



## The Predictors of Career Success

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### ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to examine the relationship between career commitment, career values perceived organizational support (POS) and career success. Using convenient sampling, data was gathered using 291 questionnaires. Correlation and regression analysis were performed to determine the significance of the independent variables, career values and POS on career success. Analysis of the data revealed that career commitment, career values and POS have significant but moderate relationship with career success. The findings show that variables, that is, career commitment, career values and POS influence approximately 61% variance on career success. This means there other factors that could not be explained by this study that determine career success. Future research should look at other variables such as human capital, socio-demographic status and stable individual difference that might influence career success.

**Keywords:** Career Commitment, Career Values, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Success

**JEL Classifications:** L2, L22, L25

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The employees' career success has been a term that has been focused on in several scholars' works since its inception. Career success is a term that is referred to by industry practitioners and scholars in equal points of view but a consensus as to the optimum way to assist employees and organizations to realize it has been elusive. The term has been a subject of debate among researchers precipitating studies like Arthur et al. (2005) and Punnett et al. (2007) who dedicated their work to shedding light on the concept of career success in the organizations. More specifically, Shakti and Srivastava (2015) and Chen (2010; 2011) examined the role of personality traits, vocational choices, career decisions in terms of career success in order to determine the factors influencing it. Moreover, a considerable number of studies have been conducted to shed light on career success among employees in the past years (Shakti and Srivastava, 2015; Guana et al., 2015) to assist organizations in facilitating employees' success. For instance, Chen (2010; 2011) carried out a study to examine the relationship between employees' career success, perceived organizational support (POS) and career values, as independent variables. According to Chen (2011), the combination of career values, POS and career success could benefit employees in their quest towards successful career outcomes, and organizations, in terms

of profitability (Choo et al., 2009), employee commitment and employee satisfaction (Barnett and Bradley, 2007; Choo et al., 2009; Chen, 2011).

Owing to the economic challenges that organizations current face in light of career success of employees, it has become a real challenge for both employees and organizations alike to because employees are convinced that resources have been lacking and as such, investment initiatives have to be provided to ensure career success. They have also noticed the dwindling of career support in their pursuit of career success as this is deemed to conflict with the organizational values. Therefore, the consequence is in the form of loss of employee commitment and trust - this is attributed to the view of the organization that the employees' career values clash with the organizational values instead of complementing them.

A significant number of past studies dedicated to employees' career success have focused on several predictors such as organizational citizenship behavior, personality and HRM (Judge et al., 1999; Nabi, 2001) and they are primarily concentrated on Western context companies. Although there exists a general interest in examining the concept of career values, POS and career success among researchers, only a few of such researches have been conducted in Jordan. To minimize the gap in literature, this study

contributes by examining career values, POS and career success to provide a different insight from the findings of the extensively examined personality, abilities and human capital.

Moreover, career commitment is defined as the individual identifying and being involved in his/her occupation (Mueller et al., 1992, p. 212) and Colarelli and Bishop (1990) categorized it into the development of and commitment to the planned career goals. In sum, it is the individual's motivation to work in his selected job (Hall, 1971).

Committed employees have to experience subjective career success and have positive feelings towards the career in comparison to their non-committed counterparts. In prior studies, committed employees were found to have a tendency to develop attitudes that are aligned to commitment (Carson et al., 1999; Kiesler, 1971). More specifically, Carson et al. (1999) examined the influence of career commitment and organizational commitment on work-related results, and revealed that committed librarians have higher career satisfaction compared to non-committed ones. Also, Lee et al. (2000) conducted a meta-analytic study concerning occupational commitment and revealed the variable to be positively linked to career success.

According to Kalleberg (1977), work values refer to general attitudes concerning the individual's attached meaning to his/her work role. They are what the individual finds important on the reward of his job. It is logical to define career values as general attitudes concerning the meaning that the individual attaches to his/her career role, representing what he thinks about his career in terms of reward. Furthermore, work values affects job satisfaction that may be weaker and negative in that if an individual values something more, he/she has a tendency to be not as satisfied as he/she should be, owing to the less possibility of obtaining a high level of satisfaction.

Moving on to POS, it refers to the beliefs of the employees regarding the level to which organizational values contribute to the employees' well-being (Seibert et al., 1999). Past empirical findings revealed the relationship between organizational support and job performance, job satisfaction, affective commitment as well as job induced tension (Hochwarter et al., 2003).

Therefore, on the whole, in the current times of economic globalization, companies around the globe are competing in the same market, and during global economic recession - a period marked with unstable careers, career success is hard to gain. In this respect, organizations in Jordan are exerting efforts to stabilize businesses and overlook employees' career success. This is reflected by the employee commitment to the organization and the negative effects on human capital development. This begs to question as to the optimum way to sustain employees' career success, by examining its relationship with career commitment, employees' career values and their perceived organizational support. This the primary issue that is addressed in the present study.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Arthur et al. (2005), career success stems from career experience, and based on traditional notion, and

Sullivan et al. (1998) described it as upward career mobility or hierarchical promotions, higher salaries and prestige (Sullivan et al., 1998). Arthur et al. (2005) further described it as a systematic expression of the experiences of the individual over time.

On the basis of the provided definitions above, career success is viewed as a product of long-term experiences on the job (Chen, 2011) and as such, for career success, an employee must have worked for a long period of time and has been promoted in whichever position in the organization. As a consequence, with the changing trend in career paradigms, career success can be conceived in two ways; objective/extrinsic career success and subjective, intrinsic/psychological career success (Hall and Chandler, 2005; Ng et al., 2005; Heslin, 2005; Gunz and Heslin, 2005).

Owing to the importance of career success to the satisfaction perception of individuals with their work roles and the shifting nature of careers as explained by Arthur et al. (2005), and Ballout (2007), studies dedicated to the subject should consider the role of career values and POS in identifying career options and decisions to comprehend the dynamic process of career advancement.

Moreover, due to the huge influence of individual values on individual's perception of work, and his/her happiness on realizing career values, it is important to design people's careers in a way that they are aware of the roles that career values play. Along the same line of argument, because of POS capability of bringing about career success realization, it is important to understand its role to determine the best way of providing organizational level support to employees - in effect, career values and POS have positive influence on career satisfaction (Chen, 2011; Othman et al., 2012; Riggl et al., 2009).

On the basis of the above, the career success relationship with career values and POS can be understood by gauging the satisfaction that employees gain from the fulfillment of their personal values resulting from their work, particularly with the organization's support.

More importantly, in the present study, the concept of career values is used synonymously with work values as they are correlated and have been studied academically by Western countries since the 1970s. In addition, Chen (2010) related that for the past four decades, researchers have attempted to understand the effect of career values on the attitudes and behaviors of employees because of the increasing need to understand the relationship between individuals' personal values and career values. Such studies have been driven by the need to understand how individuals' value choices influence their life work (Shapira and Griffith, 1990; Chang et al., 2008; Choo et al., 2009). For an accurate definition of career values, the meaning of values have to be explored and one of the more prominent researchers on values, Rokeach (1973) defined them as an enduring belief.

Significant evidence indicates the correlation between career values and career success but the findings have to be examined in different contexts to confirm the outcome. In this regard, it can be stated that literature on the subject could likely benefit from testing Western proposed theories concerning career values and career success

relationship external to the Western countries. Consequently, the findings may highlight the impact on the employees-employer relationship when it comes to the cooperation between them in realizing career goals and organizational success. The highlight of the findings would be the level to which career values predict career success in the context of Jordanian organizations.

In relation to the above, POS is described as the level to which employees are convinced that their organization should provide them support, acknowledge their contributions, and be concerned about what affects them (Chen, 2010). Evidently, not all organizations have the capability of providing high support level to employees because of lack of resources or awareness of POS usefulness. Nevertheless, even with lack of support, the organization could still adopt other measures; for example, it could explore the possibility of autonomous working and compensation for lack of support. It could also look into reordering recruitment processes to make sure that candidates with internal locus of control are chosen as they are more capable of maintaining a good commitment level to the organization (Aube et al., 2007). Such measures could be in lieu of POS as evidenced by Turban and Dougherty (1994) and Wallace (2001) who revealed that social support like mentoring could have a key role in career development and perceived career success.

According to Nabi (2001) social support can be categorized into different domains namely personal, peer and network and that the last one has a significant influence on the subjective career success of male individuals. On the other hand, the first one (personal support) has a significant influence on female individuals' subjective career satisfaction. These evidences support the key role of POS in the career success of employees. In sum, POS can result in career success if all the required support types are provided.

Moreover, employers-employees cooperation is a must for the success of both entities. The organization is dependent on the honest and competent work of employees for sustainable running of business, while the employees are dependent on organizational support for their effective and efficient achievement of career goals. Hence, in the present study, POS is considered to influence career satisfaction based as POS predicts career success.

Other studies like Kidd and Green (2006) and Day and Allen (2004) examined career success determinants such as organizational commitment and career motivation, where the former refers to the strength of the individual's motivation to work in his selected career (Hall, 1971. p. 59).

Career commitment essentially presents the work commitment of employees towards their jobs and it could be linked to desired career outcomes. In other words, individuals who are committed to their careers and have higher expectation levels tend to may significant investments in their jobs (Aryee et al., 1994). In turn, they are more inclined towards committing efforts required to achieve their career goals through which they expect to advance and be promoted on their jobs.

Empirical support indicates the relationship between career commitment and career success; to begin with, Jones and Whitmore (1995)

evidenced the relationship between career commitment and promotions, while Day and Allen (2004) conducted a study on career commitment. They revealed it to be positively related to salary level and effectiveness of performance. Similarly, Poon (2004) study indicated that career commitment is a predictor of career success (both objective and subjective). Therefore, based on prior works on the subject, the researcher aims to replicate and test the relationship between career commitment and career success in the context of Jordan, a non-Western country. In so doing, it can be argued that this study can contribute to literature by examining western theories of career commitment/career success relationship in the context of the Middle East (Jordan), and in the education sector to provide insight into the motivational process entailed in the process of career success.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Participants

The data for this study were obtained from different departments in Hashemite University in Jordan. Of the total sample, 46.8% were male and 35.2% were female. The ages between 41-50 years old were 48.6% and 32-40 were 31.4%. Frequencies by marital status were single, 16.2%; married 83.8%. Years employed 45.2%, 7-9 years, and 31.9%, 10 years above. The qualification, the most 99% hold bachelor's degree, and only 5% master degree.

#### 3.2. Variable Measurement

The purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between career commitment, career values, perceived organizational support, and the career success of employees in Hashemite University in Jordan. Career success was evaluated using an adopted, model of the 8-item survey of career satisfaction questionnaire developed by Judge et al. (1999), in the study, career success is evaluated by subjective feelings, career satisfaction. Career commitment was assessed using Ellemers et al. (1998) 8 items. Career values were evaluated using the 15-item instrument of career values developed by Super and Super (1957). POS was measured using the 16-item Survey of POS by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) which is a revised version of the 36-item Survey of POS developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986). 291 questionnaires were distributed and 210 copies were received from the respondents. The questionnaires received were usable for further analysis. This figure represented 72% response rate. Statistical analysis of the data was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences tool, version 19.

### 4. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, zero-order correlations, and reliability coefficients of the study variables.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics, scale reliabilities, and correlations of study variables (n=210)**

Variable	Mean±SD	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4
Career commitment	3.87±0.67	0.83	-			
Career value	3.75±0.56	0.85	0.87**	-		
Organizational support	3.81±0.54	0.84	0.78**	0.77**	-	
Career success	3.79±0.59	0.76	0.74**	0.74**	0.70**	-

\*\*P<0.01,  $\alpha$ : Reliability, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation

**Table 2: Regression results for the effects of career commitment, career value and organizational support on career success**

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Significant
	$\beta$	Standard error	B		
(Constant)	0.61	0.19	-	3.15	0.002**
Career commitment	0.25	0.08	0.29	3.07	0.002**
Career value	0.33	0.09	0.32	3.41	0.001**
Organizational support	0.25	0.08	0.23	3.11	0.002**

\*\*P<0.01, R<sup>2</sup>: 0.61, F: 105.40

All the measures had alpha reliabilities that exceeded 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's Alpha for the career success 0.76, career commitment 0.83, career value 0.85, and organizational support 0.84. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), Pearson correlation is capable of providing information on how one variable is related to another by indicating the direction and strength of the relationship of the variables. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis showed that career commitment, career values and organizational support variables were significantly correlated with the career success as shown in Table 1.

To test hypothesis 1-3, regression analysis was conducted. Results in Table 2 showed that 61% (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.61, F = 105.40, P < 0.01) of the variance in work engagement was significantly explained by career commitment, career value and organizational support. In the model, career commitment ( $\beta$  = 0.29, P < 0.01), career value ( $\beta$  = 0.32, P < 0.01) and organizational support ( $\beta$  = 0.23, P < 0.01) were found positively associated with work engagement. Therefore, hypothesis 1-3 were supported.

## 5. DISCUSSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In recent times, the relationship between career commitment, career value, POS and career success has been largely ignored. The present study found career commitment, career value, POS to be positively related with career success. This result is aligned with those reported by prior researches (Ballout, 2007; Liu et al., 2015; Poon, 2004; Yu, 2011).

This study extended the perspective towards Jordanian employees and it indicates that career commitment, career value and POS are key predictors of career success. In other words, career committed individuals tend to enjoy greater career success. With regards to career value, happy employees are so owing to their satisfaction with the degree of achievement of career values, the high effect of such values on their career success. Nevertheless, in the current work environment, majority of employees are in need of organizational support in facilitating their career management and those who are recipients of more support are more likely to have greater opportunities towards career success. Added to this, the significant relationship between career commitment, career value, and perceived organizational support, and career success among employees can affect their contribution level and consequently, improve organizational performance.

This study, not unlike studies of its caliber, has some limitations pertaining to the design that may influence the understandings of the findings and their generalizations. The present study's focus is employees in Jordanian public universities and as such, the findings may be different in different settings and contexts. The researcher thus recommends future studies to replicate the study framework by including the study factors to obtain an extensive picture of career success.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study's main objective was to examine the relationship between the variables of career commitment, career value, perceived organizational support, and career success among Jordanian employees. The results indicated that career commitment, career value, POS positively correlated with career success. This shows that Jordanian organizations have to concentrate on the benefits of positive personality traits brought about by motivation during work. Through such traits, career commitment, career value, POS and career success may be enhanced and may maintain employees' willingness to stay on the job.

The paper aimed to direct the focus on career success and the findings showed that career success is predicted by several variables namely, career commitment, career value, perceived organizational support, and consequently, this could bring about career success of the workforce.

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