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ABSTRACT

Research into career success has usually dealt with objective aspects of career paths such as income and job title. Cognitive variables can also be used to assess career success, career mobility, and career satisfaction. This study examined demographics, job properties, and personal attributes as well as the relationship between career strategies and career success. The sample was obtained from 14 major corporation located in metropolitan Los Angeles, California and employing more than 1,000 people locally. Personnel officers at the firms distributed questionnaires to managers who were supervising others and had both hiring and budget responsibility; had been identified by their organizations as talented; and were considered realistically likely to be promoted within the next 3 years. The final sample of 96 male and 98 female managers completed a career development questionnaire on demographics, job properties and personal attributes, career strategies, and success. The data revealed that demographics were the best predictor set when trying to explain a person's career success and mobility. None of the predictor sets explained career satisfaction. The usefulness of career strategies when studying career is brought into question by the weak relationship between career strategies, career success, and career mobility. (Author/NB)

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Career Success, Mobility and Extrinsic Career Satisfaction: Studying Corporate Managers[1]

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Career Success, Mobility and Extrinsic Career Satisfaction: Studying Corporate Managers

Abstract

Research into career success has usually dealt with objective aspects of career paths such as income and job title. This paper suggests that cognitive variables can also be used to assess career success, career mobility and career satisfaction. It examines demographics, job properties and personal attributes as well as the relationship between career strategies and career success. The data reveal that demographics are the best predictor set when trying to explain a person's career success and mobility. None of the predictor sets explained career satisfaction. The usefulness of career strategies when studying careers is brought into question by the weak relationship between career strategies, career success and career mobility. Implications for future research and management are discussed.

Career Success, Mobility and Extrinsic Career Satisfaction: Studying Corporate Managers

Several previous studies have examined the phenomenon of career success. Unfortunately, they have almost invariably focused on external perceptions of individual careers and evaluated careers using society's rather narrow standards (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). Confused pictures of the minds of "unsuccessful" individuals result from a failure to agree on the particular measures of ob ective career success (Korman, 1980). Other research does assess careers from a cognitive perspective, measuring individuals' attitudes toward their own career success (e.g. Korman, 1980; Gattiker & Larwood, 1986). However, this research has seldom linked potential factors such as career strategies to an individual's level of satisfaction with his or her career (e.g., Landy, 1985, pp. 393-397). Career success has been related to satisfaction, but potential predictors to explain differences in satisfaction still need to be determined.

Looking at careers from the perspective of the individual employee demonstrates that career success is a construct which exists only in people's minds and which has no clear boundaries. Therefore, it is important to determine if people considered to have hierarchical success are satisfied with their own organizational advancement (Schein, 1980). Additionally, it is important to advance our knowledge of factors that may influence those individuals' organizational careers, freeing ourselves from the limitations of demographics and looking as well at job propensities and personal attributes (e.g., line vs. staff position, gender) and at the career strategies used by

the individual to advance his or her career success (Gattiker, 1985). Researchers have called for such work (e.g., Rosenbaum, 1984; Schein, 1980) but so far little has been done.

This paper first presents a study designed to explain career success, mobility and satisfaction by employing both objective and subjective predictors. Second, the predictors that may better explain career success and mobility as well as career satisfaction are examined. Third, Landy's (1985) proposition that certain cognitive events have consequences for a person's level of satisfaction is tested. Findings that examine these issues have been presented before, but only in piecemeal fashion.

A Cross-Disciplinary View of Career Success:

Literature Review

This research is multi-disciplinary, drawing upon literature in sociology, management and psychology, and is directly affected by studies in three areas: career development, satisfaction and career success. The sections that follow provide a brief summary of recent work in these areas and show how such work can be applied to the career success domain.

Career success has been researched extensively for at least three decades. While sociologists have looked mostly at socio-economic factors and advancement (e.g., Pfeffer, 1977; Rosenbaum, 1985), psychologists have been primarily interested in assessing the career satisfaction of 'successful' managers (e.g., Korman, 1980). Since no previous research has tried to link these approaches by integrating them into one study, this paper will attempt to do so, looking at not only objective career success and mobility (e.g., title, income--the usual indicators of success) but also at career satisfaction. Further, it seems necessary to look at which factors influence

either career success or career satisfaction by examining not only objective independent variables like demographics but also subjective ones such as career strategies (Schein, 1980).

Career Success

Objective and subjective career success. Careers can be judged from external or internal perspectives (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). The objective path of a person's career as described by a reference group serves as the reference point for the external perspective. For example, society would probably view a lawyer who attended a prestigious law school, entered a respected law office right after graduation, and became a partner after an appropriate period of time, as successful. Most research has shared society's bias and looked only at such objective measures of career success when studying career development. Kotter (1982), for example, examined the career patterns of successful managers by defining success through career mobility and income, and Gould and Penley (1984) used a similar approach to study employees in a government agency. Korman, Wittig-Berman, and Lang (1981), however, found that successful managers often were not satisfied with their careers and did not feel successful or proud of their achievements. They had their own internal perspectives of success, which would often lead them to subjectively consider themselves failures.

Career mobility. The usual indicators subsumed under the term career mobility are the frequency of promotions or the length of time an individual has stayed in the same position (e.g., Rosenbaum 1984). Rosenbaum (1985) found that the amount of time a person spent in his or her last position was a good measure of career mobility, since remaining in one position for a long period caused stagnation. A high level of stagnation tended to indicate that

individuals had arrived at the peak of their careers. Kotter (1982) confirmed these results by surveying a group of executive managers in a large corporation. He found that those headed for the upper echelons had usually been promoted out of their positions within 2.4 years. This suggests that frequency of promotion is a valuable indicator for assessing career mobility, since it is important for an individual's ascent in a corporate hierarchy.

From a subjective perspective it is important to determine how a person perceives his or her level in an organizational hierarchy. Perceptions are defined as cognitive representations of career mobility attributes and include the significance of these attributes to individuals (e.g., the perceived level in a hierarchy). Thus, a person could perceive him or herself to be relatively low in the hierarchy even though an outside observer may feel differently (Korman, 1980).

Career satisfaction. Landy (1985, p. 395) suggested that satisfaction is an emotional state based on an earlier event. Career satisfaction could therefore be defined as a stimulated response to career and work events, and will occur only if these events are sufficiently stimulating to produce an emotional reaction.

Mortimer (1979) has argued that two broad categories of satisfaction can be identified: internal and external. External factors determining job satisfaction might include pay, career progress and position, while individual suitability to a career might be considered an internal factor. Career satisfaction refers to the overall affective orientation of the individual toward his or her career or job role, and is only one facet of a person's job satisfaction--a fact that should be kept in mind, since a person satisfied with his or her career may not be satisfied with another facet of his or her

job (e.g., working conditions). In this paper, career satisfaction is synonymous with external career satisfaction, which will be the focus in this study.

What Predicts Career Success?

Demographics. Dalton (1951) was among the first organizational researchers to examine the antecedents to success. Studying 228 salaried managers, he concluded that demographic variables are the most important contributor to career success. Demographics have also been found to be important in more recent studies. Gould and Penley (1984) found that the demographic variables of age and education were significant in explaining the variance in salary progression. The R^2 obtained for age and education was 14.5%, making it the highest in their predictor set, and supporting their hypothesis that an individual's demographics can have a significant impact on career success.

Job properties and personal attributes. Successful people could be expected to prefer situations with a higher degree of centrality, or central importance to the organization, allowing them to obtain and use power (see Brass, 1985). Although some power can be attained in staff positions (such as human resource management), those jobs are usually considered to be more peripheral, supporting and serving line positions that have authority over the organization's primary activity (see Hitt, Ireland & Palia, 1982). As a result, staff positions are generally lower paid than line positions (Pfeffer, 1977; Weinstein & Srinivasan, 1974) and slow down an individual's promotability (Larwood & Gattiker, 1986).

Another important factor to predict career success is the industry the employee works in. For instance, a fast growing service company will offer

more opportunity for lateral and hierarchical career movement than a steel manufacturer (Rosenbaum, 1985). Thus a distinction between manufacturing and other companies could be helpful, since the former have experienced less growth than the service sector (e.g., banking) in the last decade.

What Predicts Career Mobility?

As mentioned earlier, career mobility is generally viewed as the frequency of promotions or the length of time an individual has stayed in the same position (e.g., Rosenbaum, 1984). One would also expect that a frequently promoted manager would perceive him or herself to be high in the corporate structure (Kotter, 1982).

Demographics. It is well established in the literature that certain demographic characteristics help and other hinder individuals in their career achievements (Jaskola, Beyer & Trice, 1985; Pfeffer & Ross, 1982; Rosenbaum, 1985). For instance, Gould and Penley (1984) found that demographics such as education explained career and salary progress in a corporate hierarchy. Lang (1985) found that well educated managers were less likely to perceive themselves as being high in the corporate hierarchy, since their expectations were often extremely high. Another study found that demographics such as education, family and marital status affect a person's extrinsic career satisfaction (Romney, Smith, Freeman, Kagan & Klein, 1979).

Respondent age may also be partially responsible for subjective perceptions of career mobility, since older employees tend to be more satisfied with their career progress than younger workers (Korman, Mahler & Omran, 1983; Rhodes, 1983). Based on these and other studies (e.g., Rosenbaum, 1984), demographics can be expected to explain part of the variance in career mobility.

Job properties and personal attributes. Job properties and personal attributes are also of interest in predicting career mobility. Dalton (1951) felt that one decisive factor for career mobility is the industrial manager's position in the organization's hierarchy. In surveying the oil industry, others found that a line position may help a manager's advancement far more than a staff position (Korman, et al., 1983). Pfeffer (1977), using longitudinal data, found a significantly higher compensation level for MBA's and business graduates in line positions over staff positions.

Numerous researchers have reported that a personal attribute such as being female may lead to longer promotional cycles and lower salary levels for an individual (e.g., Connor & Kemp, 1987). Larwood and Gattiker (1986) reported that gender affected a person's career achievement and that women attained higher management levels at a later career stage than men. Sewell, Hauser and Wolf (1980) concluded based on their longitudinal data that a person's gender will affect current and future occupational status and career mobility. According to their study, women's first jobs are generally of lower occupational status than the ones obtained by men and later mobility via, for example, promotions, is slower for females.

What Predicts External Career Satisfaction?

External career satisfaction is defined as how satisfied an individual is with his or her career (e.g., career progress and income). Landy (1985, chap. 11) suggested that career satisfaction is a cognitive phenomenon which could aid in understanding people's reactions to career events. In addition, the cognitive nature of satisfaction could possibly explain why objective success does not necessarily result in satisfaction (cf. Korman, 1980).

Demographics. Research indicates that the relationship between

demographics and career satisfaction can be very weak (e.g., Gould & Penley, 1984; Korman, 1980). Age may be partly responsible for these weak effects among respondents, since older employees tend to be more satisfied with their careers and jobs than younger ones (Rhodes, 1983). Since career satisfaction is a stimulated response to work and career events, this reasoning seems justifiable. An additional factor is suggested by Korman and colleagues' (1983) materialistic ethic construct, which postulates that demographics may relate to a person's satisfaction with income and current hierarchical position. For example, early socialization may have instilled certain values which lead to a striving for income and hierarchical success (Romney, et al., 1979). Achievements in these areas may lead to feelings of satisfaction. It is feasible to assume, however, that an individual may not see a relationship between his or her demographics and career related emotions (see Landy, 1985, chap. 10). Thus this issue will be further examined later in this study.

Job properties and personal attributes. It appears reasonable to suggest that a line position may be more satisfying for an individual than a staff position, since people may know that line positions facilitate career progress. A similar argument could be made for working in a non-manufacturing plant vs. a manufacturing one because the former has recently experienced more growth and can thus allow more extrinsic satisfaction with progress and pay (cf. Kotter, 1982). Gender is a personal attribute that has been linked to satisfaction. Nonetheless, a review of the literature suggests that gender makes less difference than one might believe (Hall, 1986, chap. 3).

Do Career Strategies Explain Career Success and Satisfaction?

An individual's feeling that a career strategy is an important advantage for success is based on a belief that applying the strategy will lead to what

he or she thinks is the maximum career reward possible (Locke, 1976). Whether the individual uses the right strategy depends largely upon his or her perception of the environment (Naylor, Pritchard & Ilgen, 1980, p. 73). Since humans have only a limited ability to acquire and process information, it is necessary to sort out and concentrate on the information cues perceived to be the most important to maximize benefits (Simon, 1979). Individuals may justify career strategies based on incorrect perceptions, and may credit career success to a strategy rather than admit a mistake. From this perspective, career strategies may not always explain objective career success.

Bandura (1982) cited the importance of chance events which influence career paths and strategies. When reading popular literature, one might think that career strategies play a decisive role in realizing career success, but such books are usually based on personal experiences, case studies, or limited interviews (Blank, 1981; Molloy, 1977). Gould and Penley (1984) reported that their eight career strategy factors accounted for only an additional 5.8% of the variance in salary progression for managers. However, had they used a more conservative measure, such as an adjusted $\bar{R}^2$, the level of prediction would not have been statistically significant (cf. Cohen & Cohen, 1983, pp. 103-107). An alternative analysis of this phenomenon (Larwood & Gattiker, 1986) reached a conclusion similar to Bandura's. It suggested that any overall relationships between strategy factors and success would be difficult to find once the strategies become widely recognized and practiced. Repeated adoption would prevent the strategies from serving as a selective mechanism, [illegible]refore from making an identifiable impact on a user's career. In view [illegible]contradictory positions, further research into the effectiveness of

strategies seems appropriate.

Research Issues

The preceding survey of the relevant career success literature seems to indicate that there is a bias towards objective career research examining the relationship between objective predictors, such as social demographics and success measures, such as income. This has caused researchers to ignore the relationships between subjective predictors, as for example career strategies, perception of career success and career satisfaction. Investigating subjective and objective predictors in combination with career success is more likely to provide insights into the domain of career success.

This research tries to investigate both objective career success and career satisfaction. Objective measures (e.g., demographics) as well as subjective ones (e.g., career strategies) are used to try to explain why some individuals may be dissatisfied with their careers despite income and career mobility indexes that indicate they are more successful than their colleagues. In spite of suggestions by various researchers that such an investigation is necessary to increase our knowledge about careers (e.g., Brousseau, 1983; Korman, 1980; Schein, 1980, Van Maanen & Schein, 1977), the approach is unique to this study. The hypotheses given below were stated in an attempt to discover exactly how subjective and objective factors relate to career mobility, success and career satisfaction.

The central hypothesis to be tested here is that correlations exist between these predictors. Since at this time there is no clearly defined notion of the direction of difference to expect if the null hypothesis is false (e.g., did the independent variable correlate with the dependent one?), two-tailed rejection regions will be used (Hays, 1981, p. 257). The

literature reviewed above suggests three overall predictions for the sample used in this study.

Hypothesis 1. In agreement with the literature previously investigated, demographics and job properties/personal attribute variables should predict a significant part of the variance of career success for the managers studied.

Hypothesis 2. Career strategies should not account for any significant part of the population variance when explaining career success.

Hypothesis 3. Demographic variables are a stronger predictor of career success than either job properties/personal attribute variables or career strategy variables.

Method

Design and Subjects

For this study, twenty-four major corporations were selected from a published list of the largest firms operating in California. They were divided evenly between manufacturers and non-manufacturers, and selection was based on firm size and headquarter location--in this case, firms in metropolitan Los Angeles employing more than 1000 people locally. Except for this stipulation of locale and size, organizations were chosen at random. Fourteen firms agreed to participate in a study of their managers' career success. Personnel officers in those companies were instructed to distribute questionnaires to persons whom they selected based on the following criteria: (1) managers supervising individuals and having both budget and hiring responsibility and authority (e.g., manager of operations, vice-president marketing); (2) individuals who had been identified by their organizations early in their organizational careers as "talents" (cf. Rosenbaum, 1984, chap. 1); (3) individuals who were considered realistically likely to be promoted

within the next three years. Although "success" was not defined, the above three parameters limited the selection process considerably, eliminating individuals who might have been selected solely for their willingness to respond. Furthermore, individuals carrying the title of manager but not qualifying on all of the above three counts were eliminated. Since staff positions were included in the study, this sample was also composed of professionals with primarily managerial duties. Only demonstrably "successful" individuals were examined, to accommodate Osipow's suggestion (1983, p. 271) that prior research may have been inconclusive because it often mixed respondents of varying levels of success.

As suggested by Baron and Bielby (1986), we asked for a stratified sample with approximately equal numbers of men and women in similar positions (line and staff). This was done specifically to eliminate any gender effects which might be solely due to the fact that women and men hold different positions. The large size of the organizations involved in this study allowed such an approach.

Respondents were designated by their personnel departments according to a 2 (male or female) x 2 (low or middle to higher managers) x 2 (line or staff) factorial design in which up to 16 managers (2 per condition) could participate. Such a stratified sample facilitates making subsequent generalizations from the results of this study (Blalock, 1984, chap. 4).

Of 224 executives invited, 194 (87%) participated in the research by completing a usable survey. They were approximately equally distributed by group, with 95 industrial participants and 99 from other firms. There were 96 male and 98 female respondents, 97 each in low and higher positions, 95 in line jobs and 99 in staff positions. The respondents had worked an average of

11.9 years in their current career. Response rates between the different companies ranged between 75% and 95%.

Instrument

Participants were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire assessing their views on career development. The instrument was divided into four segments. The first asked about demographic variables, such as years in career, education, age, marital status and number of children, while the second portion was concerned with job properties and personal attributes--including whether the participant held a line or staff position--and gender.[1] Classifications of individual organizational levels (low or middle to higher managers) as well as type of firm were obtained from the respective personnel departments.

The third questionnaire segment consisted of a list of eighty-two potential career strategies and tactics, including ability to meet deadlines, showing company loyalty and willingness to take risks (Larwood, Radford & Berger, 1980). The items used in this portion of the survey were originally derived from a study by Heisler and Gemmill (1978) who asked managers and MBA students about career strategies. Their results indicated that such areas as ability to meet deadlines and to take risks were perceived by both groups of subjects to be important career strategies. Furthermore, the data obtained by Heisler and Gemmill indicated that MBA students as well as seasoned managers felt that career strategies were important in helping advancement and career success in an organization. Each item in the third segment of the questionnaire was accompanied by a five-point scale ranging from (1) "important advantage" to (5) "important disadvantage." These items had previously been used and tested for their psychometric properties (Larwood,

Radford & Berger, 1980). A correlation of .85 was obtained between what managers and a sample of MBA students felt were important items for career success.

The final part of the survey concerned success. Global success in relation to others in management and level in the company's hierarchy were evaluated on a three-point scale ranging from (1) "very" to (3) "not very." Satisfaction with progress and pay were each assessed on five-point scales, from (1) "more than it should be" to (5) "less than it should be." Respondents also provided two relatively objective measures, pay category (scored from under $20,000 annual income to over $50,000) and the length of time since their last promotion (scored from under 1 year to over 5 years).

Analyses

In order to evaluate the data set, a factor analysis was conducted on the success measures. One of the design variables, organizational level (as rated by the personnel department), was also included as a success measure in the factor analysis. Orthogonal varimax rotations were performed and eigenvalues (>1.0) helped in determining the number of factors to be extracted from the data set of the different items (Kaiser, 1974). This decision was supported by a scree-test (Cattell, 1966).

Factor loadings greater than .40 were statistically significant ($p<.001$) according to the Burt-Banks criterion (Child, 1970), and were retained for the scales discussed below. This conservative approach was used to avoid reporting results based on sample characteristics which could not be replicated in the future (cf. Nunnally, 1978, chap. 3 & 6; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, Sechrest & Grove, 1981, chap. 3). The lowest factor loading obtained with this data set was .53, thus well beyond the .40 criteria. The

82 career strategy survey items were subjected to identical factor analytic procedures as above (cf. Larwood, et al., 1980).

Multiple regression was used to predict career success, extrinsic career satisfaction and career mobility. The different independent variable sets were analyzed using separate regression runs (e.g., demographics), and one analysis was done with all sets combined (i.e. demographics, job properties and personal attributes as well as career strategy factors). The order of the variables within each variable set was not important, so they were entered in one step. At this stage, when trying to explain the variance in each dependent variable, it was advisable not to look at each independent variable separately. Instead, it was more important to determine whether or not the group of variables could explain part of the variance in the dependent variable (cf. Blalock, 1984, chap. 5-7; Cohen & Cohen, 1983, chap. 3).

According to Cohen and Cohen (1983, chap. 1), multiple regression is best suited for trying to determine the magnitude of a phenomenon. For correct application, multiple regression assumes that the residuals are normally distributed (bivariate and multivariate normal distribution). To test this assumption, the data used in each of the regression runs were tested for data outliers by looking at standardized residuals first and then evaluating a histogram of the standardized residual plots. The analysis of these two procedures, along with the normal probability plots of the standardized residuals obtained, showed that the data collected met the normal distribution assumption.

Results

Factors in Career Success and Extrinsic Career Satisfaction

In order to test Hypotheses 1 to 3, it was first necessary to extract

independent factors for objective and subjective career success. The eight career success measures were subjected to the factor analytic procedure described above. All eight items loaded significantly on three resulting factors: (1) career success; (2) extrinsic satisfaction; and (3) career mobility. Together these accounted for 69.5% of item variance (cf. Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

The 82 strategy items loaded on seven factors: ability (e.g., to express oneself clearly), public appearance (activity in community affairs, being married), vigilance (making sure others don't take what is yours), sex role (learning from male role models), politics (having a sponsor at a high level), acquiescence to authority (being an advocate of company policy) and education (having a good academic record)[2]. This solution explained 52% of the variance in the responses, a level similar to the variance explained in other research uncovering somewhat different factors (Elliot, 1982; Heisler & Gemmill, 1978).

To facilitate comparisons and subsequent discussions, the results of this research have been divided into two sections according to the hypotheses stated earlier (H1 and H2), with a third section concerning the assessment of the magnitude of each predictor set as well as the combined adjusted $\underline{R}^2$ for all the independent variable sets (H3).

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 held that demographics and job properties/personal attributes would predict a significant part of the variance in the three career success factors. As before, the data were tested to see if the residuals were normally distributed and the results showed that this assumption was met. The variables measuring demographics (such as marital

status and number of children) were entered by themselves to obtain their unique contribution R^2. Separate multiple regression runs were done on the data to get the unique contribution R^2 of job properties/personal attributes (respondent's sex, line vs. staff position and type of industry) as well as of the career strategy factors.

The demographic variables account for a modest but significant amount of the population variance when predicting Factor 1 (career success) (adjusted R^2=.12, p<.001) and Factor 3 (career mobility) (adjusted R^2=.21, p<.001). Job properties and personal attributes account for a small but significant amount of the population variance when predicting Factor 1 (adjusted R^2=.06, p<.001). Within the predictor factors, Pearson's r was examined to determine the direction of the predictor's contribution, as suggested by Cohen and Cohen (1983, chap. 3). Because of coding direction, respondent age, years in career, education and number of children correlated negatively with Factor 1 (career success), while marital status correlated positively (p<.05, by a two-tail test of Pearson's r) with Factor 1. Thus an older, married respondent who has children and some college education and has spent some time in his or her career tends to accomplish more than others in terms of career success (Factor 1). The respondent's age, time spent in career and number of children correlated negatively with Factor 3 (career mobility) (p<.01, by a two-tail test of Pearson's r). This suggests that mid-career individuals and those having children may perceive his/her promotion development in a more positive light than a younger colleague.

Insert Table 2 about here

The job properties/personal attribute variables which correlated negatively with Factor 3 (career mobility) (p<.05, by a two-tail test of

Pearson's r) are the type of industry and the respondent's sex. Apparently, females employed by non-industrial firms tended to have been promoted quite recently and considered themselves to be near the top of their organization's hierarchy. None of the interaction terms of the situational and organizational variables (type of industry, gender and line vs. staff) were significant. Neither demographics nor job properties/personal attributes predicted a significant part of the population variance in Factor 2 (extrinsic career satisfaction), while job properties/personal attribute variables did not predict Factor 1 (career success). Based on these results, Hypothesis 1 seems only partly confirmed.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the relationship of career strategy factors to success would be minimal. The results in Table 2 show that career strategy factors do not predict any of the success factors significantly. To confirm this hypothesis, however, several statistical decisions were made regarding the alpha error and power, as suggested by Cohen, who states: "the power of a statistical test of a null hypothesis is the probability that it will lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis" (1977, p. 4). The power of this test was calculated with a .30 effects size. This effect size represents a conservative approach which is generally advisable when using field data. Effect size implies the degree to which a phenomenon is present in a population; that is, the degree to which the null hypothesis is false. These calculations led to a power level of .85, which indicates that in this instance, where the results obtained do not allow the rejection of the null hypothesis, there is nevertheless at least an 85% chance of rejection if the actual effect was as large as .30. According to Cohen, this level of power is

acceptable and not often attained in the behavioral sciences. Hence, Hypothesis 2 appears supported.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that when examining the magnitude of variance, demographics would explain the largest part of the variation in career success which could be accounted for by the predictors. Rows 1, 2 and 3 in Table 2 show that demographics are the strongest predictor for both Factor 1 (career success) and Factor 3 (career mobility). The regression coefficients obtained in the equation showed that these differences were substantial. Furthermore, demographics alone account for a slightly larger amount of the population variance observed in Factor 1 and Factor 3 than all other predictors combined (cumulative adjusted $\underline{R}^2$ is .10 for Factor 1 and .19 for Factor 3). This is the natural result of having a larger predictor set which affects the degrees of freedom used (Cohen & Cohen, 1983, pp. 105-107). Again, the regression coefficient obtained for demographics indicated that this difference was significant. Based on these results, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to examine career success, career mobility and career satisfaction. Landy (1985) called for research examining cognitive levels of satisfaction, and this study is in part a response to this call. Overall, the results of this survey indicate that demographics, job properties/personal attributes and career strategies fail to explain extrinsic career satisfaction. This should not come as a great surprise, however, since the usefulness of the construct "extrinsic career satisfaction" in organizational settings is rather elusive (Larwood, 1984, pp. 147-150).

Ambiguity may be latent. People may claim to be satisfied with their careers but still feel unsuccessful in them, or resolve to change employers (cf. Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982).

Some researchers contend that reports of extrinsic career satisfaction are useful but do not directly address the way in which employees evaluate their careers. Furthermore, studies indicate that reports which use the construct of satisfaction to assess an individual's emotional states are always difficult to interpret (Gutek, 1978). Additionally, older employees tend to be more satisfied than their younger peers (Rhodes, 1983). This would suggest that the construct of extrinsic career satisfaction may be of limited value (e.g., Korman, 1980; Mortimer, 1979) in attempts to increase understanding of people's careers and their feelings about them. Findings indicate that this construct possibly should not be used in future research.

Another important result of this study is that demographics proved to be the best predictor for career success and career mobility. This result confirms earlier research where demographics account for the largest part of the variance explained in career success and hierarchial career development (Dalton, 1951; Gould & Penley, 1984; Pfeffer, 1977). This research project goes a step further by surveying managers in more than one organization and in two types of industries (e.g., Dalton, 1951; Gould & Penley, 1984).

The discovery that demographics are the most important predictor for career success and career mobility is an important discovery in itself. Nonetheless, at this point it seems advisable to increase their level of prediction, possibly by increasing the number of variables studied. In particular, sociologists have suggested that socio-economic background may influence people's levels of expectation when they join the workforce and may

help to explain why certain people advance in careers over others (Romney et al., 1978; Sewell, et al., 1980). Future studies should explore this further.

The results of this study also seem to support Landy's claim that career strategies used in the past are not likely to currently arouse any strong emotion in individuals. Our strategy factors were identified by managers and MBA's as important determinants of career success and mobility (Larwood, et al., 1980). But, a subjective belief is not necessarily accurate. People may believe that past career strategies have been important to their current success as a way of rationalizing former actions, whether good or bad (Pfeffer & Lawler, 1980; Bandura, 1982). However, looking at the data, these correlations apparently do not exist.

In relation to earlier research (e.g., Gould & Penley, 1984) the data obtained in this study does not necessarily negate findings which show that strategies do have a small effect on salary and promotional progress. Instead, certain strategies may apply in some fields (Gould & Penley surveyed a municipal government) but not in others (e.g., manufacturing, private business and banks). A second possible explanation could be that career strategies are ephemeral. In other words, although strategies may have helped career progress at one time or in a particular organization, their widespread use may render them competitively obsolete in other circumstances and thus prohibit their successful application by others. One important aspect of any competitive strategy is an element of surprise and originality, which, in a career context, enables the user to distinguish him or herself from others. This could explain why career strategies recommended by broadly circulated "how to" books might be ineffective.

Because this study used successful managers chosen by their employers

(based on the external criteria presented earlier), it remains to be asked: what would the relationships examined here be for managers who were less successful according to external criteria? In this kind of sample demographics might not explain subjective success, as they seem to do here. Korman (1980) reported that lower-level managers who were more satisfied with non-work related spheres of their lives also felt less alienated and more satisfied with their careers. Career satisfaction, at any rate, may correlate highly with success criteria and family variables regardless of demographics.

The data reported here suggest that more research is needed to address the relationship between job properties/personal attributes and how these affect career mobility. We know that job properties/personal attributes relate to career mobility but not to career success. Hence, we need to answer more of our questions about these relationships. Do different job properties/personal attributes such as a job's criticality to the firm help explain differences in degrees of career success and mobility? Research about wage structures in organizations would suggest that the criticality of a position does affect success and mobility (e.g., Pfeffer & Davis-Blake, 1987). Additionally, the effect of gender and other personal attributes on careers is documented (e.g., Larwood & Gattiker, 1986).

Future research must address how the criticality of one's position and various personal attributes might help to explain career success and mobility. This knowledge will be valuable to the manager attempting to attain a career fit between the needs of the employee and the needs of the firm.

One potential limitation of this study is the fact that the factors contain both objective and perceptual measures of career success and career mobility. The factor analysis showed, however, that these items had similar

loadings and signs (plus vs. minus), thus justifying such an approach (cf. Rummel, 1978). Additionally, earlier attempts to separate these dimensions have not necessarily provided better explanations of the phenomena studied (Penley & Gould, 1984).

Conclusion

The results of this study confirm earlier conceptual work which claimed that career success should be assessed by using both external and internal perspectives. Background (examined using demographics) and job properties/personal attributes were the important independent variables in this study. These findings should help managers match a job with an individual with increased effectiveness.

The investigation into the ability of demographics and job properties/personal attributes to help explain the variance in a person's career success and career mobility had interesting results. Measures using both demographics and job properties/personal attributes successfully explained the level of variance in career mobility; however, this level never exceeded a rather low 21%. What could help to explain levels of variance better? One recent emphasis has been on studying organizational characteristics and their effect upon wages, career mobility and success (e.g., Baron & Bielby, 1986; Pfeffer & Davis-Blake, 1987; Rosenbaum, 1985). This research would suggest that organizational characteristics are yet another independent variable set affecting career success and mobility in a corporate hierarchy.

This assessment of demographics and job properties/personal attributes is only rudimentary; it is possible that a more extensive and refined appraisal will increase the explanatory power of our measurements. Perceptions of job

characteristics have also been used successfully in other research explaining career success (e.g., Gattiker & Larwood, 1986), which suggests that further research in this area may contribute to our understanding of career success and mobility.

Theoretical Implications

In evaluating the theoretical implications of this study, it is natural to look first at its significance for future research. Since this study included only "successful" individuals, as suggested by Osipow (1983, p. 271), it provides conclusive evidence that despite manager's subjective beliefs to the contrary, career strategies are ineffective. It also suggests that vocational psychologists need to integrate the insights gained by sociologists when using the construct of career success and development. For example, socialization and values developed during childhood and adolescence will affect the individual's aspirations concerning his or her career (Romney, et al., 1979). Thus, attitudinal measures such as success criteria, extrinsic career satisfaction and career strategies may be easier to explain when considering sociological factors in combination with psychological ones. This study represents a first, albeit small, step in that direction.

The previously mentioned low level of variance in this study warrants further discussion at this point. While demographics seemed to explain career success, other independent variables failed to account for substantial amounts of the variance in this factor. One should keep in mind that there are several possible explanations for this. The most fundamental (and also the most primitive) of these depends upon our realization that society and individuals do not always evaluate career success in the same way. Discrepancy between the two evaluations may lead to conflict or affect the

person's concept of career development. A second explanation may be that relationships reported between personality variables and career success may invoke untested or unspecified theoretical linkages. The causal mechanisms underlying such relationships must be inferred from a wide range of theoretical possibilities. Those with high achievement needs, for example, might be less satisfied with their present success because they have higher aspirations. A third explanation would be that there is a theoretical correspondence between an individual characteristic and a career success construct. When, for example, perceptions of job characteristics relate to organizational commitment (or, as in this study, when job properties/personal attributes relate to career mobility), the theoretical linkage between variables is more specified or obvious than it is with the almost arbitrary use of personality constructs in much of the organizational literature (cf. Pfeffer & Ross, 1982).

The argument that career success and extrinsic career satisfaction have different causes also suggests some necessary revisions to our models of career development. It is possible that external career paths, internal career paths and social information about one's career situation are three separate or independent determinants of both objective and subjective career success, but it is also possible that these three sources of career success are highly interactive. Future research may find that our perceptions of career success are conditioned by attitudinal cues from both internal (career success concept) and external (social) sources. Alternatively, we may find that internal and external cues are moderated by realities of work life such as economic growth rates and demographic factors which can speed up or slow down the progress of a career. Additional research is needed to see if such

interactive models will offer better explanations than simple main-effect ones.

Practical Implications

The most obvious practical implication of these findings concerns the usefulness of vocational counselling. Vocational counsellors are intended to help individuals make career choices and to help devise career strategies which will provide individuals with the environment and rewards they desire. Some research indicates that this will lead to career satisfaction (Schein, 1978; Stokes Shaffer, 1987). On the other hand, the claim made by Bandura (1982) that career success may be due to change rather than strategy, and the present finding that career strategies do not explain one's career success, career mobility nor extrinsic career satisfaction, imply that it may be extremely difficult to make the "right" choice of career strategy (e.g., what type of higher education) at an early stage of one's career. Even vocational counselling efforts may be prone to failure, since these have to contend with strong external forces that may make individuals change their careers or prompt them to feel less successful than they wish to be. For instance, U.S. employers often consider an undergraduate degree to be a pre-requisite for job applicants. Thus, a decision to attain such an education is not a strategic move but a requirement to start one's career in an advantageous position.

Interpreting the results in a conservative way, one might conclude that career counselling is not worth the effort, and that the information obtained concerning a person's preferences and his or her personality is insufficient to make decisions about career strategies and choices. Numerous environmental factors and future events may be equally important and ignorance of these may lead to strategies which are not necessarily rational (Simon, 1979). A more

liberal interpretation, just as defensible, is that career counselling efforts need to be more extensive and must include both environmental considerations and psychological factors.

Our data about the importance of a person's demographics for career mobility may also have direct implications for personnel selection practices. If career satisfaction remains rather stable over time, as Staw, Bell and Clausen (1986) indicate, it may be easier to improve organizational morale through employee selection than through career development. For example, looking at today's demographics, many individuals may have career aspirations which are so difficult to accomplish that they may never feel extrinsically satisfied with their careers. Such a "high-flyer" mentality may be to the firm's disadvantage. The traditional promotional channels through organizational hierarchies are largely blocked (Driver, 1985), and the age-keyed structure of North American businesses will prevent many younger individuals from rising through the ranks as their older colleagues have done. Already, investment bankers in their early thirties warn their younger colleagues of a bleak future.

Ambitious young employees may never realize their goals and an organization staffed with many such individuals might therefore expect to find itself burdened with increasingly poor morale as its employees discover that their futures are not as bright as they had hoped. An organization that is composed of a mix of people with varying desires to succeed, however, will likely possess a more contented workforce--a workforce that in the long run will be more effective and committed to the organization. The need to learn how to build this kind of workforce is the primary reason that there must be further investigation into the relationships between career success and career

satisfaction. Only as a result of this kind of research can we can expect to see the dynamic revisions in managerial practices that will be the essence of this new style of organization.

Footnotes

1) Gender could also be placed among the demographic variables. For convenience, all design variables were grouped together in the second variable set.

2) These factors are described in Larwood, Radford and Berger (1980); because they are not of main importance to the present study, they will not be elaborated here.

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Table 1

Items Used to Define Three Factors: Career Success, Mobility and Satisfaction

Factor	Items	Factor Loadings
1 Career Success	Global success scaled from 1 (very high) to 3 (not very high)	.61
	Income scaled from 1 (high) to 3 (low)	.84
	Level (design variable rated by personnel dept) scaled from 1 (upper/middle) to 2 (low)	.70
2 Satisfaction	Satisfaction with progress scaled from 1 (more than it should be) to 5 (less than it should be)	-.73
	Satisfaction with pay scaled from 1 (more than it should be) to 5 (less than it should be)	-.90
3 Career Mobility	Level (subjective) scaled from 1 (very high) to 3 (not very high)	-.53
	Time since last promotion scaled from 0 (less than one year) to 9 (nine years or longer)	-.89

Note. The above factors were obtained using principal components analysis. Orthogonal varimax rotations were performed on the data. Only loadings greater than .40 were statistically significant ($p<.001$), according to the Burt-Banks criterion (Child, 1970). All factors had eigenvalues >1.0 (Kaiser, 1972). Total variance explained by the three factors was 62%.

Table 2

Career Success, Mobility and Satisfaction: Adjusted R^2 by Each Predictor Set

Predictor Sets	Factor 1 Career Success	Factor 2 Extrinsic Career Satisfaction	Factor 3 Career Mobility
Demographics	.12***	.01	.21***
Job Properties and Personal Attributes	.00	.00	.06***
Career Strategy Factors	.02	.00	.02
Cumulative adjusted R^2	.10***	.00	.19***

Note. The adjusted R^2 is an estimate of the population R^2 adjusted for the number of predictors (Cohen & Cohen, 1983, pp. 105-107) based on the multiple regression values actually obtained. The unique contribution to the adjusted R^2 of demographic variables, job properties/personal attributes and career strategy factors was obtained with separate regression runs. To obtain the cumulative adjusted R^2, demographic as well as job properties/personal attributes and strategy factors were entered together in the regression at the same step/time.

Demographic variables included the respondent's education, age, marital status, number of children and years in career; job properties/personal attributes represent the variables manufacturing versus non-manufacturing, sex, line versus staff position and their four interaction terms. Career strategy represents the factors obtained.

* $p<.05$
*** $p<.001$