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Shmuel Grimland, Eran Vigoda-Gadot & Yehuda Baruch

University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel
Rouen Business School, France
Middlesex University, UK

Available online: 09 Aug 2011


To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.560884

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Career attitudes and success of managers: the impact of chance event, protean, and traditional careers

Shmuel Grimland\textsuperscript{a}, Eran Vigoda-Gadot\textsuperscript{a} and Yehuda Baruch\textsuperscript{b}\textsuperscript{*}

\textsuperscript{a}University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel; \textsuperscript{b}Rouen Business School, France & Middlesex University, UK

We propose a career model that focuses on the antecedents of career success for managers and professionals within organizations. The model includes constructs rarely represented in the literature, and is based on conservation of resources theory. Testing our model with a sample of 545 managers, we found significant effect of positive and negative social capital, perception of organizational politics, professional vitality, and protean career attitude on internal and external career success, mediated by organizational commitment and met expectations, and moderated by chance event effect. This original contribution includes incorporating new constructs and concentrates upon factors enabling support for successful careers.

Keywords: career success; chance event; organizational commitment; organizational politics; protean career; social capital

Introduction

Current careers tend to be dynamic, less predictable, and boundaryless (Arthur and Rousseau 1996; Lips-Wiersma and Hall 2007), in contrast to the traditional linear, static, and rigid view of careers (Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk 2000). In keeping with the more modern definition is Arthur, Hall and Lawrence’s (1989) view of career as the evolving sequence of work experiences over time. The essence of career has changed, and under this emerging definition, individuals bear most of the responsibility for planning and managing their own careers. This type of individual career management has been conceptualized as the protean career (Hall 2002, 2004), multidirectional career (Baruch 2004), or the kaleidoscope career (Mainiero and Sullivan 2006). As Hall (1996, p. 10) notes, protean career is ‘a contract with oneself, rather than with the organization’, when individuals take responsibility for transforming their career path, in line with their personal aspirations. Hall and Chandler (2005) characterized the protean career attitude (ProtA) as freedom, growth, professional commitment and fulfillment, and psychological success through the pursuit of meaningful work. This new type of career reflects changes in employment relationships and organizational structures, driven by globalization, competitive pressures, and technological advances (Arthur and Rousseau 1996; Lips-Wiersma and Hall 2007).

Typically, career success is measured along two dimensions: external (objective) and internal (subjective; Hall and Chandler 2005; Heslin 2005; Ng, Eby, Sorensen and Feldman 2005; Baruch and Quick 2007; Abele and Spurk 2009). The external (objective) is mostly concerned with personal observable, measurable, and verifiable attainments such as pay, promotion, and occupational status (Dries, Pepermans and Carlier 2008), factors
relevant in many societies (Nicholson 2000). Since the 1990s, high pay, frequent promotions, and fast track upward mobility within the organizational hierarchy are less prominent (Hall 2002; Heslin 2005). The second facet of career success, the internal (subjective), is expressed in career and life satisfaction (Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley 1990) and is typically measured via self-perception of career accomplishments and future career prospects (Judge, Cable, Boudreau and Bretz 1995; Nabi 1999; Dries et al. 2008). In light of this, career scholars call for a more thorough conceptualization of career success supported by and more empirical work to determine what constitutes career success (Heslin 2005; Arthur 2008).

The primary objective of our study is to propose and investigate a career model that focuses on antecedents of career success for managers and professionals, some of which have not been thoroughly studied in the past. We aim to identify factors that enhance career development in organizations within a global context. Our conceptual framework is based on current career theories and the conservation of resources (COR) theory, where we look at the antecedents to career success as resources available to employees. The model was empirically tested via a large sample of task and projects managers in high tech, infrastructure, and engineering organizations in the public and the private sectors. Using the multilevel analysis, we provided both new theoretical insights and practical implications.

Theoretical background and hypotheses development

We built our conceptual framework on current career theory (Arthur 2008; Sullivan and Baruch 2009; Sturges, Conway and Liefooghe 2010), combined with Hobfoll’s (1989, 1998) COR theory, which reflects reactions of people to stressful situations and the way they handle these events. The main tenet of COR theory is that people attain and manage resources that they highly regard and value. Individuals aim to maximize resources that mostly contribute to their general development. Previous work on well-being, job satisfaction, and burnout has successfully supported the COR model (Halbesleben 2006; Wright and Bonett 2007), thus, we employ this theory to study career success in dynamic work environments. Following Hobfoll, stress is created when people experience threat or actually loose valuable resources. Resources are ‘…those objects (e.g. car, house), conditions (e.g. job security, good marriage), personal characteristics (e.g. social aplomb, mastery), or energies (e.g. money, knowledge, favors owed) that are valued by the individual or that serve as means of obtaining that which is valued by the individual’ (Hobfoll, Freedy, Lane and Geller 1990, p. 466). Hobfoll (2002) claims that people with higher levels of resources will handle stressful situations and resolve problems better than people with lower levels of resources. Resources enable individuals to manage challenges and take advantage of opportunities (Hobfoll 2002; Wright and Bonett 2007). The COR literature does not discuss how resources can be a factor in career development and progress, where resources may be instrumental. For example, employees will gather and look for any additional resources within the organization in order to compensate the erosion of resources in the daily organizational activities.

Within the work world, an employee’s resources can be the physical, psychological, social, and organizational aspects of the work role or institutional resources (Schaufeli and Baker 2004; Zeitz, Blau and Fertig 2009). Employees will invest efforts and energy in order to meet work requirements and achieve desirable (Cheung and Tang 2007). Employees will manage their resources in a way that some of their overall resources will contribute to their general growth (Wright and Bonett 2007). Higher job demands require larger amount of resources, and may thus divert these resources away from career
progression. Greater resources would enable better coping with job demands and divert resources to enhance career progress. For example, networking will provide information about future attractive projects. Understanding organizational politics and gaining formal and informal knowledge will be advantageous in successfully managing tasks and projects. Drawing energy from personal attitude for career may mean adding time beyond the period dedicated to current tasks, and devotion to be applied to career development.

We offer a system-based triple-stage model, including antecedents, mediators, moderators, control variables, and career success outcomes. The model is presented in Figure 1.

**Antecedents of career success**

**Social capital**
The first resource available to employees in order to address job requirements and improve performance is their social capital. An individual’s social capital is his or her network of social connections that assist them in functioning in society (Coleman 1990). Within career theory, social capital fits the ‘knowing whom’ dimension of social relationships of the employees (Arthur, Claman and DeFillippi 1995; Parker, Khapova and Arthur 2009; Singh, Ragins and Tharenou 2009). This concept was incorporated to multinational career aspects in a recent study (Makela and Suutari 2009).

According to the COR theory, social relationships and networks provide employees with support, information, or protection when they are faced with different situations in the workplace. Social capital via connections in the organization enables to acquire better team project professionals, preference in the production or logistic of the organization, enhancing by that the probability for successful completion of jobs or tasks in the workplace. Brotheridge and Lee (2002) and Hobfoll (2002) claim that social support in the workplace is the most important resource reservoir in the possession of the employee.

Social capital is positively related to career satisfaction and hierarchical advancement (Seibert, Kraimer and Linden 2001), and developing social capital is a major factor in gaining career success (de Janasz and Forret 2007). Yet, most researchers focus only on the positive aspect of social capital. To better understand the differential impact of social capital, Labianca and Brass (2006) proposed the incorporation of negative social capital

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**Figure 1. Research model.**

- **Social Capital**
  - Positive social capital
  - Negative social capital

- **Perception of organizational politics**

- **Protean career attitude**

- **Work attitudes**
  - Organizational commitment
  - Employees met expectations

- **Career Success Measures**
  - External success measure:
    - Progress in organizational hierarchy
  - Internal success measures:
    - Career satisfaction
    - Professional vitality

- **Chance event impact on career**
(NSC) aspects. Negative social relationships are characterized by the intensity of dislike of employees to other workers created during their working relationships. Negative relationship can affect the availability of the organization’s professionals required for the task or project or lowering the preference for promotion or entering new promising activities of the company.

Following the COR concept, of acquiring more resources to protect existing resources, managers will try to enlarge their positive social connections and lower their NSC, mainly by avoiding interactions with individuals that can hamper their ability to perform tasks.

Combining both sides of social capital to better reflect work reality, we hypothesize:

\[ H1a: \] There is a positive relationship between positive social capital (PSC) and the external (progress in the organizational hierarchy) and the internal (career satisfaction and professional vitality) aspects of career success.

\[ H1b: \] There is a negative relationship between NSC and the external and the internal aspects of career success.

Organizational politics

Another resource available to employees is their understanding of organizational politics. Perception of organizational politics is the subjective evaluation of situations or behaviors in the organization that employee perceives as political and unfair (Harrel-Cook, Ferris and Dulebohn 1999). The employees’ belief that organizational outcomes are related to organizational politics will lead to a sense of threat to their resources, as their energy and time will address political issues rather than personal career concerns. Employees may feel that due to the organizational politics, their hard work does not lead to anticipated career outcomes and their organizational commitment and performance will decline (Chatman 1989; Harris, Harris and Harvey 2007). For example, organizational politics can limit access to organizational resources for the non-preferred employees, potentially harming their career success. In case of unsuccessful projects, organizational politics can enable only preferred employees to gain protection, compared with non-preferred ones. Additional mechanism that can flow out of COR concepts and related to organizational politics is non-membership of preferred group in the organization. Employees of the non-preferred group get low appreciation or negative feedbacks, issue that harms their professional feeling skills (a resource for achieving high performance) and, therefore, lowering their career satisfaction and career development (Dorman and Zapf 2004; Nurse 2005; Harris et al. 2007).

Thus, the following hypothesis:

\[ H2: \] There is a negative relationship between perception of organizational politics and external (progress in the organizational hierarchy) and internal (career satisfaction and professional vitality) aspects of career success.

Protean career attitude

ProtA is based on inner values (Hall 2002, 2004), which are a powerful drive for an individual’s behavior (Rokeach 1973; Sagiv and Schartz 2000). The importance of this career attitude was reiterated more recently (Briscoe, Hall and Frautschy DeMuth 2006), and was associated with different aspects of career success (Baruch and Quick 2007; Segers, Inceoglu, Vloeberghs, Bartram and Henderickx 2008), though the impact may be different for external versus internal success (Singh et al. 2009). Based on inner values,
employees can derive additional energies and compensate for resources’ erosion following work activities, or divert the additional power to desired development path of their own career. Thus, hypothesis H3 suggests:

\[ H3: \] There is a positive relationship between ProtA and external (progress in the organizational hierarchy) and internal (career satisfaction and professional vitality) dimensions of career success.

**Mediation of organizational commitment and employee’s met expectations**

In order to identify possible mediation path between antecedents (resources available to the employee) and outcomes (career success facets), we looked for factors that are possible resources in working surrounding and at the same time are related to both the antecedents and the outcomes. By looking at organizational commitment as a possible drive force at working place or as originally defined ‘a strong belief in and acceptance of the organizations goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf the organization, and define desire to maintain organizational membership’ (Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian 1974, p. 604), organizational commitment appears as a highly possible inner resource related to job resources (Mathieu and Zajac 1990). In addition, by following the analysis of Hobfoll and Freedy (1993) and Lee and Ashforth (1996), employees’ expectation in organization can be viewed as highly personal resource, or as Lee and Ashforth noted ‘met expectations would likely be viewed as resources because they confirm or support one’s adjustment’ (Lee and Ashfort 1996, p. 129).

Organizational commitment is anticipated to mediate the relationships between work attitudes and organizational outcomes (Suliman 2002; Hochwarter, Kaemar, Perrewe and Johnson 2003). Following this, we expect organizational commitment to mediate the relationships between the antecedents such as social capital, organizational politics, protean attitude to career, and the outcomes of career success – external and internal aspects of career success.

Met expectations are related to work attitudes and performance (Wanous 1992; Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey and Toth 1997), and motivation (Vroom 1964). Employees will have a positive evaluation of their organization when their goals are met, whereas unmet expectations encountered in work will trigger job dissatisfaction and decrease work performance (Wanous 1992). We thus suggest that, similarly to organizational commitment, met expectation will mediate between social capital, organizational politics, protean attitude to career, and external and internal aspects of career success.

\[ H4: \] Organizational commitment and employee’s met expectations will mediate between social capital, organizational politics, ProtA and between the external (progress in the organizational hierarchy) and the internal (career satisfaction and professional vitality) aspects of career success.

**Chance event impact on careers**

An additional factor that may influence the relationship between the antecedents and career success is chance events. Luck is an important factor in life, and serendipity plays a crucial role in the way life unfolds, including working life. There is no agreed-up definition of a chance event in the literature, but it is generally referred to as an event, luck, coincidence, or uncertainty (Manis and Meltzer 1994). Chance events affect the work environment and usually appear in combination with an individual’s attempt to form his or
her professional life (Chen 2005). The common view of chance event is as an ‘unplanned, accidental, or otherwise situational, unpredictable, or unintentional events or encounters that have an impact on career development and behavior’ (Rojewski 1999, p. 269). In one of the few experimental investigations into the impact of chance events, Bright, Pryor and Harpham (2005) found that career decisions were highly affected by chance events.

Following the COR theory, we argue that employees with higher resources like PSC will be able to better utilize chance events for improving their career progress, for example, by getting an early warning of withdrawal of competitors or learning of lucrative projects. Along the same line, employees with higher NSC will be harmed by chance events. For example, employees with higher NSC may have more limited access to important organizational resources as compared to employees with better networking (PSC). These employees may also be less protected from negative consequences in the case of a project failure than would be individuals with higher PSC. Following Labianca and Brass’ (2006) argumentation that negative social relationships can explain more of the socio-emotional and task outcomes in organizations than the positive social relationships, we focus our attention on the relationships between chance effect and NSC and propose the following hypothesis:

**H5a:** Chance event moderates the relationship between social capital, organizational politics, protean attitude to career, and external (progress in the organizational hierarchy) and internal (career satisfaction and professional vitality) facets of career success.

**H5b:** Chance event will have higher impact on external and internal aspects of career success for employees with higher PSC and harm more employees with higher NSC. In other words, individuals with higher PSC will be more positively affected by chance events whereas individuals with lower social capital will have more negative outcomes.

Demographic factors such as age and gender (Tharenou, Latimer and Conroy 1994; Judge et al. 1995; Valcour and Ladge, 2008) as well as education (Seibert et al. 2001; Ragins 2007; Reitzle, Körner and Vondracek 2009) can affect career success in various ways. We thus used age, gender, and education as control variables in the model.

**Methods**

**Sample and procedures**

The research target population included task or project managers in the public and the private sectors in Israel, employed within the high technology, engineering, and infrastructure fields. The managers came from 21 organizations, 11 in the public sector and 10 in the private sector.

In developing the questionnaire in Hebrew, items originally developed in English were subjected to standard translation and back-translation procedures (Brislin 1970). Responses from a pilot study with 38 individuals indicated that there was no confusion or lack of clarity.

The full-scale study included the distribution of 1048 questionnaires survey. We accessed private sector companies by calling companies in high-technology parks in the central part of Israel and public organizations via a governmental web site for public organizations. Of the 21 participating organizations, 11 came from the public sector and 10 from the private sector. The organizations were in high tech and infrastructure/engineering field. The response rate at the firm level was 30%, high for this level (Cycyota and
Harrison 2006). Of the 1048, 545 questionnaires were returned, accounting for a response rate of 52%, a figure above the norm of survey response rate in organizational research (Baruch and Holtom 2008). A note about the survey was published on each organization’s internal web site, and employees were encouraged to participate in the survey. An additional 59 questionnaires were distributed directly to project managers enrolled in project management courses. The demographic characteristic of this direct collection group was similar to the group collected in the organizations, and we thus incorporated their responses into the sample.

The composition of the sample was as follows: 229 (42%) were public sector managers and 316 (58%) were private sector managers; 393 (72.1%) worked in the high-tech sector and 152 (27.9%) in engineering/infrastructure; regarding gender, 427 (80.7%) were males and 102 (19.3%) were females. Average age of the participants was 44.02 (SD = 10.09) years. Survey respondents held a variety of positions within their organizations: 36 (7.4%) were in low managerial position, and 32 (6.6%) were managers of single task/project. Seventy (16%) were team leaders, 81 (16.6%) were branch leaders (in charge of several teams), 130 (26.7%) were section managers, 74 (15.2%) were department managers, 26 (5.3%) were director general deputies, and 30 (6.2%) were in director general positions. Regarding educational level: 8 (1.5%) were graduated from high school, 62 (11.5%) were practical engineers (a professional degree awarded by technological colleges in Israel, representing a professional level between an engineer and technician), 238 (44.3%) held first degree, 220 (41%) held second degree, and 9 (1.7%) held PhD degree. University graduates accounted for 398 (77.1%), whereas 118 (22.9%) graduated from colleges. In the Israeli high educational system, university is a research-oriented institution awarding first, second, and third academicals degrees. Colleges in Israel award practical engineer and first degree only, and are usually not research oriented.

Measures

Social capital. PSC was measured by a scale based on Seibert et al. (2001). The respondents were asked to identify people who helped them by talking in their favor, supplied them with information regarding opportunities in their career, supported them psychologically, spoke to them about the difficulties of the job, about alternative functions or about long-term goals in their career, referring to only long-term relationships rather than single or random relationships. Five levels of assistance efficiency were suggested: 1 (a very low efficiency) to 5 (a very high efficiency).

The scale for NSC was a mirror version of the PSC concept. The respondents were asked to respond to the following request: please talk about the people who harmed you for a continuous period of time in your career. Five levels of harmful efficiency were suggested: 1 (a very low efficiency) to 5 (a very high efficiency). For both scales, the number of people related to was set to four. The Cronbach’s alphas for PSC and NSC were 0.81 and 0.87, respectively.

Perception of organizational politics. Based on the work of Kacmar and Ferris (1991) and Kacmar and Carlson (1997), a sub-scale of seven items was utilized to measure perception of organizational politics, as Kacmar and Carlson (1997), Vigoda (2000) and Vigoda-Gadot (2003) showed that these items represent the original full set of 40 items with evidence of reliability and validity. An example item is: ‘ Favoritism rather than merit determines who gets ahead around here.’ Each item was assessed via a Likert scale ranging
from 1 (not at all true – a low level of organizational politics) to 5 (very true – a high level of organizational politics). The coefficient alpha for this measure was 0.84.

Protean career attitude. We adopted the scale for ProtA from Baruch and Quick (2007). A sample item from this measure is: ‘I navigate my own career according to my plans.’ The Likert scale ranged from 1 (highly disagree) to 5 (highly agree). The corresponding coefficient alpha was 0.61 for five items, below the standard 0.70, but complying with the acceptable value of 0.60 in the initial phase of research (Nunnally 1978).

Organizational commitment. We utilized a sub-scale of seven out of the original 14 items of Porter et al.’s (1974) measure of organizational commitment. The shortened version is based on the work of Kacmar and Ferris (1991) and Vigoda (2002) that demonstrated good psychometric properties for the shortened version. An example item is ‘I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization to be successful.’ The Likert scale ranged from 1 (highly disagree) to 5 (highly agree). The coefficient alpha for this measure was 0.81.

Employee’s met expectations. We used a nine-item measure of employee’s met expectations developed by Lee and Mowday (1987), where the respondents were asked to describe how well their expectations about their immediate supervisor, kind of work, co-workers, subordinates, physical working conditions, financial rewords, career future, organizational identifications, and their overall jobs had been met recently. A sample item is: ‘In the last year, my experience with my immediate supervision has been ...’. The Likert scale ranged from 1 (less than expected) to 5 (more than expected). The coefficient alpha for this measure was 0.82.

Chance event impact. Chance event impact on career was defined as a dummy variable, where employees were asked to note if a fundamental event influenced their career progress with 1 = it happened, 0 = it did not happened. In order not to limit the different possible chance events that employees faced during their career, no list of possible events was presented in the survey. We also asked the respondents to briefly describe in an open-response format, the nature of the fundamental chance event and how it affected their career.

External progress in career. External progress in career was noted by position in organizational hierarchy, and was defined according to management level. The scale was from 1 (non-managerial job) up to 9 (director general).

Career satisfaction. Career satisfaction was measured by five items (Greenhaus et al. 1990). The respondents were asked to state to what extent they were satisfied with their advancement in their career on a 1–5 Likert scale with 1 = highly disagree to 5 = highly agree. A sample item is ‘I am satisfied with the success that I have achieved in my career.’ The coefficient alpha for this measure was 0.86.
Professional vitality. Professional vitality is defined as a characteristic by individuals who are able to consistently perform the work of their chosen profession with passion, vigor, facility, and satisfaction. This definition and the measure were developed by Harvey (2002), and the measure was used with permission, utilizing 14 of the original 18 items (four items were removed due to a lack of fit). A sample item is: ‘I am filled with energy throughout the workday’ measured on a 1–5 Likert scale with 1 = highly disagree to 5 = highly agree. The coefficient alpha for this measure was 0.83.

Demographic variables included personal data such as gender (male = 0 and female = 1), age measured in years, and education that was measured as ordinal variable (1 = secondary school, 2 = above secondary school, 3 = first academic degree, 4 = master degree, and 5 = PhD degree).

Analysis
Due to the composition of our sample, we tested for the possible effect of non-independence in responses from the same group (organization). The degree of non-independence can be estimated by calculating intra-class correlation coefficient using the ANOVA analysis (Klein and Kozlowski 2000; Kenny, Mannetti, Pierro, Livi and Kashy 2002), where the group is treated as an independent variable in a one way, between subjects ANOVA. From the ANOVA analysis, mean square between groups (MSBG) and mean square within groups (MSWG) are calculated, and ICC(1) is computed:

\[
ICC(1) = \frac{[(MS_{BG}) - (MS_{WG})]/[(MS_{BG}) + (N_g - 1)M_{wg}]}{N_g}
\]

where \(N_g\) is the group size. If the group sizes are unequal, a correction proposed by Kenny and La Voie (1985) can be used. If the non-independence phenomenon is detected, a multilevel analysis is required (Klein and Kozlowski 2000; Grawitch and Munz 2004; Dixon and Cunnigham 2006). There is no agreed level for ICC(1) that implies multilevel analysis and in different fields, different ICC(1) thresholds are used. In career research, a cut-off level of ICC(1) is an unresolved issue and when to apply ordinary least square (s) analysis or when to apply multilevel analysis is still an open question.

In order to decide what type of analysis should be applied, we evaluated three parameters: ICC(1), ICC(2), and \(r_{wg}\). By considering ICC(1) as the main decision tool and by indicative perspective of ICC(2) and \(r_{wg}\) parameters (Klein and Kozlowski 2000; Kenny et al. 2002), we identified that ICC(1) of the different variables was in the range of 0.04–0.16, a figure below the 0.25 used as a cut-off level in areas like public administration field and social work (Heinrich and Lynn 2001; Guo 2005). ICC(2) range is mainly below the level of 0.70 and several \(r_{wg}\)'s are below the threshold level of 0.70 for applying multilevel analysis. Based on the fact that all our research variables are measured at the individual level and considering low value of ICC(1)'s, we decided to apply OLS analysis in our research.

Hypotheses testing
To test the research hypotheses, we employed four strategies. First, a zero-order correlation was utilized to examine H1–H3. Second, multiple hierarchical regression analysis was utilized to test hypotheses H1–H5. Mediation was tested via the procedure of Baron and Kenny (1986) and Kenny, Kashy and Bolger (1998).
Table 1 presents descriptive statistics, zero-order correlations. As can be seen, most of the intercorrelations hold in the expected directions and none of them exceeds the maximum level of 0.70, which is a good indicator for the absence of multicollinearity among the variables. Tables 2 and 3 present the different relationships between the antecedents and objective and subjective facets of career success.

**Results**

Hypotheses H1a and H1b suggested that there is a positive relationship between PSC and the external and the internal aspects of career success and that there is a negative relationship between NSC and the external and the internal aspects of career success. Based on the results from Tables 1 and 3 (Step 1), there is a positive relationship between PSC and subjective aspect of career success ($b = 0.21, p \leq 0.001$; professional vitality $r = 0.10, p \leq 0.01$), a negative relationship between NSC and career satisfaction ($\beta = -0.12, p \leq 0.01$). Therefore, hypotheses H1a and H1b are partially supported.

H2 suggested that there is a negative relationship between the perception of organizational politics and external and internal aspects of career success. From Table 3 (Step 1), it can be seen that perception of organizational politics is negatively related to position in organizational hierarchy ($\beta = -0.12, p \leq 0.05$) and to career satisfaction ($\beta = -0.22, p \leq 0.01$). Therefore, hypothesis H2 is partially supported.

H3 suggested that there is a positive relationship between ProtA and external and internal career success. Table 3 (Step 1) indicates that ProtA is related positively to position in organizational hierarchy ($\beta = 0.19, p \leq 0.001$), to career satisfaction ($\beta = 0.34, p \leq 0.001$) and to professional vitality ($\beta = 0.30, p \leq 0.001$). Therefore, H3 is supported.

In order to test the mediation of organizational commitment and employee’s met expectations suggested by our fourth hypothesis, we look for the fulfillment of four conditions for the emergence of mediation phenomenon (Baron and Kenny 1986; Kenny et al. 1998). We present only the DV–IV relationships (Table 3, Step 1) and the mediators’ effect (Table 2), the mediators’ relationships with IV and DV are available upon request from the first author. Table 3 indicates a relationship between the position in organizational hierarchy and the perception of organizational politics and the protean attitude to career ($\beta = -0.12, p \leq 0.05; \beta = 0.19, p \leq 0.001$), respectively. Table 3 manifests relationship between career satisfaction and PSC, career satisfaction and NSC, career satisfaction and perception of organizational politics and ProtA ($\beta = 0.21, p \leq 0.001; \beta = -0.12, p \leq 0.05; \beta = -0.22, p \leq 0.001; \beta = 0.34, p \leq 0.001$), respectively; professional vitality and protean attitude to career ($\beta = 0.30, p \leq 0.001$). For the mediators’ relationships, we found that organizational commitment is related to perception of organizational politics and protean attitude to career ($\beta = -0.29, p \leq 0.001; \beta = 0.13, p \leq 0.01$), respectively; met employee’s expectations from organization are related to PSC, NSC, perception of organizational politics, and protean attitude to career ($\beta = 0.22, p \leq 0.001; \beta = -0.09, p \leq 0.05; \beta = -0.40, p \leq 0.001; \beta = 0.09, p \leq 0.05$) correspondingly.

Table 2 highlights relationship between position in organizational hierarchy and met expectations ($\beta = 0.12, p \leq 0.05$); career satisfaction and organizational commitment and met employee’s expectations ($\beta = 0.11, p \leq 0.05; \beta = 0.52, p \leq 0.001$), respectively; professional vitality and organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.33, p \leq 0.001$). From Tables 2 and 3, it follows that for position in organizational hierarchy after controlling
Table 1. Correlation matrix.

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PSC</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>(0.81)</td>
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<td>2. NSC</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>-0.10*</td>
<td>(0.87)</td>
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<td>3. Education level</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. POPS</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>-0.32**</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>(0.84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ProtA</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.11*</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>(0.61)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Chance event impact on career</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Organizational commitment</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>-0.15**</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.35**</td>
<td>0.15**</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>(0.81)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Met employee’s expectations</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>-0.19**</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.47**</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.55**</td>
<td>(0.82)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Position in organizational hierarchy</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.14**</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.14**</td>
<td>0.15**</td>
<td>0.14**</td>
<td>0.12**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Career satisfaction</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>-0.16**</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.35**</td>
<td>0.39**</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.40**</td>
<td>0.60**</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>(0.86)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Professional vitality</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.10**</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>(0.83)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Age</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10.09</td>
<td>-0.15**</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.13**</td>
<td>-0.21**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>-0.12**</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Gender (1 = female, 0 = male)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.10*</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.10**</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.09*</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.10*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $N = 434–545$ (due to missing values); **$p \leq 0.01$; *$p \leq 0.05$; coefficient α’s are in the parenthesis on the diagonal cells.
Table 2. Findings of the hierarchical regression analysis (standardized coefficients) of the relationships between independent variables and the position in organizational hierarchy, career satisfaction, and professional vitality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Position in org. hierarchy</th>
<th></th>
<th>Career satisfaction</th>
<th></th>
<th>Professional vitality</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1 $\beta(t)$</td>
<td>Step 2 $\beta(t)$</td>
<td>Step 1 $\beta(t)$</td>
<td>Step 2 $\beta(t)$</td>
<td>Step 1 $\beta(t)$</td>
<td>Step 2 $\beta(t)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>0.23 (4.76***</td>
<td>0.27 (5.47***</td>
<td>−0.11 (−2.73**</td>
<td>−0.02 (−0.55</td>
<td>0.21 (4.96***</td>
<td>0.27 (6.35***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gender</td>
<td>−0.08 (−1.74)</td>
<td>−0.06 (−1.27)</td>
<td>0.01 (0.34)</td>
<td>0.04 (1.04)</td>
<td>0.04 (0.86)</td>
<td>0.05 (1.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education level</td>
<td>0.05 (1.11)</td>
<td>0.04 (0.82)</td>
<td>−0.02 (−0.48)</td>
<td>−0.36 (−0.99)</td>
<td>0.08 (1.96)</td>
<td>0.06 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. PSC</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.06 (1.16)</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.07 (0.69)</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.09 (0.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. NSC</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−0.04 (−0.79)</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−0.06 (−1.70)</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−0.02 (−0.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. POPS</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−0.08 (−1.32)</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−0.05 (−1.09)</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.11 (2.34*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ProtA</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.18 (3.76***</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.29 (7.74***</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.29 (6.87***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Organizational Commitment</td>
<td>0.04 (0.74)</td>
<td>0.02 (0.34)</td>
<td>0.11 (2.34*)</td>
<td>0.06 (1.43)</td>
<td>0.33 (6.60***</td>
<td>0.32 (6.50***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Met expectations of employees</td>
<td>0.12 (2.06*)</td>
<td>0.11 (1.74)</td>
<td>0.52 (11.38***</td>
<td>0.46 (9.66***</td>
<td>0.09 (1.74)</td>
<td>0.12 (2.19*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>8.00***</td>
<td>6.37***</td>
<td>51.03***</td>
<td>40.20***</td>
<td>24.84***</td>
<td>21.68***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$ for $\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>4.04**</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>17.38***</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>14.11***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ***$p \leq 0.001$; **$p \leq 0.01$; *$p \leq 0.05$; $N = 487–545$ (due to missing values).
Table 3. Findings of the hierarchical regression analysis (standardized coefficients) of the relationship between the independent variables and major chance event impact on career — position in organizational hierarchy, career satisfaction, and professional vitality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position in org. hierarchy</th>
<th>Career satisfaction</th>
<th>Professional vitality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>0.28 (5.30***), 0.29 (5.40***), 0.03 (0.59), 0.03 (0.72), 0.37 (7.45***), 0.38 (7.64***)</td>
<td>0.05 (1.99), 0.05 (1.13), 0.04 (0.97), 0.06 (1.22), 0.05 (1.08), 0.04 (0.86), 0.05 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gender</td>
<td>0.05 (-0.99), 0.02 (-0.29), -0.03 (-0.73), -0.04 (-0.97), -0.04 (-0.79), -0.02 (-0.25)</td>
<td>0.02 (0.68), 0.04 (1.13), 0.04 (0.97), 0.06 (1.22), 0.05 (1.08), 0.04 (0.86), 0.05 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education level</td>
<td>0.05 (0.88), 0.05 (0.98), 0.21 (4.46***), 0.24 (3.47**), 0.09 (1.72), 0.20 (2.76**)</td>
<td>0.05 (1.22), 0.05 (1.08), 0.04 (0.97), 0.06 (1.22), 0.05 (1.08), 0.04 (0.86), 0.05 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. PSC</td>
<td>0.05 (0.88), 0.15 (1.92), 0.21 (4.46***), 0.24 (3.47**), 0.09 (1.72), 0.20 (2.76**)</td>
<td>0.05 (1.22), 0.05 (1.08), 0.04 (0.97), 0.06 (1.22), 0.05 (1.08), 0.04 (0.86), 0.05 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. NSC</td>
<td>-0.01 (-0.35), -0.16 (-1.91), -0.12 (-2.52*), -0.13 (-1.88), -0.04 (-0.79), -0.02 (-0.25)</td>
<td>-0.05 (-0.95), -0.02 (-0.25), 0.04 (0.86), 0.05 (1.03), 0.04 (0.86), 0.05 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. POPS</td>
<td>-0.12 (-2.19*), -0.22 (-2.71**), -0.22 (-4.57**), -0.24 (-3.37**), -0.05 (-0.95), -0.20 (-2.68**)</td>
<td>-0.05 (-0.95), -0.02 (-0.25), 0.04 (0.86), 0.05 (1.03), 0.04 (0.86), 0.05 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ProtA</td>
<td>0.19 (3.70***), 0.30 (3.74***), 0.34 (7.47***), 0.27 (3.87), 0.30 (6.26***), 0.26 (3.56***)</td>
<td>0.09 (1.89), 0.03 (0.57), 0.04 (0.60), 0.04 (0.57), 0.05 (0.60), 0.04 (0.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Chance event impact on career (CE)</td>
<td>-0.13 (2.58**), -0.13 (2.58**), -0.04 (-0.60), -0.15 (-1.98*)</td>
<td>-0.09 (1.89), 0.03 (0.57), 0.04 (0.60), 0.05 (0.60), 0.04 (0.57), 0.05 (0.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. PSC × CE</td>
<td>-0.15 (1.83), -0.15 (1.90), 0.08 (1.18), 0.19 (2.58**), 0.06 (0.76)</td>
<td>0.09 (1.89), 0.03 (0.57), 0.04 (0.60), 0.05 (0.60), 0.04 (0.57), 0.05 (0.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. NSC × CE</td>
<td>-0.19 (-2.32*), 0.01 (0.16), 0.01 (0.15), 0.19 (2.58**), 0.06 (0.76)</td>
<td>0.09 (1.89), 0.03 (0.57), 0.04 (0.60), 0.05 (0.60), 0.04 (0.57), 0.05 (0.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. POPS × CE</td>
<td>0.13 (1.58), 0.08 (1.18), 0.19 (2.58**), 0.06 (0.76)</td>
<td>0.09 (1.89), 0.03 (0.57), 0.04 (0.60), 0.05 (0.60), 0.04 (0.57), 0.05 (0.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. ProtA × CE</td>
<td>0.08 (1.18), 0.06 (0.76)</td>
<td>0.09 (1.89), 0.03 (0.57), 0.04 (0.60), 0.05 (0.60), 0.04 (0.57), 0.05 (0.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.11, 0.16, 0.28, 0.29, 0.19, 0.23</td>
<td>0.10, 0.13, 0.27, 0.27, 0.18, 0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.11, 0.16, 0.28, 0.29, 0.19, 0.23</td>
<td>0.10, 0.13, 0.27, 0.27, 0.18, 0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δ R²</td>
<td>0.05, 0.05, 0.01, 0.01, 0.04, 0.04</td>
<td>0.05, 0.05, 0.01, 0.01, 0.04, 0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ***p ≤ 0.001; **p ≤ 0.01; *p ≤ 0.05; N = 434–545 (due to missing values).
for organizational commitment and employee met expectations, the β’s of perception of organizational politics and ProtA drop down (β = −0.12, p ≤ 0.05) to non-significant values and (β = 0.19, p ≤ 0.001) to (β = 0.18, p ≤ 0.001). For career satisfaction after controlling for organizational commitment and met employee’s expectations, the β’s of PSC, NSC, perception of organizational politics, and protean attitude to career decreased as follows: (β = 0.21, p ≤ 0.001) to non-significant value, (β = −0.12, p ≤ 0.05) to non-significant value, (β = −0.25, p ≤ 0.001) to non-significant value, and (β = 0.34, p ≤ 0.001) to (β = 0.29, p ≤ 0.001), respectively. For professional vitality, the protean attitude to career drops from (β = 0.30, p ≤ 0.001) to (β = 0.29, p ≤ 0.001).

Therefore, the coexistences of the four meditation conditions imply that organizational commitment and employee’s met expectations mediate the following: between PSC, NSC, perception of organizational politics, and career satisfaction, and mediates partially between ProtA and career satisfaction. Organizational commitment partially mediates between ProtA and professional vitality. Employee’s met expectations mediate between the perception of organizational politics and position in organizational hierarchy, and mediate partially between protean career attitude and position in hierarchy. Therefore, hypothesis H4 is partially supported.

H5 suggested that chance events would modify the relationships between the antecedents and the position in organizational hierarchy and professional vitality. Table 3 displays the results of our analysis, showing that chance events affect the relationships between the antecedents and the position in organizational hierarchy and professional vitality. Chance effect interfered via interaction with NSC for position in organizational hierarchy (β = −0.19, p ≤ 0.05), and consequently the explained variance of position in organizational hierarchy is increased from 11 to 16% (F for ΔR² = 3.68, p ≤ 0.01), a rise of factor 1.45.

Chance events also affect professional vitality (see Table 3) via interaction with PSC and organizational politics (β = −0.15, p ≤ 0.05; β = 0.19, p ≤ 0.01), respectively. The explained variance of professional vitality rises due to this interaction from 19 to 23% (F for ΔR²) = 2.99, p ≤ 0.05), an increase of factor 1.21. Therefore, hypothesis H5a is partially supported.

In order to investigate the direction of chance effect on career success (Table 3), we plotted the highest interaction effect of chance effect (the highest increase in the explained variance of the outcomes), namely the chance effect with NSC on position in organizational hierarchy (see Figure 2). It can be seen that employees with higher NSC are more harmed in their career progress compared with their counterparts. Therefore, hypothesis H5b is supported.

A few additional results are worthy of note, we believe. Of the 434 participants who responded regarding chance effect on their careers, 56% (N = 242) noted that chance events highly affected their career, whereas the remaining 44% (N = 192) indicated that chance events did not interfere with their careers. Our figure for chance event effect is lower than Bright et al.’s results (74%) of Australian sample, probably due to the younger Australian sample as compared to our sample, or may be due to cultural society differences. In both samples, the high figure of people that noted about the influence of chance, effects came out probably due to the deep roots of chance in society live (Roberts, Arth and Bush 1959; Bandura 1982).

When constructing the categories of chance event types, we followed Bright et al.’s (2005) career chance event survey. Their list of included 15 categories of chance events, positive and negative, which affect careers. In our research, being in the right place at the right time emerged as the most encountered of the 15 chance cases, and appeared in 28%
(N = 67) of total chance event cases. The next common case was encouragement of others at 12% (N = 30). The third most common case was professional or personal connection which led to information about jobs, informal recommendations, and job offers with 9% (N = 21). Comparing positive or negative outcomes of chance events, we found that 77% (N = 183) mentioned that the outcome of chance event was positive as related to their career and 23% (N = 56) reported a negative effect related to their career.

Further interesting results also emerged, including the identification of relationships between the different aspects of career success. These included a positive relationship between professional vitality and position in organizational hierarchy and career satisfaction (r = 0.27, p < 0.01; r = 0.30, p < 0.01), respectively. These results imply that managers with higher levels of professional vitality have higher career satisfaction and probably achieve a higher position in their organizations as compared to less vital managers. It goes in line with field observations that successful managers are vital in work and act usually with stamina, enthusiasm, and energy (Bakker and Demerouti 2008; Shraga and Shirom 2009). Causality could not be tested under the current research design.

Discussion

We developed and empirically examined a new model of career success, where we offer three antecedents to career success, as well as direct and indirect relationships among the antecedents. All of our hypotheses which comprised the model were fully or partially supported. The antecedents included positive and NSC, broadening the effect of social capital, perception of organizational politics as an additional resource enabling people to develop their career, and ProtA as a main driver in contemporary careers. The two mediating variables investigated were organizational commitment and met employees’ expectations, acting as complementing variables that mediated the relationships between the antecedents and outcomes. A moderator was added to the model that affects the relationships between antecedents and career success, namely a chance effect on career – an aspect rarely discussed in career research.
Theoretical implications

By incorporating the COR conceptual framework (Hobfoll 2002; Wright and Bonett 2007), our findings highlight the central role of antecedents and their effect on career success. This framework supplements current knowledge with an additional theoretical platform to enrich the discussion of career success. We also broadened the notion of career success, adding specific dimension of the work domains to the generally accepted ones. Four variables (PSC, NSC, perception of organizational politics, and protean career) demonstrated relationship with different facets of career success, both directly and through mediation. Lastly, we added a new construct, the phenomenon of chance events’ impact on the relationships connected to career success (Bright et al. 2005; Bright, Pryor, Wing Man Chen and Rijanto 2009). Our study suggests that chance events mainly affect the relationships with the external facet of career success (position in organizational hierarchy) and less with the subjective facet of career success (professional vitality) by interacting with positive and, NSC and the employee’s perception of organizational politics, providing a better explanation of employee career success.

We believe that our main contribution to the careers literature is that our model depicts broadly the complicated nature of factors related to and affecting career success, mainly by proposing a wider conceptual framework and variables such as NSC, chance event, and professional vitality that enrich the discussion of career success in the turbulent working arena nowadays.

Organizational and managerial implications

Beyond its theoretical contribution to the study of career development, our study also has a number of meaningful practical implications. The implications for organizations in both the private and the public sectors are that, despite the development of new psychological contracts (Rousseau 1995; Conway and Briner 2005), organizational commitment is still a significant construct in understanding the world of work (see Mowday 1998). Together with employees’ met expectations, organizational commitment relates to the success of organizational managers, and thus we believe it is worthwhile to invest simultaneously in organizational commitment and employees met expectations in order to enhance the success of managers in organization.

Our study’s finding of the differential relations of professional vitality and organizational aspects and facets of career success suggests that improving the physical and spiritual vitality of their employees should be a priority for organizations. Improving the social capital of employees should also be taken seriously by both organizations and employees. Yet, we pointed out the dark side of networking (NSC) that might be harmful to progress in an organization and to the well-being of employees, which should be considered by both the organization and its employees. Finally, the relevance and impact of chance events are a factor in career progress, and employees should aim to positively exploit opportunities they encounter in life.

Strengths and weaknesses

As with any new addition to the careers literature, this research also has limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed in future studies. The research design is based on self-report and thus might be subject to common-method bias. To check for this deficiency, we employed the Harmon’s test, and following Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003), we conducted a factor analysis, which showed that the model has no
dominant factor (six factors were acquired in the analysis) and is thus less sensitive to such bias. Most of the knowledge in management and behavioral studies is based on studies that employ a single source, and while some correlations might be inflated, the use of this method should not be considered fatal error (Spector 2006). We explored a specific population – task/project managers in high tech and engineering/infrastructure fields – which may limit the external validity of our results, but this population is typical for the current managerial workforce. Lastly, the study was conducted in a single country – Israel. It should be mentioned that Israel may be considered as a ‘Maduradam’ (a microcosm) for studies representing wider Western society (Harel and Tzafrir 1999), thus this limitation is likely not a major issue.

**Future Research**

Investigating combinations of other antecedents that may enhance the predictive power of the career success model, like perception of organizational support or work – family conflict would be useful for further careers research. Chance event impact bears further investigation as well, particularly focusing on the development of a more complex measure for it. Looking for culture effects on perception of chance/luck and its relationship to career would be useful as well as would be an inquiry into the balance between the different aspects of career success as an additional factor in developing career theory.

**References**


Hobfoll, S.E. (1998), Stress, Culture, and Community, New York: Springer.


