

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

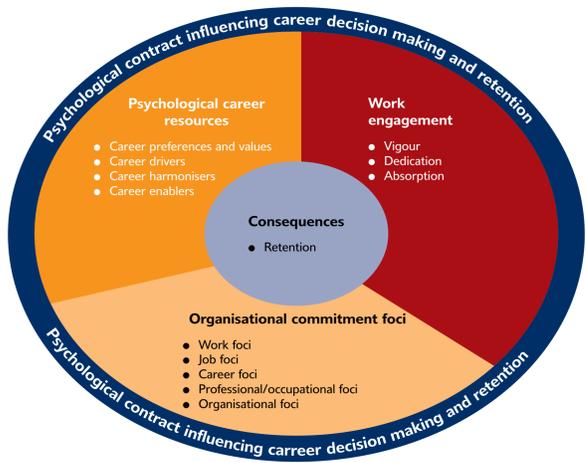
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 Presented at the 30th International Congress of psychology (ICP), Cape Town, 22 - 27 July 2012



Context

- Careers are becoming more recurring, lateral and individuals are taking ownership of their careers
- Restructuring, downsizing, layoffs, flatten structures and less career advancement opportunities lead to less loyalty, dedication and commitment, influencing the retention of talented staff
- Relational psychological contract has become important for understanding the contemporary employment relationships and individual career behaviour
- Research needed in terms of how psychological career meta-competencies influence individuals' work engagement and organisational commitment foci (retention-related dispositions)

21st Century world of work



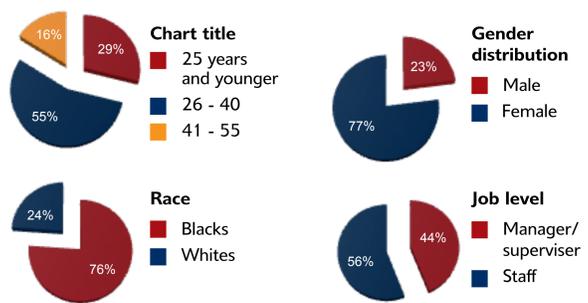
Research objective

Objective 1: To determine the relationship between employees' psychological career resources (as a set of career meta-capacities) in relation to their work engagement and organisational commitment foci (as a set of retention-related dispositions)

Research approach and sample



Biographical characteristics of the sample



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

PCRI (Coetzee, 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-point Likert scale • 64 items • Validity and reliability established (Coetzee, 2008). Cronbach Alpha coefficients for each subscale range between .71 and .88 (high)
UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-point Likert scale • 21 items • Validity and reliability established (Storm & Rothman, 2003). Cronbach Alpha coefficients for each subscale range between .68 and .91 (high)
OCQ (Roodt, 1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-point Likert scale • 38 items • Validity and reliability established (Roodt, 1997). Cronbach Alpha coefficients for each subscale range between .70 and .93 (high)

Research procedure and statistical analyses

Research Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical clearance obtained from higher education institution Research Ethics Committee • Questionnaires sent to the honours students via post and questionnaires distributed during discussion classes • Informed consent • Confidentiality and privacy
Statistical Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicability to exploratory nature of research • SPSS Version 20.0 (2011) • Cut-off point-level of significance: $p \leq .05$
Statistical Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive statistical analysis (means, standard deviation and Cronbach Alpha) • Canonical correlations • Structural equation modelling

Summary of results: descriptive statistics

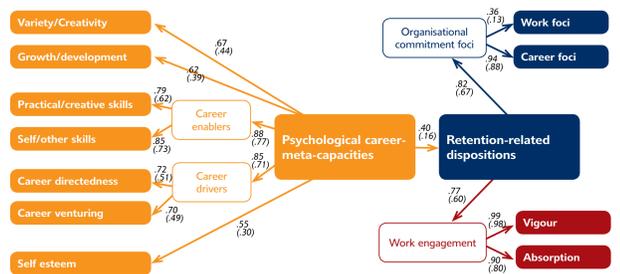
Psychological Career Resources Inventory	Work Engagement Scale	Organisation-related Commitment Foci Questionnaire
Highest mean scores on stability/expertise ($M = 5.30$; $SD = .64$). Growth development was indicated as a dominant career value ($M = 5.49$; $SD = .66$). Career purpose ($M = 5.34$; $SD = .72$). Self-esteem ($M = 5.09$; $SD = 5.09$)	Highest mean scores on vigour ($M = 4.28$; $SD = 1.19$)	Highest mean scores on career foci ($M = 3.81$; $SD = .58$) and occupational foci ($M = 3.78$; $SD = .60$)

Summary of results: canonical correlations

Canonical variate (Career meta-capacities)	Canonical variate (Retention-related dispositions)
Independent variables	Dependent variables
Canonical loadings $\geq .40$	Canonical loadings $\geq .40$
Psychological career resources	Work engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety/creativity ($R_c = .61$) • Growth/Development ($R_c = .44$) • Practical/Creative skills ($R_c = .48$) • Self/Other skills ($R_c = .48$) • Career directedness ($R_c = .53$) • Self-esteem ($R_c = .47$) • Behavioural Adaptability ($R_c = .46$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vigour ($R_c = .51$) • Absorption ($R_c = .49$)
Organisational commitment foci	Organisational commitment foci
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career foci ($R_c = .81$) • Occupational foci ($R_c = .42$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career foci ($R_c = .81$) • Occupational foci ($R_c = .42$)
% of overall variance explained by own canonical variance = 16%	% of variance explained by own = 22%
Redundancy Index = 4%	Redundancy Index = 6%

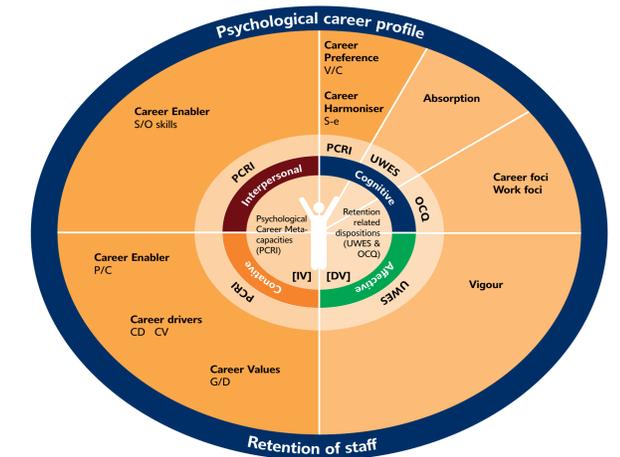
SEM fit statistics summary (N = 318)

Model	CMIN	df	CMIN/df	P	NFI	RFI	TLI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	Δ CMIN
1	472.582	112	4.219	.000	.840	.781	.824	.873	.871	.101		
2	132.182	40	3.305	.000	.920	.869	.905	.943	.942	.085		-343.4
3	52.139	30	1.738	.007	.963	.932	.970	.984	.984	.049	.0371	-80.043



Final structural model (3) linking the psychological career meta-capacities construct variables to the retention-related dispositions construct variables work engagement and organisational commitment foci
 Note: All standardised path coefficient estimates $*** p \leq .001$. Squared multiple correlations (R^2) shown in brackets. The model explains 16% of the retention-related disposition variables

Empirical psychological career-related profile



Findings

- Individuals' psychological career meta-capacities (variety/creativity, growth/development, practical/creative skills, self/other skills, career directedness, career venturing, and self-esteem) have potential in predicting individuals' retention-related dispositions (vigour, absorption, work foci and career foci commitment).
- Providing work that offers variety/creativity and opportunities for personal growth/development may enhance the participants' work engagement (vigour and absorption) and commitment towards their work and careers.
- Assisting the participants in developing the self-confidence in their practical/creative skills and self and interpersonal skills to manage their career development and achieve their career goals may further enhance their work engagement (vigour and absorption) and commitment towards their work and careers.
- Ensuring that the participants have clarity in terms of their future careers in the organisation and the readiness to venture to new opportunities may further enhance their work engagement (vigour and absorption) and commitment towards their work and careers.

Conclusions

- Organisations should realise that developing the psychological career meta-capacities of employees may enhance their work engagement and commitment to their work and careers in the organisation. Employees' self-esteem, career preferences and values, enablers and drivers are important to consider in the retention context as these variables appear to significantly influence their energetic involvement in their work and career.
- The research contributed novel insights regarding the psychological attributes that influence the potential retention of staff.

Limitations and recommendations

- Sample size of 318 limited only to participants employed in service industry enrolled for honours degree in the Economic and Management Sciences field (No generalisations to other occupational contexts)
 - The measurement scales were dependent on the self-awareness and perceptions of the respondents. Interpreted associations-causes not established
 - Obtaining larger and more representative sample. Replicate study to other occupational categories
- Little Research in SA context - New knowledge and valuable data

Theory of psychological career resources

DEFINITION
 Individuals' inherent resources or meta-competencies used to adapt to changing career circumstances and sustaining their employability (Coetzee, 2008)

DISCUSSION
 Helping individuals to tap into their psychological career resources will form a critical component of career counselling and guidance services that organisations can provide to retain their staff. Favourable working conditions and career development practices that foster an expression of goals related to employee's core self-evaluation and inner career values and interests as reflected in their range of psychological career resources, may result in higher levels of life satisfaction and career satisfaction which might lead to the decision to stay with the employing organisation (Coetzee, Bergh & Schreuder, 2010). People who possess a wide range of psychological career resources have been shown to be adaptable to changing career circumstances (Fugate, Kinicki, Ashforth 2004; Griffin & Hesketh 2005; McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, Wall 2007), and they are also likely to be engaged in their work and be committed to their job, work, career, occupation or the organisation.

Theory of work engagement

DEFINITION
 A positive fulfilling state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003).

DISCUSSION

- **Vigour** (physical component) is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience, and being sufficiently willing to invest effort into one's work despite available obstacles.
- **Dedication** is characterised by experiencing a sense of importance in one's work, feeling passionate and proud of the job, and being inspired and challenged by work.
- **Absorption** refers to being completely and happily absorbed in one's work, unable to detach oneself from it and not noticing how quickly time flies.

Theory of organisational commitment foci

DEFINITION
 A cognitive predisposition towards a particular organisational commitment focus insofar as this focus has the potential to satisfy needs, realise value and achieve goals (Roodt, 1997).

DISCUSSION
 An understanding of different organisational commitment foci can probably explain the dynamics of employee commitment in the work context (Roodt, 2004). Organisational commitment is a stabilising and obliging force which provides direction to behaviour that binds the person to a course of action. Individuals often find it difficult to recognise the differences between different foci especially in the South African context (Roodt 2004).

Constructs of psychological career resources	Components of work engagement	Types of organisational commitment foci
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career preferences (stability/expertise, managerial, variety/creativity) • Career values (growth/development, authority/influence) • Career drivers (career purpose, career directedness, career venturing) • Career enablers (practical/creative skills, self/other skills) • Career harmonisers (self-esteem, behavioural adaptability, emotional literacy, social connectivity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vigour (feeling of physical strength, cognitive liveliness and emotional energy) • Dedication (experiencing a sense of importance in one's work, feeling passionate and proud of the job, and being inspired and challenged by work) • Absorption (being completely and happily absorbed in one's work, unable to detach oneself from it and not noticing how quickly time flies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work foci (commitment to work itself) • Job foci (dedication to tasks that comes with the job) • Career foci (commitment to a career) • Occupational foci (dedication to an occupation) • Organisational foci (commitment to the organisation)