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Career and Success: A Literature Review

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1 Introduction

In the past organizations were characterized by rigid hierarchical structures and they operated within a stable environment. Careers therefore were predictable, secure, and linear. Nowadays organizational and environmental systems are highly dynamic and fluid making careers more unpredictable, vulnerable, and multidirectional within (Baruch, 2006). From an extreme viewpoint careers in this context can be seen as boundaryless today (Ashkenas et al., 1995).

At the micro-level these changes are coupled by changes in norms, values and attitudes to life and work (Baruch, 2006; Polach, 2004) although many people still view high achievement in the work domain as a key factor for a successful life in Western societies (Wiese, Freund and Baltes, 2002).

Research interest in career success has been high for many years in Psychology and Social Sciences (e.g. Abele, 2002; Abele and Spurk, 2009a; Iaffaldano and Muchinsky, 1985; Judge et al., 2001; Kirchmeyer, 1998). Career choices and success are affected by one's immediate environment, parents, and social context, as well as one's idiosyncratic characteristics such as age, gender, specific talents, interests, and values. Adding to this wide array of influences are also broader issues, such as geography and political and economic climate (Abele-Brehm and Stief, 2004; Zikic and Hall, 2009). But what is career success? Is it money, position, and/or promotions or is it an individual’s satisfaction with and positive evaluation of his/her career?

Attempting to give answers to these questions the present paper discusses career as a life-long process, presents views on how to delineate career success (section 2) and reviews the literature review upon which variables have an influence on careers and career success1 (section 3) before we conclude this present working paper in section 4.

2 Career as a life-long process

2.1 From hierarchic to boundaryless careers

Traditionally careers were closely linked to hierarchies in organizations (e.g., Whyte, 1956; Wilensky, 1961). People competed for promotions (Rosenbaum, 1979), and climbing up the ladder was the ultimate indicator of success (Townsend, 1970). Consequently, Wilensky (1961) referred to career as ‘a succession of related jobs, arranged in a hierarchy

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1 Note: empirical findings from empirical research with student samples are excluded.
of prestige, through which persons move in an ordered (more-or-less predictable) sequence’ (p. 523). Since the 1980ies market changes and increased competition induced organizational transformations (Baruch, 2006). Boundaries within organizations and beyond started to fade (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994) and ever since individuals cannot rely on secure employment anymore (e.g. Rousseau, 1995). Hence, boundaryless careers (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994) or post-corporate careers (Peiperl and Baruch, 1997) are characterized by higher levels of complexity and flexibility (Baruch, 2006).

In this context individuals are supposed to precede an intelligent (Arthur, Claman and DeFillippi, 1995) or protean career (Hall, 1976; 1996; 2004). While the intelligent career (Arthur, Claman and DeFillippi, 1995) emphasizes the qualities required for successful management of one’s own career, the protean career concept offers a broader perspective: as ‘[…]a process which the person, not the organization, is managing. It consists of all the person’s varied experience in education, training, work in several organizations, changes in occupational field, etc. The protean person’s own personal career choices and search for self-fulfilment are the unifying or integrative elements in his or her life’ (Hall, 1976, p. 201).

Thus, there has been a noticeable evolution in the way career and career success is viewed. Nowadays careers and success thereof are defined and formed more individually (Derr, 1986; Gunz and Heslin, 2005). In this holistic perspective careers are not limited to moving up the ladder (Carlson and Rotondo, 2001) and the work sphere alone but careers include a lifelong sequence of role-related experiences of individuals (Arnold and Cohen, 2008; Hall, 2002), thus all life spheres and roles individuals hold (Super, 1980). This is clearly reflected in Gerber et al.’s. (2009) definition of career ‘[…] as a sequence of attitudes, activities or behaviours associated with work roles of individuals during the course of their lifetime’ (p. 304). Hence, careers are increasingly concerned with self-fulfilment and satisfaction of oneself from his or her own career (Baruch, 2006). Despite higher flexibility the variety of options and paths are associated with ambiguity and diminishing security which may generate anxieties and stress (Baruch, 2006; Cooper, Dewe and O’Driscoll, 2002).

Nevertheless, it might be misleading to assume that the traditional career system is dead. Rather, the traditional and protean career approaches represent extreme scenarios which are appropriate for a growing number of people and career environments, but – they do not – by any means – form the new norm (Baruch, 2006).

2.2 Career stages and career management

Given Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom’s (2005) more recent definition of career as ‘[…] the evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time’ (p. 8) an individual
career is procedural and evolutionary. Moreover, research divides careers in an exploratory/development and routine stage.

Between 15 and 24 years of age an individual passes through a development stage to crystallize, specify, and implement vocational preferences (Super, 1957). Hall (1986) refers to this stage as an initial exploratory and trial activity in early adulthood in which career-related information is gathered, one tests hypotheses about the self, makes career plans, and decisions that will lead to a personally meaningful work life. As a result individuals are theoretically expected to settle into a routine after a phase of career exploration (Hodkinson, Sparkes and Hodkinson, 1996). According to Hodkinson, Sparkes and Hodkinson (1996) and Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) routines can be (i) confirmatory (i.e. original choices and the path chosen become engrained), (ii) contradictory (i.e., consider a different career), (iii) accepting a career which previously was reluctantly chosen, (iv) dislocating (i.e. against one’s identity but without being able to initiate a transformation), and (v) evolutionary (i.e. gradual changes without changes being contradictory or dislocating). This also implies that routines – voluntarily or involuntarily – will change or can be disrupted. Hall (1986) discusses in this context turning points which can be (i) structural (e.g. leaving school) (ii) incidental (i.e., they are outside one’s control), and (iii) (deliberate) decisions (i.e., within a person’s control) of variant duration. Despite turning points occurring individuals develop in the course of time an individual career concept\footnote{Note: From a theoretical perspective career concepts are similar to career anchors and closely related to career orientations.} (Brousseau et al., 1996). According to Brousseau et al. (1996) one cannot differentiate between a linear, expert, spiral and transitory career concept (table 1).
A linear career consists of progressive steps upward in the hierarchy with increasing authority and responsibility. Linear careerists often find it difficult to imagine any other definition of success other than climbing up the ladder. The expert career is characterized by a lifelong commitment to expertise and/or technical competence in a confined occupational field. These individuals strongly strive for security or stability and the nature of their work is an integral part of their self-identity. In a spiral career individuals move across occupational areas, specialties, or disciplines developing in-depth competence and satisfying their need of personal development and creativity. In a transitory career individuals move even quicker to very different or wholly unrelated occupational fields or jobs. In fact, they do not consider themselves as actually having careers. Rather, they perceive themselves as having a variety of work experiences striving for independence and diversity (Brousseau et al., 1996).

The latter concepts are closely related to Hall (1996) emphasizing that individuals do not necessarily approach their career decisions rationally. Results from Betsworth and Hansen (1996) among 237 adults employed at a U.S. university show that 62.9% of the men’s (n=56) and 57.4% of the women’s (n=85) careers were influenced by serendipitous events. In particular the most prominent incidents were: (i) professional or personal connections (n=23), (ii) unexpected advancement (n=19), (iii) right place/right time (n=15), (iv) influences of marriage and family (n=13).

Concerning routine vs. turning points results from Kanchier and Unruh (1989) from 464 managers and former managers from Canada show that non-changers have more traditional and extrinsic work values while changers preferred more intrinsic rewards. Both groups however felt their work provided them with a sense of identity and satisfaction. Neapolitan (1977) found that changers appeared to possess higher levels of self-esteem, and placed higher value on personal fulfilment and intrinsic job rewards than did non-changers.
Having developed a career concept and based on the above discussion that careers nowadays are mostly seen as the responsibility of each individual, people are expected to proactively manage their careers (Crant, 2000; Hall and Chandler, 2005) to achieve their career goals (Barnett and Bradley, 2007). In the career literature these behaviours are alternatively referred to as career enhancing strategies (Nabi, 2003), context-specific proactive behaviours (Crant, 2000), and career goal-directed activities (Lent, 2004). These behaviours include career exploration and planning, skills development, networking and promoting one’s achievements (e.g., Nabi, 2003; Noe, 1996; Orpen, 1994).

2.3 Career success: a multifaceted construct

While traditionally a career was confined to advancing through organizational hierarchies, today the term career is more broadly applied and is commonly considered to be the lifelong sequence of role-related experiences of individuals (Arnold and Cohen, 2008; Hall, 2002). Consequently careers are comprised of objective and subjective elements and reflect the change in context in which individuals are expected to self-manage their own careers rather than rely on the organization. Despite the fact that the literature on careers has not found common ground to define and operationalize career success (e.g., Abele-Brehm and Stief, 2004; Dette, Abele and Renner, 2004) the subjective/objective dichotomy is reflected common definitions of career success (table 2). Moreover, it is widely accepted that career success comprises objective and subjective elements (e.g., Abele-Brehm and Stief, 2004; Abele and Spurk, 2009b).

| ‘Career success’ can be defined as the ‘positive psychological and work-related outcomes accumulated as a result of one’s work experiences’ (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001, p. 2). |
| Career success refers to ‘the real or perceived achievements individuals have accumulated as a result of their work experiences” (Judge et al., 1999, p. 621). |
| Career success is defined as ‘[…] the positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements one accumulates as a result of work experiences’ (Seibert, Grant and Kraimer, 1999, p. 417). |

**Table 2: Definitions of career success**

According to Dries, Pepermans and Carlier (2008) objective career success ‘[...] ‘is mostly concerned with observable, measurable and verifiable attainments such as pay, promotion and occupational status’ (p. 254). Additional criteria for objective success include salary, salary growth, hierarchical status, or number of employees (for discussions see Arnold and Cohen, 2008; Dette, Abele and Renner, 2004). Compared to subjective, i.e. perceptual and evaluative criteria they are neutral and not biased in their empirical
Subjective career success ‘[…’ refers to factors that are inherent in the job or occupation itself and is dependent on the incumbent’s subjective evaluation relative to his or her own goals and expectations’ (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001, p. 2). According to Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990) subjective career is even broader and refers to all aspects relevant concerning individual career satisfaction.

Whereas it is easily conceivable that objective success has an influence on how individuals subjectively experience their career success, it is also comprehensible that subjective experiences of success have an influence on individual objective success (Abele and Spurk, 2009a) as subjective success could make a person self-confident or it could enhance his or her motivation and goal-striving. These motivational effects could in turn lead to more objective success over time. Alternatively, people experience objective success, consequently subjectively develop their individual understanding about what constitutes career success, then individually act upon, and eventually leading to certain (more successful) outcomes (Abele and Spurk, 2009a; Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom, 2005; Hall, 2002; Hall and Chandler, 2005).

Empirical research has confirmed that objective success has an overall positive influence on job satisfaction (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Judge et al., 1999). In particular, it has been found that income, status, and promotions predict career satisfaction (Judge et al., 1995; Martins, Eddleston and Veiga, 2002; Richardsen, Mikkelsen and Burke, 1997; Schneer and Reitman, 1993; Wayne et al., 1999) and that income predicts changes in career satisfaction in time intervals of 12 months (Raabe, Frese and Beehr, 2007) and six years (Schneer and Reitman, 1997). Additionally, it has been suggested that the impact of objective success on job satisfaction may be moderated by age or career stage (Altimus and Tersine, 1973; Lee and Wilbur, 1985). Turban and Dougherty (1994) found that income and promotions are associated with perceived career success in terms of other-referent comparison judgments. Similarly, Kirchmeyer (1998) reported positive correlations of income and status with other-referent subjective success. Nevertheless, Judge et al. (1995) and Richardsen, Mikkelsen, and Burke (1997) did not find any influence of objective success criteria on subjective ones.

Findings upon the influence of subjective success on objective success however are rather scarce. Marks and Fleming (1999) found that subjective well-being predicted income with prior income being controlled for. Abele and Spurk (2009a) show that subjective success highly contributes to objective success.

Additional research reveals, that objective and subjective measures correlate positively, but the correlations are only moderate. As reported in a meta-analysis by Diemer
(2008), objective career success shows an estimated correlation of .30 with self-referent subjective career success. Ng et al. (2005) reported a correlation of .30 between self-referent career success and salary, and a correlation of .22 between self-referent career success and promotions in his meta-analysis. Thus, some authors (e.g. Judge et al., 1995; Ng et al., 2005; Nicholson and de Waal-Andrews, 2005) conclude that the subjective perception of success is only a by-product of objective success.

3 Influencing variables on career success

3.1 Person-centered factors and career success

3.1.1 Work and career motivation

While the terms career commitment and career motivation are often used interchangeably (Day and Allen, 2004) work motivation is restricted to the actual effort an individual puts into his actual work compared to career as a broader construct.

‘Career motivation is defined as the motivation to do one’s present job and to meet expectations related to various managerial roles. As well, career motivation is associated with a wide range of career decisions and behaviours such as searching for and accepting a job, staying with an organization, revising career plans, seeking training and new job experiences, and setting and trying to accomplish career goals’ (Grzeda, 1999, p. 235). As shown in figure 2, career motivation is comprised of three components: (i) career resilience, (ii) career insight, and (iii) career identity.

‘Career resilience is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, even when circumstances are discouraging or disruptive’. […] ‘Career insight is the ability to be realistic about one’s career and consists of establishing clear, feasible career goals and realizing one’s strengths and weaknesses’. […] ‘Career identity is the extent that one defines oneself
by one’s work. It is associated with job, organizational, and professional involvement, need for advancement, and recognition’ (Day and Allen, 2004, p. 73).

Thus, career motivation is primarily characterized by an individual's flexibility, realistic insight in his/her skills and abilities, how to successfully pursue individually defined goals thereof and how one subjectively values his/her professional life and career success.

As shown in figure 2 career resilience consists of the following three subfactors: willingness to take risks, need for achievement, and self-efficacy. In the present context self-efficacy however refers to occupational self-efficacy which '[...] is the belief in one’s capacity and motivation to successfully perform occupational tasks and challenges and to pursue one’s occupational career irrespective of the particular field of occupation’ (Abele and Spurk, 2009b, p. 54).

Thus, as career resilient individuals are expected to manifest higher levels of self-efficacy, risk-taking tendency, and need for achievement one can assume that they respond more effectively to challenges faced by managers and professionals in protean career contexts (Grzeda, 1999). Accordingly self-efficacy and risk taking may also facilitate career transitions (Grzeda, 1999) while (Handy, 1994) suggest that career resilience contributes to transitions into self-employment, part-time or temporary work models. Furthermore, one may speculate that individuals with higher levels of career resilience should be capable of searching more widely for career opportunities, thus increasing the likelihood of successful transitions (London, 1996).

Overall one may assume that a higher level of career commitment contributes to objective career success and in particular individuals with higher levels of career resilience should be more successful in their careers. While Bretz and Judge (1994) for example show positive relations between work commitment (hours worked per week) and objective career success, findings from Phillips (1982) reveal that increased career commitment does not necessarily contribute to higher objective career success. Kim, Mone, and Kim (2008) reported that Korean employees' self-efficacy correlates positively with salary, i.e. objective career success. In contrast, Lubbers, Loughlin, and Zweig (2005) did not find any association between job self-efficacy and hourly wage.

Longitudinal studies from Higgins, Dobrow, and Chandler (2008) and Saks (1995) reveal an influence of self-efficacy on job satisfaction or perceived career success. Furthermore, participants with higher occupational self-efficacy at graduation were found to be more satisfied with their careers seven years later than those with lower occupational self-efficacy (Abele and Spurk, 2009b).
Similar to Day and Allen (2004) and Valcour and Ladge (2008) who reported positive correlations between employees' career self-efficacy, objective (current salary) and subjective career success, Abele and Spurk (2009b) show that occupational self-efficacy and career-advancement goals are both related to objective success and subjective success.

Additionally, empirical findings from London (1993) and London (1996) show that employees who are willing to take risks and who are more reliant on their own abilities demonstrate less dysfunctional transitions from job loss to job redeployment.

### 3.1.2 Career values: career orientation and career anchors

Individual values – compared to societal and cultural values – are the basis for self-evaluation, the evaluation of others and they play an important role in establishing personal goals (Brown, 2002). 'Work values are the values that individuals believe should be satisfied as a result of their participation in the work role' (Brown, 2002, p. 49). Financial prosperity and achievement are examples of concrete work values.

According to Schein (1985), at least three to five years of work experience are required to develop stable work-related values or motives. I.e. until an individual develops certain career concepts and exhibits an individually specific career orientation. Career orientation is defined as ‘a type of work-related values reflected in individual preferences regarding various job types, performance standards, and forms of recognition in the context of work careers’ (Gerpott, Domsch and Keller, 1988, p. 441). From an individual’s perspective career orientation represents long-term values which reflect the interdependence between work, environment, and self-development (Carlson and Rotondo, 2001). Derr (1986) building on the work of Schein (1975; 1978) developed five internal career orientations: (i) getting ahead, (ii) getting secure, (iii) getting free, (iv) getting high, and (v) getting balanced (for a complete overview and definition of these orientations see table 3 in the appendix). A highly discussed question however is if career orientation is a rather stable concept or if it changes over one’s career history. Schein (1978; 1985) view career orientation as stable throughout one’s career once it is developed. Derr (1986) in contrast, regards them as modifiable through interaction with the environment, major events at work and in one’s personal life (e.g., a divorce).

This view is shared by Igbaria, Kassicieh and Silver (1999) from their results indicating that career orientations change over various life-stages. Derr (1986), Miguel (1993), and Loughlin and Barling (2001) found that career orientations differ as people grow older. Doorewaard, Hendrickx, and Verschuren (2004) found that age does not have a significant effect on money orientation. In Kim’s (2004) study on Korean women, a significant difference in career success orientation by years of work experience was found. Results from Igbaria, Kassicieh, and Silver (1999) from 78 research, development and engineering professionals
(RD&E) from New Mexico show that they overall scored low on the managerial and technical competence orientation compared to the service, job security, and lifestyle orientation on which they scored higher. Additionally, job-security-oriented RD&E professionals placed little importance on management and entrepreneurship, but more importance on the technical and lifestyle orientation. Results from Igbaria, Kassicieh, and Silver (1999) also reveal that career satisfaction is positively correlated with the geographic security and lifestyle orientation. Evidence on the existence of career orientations in the European context is sparse. Rosenstiel and Stengel (1987) and Rosenstiel (1989) demonstrated that the traditional, leisure and alternative career orientation were prevalent among students and young professionals in Germany. Jongseok, Youngbae, and Tae-Yeol (2009) show in their study among 1,128 research and development (R&D) professionals and 222 project managers in 15 South Korean organizations, that job satisfaction increased as career orientation increased toward career development opportunities, then decreased when career development opportunities exceeded career orientation. In addition, job satisfaction and organizational commitment are higher when career orientation and career development opportunities are both high rather than low. Additionally, career orientations, i.e. subjective definition of career success differed by length of work experience. Those who had worked for ten years or more placed more value on job security than did those who had started to work within the past four years. Also, those who had worked for less than four years considered both dimensions of personal and professional life as criteria of their career success more so than did those who had worked for seven years or more (Kim, Mone and Kim, 2008).

As noted before, Schein (1975; 1978; 1985; 1990; 1996) suggests that life experiences give people an increasingly accurate and stable career-self-concept. I.e. depending on one’s career orientation individuals gradually develop career anchors reflecting one’s individual definition of career success (Schein, 1975; 1978). Hence, when individuals achieve congruence between their career anchor and their work, they are more likely to attain positive career outcomes, such as job effectiveness, satisfaction, and stability (Danziger, Rachman-Moore and Valency, 2008). Empirically grounded, Schein (1990) derived eight career anchors. Their complete description is found in table 3 in the appendix. For most of the 1970s and 1980s empirical findings showed fairly consistent results with roughly 25 percent of the population broadly distributed among occupations anchored in general management, another 25 percent in technical/functional competence, ten percent each in autonomy and security and the rest spread across the remaining anchors (Schein, 1996). According to Kim, Mone, and Kim (2008) career anchors are also related to subjective career success.
3.2 Career management

As career motivation is associated – among other factors – with proactiveness, risk taking, and need for achievement and empirical research has found positive relations to career success, one can assume that career motivated people also engage in higher levels of individual career management, which in turn again contributes to higher levels of career success.

In fact, Barnett and Bradley (2007) and Seibert and Kraimer (2001) found highly proactive individuals more likely to achieve greater career satisfaction due to actively managing their career. Furthermore, a number of studies (e.g. Freund and Baltes, 1998; Wiese, Freund and Baltes, 2000; Wiese, Freund and Baltes, 2002) with adults from various age groups showed, that optimization career management strategies are correlated with life and job satisfaction. Meta-analytical results also support the positive relationship between individual career management behaviours and career satisfaction. Significant effect sizes of 0.33 and 0.28 were found respectively for career planning and employee networking behaviour on career satisfaction across up to eight studies (Ng et al., 2005). The positive relationship between career management and subjective career success can also be found longitudinally. Wiese, Freund and Baltes (2002) surveyed 82 young German adults (age range 28 to 39 years) employed in a range of professions including physicians, lawyers, scientists, bank employees, hotel managers and police officers and found that career management behaviours at time 1 predicted 14 per cent of the variance in participants’ career satisfaction three years later, after controlling for career satisfaction at time 1. Results from Nabi (2003) among 283 full-time support personnel in the UK show that individuals who felt secure in their employment tended to engage in higher levels of a specific career-enhancing strategies. This again was positively related to higher levels of intrinsic job success. These results are in accordance with Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley (1990) and Lee and Allen (2002) who found that a positive and conducive socio-organizational context increases the likelihood that employees will engage in career self-management to gravitate towards personal aspirations and higher levels of contentment in their work role.

Regarding objective career success, Gould (1979) showed career planning to be positively related to monthly salary and professional position. Steffy and Jones (1988) found a positive association between career planning and income level.

3.3 Human capital and socio-demographics

A meta-analysis by Ng et al. (2005) found that human capital and socio-demographics have a strong impact on objective indicators of career success.
In particular acquired skills and knowledge are positively related to subjective and objective career success (e.g. Boudreau, Boswell and Judge, 2001; Judge et al., 1995; Melamed, 1995).

Among others, Allen and Meyer (1993) and Conway (2004) found age to be positively related to job satisfaction. Furthermore, older generations still view career success rather with objective criteria, such as advancement or vertical upward mobility in status, income, or authority (e.g. Gattiker and Larwood, 1986), compared to younger generations emphasizing the subjective meaning of success at work and in life (Judge et al., 1995; Nabi, 1999.; Poole and Bornholt, 1998). Results from Kim, Mone, and Kim (2008) show that individuals in their 20ies and 30ies develop expertise in areas that they truly enjoy and longed more for work-life balance compared to respondents in their 40ies.

Concerning gender, Huang et al. (2007) found that women’s career development remains more complex than men’s because of their multiple family and work related roles. Findings from Hakim (2000; 2006) on women’s careers in the UK and the US suggest that women mostly exhibit adaptive careers while men – according to Huang et al. (2007) and Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) – tend to have more linear, traditional career patterns placing more emphasis on monetary rewards and promotion. These findings comply with Abele and Wiese (2008) and Abele (2003) who found that gender still has a significant influence on individuals’ career development although there aren’t any gender differences in university grade point average, and study duration. When compared with men, females had lower scores in career planning, other-referent subjective career success, and self-referent subjective career success. Most evidently, women had substantially lower scores than their male counterparts in objective career success. Research has also found that there are dominant types of career orientation by gender. Igbaria and Parasuraman (1991), Kim (2004), and Watts (1993) reported that most women valued balance between work and personal life higher than men. Longitudinal results from Hohner, Grote, and Hoff (2003) on German physicians and psychologists show that men invest more time in their career while women attempt to balance work and private life. Additionally females value subjective success higher than objective criteria of career success. These results are closely linked to Martin and Hanson (1985) who found that a large percentage of married women chose jobs that allowed them to fulfill their female role. Findings from Igbaria, Kassicieh, and Silver (1999) indicate that compared to their male counterparts females are less managerially and pure-challenge oriented than males and score higher on lifestyle orientation. In particular married RD&E professionals have higher scores in geographic security, service, entrepreneurship, and lifestyle orientation indicating that they rather want to balance family, and career. Some of them may choose entrepreneurship to have flexible hours to accommodate family, community, and career concerns. McGovern and Hart (1992) also
found that prestige and salary were more important to men, and flexibility was more important to women. Miguel (1993) however concludes that there are two competing perspectives about gender differences. One is that women and men are different in terms of career orientation, attitudes, and values, while the other holds that they are the same if mediating variables are controlled for. The latter perspective is supported by findings from Kim, Mone, and Kim (2008) revealing that males and females did not have substantially different career orientations when potentially mediating variables, such as age, employment level and education level, were held constant. In this regard, numerous previous studies claiming that females place a higher value than males on work-family balance (e.g. Igbaria and Parasuraman, 1991; Igbaria, Kassicieh and Silver, 1999; Kim, 2004) may have limitations.

3.4 Organizational factors

It is assumed that career development support and job security in organizations influence subjective career success because they enhance the progressive development of skills and knowledge. These again give employees an opportunity to satisfy their career growth needs thus contributing to higher levels of psychological success (Nabi, 2003). Findings from Aryee, Chay, and Tan (1994) support the positive relation between internal labour market practices and subjective career success, even after accounting for several control variables (e.g. sex, age and career stage). Meta-analytical results from Ng et al., (2005) also revealed that organizational support (e.g. training and development opportunities) have a strong influence on subjective career success. The glass ceiling effect however is still evident in some corporate practices and policies (e.g., training, career development, promotion, and compensation), thus being a major barrier preventing women from making it to the top (e.g. Oakley, 2000).

4 Conclusion

As perspectives on careers have changed from the organizational career to the protean and boundaryless career careers are seen as a life long concept in which the individual nowadays is the main agent. People are expected to engage in career management behaviour and opting for career opportunities. Moreover, changing jobs is increasingly seen as a desire for personal and professional growth, rather than a signal of personal instability or indecision (e.g. Kanchier and Unruh, 1987; Miller-Tiedeman, 1987). It may also indicate personal drive, flexibility and skills (Kanchier and Unruh, 1989). Although careers are characterized by turning points on the one hand and by routine on the other individuals develop rather stable career concepts.
The distinction between the protean and organizational career is closely related to the fact that career success is both objective and subjective. Career success as an outcome of one’s career at a specific temporal point might take various forms: achieving a specific career goal, such as finding a better and/or more challenging job; higher salary; more responsibility; moving to a different type of organization (e.g., different size of organization, profit to non-profit) or finding an option that leads to better work-life balance. Thus, while objective success refers to salary or hierarchical position career success also comprises the beholder’s subjective success, i.e. an individual's evaluation of his or her career (Abele and Wiese, 2008; Abele and Spurk, 2009b; Dette, Abele and Renner, 2004; Dries, Pepermans and Carlier, 2008; Heslin, 2003; Heslin, 2005; Judge et al., 1995; Ng et al., 2005; Nicholson and de Waal-Andrews, 2005).

Based upon the above theoretical discussion and literature review we conclude that various aspects have shown to significantly effect subjective and objective career success (figure 3).

Concerning person centred factors skills and knowledge as well as career motivation – in particular occupational self-efficacy – have been shown to have a positive relation to objective and subjective career success. Organizational factors – such as career development opportunities – are however solely related to subjective success, i.e. career satisfaction. Concerning socio-demographics work experience is positively related to one’s
career anchors orientations. Results concerning the influence of gender upon an individual’s career anchor’s orientation have been rather equivocal. However, it has been shown that gender has a significant influence on subjective and objective career success. Last but not least subjective success and age are related. In particular age influences how one individually perceives and values success. While younger generations place a higher emphasis on a life career – i.e. success in their private and professional sphere – older generations still rather restrict career success to the traditional linear view of climbing up the ladder. In line with the quest for a protean career an individual's engagement in career management has a positive influence on subjective as well as objective career success.

From a methodological point of view one might assume that varying definitions of subjective and objective career success across empirical studies and the operationalization of the research object might indeed contribute to differing results and this complex picture of career success.

In essence: despite the variety of empirical results and aspects influencing one’s career success we allow us to propose that each individual – depending on her/his career orientation – might develop a highly individual career concept and value career success highly different thereof. Thus, for example one may place a higher emphasis on flexibility or security while another individual may value subjective over objective career success. Hence, the possibilities of approaches to a life career are highly individual and multifaceted additionally depending on previous experiences, career motivation, goals and expectations as well as the social and environmental context one is embedded.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career anchor</th>
<th>Original description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical/functional competence:</td>
<td>Primarily excited by the content of the work itself; prefers advancement only in his/her technical or functional area of competence; generally disdains and fears general management as too political.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General managerial competence:</td>
<td>Primarily excited by the opportunity to analyze and solve problems under conditions of incomplete information and uncertainty; likes harnessing people together to achieve common goals; stimulated (rather than exhausted) by crisis situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy/independence:</td>
<td>Primarily motivated to seek work situations which are maximally free of organizational constraints; wants to set own schedule and own pace of work; is willing to trade-off opportunities for promotion to have more freedom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security/stability:</td>
<td>Primarily motivated by job security and long-term attachment to one organization; willing to conform and to be fully socialized into an organization’s values and norms; tends to dislike travel and relocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial creativity:</td>
<td>Primarily motivated by the need to build or create something that is entirely their own project; easily bored and likes to move from project to project; more interested in initiating new enterprises than in managing established ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service/dedication to a cause:</td>
<td>Primarily motivated to improve the world in some fashion; wants to align work activities with personal values about helping society; more concerned with finding jobs which meet their values than their skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure challenge:</td>
<td>Primarily motivated to overcome major obstacles, solve almost unsolvable problems, or to win out over extremely tough opponents; define their careers in terms of daily combat or competition in which winning is everything; very single-minded and intolerant of those without comparable aspirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle:</td>
<td>Primarily motivated to balance career with lifestyle; highly concerned with such issues as paternity/maternity leaves, day-care options, etc.; looks for organizations that have strong pro-family values and programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3: Career anchors and their proposed changes**

Source: adapted from (Schein, 1975; 1985; 1990).
The *getting-ahead* career orientation is characterized as an upward mobility pattern. It is usually associated with promotions in a hierarchy of positions or advancement in a status system. The rewards of each move are normally more influence, status, and financial remuneration. Individuals pursuing such a strategy are most often found in large organizations or professional organizations.

An individual with a *getting-free* career orientation does not try to move upward, but toward. This person likes a marginal position where there is personal autonomy, space, loose supervision, and the responsibility for outcomes, but does not like being bound by another’s process, norms, and rules. Such individuals are willing to work very hard, often as professionals or small-business persons, for the reward of more independence and self-control.

The *getting-high* career orientation consists of individuals who are driven by the need for excitement, action, and total engagement in the process and content of the work. In such a career, one seeks to move, often laterally, to the centers of action, adventure, and creativity. This kind of person can exist in large or small organizations, depending on the opportunities, but will usually view bureaucratic rules as constraints.

A *getting-secure* orientation is one in which individuals view career success as long-term job security; good benefits; and a sense of identity, order, and place. They exchange dedication, loyalty, and service for financial benefits, job security, and reciprocal appreciation. They do not necessarily hope for promotions but rather to have a respected place in the organization. Getting secure individuals often seek out large institutions with a reputation for treating employees benevolently and fairly—companies that offer life-long employment.

Those individuals preoccupied with *getting* the three forces of the career triangle—work, relationships, and self-development—*balanced* may stress one dimension at the expense of another during certain periods of their careers and lives to restore equilibrium at the earliest opportunity. Work is very important to their career success but is not allowed to devour the other domains of their life. Unlike the other four types of career orientations, those who try to get balanced separate their work from other aspects of their life.

### Table 4: Career orientations according to Derr (1986)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source: adapted from (Derr, 1986).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>getting-ahead</td>
<td>Characterized as an upward mobility pattern.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting-free</td>
<td>Does not try to move upward, but toward.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting-high</td>
<td>Consists of individuals driven by the need for excitement, action, and total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting-secure</td>
<td>Orientation is one in which individuals view career success as long-term job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>security; good benefits; and a sense of identity, order, and place.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
