



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**INDIVIDUAL'S CAREER STRATEGIES AND
PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT AS THE
PREREQUISITES TO ATTAIN CAREER SUCCESS**

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**INDIVIDUAL'S CAREER STRATEGIES AND PERSON-ENVIRONMENT
FIT AS THE PREREQUISITES TO ATTAIN CAREER SUCCESS**

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**This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
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Statement of Originality

The work described in this Final Year Project, entitled
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to Attain Career Success”**

is to the best of the author’s knowledge that of the author except
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgement	i
Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	xi
Abstract	xiii
Abstrak	xiv

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of the Study	1
1.2	Problem Statement	4
1.3	Research Questions	7
1.4	Research Objectives	
	1.4.1 General Objective	8
	1.4.2 Specific Objectives	8
1.5	Conceptual Framework	9
1.6	Research Hypotheses	10
1.7	Significant of the Study	
	1.7.1 Significant to Theories	12
	1.7.2 Significant to Research Methodology	12
	1.7.3 Significant to Knowledge for Human Resource Practitioners	13
1.8	Scope of the Study	14
1.9	Limitation of the Study	14
1.10	Definition of Terms	
	1.10.1 Career Strategies	16
	1.10.2 Enhancing Promotability	16
	1.10.3 Strengthening External Contacts	17
	1.10.4 Improved Image with Superiors	17
	1.10.5 Person-environment Fit	18
	1.10.6 Person-organization Fit	18
	1.10.7 Person-job Fit	19

1.10.8 Career Success	19
1.11 Summary	20

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction	21
2.1 Career Success	21
2.1.1 Forms of Career Success	26
2.1.1.1 Objective Career Success	26
2.1.1.2 Subjective Career Success	27
2.2 Career Strategies	28
2.2.1 Enhancing Promotability	32
2.2.2 Strengthening External Contacts	33
2.2.3 Improving Image with Superiors	34
2.3 Person-environment Fit	35
2.3.1 Person-organization Fit	36
2.3.2 Person-job Fit	37
2.4 Related Theories	
2.4.1 Heslin's Conceptualization of Career Success	38
2.4.2 Theories Related to Career Strategies and Person-environment Fit: Social Cognitive Career Theory	39
2.4.3 Theories Related to Person-environment Fit: Holland's Career Theory	41
2.4.4 Basic for Formulating Conceptual Framework	43
2.5 Previous Study on Factors Affecting Career Success	44
2.6 Relationship between Career Strategies and Career Success	
2.6.1 Theoretical Evidence supporting relationship between Career Strategies and Career Success	47
2.6.2 Empirical Evidence supporting relationship between Career Strategies and Career Success	47
2.7 Relationship between Person-environment Fit and Career Success	
2.7.1 Theoretical Evidence supporting relationship between Person-environment Fit and Career Success	49
2.7.2 Empirical Evidence supporting relationship between Person-environment Fit and Career Success	49
2.8 Summary	50

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction	51
3.1	Research Design	51
3.2	Research Location, Population and Sample	
3.2.1	Location	52
3.2.2	Population	53
3.2.3	Sample	53
3.3	Research Instruments	54
3.4	Data Collection Technique	60
3.5	Data Analysis Technique	61
3.5.1	Pilot Study	61
3.5.1.1	Reliability	61
3.5.1.2	Validity: Factor Analysis	62
3.5.1.3	Data Screening	63
3.5.1.4	Normality Test	64
3.5.2	Actual Study	
3.5.2.1	Descriptive Statistics	64
3.5.2.2	Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Analysis	65
3.5.2.3	Multiple Regression Analysis	66
3.6	Summary	68

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0	Introduction	69
4.1	Respondents Characteristics	69
4.2	Frequency of Respondents	
4.2.1	Frequency of Respondents for Enhancing Promotability	72
4.2.2	Frequency of Respondents for Strengthening External Contacts	75
4.2.3	Frequency of Respondents for Improving Image with Superiors	78
4.2.4	Frequency of Respondents for Person-organization Fit	80
4.2.5	Frequency of Respondents for Person-job Fit	83
4.2.6	Frequency of Respondents for Subjective Career Success	85
4.3	Data Screening Test Results	90
4.4	Normality Test	93

4.5	Validity and Reliability Test for Actual Study	99
4.6	Level of Subjective Career Success	100
4.7	Hypotheses Testing	
4.7.1	Relationship between enhancing promotability and subjective career success	102
4.7.2	Relationship between strengthening external contacts and subjective career success	104
4.7.3	Relationship between improving image with superiors and subjective career success	106
4.7.4	Relationship between person-organizational and subjective career success	108
4.7.5	Relationship between the person-job and subjective career success	110
4.8	Multiple Regressions	111
4.9	Summary of the Research Findings/Hypotheses Testing	113
4.10	Answer for Research Questions from Research Findings	114
4.11	Discussion	115
4.12	Summary	117

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0	Introduction	118
5.1	Summary of the Study	118
5.2	Implication	
5.2.1	Implications to theory	120
5.2.2	Implications to Research Methodology	121
5.2.3	Implications to Human Resource Practitioners	122
5.3	Limitations	124
5.4	Recommendations	125
5.4.1	Recommendation for Human Resource Practitioner	125
5.4.2	Recommendation for Future Researcher	129
5.5	Summary	131
	References	132

Appendix

140

Attachment A: Permission Letter on Conducting Research

Attachment B: Questionnaire Form

Attachment C: SPSS output for Reliability test

Attachment D: SPSS output for Validity test

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 2.1	
Comparison of related concepts of career success	25
Table 2.2	
Synthesis of career success measures	46
Table 3.1	
Table for determining sample size from a given population, Krejcie and Morgan (1970)	54
Table 3.2	
Career strategies items and categories	56
Table 3.3	
Person-environment fit items and types	57
Table 3.4	
Subjective career success items	57
Table 3.5	
Five-point Likert type rating scale	58
Table 3.6	
Range of Scores determining Degree of Subjective Career Success	60

Table 3.7	
Interpretation of the Correlation Coefficient, “r”	66
Table 3.8	
Types of test used in Hypotheses Testing	67
Table 4.1	
Respondents Characteristics	71
Table 4.2	
Frequency of Respondents for Enhancing Promotability	74
Table 4.3	
Frequency of Respondents for Strengthening External Contacts	77
Table 4.4	
Frequency of Respondents for Improving Image with Superiors	79
Table 4.5	
Frequency of Respondents for Person-organization Fit	82
Table 4.6	
Frequency of Respondents for Person-job Fit	84
Table 4.7	
Frequency of Respondents for Subjective Career Success	87
Table 4.8	
Data Screening Test Result of the Actual Study	91

Table 4.9	
Cronbach Alpha for Actual Study and Pilot Study	100
Table 4.10	
Goodness of Data	100
Table 4.11	
Range of Scores determining Degree of Subjective Career Success	101
Table 4.12	
Pearson Correlation between Individual's Enhancing Promotability and Subjective Career Success	102
Table 4.13	
Spearman's Rank Order Correlation between Individual's Strengthening External Contacts and Subjective Career Success	104
Table 4.14	
Spearman's Rank Order Correlation between Individual's Improving Image with Superiors and Subjective Career Success	106
Table 4.15	
Spearman's Rank Order Correlation between Individual's Person-organizational and Subjective Career Success	108
Table 4.16	
Spearman's Rank Order Correlation between Individual's Person-job and Subjective Career Success	110

Table 4.17
Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of the most dominant factor affecting
Subjective Career Success 111

Table 4.18
Beta value of variables to determine the dominant factor 112

Table 4.19
Summary of Hypotheses Testing 113

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figures 1.1	
The Conceptual Framework of the Study, the Independent Variables and Main Dependent of the Study	10
Figures 2.1	
Conceptual Framework for Measuring Public Sector Managers' Career Success.	43
Figure 2.2	
Conceptual Framework of Individual's Career Strategies and Career Success	44
Figures 4.1	
Histogram for Enhancing Promotability	93
Figures 4.2	
Normal Probability plots for Enhancing Promotability	93
Figures 4.3	
Histogram for Strengthening External Contacts	94
Figures 4.4	
Normal Probability plots for Strengthening External Contacts	94
Figures 4.5	
Histogram for Improving Image with Superiors	95

Figures 4.6	
Probability plots for Improving Image with Superiors	95
Figures 4.7	
Histogram for Person-organization Fit	96
Figures 4.8	
Normal Probability plots for Person-organization Fit	96
Figures 4.9	
Histogram for Person-job Fit	97
Figures 4.10	
Normal Probability plots for Person-job Fit	97
Figures 4.11	
Histogram for Subjective Career Success	98
Figures 4.12	
Normal Probability plots for Subjective Career Success	98
Figure 5.1	
Recommended Conceptual Framework for Future Research	131

ABSTRACT

INDIVIDUAL'S CAREER STRATEGIES AND PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT AS THE PREREQUISITES TO ATTAIN CAREER SUCCESS

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This study investigates the relationship between perception of individual's career strategies and person-environment fit as the prerequisites to attain career success. Survey questionnaire method was used to collect data from samples from government sector employees. Respondents were asked to respond to 50 questions in relation with their method to attain career success. Pilot study was carried out onto 35 respondents in order to test the reliability of the questionnaire before conducting the actual study. The data gathered from the pilot and actual study was analyzed using SPSS *version* 17.0. The direct relationship between career strategies and person-environment fit with career success were determined by using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Analysis. The most dominant factors were determined by using Multiple Regression analysis. The analysis shows that five of the alternate hypotheses are accepted. Overall, the findings indicate that person-environment fit is proven that affect the employee's career success in the organization. Hence, it is important for organization to acknowledge the career strategies efforts and person-environment fit in the organization in order to ensure an excellent and productive performance by their employees. Therefore, this study supports the empirical study which studied by the previous researchers.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of ten sections which related to the study. This study determines the relationship of career strategies and person-environment fit towards individuals' level career success. The first section being introduced is the background of the study. The second section contains the problem statement of this study. The research objectives would be clearly clarified in the third section of this chapter. The fourth sections are the hypotheses of the study. Conceptual framework of the study showed in the fifth section. The next section justified the conceptual and operational definitions of terms while the eighth section of this chapter would be describing the significance of the study. The ninth section discusses the scope and limitations of the study. Finally, the summary of this chapter is the tenth section.

1.1 Background Of The Study

Career is an important element for an individual to fulfil an individual's fundamental needs. Besides, career link the individuals and organizations together.

Career development is “an ongoing process undertaken by organizations to prepare, implement, and monitor the career plans of individual employees, usually in concern

the organization’s career management system” (Werner & DeSimone, 2006).

Career success is a popular issue which received lots researcher attention, researchers such as Gould and Penley (1984) investigated the relationship between career strategies and career success. Besides, Lau and Pang’s (2000) study revealed the relationship between individual’s career goals, career strategies, and career success. The focus of people attention is looking at what have being achieved at individual level. How an individual define the meaning of career will influence to how the person perceive the career success as well.

Career success is a key concern for both of the employees as well as employers. Human, motivational and organization are the specific variables which enable an individual assess the success (Ballout, 2007). In fact, more than 75 per cent of the career-related articles published in major interdisciplinary journals between year 1980 and 1994 focused on the objectives perspectives (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom (2005, as cited in Vos and Soens, 2008) stated that both of the objective and subjective career success is important outcomes of individuals’ career experiences. The stages towards success may be horizontal which include increased job security, longer vacations and hierarchical (Nabi, 1999). Gattiker and Larwood (1986, as cited in Roziah, Maimunah, Jegak & Sidek, 2009) stated that a person’s own preferences for development, needs and values will influence the subjective career success of an individual’s perceptions of career experience.

Nowadays, a long-term employment is no longer in the secure form as the organizations seem unable or unwilling to offer. As a result, the current new career values have make individuals to become own “career coach” (Koonce, 1995, as cited in Lau & Pang, 2000). Career-oriented become dominant as the nature of career strategies is changing. This concept aligns with the concept of

“new careerist”. It is defined as non-performance based allows one’s to pursue career advancement (Feldman, 1988, as cited in Lau & Pang, 2000).

In order to survive in workplace, different strategies are requires because different work place exert different characteristic. Individual’s career strategies is a vital component for an individual to be success in own career (Gould & Penley, 1984; Burke, Divinagracia, & Mamo, 1998; Lau & Pang, 2000; Nabi, 1999; 2001; 2003 cited in Tan & Khulida, 2008). Review of the previous career literature showed that individual career strategies are a common investigated variable. As Gould and Penley’s (1984, as cited in Tan & Khulida, 2008) study found that when an individual utilize career strategies effectively will lead to the career outcomes.

Meanwhile, person-environment congruence has been the subject of recent research as person-environment fit is a fundamental issue in the behavioural sciences (Baruch, 2004). Morley (2007) stated that person-environment fit applied to the workplace domain and is enormously influential. Commonly, job applicants tend to select the organization which most appropriate for them to work with and this is one of the aspects that gain their concern (Rynes and Cable, 2003, as cited in Morley, 2007). On the other hand, selection process within an organization is also concern with the compatibility of one individual that will be hire through a fit between the individuals personality, values and beliefs as well as the values, norms and culture that adopted by the organization (Morley, 2007). An individual’s abilities expected being increase as an individual’s is consider fit to the job itself (Roziyah et al., 2009).

In a nutshell, to survive in current competitive labour market, a proper career strategies and person-environment fit might assist oneself to move towards achievement of subjective career success in the field respectively.

1.2 Problem Statement

Since the economic crisis in 1997, the unemployment rate has been relatively high, and many organizations have lay-off workers. Employment security becomes the main concern among employees. Furthermore, workers desired to be recognized on the job and concerned with the issue of develop a good fit between themselves and their organization. During the economy recovery period, it may be hard for an organization in provided employment security to employees. However, to overcome it the organizations may offer employability security to their employees through training or job rotation that turn employees to become more marketable. As the nature of employment relationship has basically change in the past years where the current trend is the employer-employee contractual relationship temporary rather than fixed, so it is essential in examine current career perspectives (Ballout, 2007).

While previous approaches to career success were driven by the strong belief that career success was rationally and predictably determined by a set of human, structural, and behavioral variables, however recent approaches to career have been driven by the new realities of organizational restructuring and the alterations in the psychological employment (Arthur, Claman & Defillipi, 1995; Sullivan, 1999, as cited in Ballout, 2007). As a consequences, Ballout (2007) stated it is essential useful in examine contemporary perspectives of career. This is because the nature of employment relationship has fundamentally changed in the past years.

Meanwhile, Van Maanen and Schein (1979, as cited in Roziah et al., 2009) study the significant of subjective career success since the late 70s. Besides, the important of examining subjective career success have been highlighted (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Peluchette, 1993; Nabi, 2003, as cited in Roziah et al., 2009). Based on the results of previous research, the objective and subjective career success are two distinct concepts and are weakly related to each other (Nabi, 1999; 2001; Poon, 2004). Factors other than high salaries such as a good working

environment can also lead to achieve of subjective career success (Nabi, 1999; 2001) so Tan and Khulida (2008) suggested that researcher could either emphasize on objective or subjective career success.

Indeed, Hall (2002, as cited in Heslin, 2005) found that as the individual receive high pay and promotions, it does not necessarily make that individual feel proud or even successful. For instance, Heslin (2005) mentioned the traditional objective criteria for success are pay and promotions. Accordingly, this indicated that pay and promotions may not be the only objective outcome which people expect from their careers. Employees who frequently used career strategies reported that they feel more successful in their own career (Tan & Khulida, 2008).

The findings of previous and present study are inconsistent. The finding of Chang's (2002) study found that career strategies are positively related with career satisfaction which is career success. However, the results of the present study of Tan and Khulida (2008) showed that career strategies enhancing promotability were not associated with career success which suggested that career strategies might not an important predictor to career success. Thus, there is an empirical gap between the present study and Chang's (2002) study. Tan and Khulida (2008) suggest future researcher should re-examine the relationship between career strategies and subjective career success.

Besides, the importance of the career strategies towards careers success had been proven by some researchers which is based on their planned and systematic research activities (Tan & Khulida, 2008). There was lots of researchers work such as Gould and Penley (1984), Burke, Divinagracia and Mamo (1998); Nabi (1999; 2001; 2003), Lau and Pang (2000) found that career strategies are important for access career success. Thus career strategies are one of the determinants of career success. Tan and Khulida (2008) suggested that the current research study had sought to re-examine the current relationship between career strategies and career success. Thus, researcher was interest in compare the relationship of career strategies which restrict to three categories.

Furthermore, Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson (2005b) stated the types of person-environment fit that focus on the individual's compatibility with their job and organization while there are rarely researches that outline conclusion of the fit impact on individual-level outcomes. The use of person-job fit, person-organization fit and person-culture fit in previous research are to provide a match or congruence explanation for the individual differences in the aspect of job choice decisions and proactive career behaviours (Cable & Judge, 1994; Cable & DeRue, 2002; Erdogan & Bauer, 2005 ,as cited in Ballout, 2007).

Ballout (2007) stated that there is little previous research on the effect of person-environment fit towards career success in identify what are the different types of person-environment fit that are most related to the components of career success, whether the effect is direct or indirect which concerns with the influence of various level of person-environment fit on career success. Besides, Kristof-Brown et al. (2005b) found that employees' work attitudes were differentially predicted by different forms of person-environment fit. Thus, Ballout (2007) suggested that should examine empirically the linkages between person-environment fit and career success.

Most of the reviews of person-environment fit were non quantitative study and only emphasize on one single person-environment fit without looking at the different types of others fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005b). Research on different types of person-environment fit rarely draw conclusions about the true impact of fit on individual-level outcomes. According to Edwards (1991, as cited in Kristof-Brown et al., 2005b), a complete qualitative review of person-environment fit studies have been done. However, the review did not take the strength of the reported relationships in the quantitative analysis. Besides, a qualitative review on an exclusive person-environment fit literature has been conducted through Kristof's (1996) study. As there are limited scopes in person-environment fit study and the past study focus on qualitative study. Thus, the current quantitative analysis of person-environment fit is necessitating study in different types (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005b).