuren. 1998. "Defining and Measuring Career Resilience." *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology* 24(3): 52–59. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v24i3.662>.
- Franken, Esme. 2019. *Building People Up: Leadership and Employee Resilience [Thesis submitted to Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy]*. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington.
- Franken, Esme, and Geoff Plimmer. 2019. "Mediocre and Harmful Public Sector Leadership." *International Journal of Public Leadership* 15(4): 274–86. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijpl-09-2019-0058>.
- Gergen, Mary, and Sara N. Davis. 1997. *Toward a New Psychology of Gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Germain, Marie-Line, Mary J. Ronan Herzog, and Penny R. Hamilton. 2012. "Women Employed in Male-Dominated Industries: Lessons Learned from Female Aircraft Pilots, Pilots-in-Training and Mixed-Gender Flight Instructors." *Human Resource Development International* 15(4): 435–53.
- Ghazal Read, Jen'nan. 2004. "Family, Religion, and Work Among Arab American Women." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66(4): 1042–50. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00077.x>.
- Gill, Rosalind, and Shani Orgad. 2018. "The Amazing Bounce-Backable Woman: Resilience and the Psychological Turn in Neoliberalism." *Sociological Research Online* 23(2): 477–95.
- Gioia, Dennis A., Kevin G. Corley, and Aimee L. Hamilton. 2013. "Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology." *Organizational Research Methods* 16(1): 15–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428112452151>.
- Gray, Michael P., and Karen M. O'Brien. 2007. "Advancing the Assessment of Women's Career Choices: The Career Aspiration Scale." *Journal of Career Assessment* 15(3): 317–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072707301211>.
- Han, Yu, Tasnuva Chaudhury, and Greg J. Sears. 2019. "Does Career Resilience Promote Subjective Well-Being? Mediating Effects of Career Success and Work Stress." *Journal of Career Development* 0894845319851875.
- Hansman, Catherine A. 2002. "Diversity and Power in Mentoring Relationships." *Critical Perspectives on Mentoring: Trends and Issues* 39–48.
- Hartman, Harriet, and Moshe Hartman. 1996. "More Jewish, Less Jewish: Implications for Education and Labor Force Characteristics." *Sociology of Religion* 57(2): 175–93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3711949>.
- Hazen, Mary A. 1993. "Towards Polyphonic Organization." *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 6(5): 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09534819310072747>.
- Hicks, Richard E., and Eva-Maria Knies. 2015. "Psychological Capital, Adaptability, Coping with Change, and Employee Engagement in a Multinational Company." *Journal of International Business Disciplines* 10(2): 36–51.
- Hofstede, Geert. 1980. *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hill, CA: Sage.
- Hofstede, Geert, and Gert J. Hofstede. 2005. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (2nd edition). United States: Mc-Graw Hill.
- Hollstein, Betina. (2011). *Qualitative Approaches*. The Sage handbook of social network analysis, 404–416.
- Holmes, Jessica. 2021. *The Trouble with Resilience. Communicating in the Anthropocene: Intimate*. London, UK: Lexington Books.
- House, Robert, Paul J. Hanges, Mansour Javidan, Peter W. Dorfman, and Vipin Gupta. 2004. *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 Societies*. California: Sage Publications Inc.
- International Labor Organization. 2020. *Labor Force, Female (% of Total Labor Force) - Malaysia*. Retrieved January 28, 2021, from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS?locations=MY>.
- Jiang, Zhou, Yiqi Jiang, and Ingrid Nielsen. 2020. "Thriving and Career Outcomes: The Roles of Achievement Orientation and Resilience." *Human Resource Management Journal* 2020: 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12287>.
- Johnson, Bruce, Barry Down, Rosie Le Cornu, Judy Peters, Anna Sullivan, Jane Pearce, and Janet Hunter. 2015. *Promoting Early Career Teacher Resilience: A Socio-Cultural and Critical Guide to Action*. Routledge.
- Karam, Charlotte M., and Fida Afioni. 2014. "Localizing Women's Experiences in Academia: Multilevel Factors at Play in the Arab Middle East and North Africa." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 25(4): 500–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.792857>.
- Kelan, Elisabeth K. 2008. "Emotions in a Rational Profession: The Gendering of Skills in ICT Work." *Gender, Work & Organization* 15(1): 49–71.
- Kellerman, Barbara, and Deborah Rhode. 2007. *Women and Leadership: The state of play and strategies for change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kelliher, Clare, and Deirdre Anderson. 2010. "Doing More with Less? Flexible Working Practices and the Intensification of Work." *Human Relations* 63(1): 83–106. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726709349199>.
- Kennedy, Jeffrey C. 2002. "Leadership in Malaysia: Traditional Values, International Outlook." *Academy of Management Perspectives* 16(3): 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2002.8540292>.
- Khilji, Shaista E., and Kelly H. Pumroy. 2019. "We Are Strong and We Are Resilient: Career Experiences of Women Engineers." *Gender, Work & Organization* 26(7): 1032–52.

- Kolmaš, Michal. 2020. "Identity Change and Societal Pressures in Japan: The Constraints on Abe Shinzo's Educational and Constitutional Reform." *The Pacific Review* 33(2): 185–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2018.1540497>.
- Kossek, Ellen E., and Matthew B. Perrigino. 2016. "Resilience: A Review Using a Grounded Integrated Occupational Approach." *The Academy of Management Annals* 10(1): 729–97. <https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2016.1159878>.
- Kram, Kathy E., and Lynn A. Isabella. 1985. "Mentoring Alternatives: The Role of Peer Relationships in Career Development." *Academy of Management Journal* 28(1): 110–32. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256064>.
- Kram, Kathy E., and Wendy Murphy. 2014. *Strategic Relationships at Work: Creating Your Circle of Mentors, Sponsors, and Peers for Success in Business and Life*. McGraw-Hill.
- Kuntz, Joana R., Sanna Malinen, and Katharina Näswall. 2017. "Employee Resilience: Directions for Resilience Development." *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 69(3): 223–42. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000097>.
- Kuntz, Joana R., Katharina Näswall, and Sanna Malinen. 2016. "Resilient Employees in Resilient Organizations: Flourishing beyond Adversity." *Industrial and Organizational Psychology* 9(02): 456–62. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2016.39>.
- Lake, Marilyn. 1996. "Frontier Feminism and the Marauding White Man." *Australian Journal of French Studies* 20(49): 12–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443059609391738>.
- Leipold, Bernhard, and Werner Greve. 2009. "Resilience: A Conceptual Bridge between Coping and Development." *European Psychologist*, 14(1): 40–50. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040.14.1.40>.
- Lengnick-Hall, Cynthia A., Tammy E. Beck, and Mark L. Lengnick-Hall. 2011. "Developing a Capacity for Organizational Resilience through Strategic Human Resource Management." *Human Resource Management Review* 21(3): 243–55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2010.07.001>.
- Linehan, Margaret. 2002. "Senior Female International Managers: Empirical Evidence from Western Europe." *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 13(5): 802–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190210125930>.
- London, Manuel. 1983. "Toward a Theory of Career Motivation." *Academy of Management Review* 8(4): 620–30. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1983.4284664>.
- Madsen, Susan R. 2017. *Handbook of Research on Gender and Leadership*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Maher, Jane M. 2013. "Women's Care/Career Changes as Connection and Resilience: Challenging Discourses of Breakdown and Conflict." *Gender, Work & Organization* 20(2): 172–83. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12015>.
- Mansor, Norma. 1994. "Women Managers in Malaysia: Their Mobility and Challenges." In *Competitive Frontiers: Women Managers in a Global Economy*, edited by Adler N. J. and D. F. Izraeli, 101–13. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.
- Martin, Joanne. 2000. "Hidden Gendered Assumptions in Mainstream Organizational Theory and Research." *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9(2): 207–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105649260092017>.
- Masten, Ann S., Norman Garnezy, Auke Tellegen, David S. Pellegrini, Kevin Larkin, and Andrea Larsen 1988. "Competence and Stress in School Children: The Moderating Effects of Individual and Family Qualities." *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 29(6): 745–64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1988.tb00751.x>.
- Mayrhofer, Wolfgang, Michael Meyer, Michael Schiffinger, and Angelika Schmidt. 2008. "The Influence of Family Responsibilities, Career Fields and Gender on Career Success." *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 23(3): 292–323. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940810861392>.
- McManus, Sonia, Erica Seville, John Vargo, and David Brunson. 2008. "Facilitated Process for Improving Organizational Resilience." *Natural Hazards Review* 9(2): 81–90. [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(asce\)1527-6988](https://doi.org/10.1061/(asce)1527-6988).
- Ministry for Women. 2018. *Parenthood and Labour Market Outcomes*. https://women.govt.nz/sites/public_files/Parenthood%20%26%20Labour%20Market%20Outcomes.pdf.
- Näswall, Katharina, Sanna Malinen, Joana Kuntz, and Morgana Hodliffe. 2019. "Employee Resilience: Development and Validation of a Measure." *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 34(5): 353–67. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jmp-02-2018-0102>.
- Ng, Chi-Hung. 2010. "Do Career Goals Promote Continuous Learning Among Practicing Teachers?" *Teachers and Teaching* 16(4): 397–422. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540601003754806>.
- Nguyen, Quyen, Joana R. C Kuntz, Katharina Näswall, and Sanna Malinen. 2016. "Employee Resilience and Leadership Styles: The Moderating Role of Proactive Personality and Optimism." *New Zealand Journal of Psychology* 45(2): 13–21.
- Noordin, Fauziah, and Kamaruzaman Jusoff. 2010. "Individualism-collectivism and Job Satisfaction between Malaysia and Australia." *International Journal of Educational Management* 39(2): 88–174. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513541011020963>.
- OECD. 2017. *Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial Level*. <http://www.oecd.org.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/mcm/documents/C-MIN-2017-7-EN.pdf>.
- Olesen, Virginia. 2000. "Feminisms and Qualitative Research at and into the Millennium." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Denzin N. and Y. Lincoln, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Omar, Azura, and Marilyn J. Davidson. 2001. "Women in Management: A Comparative Cross-Cultural Overview." *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management* 8(3/4): 35–67. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13527600110797272>.
- O'Neil, Deborah A., Margaret M. Hopkins, and Diana Bilimoria. 2008. "Women's Careers at the Start of the 21st Century: Patterns and Paradoxes." *Journal of Business Ethics: JBE* 80(4): 727–43. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-007-9465-6>.
- Parker, Polly, Kathy E. Kram, and Douglas T. Hall. 2014. "Peer Coaching." *Organizational Dynamics* 2(43): 122–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2014.03.006>.

- Peus, Claudia, Susanne Braun, and Kristin Knipfer. 2015. "On Becoming a Leader in Asia and America: Empirical Evidence from Women Managers." *The Leadership Quarterly* 26(1): 55–67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2014.08.004>.
- Poole, Millicent, and Janice Langan-Fox. 1997. *Australian Women and Careers: Psychological and Contextual Influences over the Life Course*, Vol. 10. CUP Archive.
- Ralston, David A., David H. Holt, Robert H. Terpstra, and Yu Kai-Cheng. 2008. "The Impact of National Culture and Economic Ideology on Managerial Work Values: A Study of the United States, Russia, Japan, and China." *Journal of International Business Studies* 39(1): 8–26. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400330>.
- Ross-Smith, Anne, and Martin Kornberger. 2004. "Gendered Rationality? A Genealogical Exploration of the Philosophical and Sociological Conceptions of Rationality, Masculinity and Organization." *Gender, Work and Organization* 11(3) 280–305. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2004.00232.x>.
- Rowley, Chris, and Vimolwan Yukongdi. 2009. *The Changing Face of Women Managers in Asia*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Savickas, Mark L. 2011. "Constructing Careers: Actor, Agent, and Author." *Journal of Employment Counseling* 48(4): 179–81. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.2011.tb01109.x>.
- Schmidt, Lynn M. 2009. *Executive Women's Perceptions of Their Career Derailment (Doctoral Dissertation)*. Fielding Graduate University.
- Sealy, Ruth H., and Val Singh. 2010. "The Importance of Role Models and Demographic Context for Senior Women's Work Identity Development." *International Journal of Management Reviews* 12(3): 284–300.
- Sherkat, Darren E. 2000. "'That They Be Keepers of the Home': The Effect of Conservative Religion on Early and Late Transitions into Housewifery." *Review of Religious Research* 41(3): 344–58. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3512034>.
- Shipper, Frank, and John E. Dillard Jr. 2000. "A Study of Impending Derailment and Recovery of Middle Managers across Career Stages." *Human Resource Management* 39(4): 331–45. [https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-050x\(200024\)39:4<331::aid-hrm5>3.0.co;2-y](https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-050x(200024)39:4<331::aid-hrm5>3.0.co;2-y).
- Sidani, Yusuf M., Alison Konrad, and Charlotte M. Karam. 2015. "From Female Leadership Advantage to Female Leadership Deficit: A Developing Country Perspective." *Career Development International* 20(3): 273–92. <https://doi.org/10.1108/cdi-01-2014-0009>.
- Sinclair, Amanda. 2013. "Not just 'Adding Women in': Women Re-making Leadership." In: *Seizing the Initiative: Australian Women Leaders in Politics, Workplaces and Communities*, Vol. 15–34.
- Struch, Naomi, Shalom H. Schwartz, and Willem A. Van Der Kloot. 2002. "Meaning of Basic Values for Women and Men: A Cross-Cultural Analysis." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 28(1): 16–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167202281002>.
- Super, Donald E. 1980. "A Life-Span, Life-Space Approach to Career Development." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 16(3): 282–98. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791\(80\)90056-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(80)90056-1).
- Syed, Jawad, and Edwina Pio. 2010. "Veiled Diversity? Workplace Experiences of Muslim Women in Australia." *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* 27(1): 115–37.
- Terjesen, S. 2005. "Senior Women Managers' Transition to Entrepreneurship: Leveraging Embedded Career Capital." *Career Development International* 10(3): 246–59. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430510598355>.
- Toh, Soo M., and Geoffrey J. Leonardelli. 2012. "Cultural Constraints on the Emergence of Women as Leaders." *Journal of World Business* 47(4): 604–611.
- Ungar, Michael. 2008. "Resilience Across Cultures." *British Journal of Social Work*. <https://academic.oup.com/bjsw/article-abstract/38/2/218/1684596>.
- Ungar, Michael. 2010. "What is Resilience across Cultures and Contexts? Advances to the Theory of Positive Development Among Individuals and Families under Stress." *Journal of Family Psychotherapy* 21(1): 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08975351003618494>.
- Ungar, Michael. 2011. "The Social Ecology of Resilience: Addressing Contextual and Cultural Ambiguity of a Nascent Construct." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 81(1): 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01067.x>.
- Ungar, Michael. 2012. "Social Ecologies and Their Contribution to Resilience." In *The Social Ecology of Resilience: A Handbook of Theory and Practice*, Ungar M., editor, 13–31. New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-0586-3_2.
- Vogt, W. Paul. 1999. *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences*, London: Sage.
- Wajcman, Judy, and Bill Martin. 2002. "Narratives of Identity in Modern Management: The Corrosion of Gender Difference?" *Sociology* 36(4): 985–1002. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003803850203600410>.
- Watts, Anthony G. 1996. *Careerquake: Policy Supports for Self-managed Careers*. London: Demos.
- Windsor, Carolyn, and Pak Auyeung. 2006. "The Effect of Gender and Dependent Children on Professional Accountants' Career Progression." *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* 17(6): 828–44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2004.11.007>.
- Wolff, Hans-Georg, and Klaus Moser. 2009. "Effects of Networking on Career Success: A Longitudinal Study." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 94(1): 196–206. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013350>.
- Wood, Wendy, and Alice H. Eagly. 2002. "A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Behavior of Women and Men: Implications for the Origins of Sex Differences." *Psychological Bulletin* 128(5): 699–727. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.5.699>.

- Woodhams, Carol, Huiping Xian, and Ben Lupton. 2015. "Women Managers' Careers in China: Theorizing the Influence of Gender and Collectivism." *Human Resource Management* 54(6): 913–31. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21643>.
- Wright, Tessa. 2016. "Women's Experience of Workplace Interactions in Male-Dominated Work: The Intersections of Gender, Sexuality and Occupational Group: Workplace Interactions in Male-Dominated Work." *Gender, Work, and Organization* 23(3): 348–62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12074>.
- Yost, Paul R. 2016. "Resilience Practices." *Industrial and Organizational Psychology* 9(2): 475–9. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2016.42>.
- Yukongdi, Vimolwan, and John Benson. 2005. "Women in Asian Management: Cracking the Glass Ceiling?" *Asia Pacific Business Review* 11(2): 139–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360238042000291225>.
- Yukongdi, Vimolwan, and John Benson. 2006. *Women in Asian Management*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Zambrana, Ruth Enid, Rashawn Ray, Michelle M. Espino, Corinne Castro, Beth Douthirt Cohen, and Jennifer Eliason. 2015. "'Don't Leave Us behind' The Importance of Mentoring for Underrepresented Minority Faculty." *American Educational Research Journal* 52(1): 40–72. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831214563063>.
- Zellers, Darlene F., Valerie M. Howard, and Maureen A. Barcic. 2008. "Faculty Mentoring Programs: Reenvisioning Rather Than Reinventing the Wheel." *Review of Educational Research* 78(3): 552–88.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Uma Jogulu is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Business and Law at the Edith Cowan University. Uma writes about careers and the complexity of this within an intelligent career framework. Uma's work encompasses the intersections of gender and diversity, careers and work, and disability and inclusion to understand why individuals make choices. More recently, Uma's research incorporates the cause and consequences of undertaking work in the pandemic-era to understand the interplay between choice and career success.

Esme Franken is a Lecturer in Management in the School of Business and Law at the Edith Cowan University and Course Coordinator of Human Resource Management. She obtained her PhD from Victoria University of Wellington in 2019. Esme is interested in leadership, resilience at work, and the role of gender in organizational life. Her research uses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. In 2020, Esme received the Emerald Global Award for Outstanding Doctoral Research in the area of Leadership and Organisational Development.

How to cite this article: Uma, Jogulu, and Franken Esmé. 2022. "The Career Resilience of Senior Women Managers: A Cross-Cultural Perspective." *Gender, Work & Organization* 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12829>.