

Psychological career resources and subjective work experiences of working adults: an exploratory study

M. Coetzee & Z.C. Bergh

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to determine the relationship between the psychological career resources (as measured by the Psychological Career Resources Inventory) and the subjective work experiences of a sample of working adults (as measured by a four-item global work experiences scale). The research also aimed to explore broad trends regarding how the participants differed on these variables in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics (marital status, educational level, age, gender and race). A sample of 2 997 working adults, registered as students at a South African higher distance education institution, participated in this study. Stepwise regression analyses indicated dimensions of psychological career resources as significant predictors of the four subjective work experiences: life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction, happiness and perceptions of work as a valuable activity. The results further indicated significant differences between participants with regard to their socio-demographic characteristics and their psychological career resources and subjective work experiences. Considering that the employment equity context in South Africa contributes to a more diversified workforce, the findings add valuable new knowledge that can be used to inform organisational career development practices concerned with promoting experiences of psychological career success.

Key words: career drivers; career harmonisers; career preferences; happiness; job/career satisfaction; life satisfaction; psychological career resources; subjective work experiences

Prof. M. Coetzee and Mr Z.C. Bergh are in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa. E-mail: coetzml@unisa.ac.za

Introduction

Since the turn of the 21st century, the employability, job and life satisfaction as well as general well-being and happiness of employees have increasingly become a primary focus of managers and industrial psychologists (Judge, Bono, Erez & Locke 2005; Kokou & Ierodiakonou 2007; Van Dam 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden 2006). The employability of employees is regarded as a critical requirement for sustaining a competitive advantage at the company level and promoting experiences of objective and psychological career success at the individual level (Van Dam 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden 2006). Employability refers not only to people's ability to gain access to the workplace, to adjust to the workplace, and to be productive in the workplace, but also to their continuous ability to fulfil, acquire or create work through the optimal use of both occupation-related and career meta-competencies (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs 2007; Hall & Chandler 2005; Herr, Cramer & Niles 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden 2006).

Career meta-competencies refer to a range of psychological career resources – including attributes and abilities such as behavioural adaptability, self-knowledge, career orientation awareness, sense of purpose, self-esteem and emotional literacy – that enable people to be self-directed learners and proactive agents in managing their careers (Briscoe & Hall 1999; Coetzee 2008; Hall & Chandler 2005; Herr et al. 2004). Growing numbers of researchers in the field of career development therefore suggest that greater awareness of the effect of individuals' occupational expertise and their career meta-competencies (as described by an individual's range of psychological career resources) on their general employability may become a more important determinant than career development planning in the present era of fast technological changes, globalisation, demographic workforce changes and changing organisational structures. (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs 2007; Hall & Chandler 2005; Herr et al. 2004; Kim 2005; Savickas 2000; Van Dam 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden 2006).

Moreover, in an increasingly turbulent business context where people are less dependent on organisational career arrangements because they experience more frequent career transitions, have greater agency in career decisions and are required to be able, adaptable learners, organisations have become increasingly concerned with retaining valuable and scarce skills (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom 2005; Baruch 2004). Consequently, subjective career measures that emphasise psychological attributes and subjective work experiences such as employees' job and career satisfaction, life satisfaction and happiness in the workplace have taken on greater salience in today's work environment (Brown, George-Curran & Smith 2003; Ebberwein, Krieshok, Ulven & Prosser 2004; Judge et al. 2005; Kokou &

Ierodiakonou 2007; Van Dam 2004). Employees' subjective work experiences are also increasingly assumed to be determinants of employee morale and the intent to stay or to leave the organisation (Anastasiadou 2007; Kokou & Ierodiakonou 2007; Martin & Roodt 2008).

Research objective

This research sets out to investigate the relationship between employees' psychological career resources and their subjective work experiences, more specifically their life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction, happiness and perceptions of work as a valuable activity. The research also aims to explore broad trends regarding how individuals from various marital, educational level, age, gender and race groups in the South African organisational context differ in terms of their psychological career resources and subjective work experiences. In the context of employment equity and the broadening career needs of a more diversified workforce, this study is expected to contribute important knowledge that will inform career development practices concerned with enhancing employees' psychological career resources as an important aspect of their general employability and experiences of psychological career success.

Psychological career resources

Individuals' repertoires of psychological career resources consist of those career preferences, career values, attributes, skills and orientations that can be linked to their experiences of subjective or intrinsic career success (Gunz & Heslin 2005). Psychological career resources are therefore also regarded as individuals' inherent resources or meta-competencies which enable them to adapt to changing career circumstances and to shape and select environments in order to attain success within a particular socio-cultural context (Ebberwein et al. 2004; Sternberg 1999). An individual's psychological career resources profile reflects the career consciousness of a person. Based on Adler's (1956) views of the concept of consciousness, Coetzee (2007) describes career consciousness as people's conscious, career-related cognitions (that is, perceptions, awareness and self-evaluations) of their career preferences, values, skills, attitudes and behaviours that are understood and regarded by people as being helpful in realising their goals and achieving career success.

According to Coetzee (2008), the various components of an individual's repertoire of psychological career resources need to be in balance to enable the enactment of proactive career behaviour. If any one facet is out of balance, none of the other

components can function at its maximum potential to facilitate self-empowering career behaviour. Balanced, optimal functioning of an individual's psychological career resources is an indication of conscious, self-directed career behaviour that is internally guided and driven by the individual's career preferences, career values, career enablers, career drivers and career harmonisers.

People's *career preferences* and *career values* (people's unique views about the paths their careers should follow) guide their career decisions. Individuals' career preferences and career values are regarded as the enduring cognitive or conceptual structures underlying their thinking about their careers, which define the meaning of a career to them (Driver 1982; Kim 2005). Career preferences and career values therefore become the guiding foundation for individuals' long-term career choices. Whereas individuals' career preferences guide their career moves, career values represent the motivation for a particular career preference (Brousseau 1990).

The *career drivers* (people's sense of career purpose, career directedness and career venturing orientation) are the attitudes that energise people and motivate them to experiment with career and employment possibilities that are based on their perceptions of the persons they can become and their possible future work roles (Coetzee 2008). With regard to career purpose, Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin and Schwartz (1997) state that people who feel strongly called to their careers and jobs report much higher levels of life and job satisfaction and lower levels of absenteeism than people who have a mere job and/or career orientation. Career directedness is described as individuals' sense of clarity about future career directions and goals as well as the clarity in terms of where and how to find support for achieving their career goals or finding new job opportunities. The term 'career venturing' relates to individuals' willingness to take risks in finding and experimenting with new career opportunities (Coetzee 2008).

The *career enablers* (people's transferable skills such as their practical or creative skills and self-management and relationship skills) are those abilities that help them to succeed in their careers. The *career harmonisers* (people's self-esteem, behavioural adaptability, emotional literacy and social connectivity) are the psychological attributes that act not only as promoters of flexibility and resiliency, but also as controls by keeping the career drivers in balance so that people do not burn themselves out in the process of pursuing and reinventing their careers (Coetzee 2008). Self-esteem refers to the self-evaluations people make and maintain. It includes attitudes of approval or disapproval and the degree to which people feel worthy, capable, significant and effective in comparison with other members of their social group (Battle 1992; Hewitt 2002). Behavioural adaptability involves individuals' ability to identify those qualities that are critical for future performance and being able to

make the necessary personal changes to meet their career-related needs (Hall 2002). Thus, individuals with high behavioural adaptability would have the capacity to engage proactively in the process of goal-setting, initiating effort and achieving psychological success (Hall & Chandler 2005).

Emotional literacy refers to the degree to which individuals are able to accept and express a range of affect, based on the premise that a range of emotional responses facilitates career adaptive behaviours in the career decision-making process (Emmerling & Cherniss 2003). Emotions are adaptive when they prioritise thinking in a way that ensures that the individual attends to the most important or distressing aspects of a decision. Social connectivity describes individuals' ability to connect with others and establish and maintain mutually satisfying and supporting relationships (BarOn 1997). Research by Emmerling and Cherniss (2003) indicates that the emotions experienced during the career decision-making process and in relation to social relations at work have implications for people's perception of the risks related to specific career options, the amount and kind of self-exploration in which they will engage, and how they will process information related to career choices.

Subjective work experiences

In the context of this research, subjective work experiences consist of employees' self-evaluations, perceptions, attitudes, feelings and psychological experiences that characterise their life satisfaction, job and career satisfaction, personal happiness and the meaning they attach to work. Research has shown that factors intrinsic to employees as well as extrinsic work-related determinants contribute to employees' subjective experiences of their lives, jobs or careers, their general state of happiness and their perceptions of work as a meaningful activity in their lives. Personal intrinsic factors generally include individual difference factors or personal dispositions and traits such as conscientiousness (Ashton 2007; De Fruyt & Salgado 2003; Flett 2007; Maltby, Day & Macaskill 2007), as well as positive emotionality or affectivity, for example, happiness, hope and optimism (Peterson & Seligman 2003; Snyder & Lopez 2002), and personal biographical factors such as age, gender and marital status (Arnold & Cohen 2008). Work-related factors generally relate to task and skill variety, autonomy, meaningfulness and whether the nature of jobs allows employees to feel satisfied in their jobs and provide opportunities to grow.

Satisfaction with life is defined as a global evaluation by a person of his or her life (Diener, Gohm, Suh & Oishi 2000). Life satisfaction indicates a person's subjective evaluation that all aspects in life are more or less in balance and according

to personal expectations, contributing to the level of personal happiness a person may experience. Happiness is therefore regarded as an important component of general life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Perrone et al. 2006; Seligman 2002; Snyder & Lopez 2002).

Happiness refers to an emotional, cognitive and even physiological experience that life is good with as little pain as possible (Seligman 2002; Snyder & Lopez 2002). Happiness is generally related to aspects in life such as the enjoyment of a good or pleasurable life as well as aspects beyond pleasure. These may include aspects such as good health and social interactions, religion, love and marriage, work and internal experiences (for example, internal motivation, flow and meaningfulness in work and life) (Diener & Seligman 2002; Diener & Seligman 2004; Lucas, Clark, Georgellis & Diener 2004).

Dawis (1984) regards *job satisfaction* as a cognition with affective components that results from certain perceptions about one's work and has behavioural consequences such as tenure, longevity, physical health, mental health and productivity. As a cognition, job satisfaction is linked to other cognitions, or cognitive constructs, such as self-esteem, job involvement, work alienation, organisational commitment, morale, career and life satisfaction (Herr et al. 2004). Whereas job satisfaction is usually directed at one's immediate emotional reactions to one's current job, *career satisfaction* is a broader reflection of one's satisfaction with both past and future work history taken as a whole. Career satisfaction is also regarded as a core measure of individuals' experiences of intrinsic career success, life satisfaction and job satisfaction (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller 2007).

Work is regarded as a central and fundamental activity in people's lives and has been linked to job/career satisfaction (Harpaz & Fu 2002; Whitehead & Kotze 2003). In addition to its obvious economic functions, work has a powerful potential to fulfil other important roles and needs of the individual such as personal growth and skills development, self-esteem, psychological fulfilment, identity, social interaction and sustaining a standard of living and status (Harpaz & Fu 2002). People also strive towards various goals and values through work, which results in work being regarded as a valuable activity that influences people's general life satisfaction and happiness. Barrick and Ryan (2003) refer to a body of research indicating the positive influence of positive emotions, for example personal happiness, and related aspects such as life satisfaction, on work performance and work attitudes. Research conducted by Whitehead and Kotze (2003) and Woodd (2000) found in this regard that people's main motivations for working were related to intrinsic values that give their lives meaning.

Since individuals' repertoires of psychological career resources incorporate their core self-evaluations (positive or negative self-appraisals) – which represent the

fundamental assessments they make about their worthiness, career preferences and values, motivations, competencies and capabilities regarding planning, managing and achieving their career goals – it was expected that the various aspects of people’s psychological career resources profile might influence their subjective work experiences. Research has revealed relationships between psychological career resources variables such as career orientations, personality attributes, emotional intelligence, career resiliency and career maturity, and several career-related variables such as career adaptability, job/career satisfaction, life satisfaction, goal attainment, career decision making, employability and entrepreneurial activity (Arthur et al. 2005; Brown et al. 2003; Coertse & Scheepers 2004; Ebberwein et al. 2004; Judge et al. 2005; Kim 2005; Van Dam 2004). The findings of these researchers also indicate differences between various cultural, race and gender groups regarding these career variables and experiences of subjective career satisfaction, life satisfaction, job satisfaction and experiences of happiness.

In view of the foregoing, the goal of this research was to investigate:

- Whether individuals’ psychological career resources substantially predict their levels of life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction and happiness and their perception of work as a valuable activity.
- Whether individuals differ in terms of their socio-demographic variables regarding their psychological career resources and their level of life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction, happiness and perceptions of work as a valuable activity.

Research design

Research approach

For this exploratory pilot study, a survey design was used to achieve the research objective (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister 2003). The advantages of the survey research approach include savings of time and money, a lack of interviewer bias, accurate results, more privacy for participants, and the fact that samples need not be very large in relation to the population (Salkind 1997). The major disadvantage of this design is that findings can only be generalised to the sampled population at the time of the survey (Dooley 1995).

Participants

The participants were a random sample of employed students who were registered across various fields of study at a higher distance education institution for a particular

year. The descriptive statistics revealed that the total sample of 2 997 was constituted predominantly of Nguni- and Sotho-speaking Africans (41%), followed by white English- and Afrikaans-speaking participants (31%). English-speaking Indians, English- and Afrikaans-speaking coloureds, and other minority cultural groups speaking languages such as Portuguese, German, Polish, French and Chinese, were under-represented (5%). Overall, the black (67%) and female (58%) participants predominated in the sample. The sample consisted predominantly of single (52%) and married (42%) participants, mostly in the early adulthood life stage (25–40 years) (82%). The mean age of the participants was 32, which implies well-established internal career preferences and values (Schein 1996).

The sample had a relatively high educational level, with 84% having attained a Grade 12 qualification, diploma or undergraduate higher education qualification. Students with a postgraduate qualification represented only 3% of the sample. The sample predominantly represented participants in full-time employment (80%), who occupied relatively high-level positions at senior and middle management level (18%) and middle- and first-level supervisory level (54%) in the service industry (81%).

The following economic sectors were represented: 35% government; 15% services; 18% financial, insurance, real-estate and business; 7% wholesale and retail; 6% transport, storage and communication; and 19% other sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, electricity/gas and construction. The predominant fields of expertise reported by the participants were as follows: financial field (including accounting, auditing, banking, economics) (21%); education (11%); human resource management (9%); protective services (South African Police Service, security, military) (9%); health care (8%); marketing/media/communication (6%); public administration (6%); information technology (5%); retail/sales (5%); legal/law (3%); and catering/hospitality (2%).

Measuring instruments

A socio-demographic questionnaire, the Psychological Career Resources Inventory (PCRI) (Coetzee 2007) and a four-item global subjective work experiences scale (Bergh 2009) were used to measure the variables of concern to this study.

Socio-demographic questionnaire

The influence of socio-demographic variables on careers has been examined in a variety of studies (Allen & Katz 1992; Erdoğan 2003; Igbaria, Greenhaus &

Parasuraman 1991; Marshall & Bonner 2003; Schneer & Reitman 1994). In the light of the literature, the questionnaire for this study included a series of self-reported questions in order to obtain socio-demographic data such as age, gender, race, home language, marital status, educational level, field of occupational expertise, occupational title and position, and economic sector. These data were used to examine relationships between socio-demographic information and participants' psychological career resources and subjective work experiences (life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction, happiness and work as a valuable activity).

Psychological Career Resources Inventory

The Psychological Career Resources Inventory (PCRI) (Coetzee 2007) is a self-rated multi-factorial measure that contains 64 items and five subscales (career preferences, career values, career enablers, career drivers, career harmonisers). To avoid neutral answers, a four-point Likert-type scale was used for subject responses to each of the 64 items. Based on Coetzee's (2007) psychological career resources model, the items were related to perceived agreement with statements. The PCRI measures a total of 15 constructs. The various constructs measured by each of the subscales are shown in Table 1. The results of exploratory factor analyses conducted by Coetzee (2007) reveal not only that the PCRI items satisfy the psychometric criteria of both convergent and discriminant validity, but also that their content is commensurate with the theoretical constructs being measured.

The reliability of the PCRI was determined by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient. According to Anastasi (1976), a desirable reliability coefficient would fall in the range of 0.80 to 0.90. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) use 0.70 as a directive, while Bartholomew, Antonia and Marcia (2000) argue that between 0.60 and 0.80 is acceptable. The reliability of the 15 constructs measured by the Cronbach alpha was also confirmed by means of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett test of sphericity (Coetzee 2007). The overall average of the Cronbach alpha for each subscale ranges from 0.71 to 0.88, which clearly falls within the range of directives. The KMO measure for adequacy ranged from 0.79 to 0.92 for each of the subscales, indicating that the sample was adequate. The Bartlett test of sphericity yielded a statistically approximate chi square ($p < 0.001$) for each of the subscales, which also indicated the probability that the correlation matrix had significant correlation among the variables (Coetzee 2007).

Subjective work experiences scale

A four-item subjective work experiences scale measuring global life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction, happiness and participants' perception of their work as a

valuable activity was used. The selection of the four items was based on aspects pointed out by researchers in the field of careers and organisational behaviour as being factors influencing employees' psychological experiences of career success and organisational commitment (Arthur et al. 2005; Judge et al. 2005; Perrone et al. 2006; Sempene, Rieger & Roodt 2002; Whitehead & Kotze 2003). A five-point Likert-type scale was used for subject responses to each of the four items. In terms of validity, inter-item correlations conducted on the four items ranged from 0.13 to 0.56 ($p \leq 0.01$), indicating small to large practical effect size. As shown in Table 2, the reliability of the four items was determined by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which ranged from 0.45 to 0.71.

Since the purpose of this study was not to make individual predictions based on the PCRI and global subjective work orientation scale, but rather to investigate broad trends and certain relations between variables, the instruments were considered to be psychometrically acceptable.

Research procedure

Questionnaires were mailed to 60 000 randomly selected students who were registered at the higher education institution for the particular year. The postal facilities of the institution were used to post these questionnaires. Each questionnaire included a covering letter inviting subjects to participate in the study and assuring them that their individual responses would remain confidential. Participants were requested to complete the questionnaires and return them to the researchers by mail using the return envelope. A sample of 2 997 usable questionnaires was returned. The questionnaires were scored electronically according to the authors' instructions.

Statistical analysis

The statistical procedures chosen for this research were based on their applicability to the exploratory nature of the research design. The statistical analysis was carried out with the help of the SAS System (Version 9.1) statistical package (SAS Institute 2003). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The analysis of the data involved three stages. Firstly, stepwise regression analyses were carried out to identify the PCRI variables that provide the best explanation of the dependent variables (the four subjective work orientation items). An ordinary least-squares multiple regression analysis was then performed using the most significant PCRI predictors identified by the stepwise procedure in order to obtain a better model fit and more precise estimates of the regression parameters (Draper & Smith 1981).

The second stage entailed determining which socio-demographic groups differed significantly in terms of the means of the most significant predictors of the PCRI (as identified by the regression analyses). Since the tests for normality revealed that none of the 15 psychological career resources variables could be assumed to be normally distributed, non-parametric tests were performed in order to test for significant differences between the socio-demographic variables and the selected psychological career resources constructs. The Kruskal-Wallis and Scheffé's multi-comparison of means post hoc tests were applied for the marital status, educational level, age and race socio-demographic variables. Independent-samples t-tests were applied for the gender socio-demographical variable.

The third stage entailed determining which socio-demographic groups differed significantly in terms of the percentage categorical responses on the four subjective work experiences items. The CHAID (chi-squared automatic interaction detection) procedure was applied for this purpose. A cut-off point of $p \leq 0.05$ was set for determining the significance of the findings.

Research results

Descriptive statistics

Psychological career resources

The means and standard deviations of each PCRI subscale are presented in Table 1, which shows that the variables *stability/expertise* (mean = 3.52; SD = 0.48) and *variety/creativity* (mean = 3.17; SD = 0.71) are indicated as the dominant career preferences for the total sample. In line with this observation, the sample indicated *growth/development* (mean = 3.58; SD = 0.46) as their dominant career value. With respect to the career enabler subscale, the *self/other skills* (mean = 3.40; SD = 0.53) variable obtained a higher mean score than the *practical/creative skills* (mean = 2.41; SD = 0.69) variable. The *career purpose* (mean = 3.62; SD = 0.41) and *career directedness* (mean = 3.01; SD = 0.68) variables obtained higher mean scores than the *career venturing* (mean = 2.92; SD = 0.85) variable. The variables described by the career harmonisers subscale all achieved high mean scores, with the *social connectivity* (mean = 3.33; SD = 0.55) and *self-esteem* (mean = 3.30; SD = 0.51) variables showing the highest mean scores.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics: Cronbach's alpha coefficients, means and standard deviations (PCRI) (N = 2 997)

PCRI scale	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	SD
<i>Career preferences</i>			
Stability/Expertise	0.73	3.52	0.48
Managerial	0.75	2.84	0.77
Variety/Creativity	0.70	3.17	0.71
Freedom/Autonomy	0.62	2.81	0.70
<i>Career values</i>			
Growth/Development	0.74	3.58	0.46
Authority/Influence	0.61	2.84	0.71
<i>Career enablers</i>			
Practical/creative skills	0.68	2.41	0.69
Self/other skills	0.63	3.40	0.53
<i>Career drivers</i>			
Career purpose	0.66	3.62	0.41
Career directedness	0.63	3.01	0.68
Career venturing	0.70	2.92	0.85
<i>Career harmonisers</i>			
Self-esteem	0.77	3.30	0.51
Behavioural adaptability	0.73	3.22	0.54
Emotional literacy	0.70	3.05	0.60
Social connectivity	0.67	3.33	0.55

Subjective work experiences

Table 2 provides a summary of the means and standard deviations obtained for the four subjective work experiences items. The results show that the items measuring *work as a valuable activity* (mean = 4.47; SD = 0.74) and *happiness* (mean = 4.04; SD = 0.769) obtained the highest mean scores, while the item measuring *global job/career satisfaction* obtained the lowest mean score (mean = 3.24; SD = 1.197).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics: Cronbach's alpha coefficients, means and standard deviations (Subjective work experiences items) (N = 2 997)

Subjective work experiences items	n	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	SD
Generally I feel satisfied with my life	2 979	0.45	3.64	1.09
I am satisfied in my job/ career	2 977	0.55	3.24	1.20
On average I am a happy person	2 965	0.58	4.04	0.77
Work is a valuable activity	2 970	0.71	4.47	0.74

Ordinary least-squares multiple regression analysis: PCRI and subjective work experiences scale

Table 3 shows that the regression of the selected PCRI predictor variables (the career harmoniser variable *self-esteem* and career driver variables *career directedness* and *career venturing*) upon the global *life satisfaction* item produced a statistically significant model ($F = 41.927$; $p \leq 0.001$), accounting for 7% of the variance. The entry of the PCRI predictor variables (the career driver variables *career directedness* and *career venturing*, career harmoniser variable *behavioural adaptability* and career preference variable *stability/expertise*) into the regression analysis for global *job/career satisfaction* also produced a statistically significant model ($F = 57.565$; $p \leq 0.001$), accounting for 9% of the variance.

When the selected PCRI predictor variables (the career harmoniser variables *behavioural adaptability* and *self-esteem* and career preference variable *managerial*) were regressed upon the global *happiness* item, a statistically significant model ($F = 77.388$; $p \leq 0.001$), accounting for 12% of the variance, was produced. Finally, a statistically significant model ($F = 28.538$; $p \leq 0.001$) was produced when the PCRI predictor variables (the career driver variable *career purpose* and career harmoniser variable *behavioural adaptability*) were regressed upon the work as a valuable activity item, explaining 5% of the variance.

In summary, the career harmoniser variable *self-esteem* positively predicts *life satisfaction* ($\beta = 0.151$; $p = 0.000$) and *happiness* ($\beta = 0.212$; $p = 0.000$), while *behavioural adaptability* positively predicts *job/career satisfaction* ($\beta = 0.058$; $p = 0.003$) and *happiness* ($\beta = 0.159$; $p = 0.000$), including the variable *work as a valuable activity* ($\beta = 0.097$; $p = 0.000$). Furthermore, the career driver variables *career*

Table 3: Ordinary least-squares multiple regression analyses

Variable		Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	p	F	R ²	R
		B	SE	β					
Life satisfaction	(Constant)	2.352	0.158		14.884	0.000***	41.443	0.07	0.26
	Career harmoniser: Self-esteem	0.320	0.043	0.151	7.401	0.000***			
	Career driver: Career directedness	0.251	0.033	0.156	7.625	0.000***			
	Career driver: Career venturing	-0.110	0.026	-0.087	-4.320	0.000***			
Job/career satisfaction	(Constant)	3.027	0.185		16.356	0.000***	57.656	0.09	0.30
	Career driver: Career directedness	0.468	0.036	0.265	13.012	0.000***			
	Career driver: Career venturing	-0.285	0.029	-0.204	-9.992	0.000***			
	Career harmoniser: Behavioural adaptability	0.129	0.043	0.058	2.977	0.003**			
	Career preference: Stability/expertise	-0.119	0.046	-0.048	-2.570	0.01**			
Happiness	(Constant)	2.516	0.113		22.291	0.000***	77.388	0.12	0.34
	Career harmoniser: Behavioural adaptability	0.227	0.030	0.159	7.464	0.000***			
	Career harmoniser: Self-esteem	0.318	0.033	0.212	9.595	0.000***			
	Career preference: Managerial	-0.078	0.019	-0.078	-4.038	0.000***			
Work as a valuable activity	(Constant)	3.128	0.128		24.434	0.000***	28.538	0.05	0.22
	Career driver: Career purpose	0.158	0.040	0.089	3.955	0.000***			
	Career harmoniser: Behavioural adaptability	0.133	0.028	0.097	4.791	0.000***			

***p ≤ 0.0001; **p ≤ 0.01; *p ≤ 0.05

directedness and *career venturing* significantly predict *life satisfaction* and *job/career satisfaction*, with *career directedness* having a positive prediction effect on both *life satisfaction* ($\beta = 0.156; p = 0.000$) and *job/career satisfaction* ($\beta = 0.265; p = 0.000$). However, *career venturing* negatively predicts both *life satisfaction* ($\beta = -0.087; p = 0.000$) and *job/career satisfaction* ($\beta = -0.204; p = 0.000$). The variable *work as a valuable activity* ($\beta = 0.089; p = 0.000$) is positively predicted by the career driver variable *career purpose*. In terms of the career preference variables, *stability/expertise* negatively predicts *job/career satisfaction* ($\beta = -0.048; p = 0.01$), while the *managerial* preference negatively predicts *happiness* ($\beta = -0.078; p = 0.000$). Figure 1 provides a conceptual overview of the core results of the regression analyses.

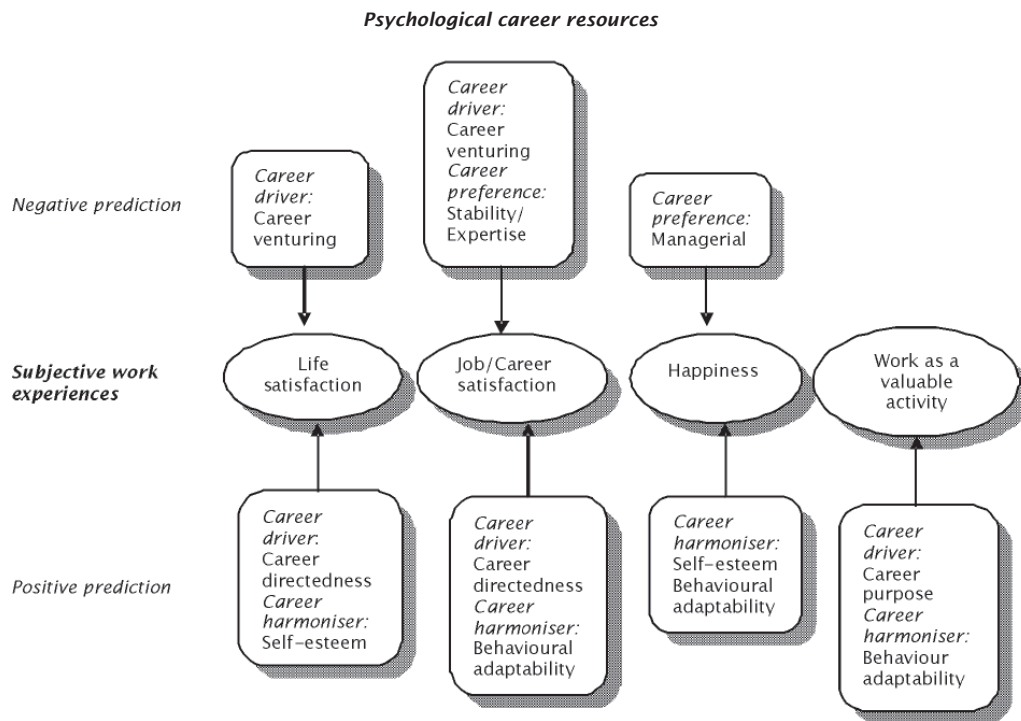


Figure 1: Conceptual model of empirical findings: the relationship between psychological career resources and subjective work experiences

Kruskal–Wallis test for socio–demographic variables and PCRI subscales

Table 4 shows only significant differences between *marital status* and the *career venturing* and *behavioural adaptability* variables. Scheffé’s multi-comparison of

means post hoc tests indicated that the single participants obtained significantly higher mean scores than the married participants on the *career venturing* variable ($p = 0.02$). Significant differences are also indicated between *educational levels* and the *managerial* and *stability/expertise* career preferences, and the *career purpose* and *self-esteem* variables. However, the source of the significant differences indicated by the Kruskal-Wallis test could not be detected.

Table 4: Kruskal–Wallis tests on PCRI significant predictors: socio–demographic variables (N =2 997)

PCRI scales	Socio-demographic variable	Chi-square	df	Sig
<i>Career preferences</i>				
Stability/Expertise	Marital status	3.723	3	0.293
	Educational level	14.936	6	0.021*
	Age	21.311	4	0.000***
	Race/Language	250.298	8	0.000***
Managerial	Marital Status	5.990	3	0.112
	Educational Level	19.742	6	0.003**
	Age	8.097	4	0.088
	Race/Language	167.510	8	0.000***
<i>Career drivers</i>				
Career purpose	Marital status	3.490	3	0.322
	Educational level	19.284	6	0.004**
	Age	8.869	4	0.064
	Race/Language	232.668	8	0.000***
Career directedness	Marital status	4.579	3	0.205
	Educational level	7.140	6	0.308
	Age	6.008	4	0.199
	Race/Language	83.559	8	0.000***
Career venturing	Marital status	12.247	3	0.007**
	Educational level	5.683	6	0.460
	Age	1.076	4	0.898
	Race/Language	163.121	8	0.000***
<i>Career harmonisers</i>				
Self-esteem	Marital status	3.292	3	0.349
	Educational level	14.435	6	0.025*
	Age	6.876	4	0.143
	Race/Language	318.386	8	0.000***
Behavioural adaptability	Marital status	13.210	3	0.004**
	Educational level	3.082	6	0.799
	Age	7.340	4	0.119
	Race/Language	30.396	8	0.000***

***p < 0.0001 **p < 0.01 *p < 0.05

The *age groups* appear to differ significantly with respect to the *stability/expertise* career preference. Scheffé’s multi-comparison of means post hoc tests indicated that

participants in the late life stage (56 years and older) show significantly lower mean scores ($p \leq 0.05$) than the late early adulthood group (31 – 40 years) regarding the *stability/expertise* career preference. There appear to be no significant differences between the various age groups and the three predictor career drivers and two career harmoniser variables.

The *race/language groups* appear to differ significantly on all the significant predictor psychological career resources variables. Scheffé's multi-comparison of means post hoc tests indicated that the African participants obtained significantly higher mean scores than the other race groups on all the significant predictor psychological career resources variables, while the white participants overall obtained the lowest mean scores on all the PCRI variables.

Independent-samples t-tests for gender and PCRI subscales

The results of the independent-samples t-test shown in Table 5 indicate that both males and females obtained high mean scores on the *career purpose* and *career directedness* variables, and the career harmoniser variables *self-esteem* and *behavioural adaptability*. The results also confirm that male and female participants do not differ significantly regarding the three career driver variables and the *behavioural adaptability* career harmoniser variable. However, male and female participants do appear to differ significantly with respect to the two predictor career preference variables *stability/expertise* and *managerial*, with the male participants showing significantly higher mean scores than the females regarding these variables. Furthermore, the male participants also show significantly higher mean scores than the female participants on the *self-esteem* variable.

CHAID analyses for socio-demographic variables and the subjective work experiences scale

Life satisfaction

Table 6 shows that the married and widowed participants in their second year of undergraduate studies indicated significantly higher life satisfaction than the single and divorced participants. Single and divorced participants younger than 25 years indicated significantly higher life satisfaction than those older than 25 years. White male participants indicated significantly higher life satisfaction than the black and female participants. Black married and widowed participants indicated significantly higher life satisfaction than their single and divorced counterparts.

Table 5: Independent-samples t-test for gender on PCRI significant predictors

PCRI scale	Group	N	Mean	SD	F	t	df	Sig
<i>Career preferences</i>								
Stability/Expertise	Male	1 243	2.48	0.68	1.723***	4.339	2989	0.000
	Female	1 748	2.37	0.70				
Managerial	Male	1 243	2.99	0.71	21.703***	8.696	2992	0.000
	Female	1 748	2.74	0.79				
<i>Career drivers</i>								
Career purpose	Male	1 246	3.62	0.42	1.351	-0.492	2992	0.623
	Female	1 748	3.62	0.41				
Career directedness	Male	1 246	3.00	0.66	1.324	-0.247	2992	0.805
	Female	1 748	3.00	0.69				
Career venturing	Male	1 246	2.95	0.84	2.966	1.421	2990	0.155
	Female	1 746	2.90	0.86				
<i>Career harmonisers</i>								
Self-esteem	Male	1 246	3.34	0.50	2.640***	3.643	2993	0.000
	Female	1 749	3.27	0.52				
Behavioural adaptability	Male	1 246	3.22	0.53	0.554	0.166	2993	0.868
	Female	1 749	3.22	0.54				

***p < 0.0001

Job/career satisfaction

As shown in Table 7, white married male participants involved in second year or higher studies indicated significantly higher job/career satisfaction than black and female participants or single, divorced and widowed participants. Female participants of 25 years and younger indicated significantly higher job/career satisfaction than those 26 years and older, while the single and divorced females and those older than 40 years indicated significantly higher job/career satisfaction than male participants who are single and divorced. Black married, divorced and widowed participants indicated significantly higher job/career satisfaction than their single counterparts. Married, divorced or widowed participants aged between 31 and 40 years also indicated higher job/career satisfaction than their younger counterparts.

Happiness

White and Indian participants indicated significantly higher happiness than black and coloured participants. Table 8 also shows that married, divorced and widowed

Table 6: Summary of CHAID analyses: significant group percentage response differences (*life satisfaction*)

Item	Socio-demographic group	Chi-square	df	Sig	Agree %	n
Generally I feel satisfied with my life	<i>Marital status</i>	43.558	1	0.000***	48	1 435
	Married; Widowed				51	658
	Single; Divorced				46	777
	<i>Married; Widowed: Educational level</i>	8.137	1	0.026*	51	658
	>2nd year further studies				53	384
	<2nd year further studies				49	274
	<i>Single; Divorced: Age</i>	9.060	1	0.024*	46	777
	<25 years and younger				49	366
	>25 years				44	411
	<i>Race</i>	57.381	1	0.000***	48.2	1 435
	White				58.2	567
	African; Indian; Coloured				43.3	868
	<i>White: Gender</i>	4.054	1	0.044*	58.2	567
	Male				60.8	161
	Female				57.2	406
	<i>African; Indian; Coloured: Marital status</i>	41.634	1	0.000***	43.3	868
	Married; Widowed				47.6	414
	Single; Divorced				40.0	454

p≤0.0001 **p≤0.01 *p≤0.05

African and coloured participants as well as married and divorced participants in the total sample indicated significantly higher happiness than their single counterparts. Married and divorced participants between 26 and 30 years also indicated a higher level of happiness than their younger counterparts.

Table 7: Summary of CHAID analyses: significant group percentage response differences (*job/career satisfaction*)

Item	Socio-demographic group	Chi-square	df	Sig	Agree %	n
I am satisfied in my job/ career	<i>Race</i>	91.726	1	0.000***	37	1 093
	White				45	437
	African; Indian; Coloured				33	656
	<i>White: Gender</i>	8.470	1	0.004**	45	437
	Male				46	121
	Female				45	316
	<i>Male: Marital status</i>	8.691	1	0.048*	46	121
	Married				49	62
	Single; Divorced; Widowed				43	59
	<i>Female: Age</i>	14	2	0.017*	45	316
	25 years and younger				49	149
	26-30 years				38	50
	>26-30 years				43	117
	<i>African; Indian; Coloured: Marital status</i>	47.548	1	0.000***	33	656
	Married; Divorced; Widowed				38	360
	Single				28	296
	<i>Married; Divorced; Widowed: Age</i>	10.673	1	0.010**	38	360
	≤31 to 40 years				37	236
	>31 to 40 years				42	124
	<i>Single: Educational level</i>	9.773	1	0.011**	28	296
	≤ 2nd year Undergraduate				25	163
	>2nd Undergraduate				32	133
	<i>Marital status</i>	46.611	1	0.000***	37	1 093
	Single; Divorced				33	561
	Married; Widowed				41	532
	<i>Single; Divorced: Gender</i>	11.251	1	0.002**	33	561
	Male				30	191
	Female				35	370
	<i>Male: Educational level</i>	7.354	1	0.04*	30	191
	≤1st year Undergraduate				27	80
	>1st year Undergraduate				33	111
	<i>Female: Age</i>	16.990	2	0.004**	35	370
	≤25 years				38	194
	>25 years; 31-40 years				30	135
	>40 years				47	41
	<i>Married; Widowed: Age</i>	8.956	1	0.025*	41	532
	≤31-40 years				41	370
	>40 years				42	162

*** p ≤ 0.0001; ** p ≤ 0.01; * p ≤ 0.05

Table 8: Summary of CHAID analyses: Significant group percentage response differences (*happiness and work as a valuable activity*)

Item	Socio-demographic group	Chi-square	df	Sig	Agree %	n
On average I am a happy person	<i>Race</i>	27.064	1	0.000***	60	1 773
	White; Indian				60	716
	African; Coloured				59	1 057
	<i>African; Coloured: Marital status</i>	8.731	1	0.047*	59	1 057
	Single				57	540
	Married; Divorced; Widowed				62	517
	<i>Marital status</i>	10.349	1	0.019*	60	1 773
	Single; Widowed				58	915
	Married; Divorced				62	858
	<i>Single; Widowed: Age</i>	9.842	1	0.015*	58	915
	≤ 25 years				56	415
	>25 years				60	500
	<i>Married; Divorced: Age</i>	11.505	1	0.006**	62	858
	≤26 to 30 years				63	193
>26 to 30 years				62	665	
Work is a valuable activity	<i>Race</i>	13.488	1	0.004**	57	1 695
	White; Indian				60	716
	African; Coloured				55	979
	<i>White; Indian: Gender</i>	18.282	1	0.000***	60	716
	Male				50	175
	Female				64	541
	<i>African; Coloured: Age</i>	8.635	1	0.03*	55	979
	<25 years & younger				54	224
>25 years				56	755	

*** $p \leq 0.0001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

Work as a valuable activity

The results show that all participants significantly regarded work as a valuable activity. Table 8 shows that white and Indian female participants regarded work as a valuable activity to a significantly higher degree than African and coloured participants. African and coloured participants older than 25 years regarded work as a valuable activity to a significantly higher degree than their younger counterparts.

Discussion

The main objective of this study was firstly to determine the relationship between the participants' psychological career resources and their subjective work experiences (life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction, happiness and their perceptions of work as a valuable activity). A second objective was to explore broad trends regarding how the participants differed on these variables in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics (marital status, educational level, age, gender and race).

Overall, the findings suggest significant relationships between participants' psychological career resources and their subjective work experiences. Moreover, the findings showed a number of significant differences between the most significant predictor psychological career resources and the four subjective work experiences of the various socio-demographic groups. In interpreting the results, the following socio-demographic characteristics of the sample were borne in mind: the participants were predominantly from the service industry and held mostly managerial and supervisory level positions. Furthermore, the sample represented predominantly full-time employed black single and married females in the entry and establishment life/career stages (25–40 years; mean age 32), who were mostly enrolled for undergraduate level studies at the higher education institution.

Relationship between psychological career resources, subjective work experiences and socio-demographic variables

The overall psychological career resources profile of the participants indicates that apart from their high sense of purpose, the participants seem to have well-developed self-management and relationship skills, the ability to connect with others in the workplace, positive self-esteem and the ability to adapt to change and deal confidently with setbacks and failures. However, their practical/creative skills, career directedness, career venturing and emotional literacy appear to be slightly out of balance. These findings suggest a lack of clarity regarding career goals and future career growth options and also an apparent lack of skills in exploring, setting and implementing future career options, and expressing these needs. Moreover, given the low mean scores obtained on *career venturing* and the high mean scores on the career preferences *stability/expertise* and *variety/creativity*, as well as for the *growth/development* career value, it appears that the group of participants prefer being in a work environment that offers them stable and steady opportunities to develop their expertise and further their growth and development. The findings also suggest a need for exposure to a variety of challenging tasks that would allow creative self-expression within a structured, known environment.

Furthermore, when considering that the participants predominantly occupy positions at the senior, middle management and supervisory level, it is interesting to note the low mean scores that the group obtained on the managerial career preference. One would tend to expect a higher preference for the *managerial* and *freedom/autonomy* career preferences and the *authority/influence* career value, as indicated by research conducted by Kniveton (2004) and Schein (1996). Since the participants are occupying managerial and supervisory positions at a relatively young age (the establishment life/career phase), their preferences may be an indication of their need to establish themselves in their positions and to develop their expertise through further development and growth opportunities. Adults in the early adulthood life/career stage were also found to have a higher need for further growth and development than adults in the middle and late life/career stages (Levinson, cited in Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk 2000: 110). The findings also indicate the *managerial* career preference as a negative predictor of *happiness*, which may suggest that fulfilling the role and responsibilities of a manager in the early adulthood stage of one's career may be experienced as stressful for some participants due to their higher need for growth and organisational support and guidance.

The middle and late early adulthood life/career stages (26–30 years and 31–40 years), also regarded as the entry and establishment life/career stages (Super 1992), are the period during which the life structure of young adults becomes more stable as they begin to settle down, become committed to contributing towards an occupation, a company or a person and start to establish socially supportive networks (Greenhaus et al. 2000). The young adults' need for developing expertise by means of further growth and learning opportunities is therefore higher during these particular life stages. These perspectives on the needs of the young working adult may provide a probable explanation for the lower mean scores on *life satisfaction* and *job/career satisfaction* and the higher mean score on *work as a valuable activity*. As individuals in the early adulthood phase (entry and establishment life/career stages) become more oriented towards the importance of work in their lives and learn how to balance job demands with their own needs, they generally find the work role to be increasingly salient (Savickas 2007). Furthermore, being exposed to a variety of job tasks and challenges that provide for the expression of one's creative abilities may lead to higher job/career satisfaction for people in the early adulthood phase of their careers.

Career directedness (having clarity regarding future career options and goals) was indicated as a positive predictor of *life satisfaction*, *job/career satisfaction* and *happiness*. Nabi (2000) regards clear career goals and future progression or growth options within a particular occupational context as key aspects in instilling a sense

of job stability and security among employees. Women were also found to regard a sense of job security and subjective feelings of success (such as growth and development opportunities, the intrinsic value of the job, and work–home balance) as more important than men, who appear to place higher value on objective aspects of achievement and career success such as progression towards positions of authority and influence within the company (Nabi 2000; Whitehead & Kotze 2003). The findings also show that female participants regarded their work as a valuable activity to a significantly higher degree than their male counterparts. Moreover, the findings indicated that participants that regard work as a valuable activity also tend to have a stronger sense of career purpose. These findings are in line with research conducted by Bellah et al. (1996), who found that people with a calling orientation (or strong sense of purpose) tend to work for the fulfilment that their jobs and careers offer and, in addition, believe that their work impacts on society in some way.

The findings also suggest that a low need for venturing out towards new career and organisational contexts (and, by implication, preferring steady, stable employment) may lead to higher levels of life satisfaction and job/career satisfaction. In terms of *career venturing*, the single participants seem to be more oriented towards taking risks in finding and experimenting with new career opportunities than the married participants. In this regard, Coetzee and Schreuder (2008) report findings indicating that single people are more willing to explore career opportunities that allow them to develop their skills and talents in challenging environments, while married people appear to have a stronger need for careers that offer them steady and stable employment and benefit packages (Coetzee & Schreuder 2008; Kniveton 2004).

Another interesting finding is that a low need for jobs that offer stability and allow one to focus predominantly on developing one's expertise in a specific area may lead to higher job/career satisfaction. Moreover, the findings of this research indicate *behavioural adaptability* as a positive predictor of *job/career satisfaction*, *happiness* and perceiving *work as a valuable activity*. The participants, who are predominantly in the establishment phase of their careers and lives, also seem to have a strong need for clarity regarding further growth and career development opportunities. Robson et al. (2006) and Arthur et al. (2005) found in this regard that behavioural adaptability, positive relationships, occupational growth, personal security, a continued focus on goals and the actual achievement of goals contributed positively to experiences of objective and subjective career success, career satisfaction, job satisfaction and life satisfaction.

The findings further suggest that positive self-views (in other words, high self-esteem) positively predict happiness. Regarding one's career as a calling positively

predicts work being experienced as a valuable activity. The findings of this research showed that males report significant higher levels of self-esteem than their female counterparts. Elliot, Sheldon and Church (1997) found that people who perceive themselves positively tend to pursue self-concordant career and work goals to a greater extent than people with a negative self-view. Research by Judge et al. (2005) found that people with self-concordant goals (that is, goals that are concordant with people's ideals, interests and values) are generally happier and have higher life satisfaction and job/career satisfaction than those who pursue goals for other reasons. People who are more self-positive tend to choose the goals that have the best chance of making them happy with their jobs and lives.

It was interesting to observe that whites reported significantly lower levels of self-esteem than African participants, whereas white male participants reported overall higher levels of life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction and happiness than black participants. Moreover, white and Indian participants also appear to attach higher significance to work as a valuable activity than black and coloured participants. These findings are in line with the findings of a study conducted by Motileng, Wagner and Cassimjee (2006) indicating that employment equity and affirmative action strategies have improved black persons' self-esteem, as these strategies present them with the chance to express their capabilities, potentialities or talents. Positive self-esteem has been found to enable people to become proactive agents in their actions and to increase their openness to and need for new learning.

As regards marital status, married and widowed participants (particularly black participants aged 31 to 40 years and white male participants) appear to experience higher life and job/career satisfaction than single and divorced participants, while married and divorced participants aged 26 to 30 years appear to experience significantly higher levels of happiness than single or widowed participants. Research by Eddleston, Baldrige and Veiga (2004) showed that the support structures offered by being married lead to a greater sense of well-being for both men and women. However, women managers are less likely to be married or have children due to the role overload often caused by being required to balance multiple life roles (Eddleston et al. 2004; Whitehead & Kotze 2003). The findings of this research showed that single and divorced females older than 40 years also reported higher job/career satisfaction than their married counterparts.

In terms of educational level, single males and married or widowed males enrolled for second year and higher levels of further studies appear to experience higher levels of life satisfaction and job/career satisfaction. Research by Eddleston et al. (2004) showed that education influences people's beliefs concerning their marketability and compensation value. Eddleston et al. regard education as one of

the most powerful influences on men's perceptions of career success and believe that education would appear to benefit men's careers more than women's. The findings of this study indicate significant differences between participants' educational levels and the *managerial* and *stability/expertise* career preferences, *career purpose* and *self-esteem*. However, the source of these differences could not be detected by the empirical analyses. Coetzee and Schreuder (2008) report in this regard that people with an undergraduate level qualification seem to be more job-oriented and to be attracted to careers that afford them the opportunity to apply and develop their own skills in positions of power and influence. However, people with a qualification at postgraduate level seem to have a higher sense of career calling and are more interested in applying their expertise where they can help make a difference in their own and others' lives.

Conclusions and recommendations

Since there is a scarcity of empirical work on the relationship between the psychological career resources and the subjective work experiences constructs relevant to this research (particularly in the multi-cultural South African organisational context), it would seem sensible not to over-interpret the present findings with reference to practical implications without further corroborative research, yet two preliminary implications may be suggested. Firstly, the findings illustrate that people's dominant career preferences, career drivers and career harmonisers (particularly self-esteem and behavioural adaptability) may have some potential in predicting their life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction and happiness and their perceptions of their work as a valuable activity. This suggests that favourable organisational conditions and career development support practices that foster an expression of self-concordant goals (that is, goals related to employees' core self-evaluations and inner career needs, values and interests as reflected in their repertoire of psychological career resources), may invoke higher levels of life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction, happiness and perception of work as a valuable activity.

Secondly, the findings also highlighted the need for further research in exploring the relationship between working adults' psychological career resources and their subjective work experiences, as the percentage variance explained by the prediction models was relatively small. However, the practical value of the findings lies in the richness of new knowledge gained regarding the differences between the socio-demographic variables and the constructs relevant to this research. Considering that the employment equity context in South Africa contributes to a more diversified workforce, the findings add valuable new knowledge that may be used to inform

organisational career development support practices and career counselling and guidance services. Moreover, organisations must take cognisance of how the particular socio-demographic context in which individuals pursue their careers may influence the strength and orientation of their employees' psychological career resources profiles, their subjective work experiences and their subsequent long-term employability, performance and motivation.

In the context of the foregoing, it is important to note that although the findings of this study apply mostly to working adults in the entry and establishment phases of their lives, organisations and practitioners need to realise that adults across all life/career stages must continue to cope with trying to implement an evolving self-concept in their lifestyles, in their work, in their choices, and in their career development planning. Efforts to grapple with skills in interpersonal relations and in learning or re-learning continue, for most people, throughout their lives (Herr et al. 2004). It therefore stands to reason that establishing career development support practices that foster positive work experiences for all age, gender and race groups may enhance experiences of intrinsic career success and promote the employability orientation of employees.

Since the present study has been limited to participants employed predominantly in the service industry, the findings cannot be generalised to other occupational contexts. Furthermore, given the exploratory nature of the research design, this study can yield no statements about causation. Associations between the socio-demographic variables and participants' psychological career resources and subjective work experiences have thus been interpreted rather than established. These findings therefore need to be replicated with broader samples across various occupational groups and economic sectors before conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between employees' socio-demographic characteristics, psychological career resources and subjective work experiences.

References

- Adler, A. 1956. *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler: a Systematic Presentation in Selections of his Writings*. New York: Basic Books.
- Allen, T.J. & Katz, R. 1992. 'Age, education and the technical ladder', *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, 39(3): 237–245.
- Anastasi, A. 1976. *Psychological Testing*. New York: McMillan.
- Anastasiadou, S.D. 2007. 'Job commitment is highly influenced by job motives and job satisfaction: the case of Greek teachers in higher education', *International Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Change Management*, 7 (7): 69–79.
- Arnold, J. & Cohen, L. 2008. 'The psychology of careers in industrial and organisational

- settings: a critical but appreciative analysis', In Hodgkinson, G.P. & Ford, J.K. (eds), *International Review of Industrial and Organisational Psychology*, Vol. 23. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Arthur, M.B., Khapova, S.N. & Wilderom, C.P.M. 2005. 'Career success in a boundaryless career world', *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 26: 177–202.
- Ashton, M.C. 2007. *Individual Differences and Personality*. Amsterdam: Academic Press.
- BarOn, R. 1997. *EQi: BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory User's Manual*. Toronto: Multi-Health Systems.
- Barrick, M.R. & Ryan A.M. (eds). 2003. *Personality and Work: Reconsidering the Role of Personality in Organisations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bartholomew, K., Antonia, J.Z. & Marcia, J.E. 2000. 'Coded semi-structured interviews in psychological research', In Resi, H.T. & Judd C.M. (eds), *Handbook of Research Methods in Social and Personality Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baruch, Y. 2004. 'Transforming careers: from linear to multi-directional career paths', *Career Development International*, 9(1): 58–73.
- Battle, J. 1992. *Culture-free Self-esteem Inventories for Children and Adults*. Texas: Pro-Ed.
- Bellah, R.N., Sullivan, W.M., Tipton, S.M., Madsen, R. & Swindler, A. 1996. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bergh, Z.C. 2009. Psychometric properties of the Global Subjective Work Experiences Scale. Unpublished research article, Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa Pretoria.
- Briscoe, J.P. & Hall, D.T. 1999. 'Grooming and picking leaders using competency frameworks: Do they work? An alternative approach and new guidelines for practice', *Organisational Dynamics*, Autumn: 37–52.
- Brousseau, K.R. 1990. 'Career dynamics in the baby boom and baby bust era', *Journal of Organisational Change Management*, 3(3): 46–58.
- Brown, C., George-Curran, R. & Smith, M.L. 2003. 'The role of emotional intelligence in the career commitment and decision-making process', *Journal of Career Assessment*, 11(4): 379–392.
- Coertse, S. & Scheepers, J.M. 2004. 'Some personality and cognitive correlates of career maturity', *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 30(2): 56–73.
- Coetzee, M. 2007. Exploratory factor analyses of the Psychological Career Resources Inventory. Unpublished research report, Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Coetzee, M. 2008. 'Psychological career resources of working adults: a South African survey', *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 34(2): 32–41.
- Coetzee, M. & Roythorne-Jacobs, H. 2007. *Career Counselling and Guidance in the Workplace: a Manual for Career Practitioners*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Coetzee, M. & Schreuder, A.M.G. 2008. 'A multi-cultural investigation of students' career anchors at a South African higher education institution', *SA Journal of Labour Relations*, 32 (2): 1–21.

- Dawis, R.V. 1984. 'Job satisfaction: worker aspirations, attitudes, and behaviour', In Gysbers, N.C. (ed), *Designing Careers, Counseling to Enhance Education, Work and Leisure*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- De Fruyt, F., & Salgado, J.F. 2003. 'Personality and industrial, work and organisational applications', *European Journal of Personality*, 17: 1–10.
- Diener, E. & Seligman, M.E.P. 2002. 'Very happy people', *Psychological Science*, 13: 81–84.
- Diener, E. & Seligman, M.E.P. 2004. 'Beyond money: toward an economy of well-being', *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 5(1): 1–31.
- Diener, E., Gohm, C.L., Suh, E., & Oishi, S. 2000. 'Similarity of the relations between marital status and subjective well-being across cultures', *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 31: 419–436.
- Dooley, D. 1995. *Social Research Methods*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Draper, N.R. & Smith, H. 1981. *Applied Regression Analysis* (2nd edition). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Driver, M.J. 1982. 'Career concepts: a new approach to research', In Katz, R. (ed), *Career Issues in Human Resource Management*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Ebberwein, C.A., Krieshok, T.S., Ulven, J.C. & Prosser, E.C. 2004. 'Voices in transition: Lessons on career adaptability', *Career Development Quarterly*, 52(4): 292–308.
- Eddleston, K.A., Baldridge, D.C. & Veiga, J.F. 2004. 'Toward modeling the predictors of managerial career success: Does gender matter?' *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 19(4): 360–385.
- Elliot, A.J., Sheldon, K.M. & Church, M.A. 1997. 'Avoidance personal goals and subjective well-being', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23: 915–927.
- Emmerling, R.J. & Cherniss, C. 2003. 'Emotional intelligence and the career choice process', *Journal of Career Assessment*, 11(2): 153–167.
- Erdoğan, N. 2003. 'Career orientations of salaried professionals: the case of Turkey', *Career Development International*, 9(2): 153–175.
- Flett, G.L. 2007. *Personality Theory and Research*. Ontario: Wiley and Sons.
- Greenhaus, J.H., Callanan, G.A. & Godshalk, V.M. 2000. *Career Management*. New York: Dryden.
- Gunz, H.P. & Heslin, P.A. 2005. 'Reconceptualising career success', *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 26: 105–111.
- Hall, D.T. 2002. *Careers in and out of Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hall, D.T. & Chandler, D.E. 2005. 'Psychological success: When the career is a calling', *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 26: 155–176.
- Harpaz, I. & Fu, X. 2002. 'The structure of the meaning of work: a relative stability amidst change', *Human Relations*, 55(6): 639–667.
- Herr, E.L., Cramer, S.H. & Niles, S.G. 2004. *Career Guidance and Counseling through the Lifespan*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Hewitt, J.P. 2002. 'The social construction of self-esteem', In Snyder, C.R. & Lopez, S.J. (eds), *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Igbaria, M., Greenhaus, J.H. & Parasuraman, S. 1991. 'Career orientations of MIS employees: an empirical analysis', *MIS Quarterly*, 15(2): 151–169.
- Judge, T.A., Bono, J.E., Erez, A. & Locke, E.A. 2005. 'Core self-evaluations and job and life satisfaction: the role of self-concordance and goal attainment', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90 (92): 257–268.
- Judge, T.A. & Kammeyer-Mueller, J.D. 2007. 'Personality and career success', In Gunz, H. & Peiperl, M. (eds), *Handbook of Career Studies*. London: Sage.
- Kim, N. 2005. 'Organisational interventions influencing employee career development preferred by different career success orientations', *International Journal of Training and Development*, 9(1): 47–61.
- Kniveton, B.H. 2004. 'Managerial career anchors in a changing business environment', *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 28(7): 564–573.
- Kokou, G. & Ierodiakonou, C. 2007. 'Job satisfaction and employee commitment in the academic profession: a gender approach', *International Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Change Management*, 6(8): 101–123.
- Lucas, R.E., Clark, A.E., Georgellis, Y. & Diener, E. 2004. 'Unemployment alters the set point for life satisfaction', *Psychological Science*, 15 (1): 8–13.
- Maltby, J., Day, L. & Macaskill, A. 2007. *Introduction to Personality, Individual Differences and Intelligence*. Harlow: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Marshall, V. & Bonner, D. 2003. 'Career anchors and the effects of downsizing: implications for generations and cultures at work. A preliminary investigation', *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 27(6): 281–291.
- Martin, A. & Roodt, G. 2008. 'Perceptions of organisational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions in a post-merger South African tertiary institution', *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 34(1): 23–31.
- Motileng, B.B., Wagner, C. & Cassimjee, N. 2006. 'Black middle managers' experience of Affirmative Action in a media company', *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 32(1): 11–16.
- Nabi, G.R. 2000. 'The relationship between HRM, social support and subjective career success among men and women', *International Journal of Manpower*, 22(5): 457–474.
- Nunnally, J.C. & Bernstein, I.H. 1994. *Psychometric Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Perrone, K.M., Webb, L.K., Wright, S.L., Jackson, Z.V. & Ksiazak, T.M. 2006. 'Relationship of spirituality to work and family roles and life satisfaction among gifted adults', *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 28(3): 253–268.
- Peterson, C. & Seligman, M.E.P. 2003. Values in Action (VIA) classification of strengths. [Online] Available at: www.psych.upenn.edu/seligman/ciamanualintro.pdf. Accessed: 20 August 2005.
- Robson, S.M., Hansson, R.O., Abalos, A. & Booth, M. 2006. 'Successful aging criteria for aging well in the workplace', *Journal of Career Development*, 33: 156–177.
- Salkind, N.J. 1997. *Exploring Research*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.
- SAS (Statistical Analysis System) Institute. 2003. SAS software package. Cary, NC: SAS Institute.

- Savickas, M.L. 2000. 'Renovating the psychology of careers for the twenty-first century', In Collin, A. & Young, R.A. (eds), *The Future of Career*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Savickas, M.L. 2007. 'Occupational choice', In Gunz, H. & Peiperl, M. (eds), *Handbook of Career Studies*. London: Sage.
- Schein, E.H. 1996. 'Career anchors revisited. Implications for career development in the 21st century', *Academy of Management Executive*, 1: 80–88.
- Schneer, J.A. & Reitman, F. 1994. 'The importance of gender in mid-career: a longitudinal study of MBAs', *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 15: 199–207.
- Seligman, M.E.P. 2002. *Authentic Happiness*. New York: Free Press.
- Sempane, M.E., Rieger, H.S. & Roodt, G. 2002. 'Job satisfaction in relation to organisational culture', *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 28(2): 23–30.
- Shaughnessy, J.J. & Zechmeister, E.B. 2003. *Research Methods in Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Snyder, C.R. & Lopez, J. (eds) 2002. *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. Washington: APA.
- Sternberg, R.J. 1999. 'Successful intelligence: finding a balance', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 3: 436–442.
- Super, D.E. 1992. 'Toward a comprehensive theory of career development', In Montross, D.H. & Shinkman, C.J. (eds), *Career Development: Theory and Practice*. Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.
- Van Dam, K. 2004. 'Antecedents and consequences of employability orientation', *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 13(1): 29–51.
- Van der Heijde, C.M. & Van der Heijden, B.I.J.M. 2006. 'A competence-based and multidimensional operationalisation of employability', *Human Resource Management*, 45(3): 449–476.
- Whitehead, T. & Kotze, M.E. 2003. 'Career and life-balance of professional women: a South African study', *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1(3): 62–76.
- Woodd, M. 2000. 'The move towards a different career pattern: Are women better prepared than men for a modern career?' *Career Development International*, 5(2): 99–105.
- Wrzesniewski, A., McCauley, C.R., Rozin, P. & Schwartz, B. 1997. 'Jobs, careers and callings: people's relations to their work', *Journal of Research in Personality*, 31: 21–33.