Psychological career resources in relation to work engagement and organisational commitment foci

Rebecca Tladinyane and Prof Melinde Coetzee
Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa
Presented at the 30th International Congress of Psychology (ICP), Cape Town, 22 - 27 July 2012

Context
- Careers are becoming more autonomous, lateral and individual, and are taking ownership of their careers
- Restructuring, downsizing, layoffs, flattened structures and less career advancement opportunities lead to less loyalty, dedication and commitment, influencing the retention of talented staff
- Psychological career capacity has become important for understanding the temporary career relationships and individual career behaviour
- Research needed in terms of psychological career meta-capacities influence individual work engagement and organisational commitment (career-related disposition)

21st Century world of work

Psychological career resources
- Personal resources (meta-capacities)
- Social resources
- Career values (growth/development)
- Career preferences (stability/conservation)
- Career directedness (self-directedness)
- Psychological contract influencing career decision making and retention

Work engagement
- Cognitive liveliness (energy, vigour, dedication)
- Physical liveliness (strength, resilience, persistence)
- Social/relational liveliness (engagement)

Organisational commitment
- Cognitive commitment (expectancy of commitment and organisational support)
- Affective commitment (attachment and emotional involvement)
- Normative commitment (duty and obligation)

Career harmonisers (self-directedness)
- Practical/creative skills
- Variety/creativity

Career enablers (practical/creative)
- Variety/creativity
- Growth/development

Research objective
Objective: To determine the relationship between psychological career meta-capacities (as a set of career meta-capacities) and work engagement and organisational commitment (as a set of retention-related dispositions)

Research approach and sample
- Exploratory study: Survey Design
- Convenience sample of employees at the South African Service Industry Industry (N=210)
- Validated measures in the Research and Management Behavioural Sciences (at a higher education degree hosting institution (N=48))

Biographical characteristics of the sample
- Gender distribution: Male 56%, Female 44%
- Race: Blacks 29%, Whites 71%
- Age: 25 years 26 - 40 25%
- Job level: Manager/supervisor 14%

Predominantly black and female in early life, establishment phase of careers

Research procedure and statistical analyses
- SEM fit statistics summary (N = 318)
- Standardised path coefficients

Summary of results: descriptive statistics
- Psychological career profile
- Work engagement (Cronbach Alpha = 0.88)
- Psychological career profile (Cronbach Alpha = 0.79)
- Career directedness (Cronbach Alpha = 0.67)
- Psychological career profile (Cronbach Alpha = 0.72)
- Psychological career profile (Cronbach Alpha = 0.49)

Summary of results: canonical correlations
- Organisational commitment (Cronbach Alpha = 0.94)
- Psychological career profile (Cronbach Alpha = 0.88)

Empirical psychological career-related profile

Findings
- Psychological career meta-capacities (variety/creativity, growth/development, practical/creative skills, and interest) have potential in predicting individual and organisation related dispositions (career engagement and organisational commitment)
- Providing work that offers variety/creativity and opportunities for personal growth/development allows the employee to use their knowledge and skills effectively and contribute towards their work and careers.
- Individuals with a wide range of psychological career resources may further enhance their work engagement (vigour and absorption) and commitment towards their work and careers.
- Providing work that offers variety/creativity and opportunities for personal growth/development allows the employee to use their knowledge and skills effectively and contribute towards their work and careers.

Conclusions
- Organisations should realise that developing the psychological career meta-capacities of employees may influence their work engagement and organisational commitment.
- Individuals with variety/creativity and opportunities for personal growth/development are inclined to use their knowledge and skills effectively and contribute towards their work and careers.

Limitations and recommendations
- Small sample size of 318 limited generalisability and external validity
-External validation required for the psychological career profile and organisational commitment measures