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Retention intention: does having a proactive personality matter?

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Abstract

Purpose – In this study, the authors examine how employees' retention intentions are related to their proactive personalities through the theoretical lens of the model of motivational force of turnover and the model of proactive motivation. More specifically, the authors also verify the partial mediation of work engagement on the main relationship and moderation of high-performance human resource practices (HPHRPs) in the process, which has rarely been explored previously.
Design/methodology/approach – The hypothesized model was tested using partial least squares structural equational modeling on a sample of 221 employees of a bank in Bangladesh.
Findings – The results showed that having a proactive personality is positively related to retention intentions due to enhanced work engagement. However, the effect of the interaction between having a proactive personality and HPHRPs was found to be not significant on work engagement and retention intention.
Originality/value – This study contributes to the literature by exploring the reason behind mixed results found in the relationship between having a proactive personality and retention intentions through work engagement as a mediator and HPHRPs as a contextual boundary condition in a single model.

Keywords Retention intention, HPHRP, Motivational forces, Proactive personality
Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Organizations spend substantial amounts of time, money and effort to acquire the right employees and train them. However, employee turnover is inevitable if organizations do not pay equal attention to employee turnover and their retention intentions, which can cause considerable financial and nonfinancial losses. The retention intention, defined as the employee's intention to remain within an organization, is a significant predictor of not only actual turnover but also workplace behaviors and organizational performance (Allen *et al.*, 2005).

Turnover studies have a long history of around 100 years (Hom *et al.*, 2017). However, employee retention intention has remained largely unexplained and unexplored (Hom *et al.*, 2012). Most early theories and empirical works have focused on the contextual and attitudinal predictors of retention, i.e. job conditions and job attitude (Hom *et al.*, 2012). Later studies found that some employees may show more propensity to leave or remain in an organization because of their dispositional tendencies (Zimmerman, 2008).

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One such dispositional trait relevant in this context is a proactive personality, a trait desired by organizations due to its positive influence on proactive work behavior, job attitudes and performance (Crant, 2000; Spitzmuller *et al.*, 2015). However, when the relationship between having proactive personality and retention intention were empirically tested, there were mixed results that were positive (Chung-Yan and Butler, 2011), negative (Vandenberghe and Ok, 2013) and insignificant (Joo *et al.*, 2015; Trifiletti *et al.*, 2009). Further, no clear explanation was found regarding the mixed results from these studies, creating a research gap.

Therefore, this study addresses the following research question: How is having a proactive personality associated with an employee's retention intention? The question has two extended parts: What underlying mechanism is incorporated and what contextual boundary condition is relevant? This study utilizes Maertz and Campion's (2004) model of motivational forces of turnover (MMFT) and Parker *et al.*'s (2010) model of proactive motivation (MPM) to answer this question.

Based on MMFT, this study proposes that alternative and affective motivational forces of turnover might explain *why* a proactive personality can have different relationships with retention intention, e.g. negative and positive, respectively (Chung-Yan and Butler, 2011; Joo *et al.*, 2015; Vandenberghe and Ok, 2013). Moreover, this study specifically focuses on the positive mechanism explained through affective forces, as it has been less explored previously (Shin and Jeung, 2019). In doing so, the MPM adds helpful insights regarding *how* the positive mechanism driven by the affective forces may function. MPM suggests that people with proactive personalities generate proactive goals through different proactive motivational states. This study proposes that being "energized to" a proactive motivational state in the form of work engagement may lead to higher retention intention. Therefore, work engagement is considered a mediator in this study, as it has theoretical relevance to both MMFT and MPM.

Next, as a boundary condition on the relationship between having a proactive personality and retention intention, this study considers a widely utilized retention strategy: high-performance human resource practices (HPHRPs). This study explores whether the negative relationship between having a proactive personality and retention intention gets weaker based on MMFT. However, MMFT is used to exclusively explain retention intention, whereas MPM can explain the mechanism of work engagement. Therefore, based on MPM, this study also explored whether the positive relationship between having a proactive personality and work engagement gets stronger in the presence of HPHRPs in the organization.

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, the negative direct relationship between having proactive personalities and retention intentions has been examined through the theoretical lens of MMFT, contributing to the literature on proactive personalities. Second, this study explores the positive relationship between having a proactive personality and retention intention through work engagement as an "energized to" mechanism by MPM, answering the call by Spitzmuller *et al.* (2015). Third, this study explores the influence of the interaction between having a proactive personality and HPHRP as that between different motivational forces on retention intention as proposed by Maertz and Griffeth (2004). Additionally, this study explored the interaction between having a proactive personality and HPHRP on work engagement as that between personal and contextual factors (Parker *et al.*, 2010).

Theoretical background

Unlike other theories that explain employee attitudes and behaviors in general, the MMFT solely focuses on the psychological process underlying employee turnover or retention decision. The eight motivational forces proposed by Maertz and Campion (2004) and Maertz

and Griffeth (2004) in MMFT are affective, contractual, constituent, alternative, calculative, normative, behavioral and moral force. Affective and alternative forces are specifically relevant to understand the influence of having proactive personalities on retention intentions. Furthermore, MPM deepens the understanding on how individual differences like having a proactive personality might influence individual employee's proactive behavior through three proactive motivational states: "can do," "reason to," and "energized to." Parker *et al.* (2010) suggest that individuals with proactive personalities constantly seek opportunities and are more active regarding career-related goals. Therefore, the intention to either remain or leave the organization can be considered part of their proactive goal generation process. MMFT and MPM play essential roles in understanding how having proactive personalities may influence retention intentions, positively and negatively. More elaboration based on these two theories will be made while developing the hypotheses.

Proactive personality and retention intention

Individuals with a proactive personality are self-directed, actively pursue their goals (Parker *et al.*, 2010), identify opportunities sooner and readily grab opportunities (Bateman and Crant, 1993; Seibert *et al.*, 1999). Additionally, having a proactive personality plays a significant role in influencing an employee's work-related attitude and behavior (Wang *et al.*, 2017). Nevertheless, due to the mixed results found in prior studies, more investigation is needed to confirm its predictability for retention intentions (Joo *et al.*, 2015).

Based on MMFT, alternative motivational force may explain the negative relationship between having a proactive personality and retention intention. Alternative motivation arises from the employee's confidence that they are capable of finding job opportunities. Zimmerman *et al.* (2016) believe that people with proactive personality have higher self-efficacy and are more active pursuers of career opportunities. Meanwhile, Maertz and Griffeth (2004) suggest that due to alternative forces, people with high self-efficacy are more confident about getting alternative job opportunities, which may lower their retention intention.

Additionally, according to MPM, individuals with proactive personalities have high "can do" motivation (Parker *et al.*, 2010), which is characterized by belief in oneself and the control on environment. Li *et al.* (2017) found that teachers, who typically have strong proactive personalities, exhibit high self-efficacy. Therefore, this study suggests that due to alternative motivational force and "can do" proactive motivational state, people with proactive personalities have lower retention intentions. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1. Employees' proactive personalities are negatively associated with their retention intentions.

Work engagement in the retention intention process

Individuals with proactive personalities can refill their personal energy and focus that energy into their work (Young *et al.*, 2018). This might be explained by the "energized to" proactive mechanism of MPM (Parker *et al.*, 2010), which is an affect-related state that makes an individual enthusiastic and causes proactive behavior.

This study proposes that work engagement can be characterized as the "energized to" proactive motivational state. Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) define work engagement "as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (p. 74). Engaged employees devote their energy to work due to work pleasure and activation (Meijerink *et al.*, 2020). Meanwhile, Parker *et al.* (2010) emphasized activation as a necessary element in the "energized to" path, which is similar to that in work engagement. Therefore, individuals with proactive personalities are more likely to be engaged because of

the replenishable energy that keeps them energized in their work. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2. Employees' proactive personalities are positively related to their work engagement.

Furthermore, Salanova and Schaufeli (2008) define engagement as an "affective-motivational state" that reflects individuals' feelings regarding their job. One characteristic of work-engaged employees is being fully absorbed by their work and having difficulties detaching from their jobs (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). This positive psychological state positively influences their intentions to remain with the organization (Bakker, 2011). Maertz and Griffeth (2004) explain that, due to affective motivational forces, when employees have a good feeling about an organization, they are motivated to stay in that organization. According to MMFT, this process of positive affective mental state by work engagement can be considered similar to affective motivational forces of turnover.

Shin and Jeung (2019) explained the mediation effect of work engagement based on the distal-proximal approach. In our study, drawing on both MMFT and MPM, we argue that work engagement may explain how having a proactive personality may positively relate to retention intention. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3. Employees' work engagement mediates the positive relationship between having proactive personalities and retention intentions.

HPHRPs in the retention intention process

HPHRPs mainly refer to a group of interrelated human resource management (HRM) practices aimed at enhancing organizational flexibility and participatory aspects for better performance by improving employee competence and motivation (Marin-Garcia and Tomas, 2016). For a broader classification, Appelbaum *et al.* (2000) categorize HPHRPs into ability, motivation and opportunity enhancing HRM practices. Ability-enhancing HR practices ensure the right people are in the right place and improve employees' knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA). Some examples are recruitment and selection, and training and development. Moreover, motivation-enhancing practices such as performance appraisals and pay-for-performance activities aim at increasing employees' motivation, while opportunity-enhancing practices (i.e. decision-making, information sharing and complaint system) are applied so that employees can use their skills and knowledge flexibly and autonomously and develop them (Jiang *et al.*, 2012).

Organizations carefully devise HPHRPs not only to enhance employee performance but also as a retention strategy (Luna-Arocas and Camps, 2008). This study suggests that HPHRPs may act as a source of multiple motivational forces, e.g. affective, calculative and contractual forces.

Furthermore, based on the MMFT, Maertz and Griffeth (2004) suggest that the interaction among motivational forces may "exacerbate or mitigate the effect of the other forces" (p. 675) and influence turnover intentions. Moreover, they strongly suggest that the affective and alternative forces might interact. Individuals with proactive personalities (alternative force) can identify opportunities faster (Crant, 2000), which is more likely to take place outside the organization. When employees with proactive personalities have a positive feeling about an organization (affective force) regarding the high use of HPHRP, they may try to identify more opportunities inside the organization. Again, when employees with proactive personalities perceive high use of HPHRPs in the organization, their future goal attainment expectation (calculative force) from and the feeling of reciprocation (contractual force) for the organization might also get stronger. This may weaken the tendency for low retention intention from alternative motivational force. Therefore, this study suggests that alternative forces might interact with calculative or contractual forces

and associate with retention intention similarly to the interaction between alternative and affective forces.

H4. Perceived HPHRPs will moderate the negative relationship between employees' proactive personalities and their retention intentions, such that employees' high perception regarding the HPHRPs will weaken this negative relationship.

Parker *et al.* (2010) suggest that organizational factors create an environment where employees are encouraged to pursue proactive action. Such organizational context work as a strong situational cue for people with proactive personalities to show more work engagement. Similarly, according to MPM, individual and contextual factors may interact and influence the motivational state of employees. Based on the model of engagement, Bakker (2011) proposes the possibility of positive interactions between job resources as contextual factors and personal resources as individual factors to influence employee engagement. Researchers suggest different HPHRPs are like a source of job resources to employees (Albrecht and Marty, 2020; Alfes *et al.*, 2013), whereas having a proactive personality is considered a source of personal resources (Caniëls *et al.*, 2018; Li *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, along with MPM, the model of engagement also suggests a positive interaction between HPHRP and proactive personality and the influence on work engagement as a "energized to" proactive motivational state.

H5. Employees' perception of the HPHRPs by the organization will moderate the positive relationship between having proactive personalities and employee engagement, such that individuals with a high perception of the HPHRPs will strengthen this positive relationship.

The conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 1.

Method

For this study, a survey was conducted among employees of a private commercial bank in Bangladesh. Due to its high performance, it has become a leading bank in Bangladesh over a short period. Permission to survey different branches in two major cities in Bangladesh was obtained from the human resource director of the bank. Survey questionnaires were distributed to 332 permanent employees working in nine branches, and 221 completed questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 66.6%.

Measures

The 10 items for proactive personality were obtained from Seibert *et al.* (1999). The items to measure employee engagement were adopted from Castanheira and Story's scale (2016), which is a shortened version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. A sample question

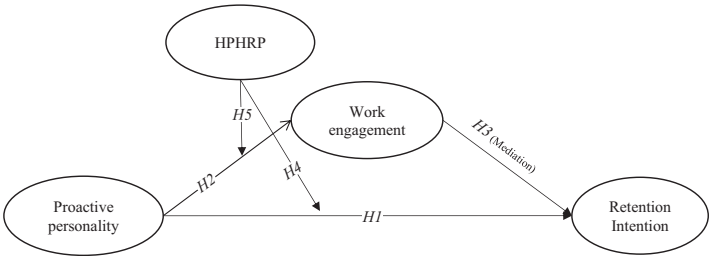

Figure 1.
Conceptual framework

asked to the participants was "My job inspires me." An additive index of 15 items was adopted from Kehoe and Wright (2013) to measure HPHRPs. The items were designed to measure employees' perceptions of different HPHRPs in the organization. A sample item was "Associates in this job benefit from a reasonable and fair complaint process." To measure retention intentions, items from Kehoe and Wright (2013) were adopted. Employees were asked to rate to what extent they agree or disagree with the statements on a Likert scale from 1 to 7 for all the items. Participants were also asked demographic questions regarding gender, age, current job level, tenure, total work experience and educational background.

Results

Sample

Among the 221 collected surveys, after screening the data for incomplete answers or disengaged participants, 175 observations were retained. Among the 175 participants, 70.9% were male and 29.1% female, which is similar to the gender distribution of the population of the bank's employees (male 76%; female 24%; $\chi^2 = 2.538$; p-value = 0.111). In the sample, 32.6% belonged to the 23–30-year-old age group, 32.0% to 31–35, and 17.7% to 36–40. Around 68.6% of them were in nonmanagerial level positions. Further, 45.7% have been working in the organization for less than five years, 33.7% for 5–10 years, and 20.6% for more than 10 years, which is not different from the bank's population characteristics (40.5, 34.2 and 25.3%, respectively; $\chi^2 = 2.612$; p-value = 0.271). Around 61.7% have a total work experience of more than five years. The mean, SD and correlations are provided in Table 1.

Analysis

In this study, partial least square structural equational modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the theoretical model using the PLS-SEM software, version 3. PLS-SEM is recommended for

Variables	Mean	SD	HPHRP	Work engagement	Retention intention	Proactive personality
Gender	1.29	0.456	−0.026	0.065	0.085	−0.027
Age	2.30	1.288	−0.020	−0.006	0.185*	−0.197**
Education qualification	2.94	0.266	0.020	−0.077	0.121	−0.116
Job level	2.11	1.022	0.051	−0.003	0.166*	−0.110
Duration in current position	1.79	0.797	0.052	0.044	0.092	−0.052
Tenure	2.57	1.008	0.061	0.128	0.078	0.026
Total work experience	2.81	0.991	0.028	0.069	0.116	−0.022
HPHRP	6.34	1.559	1			
Work engagement	5.60	1.030	0.606**	1		
Retention intention	4.50	1.602	0.406**	0.376**	1	
Proactive personality	5.81	0.884	0.276**	0.535**	0.200**	1

Note(s): Gender coded as 1 = Male, 2 = female; Age was measured in 5 years window starting from 23 years. Education qualification was coded as 1 = Diploma; 2 = Graduation; 3 = Postgraduation; 4 = Above postgraduation. Job level was coded as 1 = Entry level; 2 = Intermediate level; 3 = Middle management level; 4 = Senior management; 5 = Executive/ C level. Duration in current position, tenure and total work experience was coded as 1 = Less than 2 years; 2 = 2–5 years; 3 = 6–10 years; 4 = More than 10 years. SD = Standard deviation; HPHRP = High-performance work practice. Descriptive statistics and the Pearson correlation among all the measured variables were calculated using SPSS software version 23
**$p < 0.01$, two-tailed. *$p < 0.05$ level, two-tailed

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics of the variables

small sample sizes, nonparametric data distribution, and when the study has a formative construct (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Along with small sample size, when tested for normality by the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, we found that the data of this study were nonparametric. Moreover, this study adopted a formative scale of the HPHRP construct following the suggestion by previous studies (Delery, 1998; Kehoe and Wright, 2013) that HPHRPs affect more effectively when considered as a bundle of additive practices rather than individual practices. Therefore, following the recommendation of Hair *et al.* (2014), PLS-SEM was used to analyze the conceptual model.

Since the data were collected from a single source, a common method bias might exist. However, as this research is on employees' perceptions and attitudes, the employee is the best respondent. Following the recommendation of Podsakoff *et al.* (2003), a procedural technique was applied to control for the bias. Participants were ensured of anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Since this study had a formative indicator, procedural control was the most appropriate method for controlling common method bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Moreover, Harman's single-factor test (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) was performed to diagnose the presence of common method bias in the data. The single factor could explain only 29.4% of the variance, thus confirming no substantial common method bias.

PLS-SEM analyses consist of two steps. First, for the measurement model evaluation, a PLS-algorithm was run using the path weighting scheme, as shown in Table 2. The formative construct-HPHRP was assessed based on multicollinearity by checking the reported variance inflation factor (VIF) values. All the values were below the cut-off value of 5, indicating no potential multicollinearity problem. Next, the weight of the indicators was assessed to understand the formation of the construct. If the number of items of a formative construct is high, item weights become very small and can even have negative or insignificant weights (Hair *et al.*, 2017). HPHRP1, HPHRP2, HPHRP7, HPHRP9 and HPHRP12 had the smallest weights. However, all loadings were significant at $p < 0.01$ except for HPHRP1 and HPHRP2 ($p < 0.05$), confirming their relevance to form the formative construct.

Next, the reflective scales were evaluated. Indicators' outer loadings were all above the acceptable value of 0.4 (Hulland, 1999). The construct reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (>0.7). The convergent validity was also confirmed through the average variance extracted (AVE) (>0.5) (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Some items were removed to confirm the validity of the constructs. Furthermore, the discriminant validity of the reflective indicators was confirmed through the Fornell–Larcker criterion and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). In addition, to check whether work engagement is multidimensional (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002), an exploratory factor analysis was conducted. The single factor could explain 52.02% of the variation with an eigenvalue of 5.72. The eigenvalue drops to 0.98 for the second factor. Therefore, a one-factor structure of work engagement was adopted, which has been confirmed to be better than or indifferent to the multifactor structure in a review study by Kulikowski (2017). Finally, the model fitness compared using the standardized root mean square (cut-off: 0.08) showed comparatively favorable results for the single-factor model (0.069) than the higher order multifactor model (0.080).

Next, the structural model was evaluated through a bias-corrected and accelerated bootstrapping method, utilizing 5,000 subsamples. The moderation effect of HPHRPs was assessed by the two-stage calculation method. The results for the hypothesized relationships from PLS-SEM analyses are reported in Table 3. Two models were tested: one model without control variables (model 1) and another with control variables (model 2). Control variables were entered to model 2 as dummy variables. No dummy variables were found significant, whereas the results on the hypothesized paths remained similar.

Based on the beta coefficients in the direct path from model 1 and 2, proactive personalities were not found to have a significant relationship with retention intention ($\beta = 0.009$, *ns*; $\beta = 0.037$, *ns*). Therefore, H1 was not supported. However, having a proactive personality

Table 2. Summary of the measurement model evaluation

Variable	Construct	Weight	Loading	VIF	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE	Fornell–Larcker criterion PP	RI	WE	HTMT PP	RI
HPHRP	HPHRP1	−0.226		2.1502	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	HPHRP2	−0.252		2.2012								
	HPHRP3	0.181		1.9938								
	HPHRP4	0.346		2.1404								
	HPHRP5	0.016		1.4915								
	HPHRP6	0.050		1.3714								
	HPHRP7	−0.016		1.9145								
	HPHRP8	0.230		1.7232								
	HPHRP9	−0.036		1.4669								
	HPHRP10	0.334		1.5786								
	HPHRP11	0.089		1.8283								
	HPHRP12	−0.143		1.9226								
	HPHRP13	0.362		2.0806								
	HPHRP14	0.064		2.0191								
	HPHRP15	0.300		1.5768								
Proactive personality (PP)	PP1		0.799	2.0788	0.834	0.883	0.602	*0.776*				
	PP2		0.777	2.0282								
	PP3		0.799	1.7878								
	PP4		0.811	1.8311								
	PP5		0.686	1.4288								
Retention intention(RI)	RI1		0.885	1.8850	0.813	0.912	0.839	0.207	*0.916*		0.241	
	RI2		0.945	1.8850								
Work engagement (WE)	WE1		0.800	2.5067	0.900	0.920	0.564	0.549	0.389	*0.751*	0.626	0.440
	WE2		0.788	2.2817								
	WE3		0.732	1.9464								
	WE4		0.864	3.4099								
	WE5		0.805	2.7039								
	WE6		0.712	1.8426								
	WE7		0.797	2.4038								
	WE8		0.674	1.6010								
	WE9		0.538	1.3589								

Note(s): For the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the off-diagonal values (in italic) should be lower than the cross-diagonal ones, which are the square root of AVE. For HTMT, the values should be less than 0.9 and significant. All the HTMT values are significant

Hypothesized paths		Model 1 (Without control variables) Beta	*t*-value	Model 2 (With control variables) Beta	*t*-value	Results
H1	Proactive personality → Retention intention	0.009	0.112	0.037	0.391	Not Supported
H2	Proactive personality → Work engagement	0.401	5.575	0.401	5.732	Supported
H4	HPHRP × Proactive personality → Retention intention	−0.008	0.097	−0.014	0.153	Not Supported
H5	HPHRP × Proactive personality → Work engagement	−0.028	0.357	−0.028	0.353	Not Supported
Mediation analysis						
H3	Proactive personality → Work engagement → Retention intention	0.088	2.073	0.078	1.871	Supported
		Work engagement	Retention intention	Work engagement	Retention intention	
R^2 (%)		*53.1*	*19.5*	*53.1*	*23.6*	

Note(s): Model 1 shows the results in the moderated-mediated model, run in PLS-SEM without control variable. Model 2 shows the results on the hypothesized paths when control variables were included in the model as 12 dummy variables. 4 dummy variables were created for 4 control variables (Gender-male, Current job level < Manager; Tenure < 5 years; Total experience < 5 years and 8 dummy variables were created for 9 branches of the bank. No control variables were found significant

Table 3.
Standardized path coefficient on the direct, indirect and total path from PLS-SEM analyses

($\beta = 0.401, p < 0.01; \beta = 0.401, p < 0.01$) was found to have a significant association with work engagement, confirming H2. Furthermore, work engagement was found to mediate the relationship between having a proactive personality and retention intention based on the beta coefficients in the indirect paths ($\beta = 0.088, p < 0.05; \beta = 0.078, p < 0.1$), supporting H3. On the other hand, the interaction between having a proactive personality and HPHRPs on retention intention ($\beta = -0.008, ns; \beta = -0.014, ns$) and work engagement ($\beta = -0.028, ns; \beta = -0.028, ns$) were found not to be significant, thus failing to support H4 and H5.

The effect sizes of the variables were checked by f^2 values. According to Cohen (1988), effect sizes of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 are considered small, medium and large effects, respectively. Proactive personality had a medium ($f^2 = 0.309$) effect on work engagement, followed by a small effect of work engagement ($f^2 = 0.028$) on retention intentions. The predictive relevance of the measurement model was checked through Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value. The Q^2 values above 0 indicate the predictive relevance of the model (Chin, 1998). The Q^2 values were assessed by the cross-validated redundancy approach, using omission distance 8. The model showed predictive power ($Q^2_{\text{Retention intention}} = 0.125$; $Q^2_{\text{Work engagement}} = 0.274$).

Additional analyses

We conducted multi-group analyses (MGAs) (Henseler *et al.*, 2009) to understand more about the insignificant results. A summary of the significant results observed in MGA is presented in Table 4. Significant differences in the relationship between having proactive personalities and retention intentions were observed only between two pairs of groups. The first pair is the group of employees with total work experience of 2–5 years ($\beta = -0.126, ns$), and the other

	Multigroup bootstrapping		Welch–Satterhwait test		Parametric test	
	Beta	*t*-value	Beta difference	*t*-value	Beta difference	*t*-value
PP → *RI*						
Total experience: 2–5 years (n = 48)	−0.126	0.815	0.476	2.563	0.476	2.520
Total experience: 5–10 years (n = 55)	0.350	3.123				
Age: 23–30 (n = 57)	−0.012	0.119	0.483	2.245	0.483	1.976
Age: 35–40 (n = 31)	0.470	2.091				
*HPHRP*PP* → *WE*						
Tenure: >5 years (n = 95)	−0.153	1.718	0.348	2.902	0.348	2.955
Tenure: <5 years (n = 80)	0.195	2.496				

Note(s): MGA, PLS-SEM first runs a bootstrap on the subgroups to estimate the path coefficients. Then the difference between path coefficients (Beta) was tested through the Welch–Satterthwaite test and parametric test for significance. For MGA, 5,000 bootstrap sample was used, which leads to making 25,000,000 comparisons for each bootstrap estimate, making the result more reliable (Hair *et al.*, 2017)

Table 4.
Summary of the significantly different results on the direct paths from MGA

group with total work experience of 5–10 years ($\beta = 0.350$, $p < 0.01$). The results of the latter group, even though positive and significant, contradicts the study hypothesis. However, this group consists of only 55 employees, which may affect the result. As a result, the two groups could be significantly different in terms of the relationship. A similar result was found for the second pair of groups, where the group of employees are in the age range of 35–40 years ($\beta = 0.470$, $p < 0.05$).

Additionally, from these MGA, the interaction effect of having a proactive personality and HPHRPs was found to be significantly positive on work engagement for employees with tenure below five years ($\beta = 0.195$, $p < 0.05$). This result was significantly different ($\beta = 0.348$ $p < 0.01$) from the employee group with tenure above five years, for which the result was found to be negative ($\beta = -0.153$ $p < 0.1$). Therefore, one result being positive and the other being negative might have caused the result for the overall sample to be insignificant.

Discussion

Drawing on MMFT and MPM, this study proposes that having a proactive personality can positively or negatively relate to retention intention, depending on different mechanisms. Furthermore, this study explored the positive relationship mediated by work engagement. Besides, HPHRPs have been observed as a contextual boundary condition in that process.

The negative direct relationship between having a proactive personality and retention intention could not be confirmed due to the insignificant result, similar to the results found in some previous studies (Joo *et al.*, 2015; Trifiletti *et al.*, 2009). One reason could be the job market condition in a certain country or the context of the industry (Rubenstein *et al.*, 2018). Maertz and Campion (2004) suggest that when a person does not have a job offer, a proactive personality might still be a significant predictor regarding self-efficacy, but the predictability for turnover or retention intention goes down. In the context of the Bangladeshi job market, candidates must go through tough competition to secure a job and, even more so, if it is in a leading banking organization, as in this study. Therefore, a lack of attractive alternatives might reduce the predictability of having a proactive personality on retention intention.

Moreover, even though not hypothesized, the results from MGA provide an interesting possibility that the relationship between having a proactive personality and retention

intention might be explained by different proactive motivational states for different groups of employees. The result indicates that employees with proactive personalities and total work experience of 5–10 years show more retention intentions than their nonproactive counterparts. We assume, for employees with 5–10 years of total work experience, having proactive personalities might be positively related to retention intentions due to the "reason to" proactive motivational state. According to "reason to" motivational state, different autonomous motivations may drive individuals to achieve proactive goals. Therefore, one possibility is that after having relatively long work experience, employees having proactive personalities may be more willing to identify feasible and attractive opportunities inside the organization, which are essential to their career identity. Therefore, rather than switching jobs, employees may prefer to stay in the organization. This phenomenon can be described as having "integrated motivation," which arises when "people have a full sense that the behavior is an integral part of who they are" (Gagné and Deci, 2005, p. 335). Parker *et al.* propose "integrated motivation" as one of the "reason to" proactive motivational state variables (2010). However, because of small subsample size, this explanation cannot be generalized.

On the other hand, the interaction effect of having proactive personalities and HPHRPs on retention intentions was found insignificant. Joo *et al.* (2015) explored the interaction of having proactive personalities with job complexity, perceived organizational support (POS) and developmental feedback, on retention intentions and found no significant results. Job complexity, POS and developmental feedback are implemented in a similar vein by the organizations, to provide support for improved work performance and positive employee attitudes. We suspect for our insignificant result regarding the interaction effect, there might exist other potential moderators. Person–organization (P–O) fit was found to interact with HPHRPs and associate with retention intention (Wei *et al.*, 2015; Zimmerman *et al.*, 2016). An employee may have a high perception of HPHRPs, but still may feel they have a poor P–O fit. When P–O fit is low, for employees with proactive personalities, retention intentions might not be different from those who are not proactive, even though an organization may offer HPHRPs. Similarly, perceived job alternatives, work–life conflict and the external job market condition might also be potential moderators to nullify the moderation of HPHRPs (Rubenstein *et al.*, 2018; Woo and Allen, 2014).

Next, the interaction of having a proactive personality and HPHRP on work engagement could not be confirmed, either. The results from the MGA add useful insight regarding the insignificant result. Interestingly, for employees with tenure below five years, the interaction between having proactive personalities and HPHRPs relates to work engagement positively as expected, but for above five years, it relates negatively, canceling out the total effect. Wright and Bonnet (2002) propose that employees with higher tenure might be more burned-out and show more psychological withdrawal from their work. Therefore, employees with proactive personalities and higher tenure may show less work engagement, even though the organization provides HPHRPs. However, due to small subsample size this proposition cannot be generalized.

Theoretical implications

Our study deepens the theoretical understanding behind the mechanism of enhancing retention intention based on MMFT and MPM.

This study extends MMFT by investigating several motivational forces suggested by the model regarding the relationship between proactive personality and retention intention. In addition to an alternative motivational force for the direct relationship, work engagement as a mediator is explored as an affective motivational force. As a result, an affective force was confirmed as the theoretical foundation of the relationship, while an alternative force was not supported. Further, we argued HPHRPs as the source of some other motivational forces of

turnover, i.e. affective, contractual and constituent force, for the first time in the literature to our knowledge and expected their interaction with proactive personality would have synergy effects on retention intention. The results could not confirm the interaction between proactive personality and HPHRPs as the interaction of alternative and affective motivational force of turnover, as proposed by Maertz and Griffeth (2004). More studies are warranted to understand whether and how the motivational forces of turnover interact.

Besides, based on MPM, Spitzmuller *et al.* (2015) speculate the underlying mechanism of the relationship between proactive personality and job performance can be explained by "can do"; the relationship between proactive personality and organizational citizenship behavior can be explained by both "can do" and "reason to." Moreover, this study extends MPM by proposing work engagement as an "energized to" proactive motivational state. We argued that for employees with proactive personalities, retention intention can be considered part of their proactive goal generation process. In this regard, this is the first study in our knowledge that adds to the literature by explaining the relationship between proactive personality and retention intention through "energized to" proactive motivational state.

Practical implications

Employee work engagement and retention are both crucial factors for organizational success. Therefore, as a practical implication of our findings, organizations should consider recruiting employees with proactive personalities. Our result supports the recommendation by Young *et al.* (2018), who suggest including proactive personality assessment in the recruitment procedure as an alternative to organizational intervention to enhance work engagement and retention intention.

Limitations and future studies

The results of the study should be interpreted in consideration of its limitations. First, the data were cross-sectional; therefore, no causal claim can be made. Second, the survey has been conducted within only one organization; therefore, the results are not generalizable. Additionally, the small sample size is another limitation that might lead to a lack of generalizability.

Based on the findings of this study, we believe proactive personality and employee retention relationship has several potential areas to explore. Due to lack of generalizability, the future researchers may consider our study in a different organizational setting with larger sample size. Besides, future studies can explore different mediators as different proactive motivational states, e.g. "can do" (job-search self-efficacy, role-breadth self-efficacy) and "reason to" (intrinsic motivation, integrated motivation, identified motivation) for different groups of employees (Parker *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, considering job market condition and perceived job alternatives (Rubenstein *et al.*, 2018) as the boundary context, studies may explore the proposition by Maertz and Campion (2004) to see the predictability of having proactive personalities on self-efficacy and retention intention.

Conclusions

This study explained the process of mixed results found in previous studies in the relationship between having a proactive personality and retention intention utilizing work engagement as a mediator and HPHRPs as a boundary context. As shown in the results, the negative relationship between having a proactive personality and retention intention could not be confirmed. However, the "energized to" proactive motivational state in the form of work engagement was found to be a significant mechanism that explains the positive relationship between having a proactive personality and retention intention. On contrary, HPHRPs was explored as a boundary context, but was found insignificant.

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