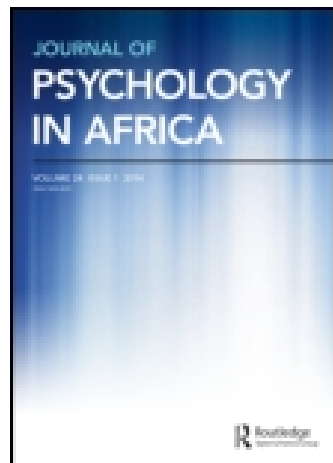


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Exploring the Attainment of Career Success

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This study examined the role of the organisation as well as the role of the employee in the attainment of career success for senior management employees. Participants were a purposive sample of 24 senior management employees from two international financial organisations in South Africa (of which 58,3% were English-speaking and 54,2% male). A qualitative research approach was followed and data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews with the participants. The verbatim transcriptions were analysed using content analysis. Findings indicate that organisations which provide challenges and opportunities advanced the careers of their employees. Employees who build good interpersonal relationships and deliver on promises are more likely to be successful at their careers. Attaining career success is the mutual responsibility or partnership between the organisation and employees.

Keywords: career success; career development; role of organisation; South African senior management; employees; employers; qualitative

Human resource development practitioners play a crucial role in career development and success among employees (McDonald & Hite, 2008). In doing so, they may provide appropriate career relevant training, implementing mentoring programmes and providing assistance with succession planning, which can all benefit employees (Gilbreath, 2008). However, if these initiatives are to have strong, long-term effects, they need to be provided within a supportive work environment. Human resource development practitioners have a crucial role to play in creating such an environment by evaluating the working environment and transforming the organisation into a place that is conducive to developing careers environment and the attainment of career success (Gilbreath, 2008).

Creating a career-conducive organisation can be an essential strategic contribution that ensures long term employment, and improved adaptability and performance among employees. Organisations tend to exert a huge influence on their employees, and therefore a career-conducive working environment also contributes to the overall quality of life of the employees (Gilbreath, 2008). However, providing a career conducive organisation should not be the only aspect organisations engage to ensure the attainment of career success for their employees.

Career support practices have been found to influence career success. If these strategies is not considered, it could lead to negative outcomes, such as anxiety, stress, dissatisfaction with the job and career, unhappiness and unwanted turnover (Coetzee & Bergh, 2009; Feldman & Bolino, 1996; Jiang & Klein, 2000; Jiang, Klein, & Balloun, 2001) leaving a huge skills shortage and knowledge gap at very crucial levels within the organisation.

Organisations have increasingly been paying attention to attracting, engaging and retaining their key employees as potential organisational leaders (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderdom 2005; Baruch, 2004). In order to retain valuable and key employees, organisations (employers) need to provide employees with appropriate incentives and career paths that are in line with

the career values, expectations and aspirations that underpin the career orientations of these employees (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2009; Järleström, 2000; Schein, 1996; Suutari & Taka, 2004).

Career success was traditionally defined around objective career success measures, such as compensation and promotions, especially onto management level (Miguel, 1993). Studies that were conducted on the careers of top executives or senior management have shown that career success was perceived in terms of advancement up the organisational hierarchy, usually realised through a series of promotions (Forbes & Piercy, 1991). Promotions generally symbolise progression up the corporate ladder and are therefore perceived as a sure sign of success (Brett, 1997; Hall, 1996). Eddleston, Baldrige, and Veiga (2004) are of opinion that personnel promotions are usually accompanied by an increase in remuneration. Managerial advancement also are characterised by an increase in responsibility, which can be expected to lead to an increase in compensation.

As a result, employees that are often associated with getting promotions and salary increases are the individuals who are typically viewed to have career success. Due to this, societies and more specifically organisations have the tendency to measure employees' career success against objective and external outcomes (Ng, Eby, Sorensem, & Feldman, 2005). Nevertheless, it may not be all that people seek from their careers (Arthur, et al., 2005; Eddleston et al., 2004; Mirvis & Hall, 1994; Tu, Forret, & Sullivan, 2006; Sturges, 1999). Thus, receiving promotions and pay increases does not necessarily make employees feel proud and successful in their careers (Hall, 2002). The sole use of objective criteria to gauge career success is therefore incomplete in capturing the multifaceted nature of the social construct of career success. When the focus is only on an individual's objective career success it may lead to incompatibility between such an individual's career goals and strategies and his/her personal values and beliefs (Callanan, 2003). Subse-

quently subjective career success has increasingly become a focal point where individuals have taken greater responsibility for their own careers. Subjective career success is based on the internal components that involve the individual's personal internal interpretations, perspectives and evaluations of his/her career success (Arthur et al., 2005).

It is therefore crucial to give attention and measure both the objective and the subjective side of career success. According to Hall (2002) the external components of career success, such as pay, increase in income and advancement in the organisation are considered to be the most commonly used and easily accessible indicators of objective career success. Traditionally, subjective career success has been measured in terms of either personal job or career satisfaction. Career satisfaction can be conceptualised as someone's positive psychological attitude towards his/her work situation (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). It is highly unlikely for individuals to perceive their career to be successful, if they are not pleased with certain aspects of that career (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999). Therefore, job satisfaction seems to be the prominent indicator of subjective career success. Even though a high level of job satisfaction may facilitate the perception of a successful career, the multidimensional nature of subjective career success cannot be restricted only to the construct of personal job satisfaction (Heslin, 2003). Career success as a concept entails actual and conventional career-related achievements that must be measured across a broader time frame than job satisfaction. It also includes a wider range of outcomes, such as deriving a sense of meaning and purpose from one's work, the ability to balance work and one's personal life – to only name a few (Finegold & Mohrman, 2001; Hall, 2002; Heslin, 2005; Wrzesniewski, 2002).

A majority of the studies that critically explore and investigate the concept of career success have been conducted in the international arena and therefore present findings from entirely different contexts. Research on career success within the South African context has mainly been of a quantitative nature exploring various career related constructs, where only some qualitative studies have been done on this related topic. A number of studies have focused on the challenges that women academics in South Africa face in terms of achieving career success (Riordan, 2007; Riordan & Louw-Potgieter, 2011). Other South African studies mostly among women include: investigations into the career nature of South African women; the psychological factors influencing careers as possible antecedents of career success for women academics in South Africa; psychological career factors as possible predictors of career anchors; career orientations influencing individual's subjective work experiences; examining the obstacles for career advancement or progression among women in the investment banking arena (Riordan, 2007; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2009; Coetzee et al., 2010; Rowe & Crafford, 2003).

Goals of the Study

This study investigated career success as influenced by the organisation in the South African financial services context and from the perspectives of senior manager. Senior management are generally perceived to enjoy career success based on their income, occupational level and status (Ng et al., 2005). The specific research questions for the study were:

- What is the role of the organisation in the attainment of career success for senior management employees?

- What is the role of senior managers in their own attainment of career success?

Method

Participants and Setting

A purposive sample of 24 senior managers (54,2 % males and 58,3% English speaking) were included in this study. The inclusion criteria specified that employees (1) are in a senior management position or higher, and (2) have between five and ten years of senior management experience. Participants were between the ages of 35 and 55 years (66,6%). The sample included employees from several management levels such as director level (29,2%), executive level (20,8%), managerial level (20,8%), and senior management level (16,8%) with a small number at partner (4,2%) and associate manager (4,2%) and associate director level (4,2%). Of the sample 37,5% had a total between 5-10 years of experience and 20,8% had 10-15 total years of experience. The years of experience in the industry were more or less equally distributed, with 37,5% between 10-15 total years of experience and 29,2% between 5-10 total years of experience in the industry.

Data Collection

Data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews in which participants were asked questions about what they perceived to influence career success from the view point of the organization and the individual employee. Participants reported on their demographics.

Procedure

Permission for the study was granted from the participating organisations and informed consent was obtained from the participants. During the interview the researcher again explained the context and the purpose of the interview. The issue of confidentiality and anonymity was also discussed and emphasised. Participants were assured that their identity would remain anonymous and that various measures were taken with regards to their interview recordings in order to ensure confidentiality (e.g., unique confidential coding system). A high-quality digital tape recorder was used to record the interviews for the purpose of transcribing the interviews later on. A specific coding system was used to label the tape recordings as well as the corresponding transcripts. Observation notes or field notes were taken down after each interview as these notes that are seen as the essentials of the interviewee's thoughts and experiences, as well as the proceedings that took place during the interview (Flick, 2009).

Data Analyses

The verbatim transcripts were analysed using the content analysis procedure. According to Flick (2009) content analysis is one of the established procedures used when analysing textual material, especially interview data. In order to start the process of analysis, the researcher thoroughly read the interviews several times, after which the responses of the participants were categorised into meaningful units that appeared as sentences or paragraphs. All of the meaningful units were then classified into categories of major themes. The co-coder later on assisted the researcher in reviewing and agreeing upon these themes. The researcher, with the help of the co-coder, carefully analysed the major themes, after which smaller and

comparable sub-themes were recognised, explored and summarised.

Findings

From the interviews three main themes were extracted. The first theme (see table 1) presents the main theme as the role of the organisation (also referred to as *employer*) regarding the attainment of career success. Consequently the second theme (see table 2) presents the theme regarding the role of the individual (also referred to as *employee*) with regards to the attainment of career success. The last theme indicates the consequences related to career success as perceived by the senior managers in this study.

Theme 1: Role of the organisation (employer). The first theme presents the role that the *organisation or employer* plays in the attainment of their (senior managers') career success. According to participants in order to obtain career success, certain elements need to be in place from the organisation's side. These elements are illustrated in Table 1.

Participants revealed that the most common role that the organisation plays in their career success is *providing an environment that is conducive to their careers* and the development of these careers. This entails an environment where they feel happy to come to work every day. They also mentioned that to them it meant working for a reputable organisation that displays an authentic image and is represented by good leadership, where they feel valued and cared for, as illustrated by the statement below:

So, you've got to build an environment that is exciting for people; that gives people a decent value proposition; that pays people well, or at least market related salaries. That is a place where people feel they can grow and thrive and be proud of. (Participant 6B)

Also providing opportunities to develop employees' careers and thus having the *appropriate career development measures* in place is seen as important. Participants mentioned having access to continuous training and development, mentoring and coaching and being provided with guidelines to plan their careers. They also mentioned the importance of being afforded various opportunities to develop their career, such as progression opportunities, networking opportunities, international opportunities and especially being given challenges to prove their capabilities. The following citation captures this role that an organisation can play:

That is quite a key contribution that organisations like this make to individuals like myself and others, where they invest and they believe in the investment of their people's development. Where they have proper career plans in place and where they have conversations with individuals about what their aspirations are and what their developmental needs are. Where you have succession plans that are formalised (Participant 6B)

A majority of the participants discussed the significance of *effective talent management* in the organisation and how it is crucial to career development and consequently career success. They referred to the importance of talent mapping and succession planning and that the organisation had a huge re-

Table 1

Role of the Organisation (Employer) for the Attainment of Career Success

Organisations should:

Provide a career conducive environment

Provide a work environment where employees want to come to work; create an environment where employees are happy and feel supported; endorse a knowledge sharing, networking and coaching culture that contributes to employees' career development; endeavour to be a reputable company that reflects an authentic image as a place where employees are valued and cared for.

Endorse awareness of the need for holistic wellness

Adopt a holistic culture of wellness awareness to prevent health risks associated with stress and burnout as well as negative interference between the work and home; promote balanced lifestyle initiatives; endorse efficient guidelines measures and policies to balance the work with everyday life; promote awareness of the need for wellness through interventions targeting the spheres of physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

Build supportive and sustainable relationships with staff

Building good relationships with employees by providing support for their work and personal issues; providing support for career aspirations, plans and decisions; expressing a vote of confidence in their capabilities through executive sponsorship.

Provide opportunities and challenges

Providing opportunities for progression; providing international opportunities and exposure; ensuring a variety of opportunities available; providing opportunities for networking by organising networking events; providing graduates with opportunities for internship and learnership; giving employees challenging assignments to prove their capability.

Initiate effective talent management strategies

Initiate effective talent management and mapping; initiate effective succession planning; groom successors of certain key positions; look after key individuals in the organisation; have effective retention strategies in place; build sustainable relationships with talented individuals.

Have appropriate career development measures in place

Provide appropriate career development through: investing in training and development and providing training that is relevant to the employees' careers (e.g., courses, conferences, formal training programmes); investing in the development of certain skills; providing career planning and having regular meetings discussing career aspirations; providing mentoring and coaching opportunities; supporting continuous learning and on-going professional development (e.g., further studies, qualification, certification); provide effective performance management and feedback systems; recognising employees' value through monetary and non-monetary incentives.

sponsibility to look after key individuals in their organisation. This should be done by deploying effective strategies to retain existing employees. They added that it was important for the organisation to consider grooming successors for certain key positions within the organisation, especially the position of CEO. Related to this, they mentioned building sustainable relationships with staff, but even more specifically focus on talent. The following quotes reflect this strategy:

So in my mind you identify your talent and you sit them down and you say, "We're going to groom and develop you and we're going to give you these exposure levels." (Participant 4B)

Apart from the role of the employer or organisation, participants also revealed what they feel employees need to do in order to achieve success in their careers.

Theme 2: Role of the individual (employee). The specific aspects which employees should give attention to for the attainment of career success are indicated in Table 2.

First and foremost, participants indicated that the most important individual prerequisite of career success was to have a *vision*. This means having a clear direction of where they were going (career path) and what they wanted to achieve (career goals). These aspects were essential to them in order to achieve career success. Reflections on such a viewpoint are cited below:

You have to understand what are your personal vision and your personal goals. So that's the first thing that will help you. (Participant 2B)

Secondly, they regarded *passion and self-insight* as necessary requirements. Participants emphasised the need to have a deep passion for their work and to be doing something that they loved and enjoyed. They claimed that such a passion enabled them to put in the hard work and concerted effort to achieve career success. Participants have shown that self-insight was necessary to them. This entails knowing themselves and acknowledging their strengths and limitations or certain areas from which they could develop themselves. In knowing themselves they could set themselves realistic goals and expectations to be achieved. References to passion and self-insight are illustrated by the excerpts below:

The first thing that you require from where I sit is that you've got to love what you do, because it's very difficult to succeed in something that you don't like doing. Second thing is, you've got to be passionate about what you do, whatever it is that you do, you've got to be passionate about it. (Participant 3B)

So you need to understand what your limitations are, play to your strengths, acknowledge your limitations, and make sure you're always developing your developmental areas. (Participant 2B)

Although the organisation do play an important role in participants career success, *taking own responsibility for career development* also emerged as one of the most popular prerequisites for career success. Participants stated that career success begins with a principled decision to be successful. They mentioned that the organisation could provide everything they needed to develop their career, as well as the means to become successful in such a career. However, the onus rests on them to take those opportunities and turn it into career success. The quotes below support the decision of taking responsibility for one's own career and the development of that career:

I think in terms of development goals, it's something that I need to set upfront for myself. Obviously I'll discuss it with

my manager and my coaches, but ultimately it's on me to do the training and to actually perform and do the work in order to reach those goals. (Participant 12A)

Another significant factor that participants lifted out as necessary to achieve career success was *building good business relationships and networking*. They mentioned that key to achieving career success for them was having and maintaining satisfying relationships with the individuals whom they worked with throughout their careers, as well as building sustainable networks with these people. They found, however, that lucrative business relationships could not be established without *delivering on promises*. Therefore, by continually delivering tangible business results they were able to sustain sound business relationships and move ahead in their career. In addition, they stated that no person can work in isolation. Therefore they depended on capable individuals within their teams to help them achieve business goals, and consequently business success. In this sense they made it clear that other people and the nature of their relationships with their co-workers are critical in achieving career success. This attitude is reflected by the following quotations:

So I think the key to success is collaboration and networking with people, and also delivering on what you say you're going to deliver. (Participant 2A)

Knowing the business also emerged as a significant prerequisite to achieve career success. However, it is not sufficient only to know and understand the business model. Factors that influence the nature of work change and evolve constantly. In light of this participants argued that it was crucial to stay up to date with the latest trends by reading and learning, as well as by updating their skills and levels of competence. They also mentioned that they were able to become experts in their field of operation through continuous learning and development of their skills. Because of this they are regarded as astute professionals within the organisation. Keeping up to date as a requirement for career success is expressed in the statement below:

Especially in today's kind of world and the way the world's moving at the fast rate, you need to keep up with that, because if you're not able to do that, you will not be able to achieve career success. (Participant 5A)

Participants also indicated that attaining career success also comes with consequences or sacrifices.

Theme 3: Consequences of career success. While discussing the role of the organisation and the role of the employee, participants also highlighted that career success to them also meant the willingness to make sacrifices. These sacrifices most of the time affected their personal and family domains. Participants claimed that the two most significant consequences related to career success were *health risks and work-personal life interference* (work or work responsibilities interfering with personal life and responsibilities). When mentioning health risks, participants referred to career success as a lifestyle that demands 24 hours of their day. They associated this style with working long hours and experiencing high levels of stress. Some participants also mentioned that they have observed and experienced the effect of failing to live a balanced lifestyle, while experiencing extended levels of stress. They found that this could lead to illness or compromised health, which may manifest in heart attacks, fatigue and burnout. When work interferes with one's personal life, this can also be considered a significant consequence of career success. This is because sacrificing personal and family time for work can lead to broken relationships. Such relationships may end up in divorce

Table 2

*Role of the Individual (Employee) for the Attainment of Career Success**Build good relationships and invest in networking*

Establishing sound and stable business relationships; enjoy a healthy working relationship with colleagues; having the ability to work well with others; having well established interpersonal skills that help to build satisfying relationships; paying respect and showing gratitude to individuals; building a sustainable network; collaborating and networking with others; having a wide-spread network.

Deliver on promises

Delivering on what you promise to deliver; follow-through on promises; establishing a track record of service delivery and performance; continuously delivering tangible business results.

Know the business

Knowing and understanding the business model; having the knowledge, experience and expertise in your field of operation; acquiring the relevant skills and knowledge to be considered a source of information or expert in the field.

Take responsibility for their career development

Taking responsibility and accountability for your own career and career development; make a principled decision to be successful; set your own developmental goals; take the responsibility to seize available opportunities; accept personal accountability to develop your own career; hold the timeframe of achievement and success in your own hands.

Have a vision

Having a clear vision of your career and career path; choosing a clear direction to move in; setting clear and defined personal and business goals; maintaining a clear personal vision of what you want to achieve.

Engage in mentorship, coaching and sharing knowledge

Being involved in formal mentorship or coaching programmes where knowledge, experience and opportunities are shared; having a credible mentor or coach who is insightful and resourceful; receiving the right guidance and mentorship; having a facilitative manager who shares his knowledge and experience; being surrounded by knowledgeable individuals.

Work in a team

Working in a team that strives towards a common goal; team achievement contributing to business's success; working within a strong and capable team; experiencing a shared sense of success through the team's recognition for individual performance.

Have support and be supportive

Having a support structure and network at work; finding support from managers and colleagues; enjoying support and 'buy-in' from team members to execute ideas and concepts; getting support and 'buy-in' from managers about your ideas, concepts and career; provided support for development; having executive sponsorship in your career.

Person-environment fit

Organisation that meets objectives; organisation helps to meet life expectations; alignment of personal goals and business goals; alignment of personal values and values of organisation; personality fits into the organisational culture; experiencing a satisfying work culture where you are happy and fulfilled.

Have self- insight

Knowing yourself and understanding your strengths and limitations; being aware of your blind spots and weaknesses; acknowledging your developmental areas of expertise; understanding your own dynamics.

Work for a reputable company

Working for a reputable organisation with an authentic image; working for a well-established organisation that is secure, stable and with a sustainable future; working in key environments with a respected track record with society; working for an organisation with a focus on credible leadership, environmental awareness, and wellness of the staff.

Be competent

Having a basic skill set; having the intellectual capability; being technically competent; having the right level of education, qualification or certification; being talented in your role and knowing the abilities that make you an expert.

Be passionate

Being passionate about your work; doing something that lets you rise every morning; doing work that you love and enjoy; partaking in something that excites and ignites your soul.

Make compromises

Prepared to make compromises and sacrifices for success; willing to make trade-off decisions; prepared to relocate nationally or internationally for long periods of time.

or parents that are alienated from their children. The following statements clearly reflect participants' experience of the consequences of career success in this regard:

When you look at successful businessmen, some of them have been extremely successful in the context of their work, but if you look through that, their family life and their health are shocking, like for example, they've had heart attacks at 40 years or they've had 3 wives. (Participant 11A)

Career success comes through the most brutal sacrifices and you normally sacrifice family, health, and everything else and you work 14 to 16 hours a day, which is just a standard work day that you function within. (Participant 4B)

Discussion

According to management employees in this study, organisations have to play a collaborative role in helping management employees achieve success in their careers; – including implementing mentoring programmes, providing career relevant training, and providing assistance in succession planning. This finding is in line with research conducted by Gilbreath (2008). Gilbreath considered a career-conducive environment to ensure long-term employment, and enhanced adaptability and performance.

Employers should provide an environment where employees feel they can grow and thrive by being provided with the appropriate challenges, opportunities and career development measures and where they feel that they are contributing and adding value to the organisation by making a difference in other people's lives. These resources could include supportive teamwork, mentoring and coaching and good leadership for person-work environment fit (see also Heslin, 2005). Organisations in their career development support for employees should support employees both within their work environment and also work-related personal lives. Gilbreath (2008) also regarded employee support as being crucial in helping them attain career success.

Although participants did emphasise the various roles of the employer in the attainment of career success, it was also clear that employee themselves also have a huge responsibility in the attainment of their own career success. Some of the main requirements mentioned from the employee's side were taking own responsibility for their career development, working in a team and having the right attitude, passion, self-insight and skills, especially those skills that allow one to work effectively with other people (interpersonal skills). Management employees taking responsibility for their own career development is very much representative of the attitude found among managers working in the new careers without boundaries. According to Hall (2002), this attitude is characterised by an individual who manages his or her career in a proactive, self-directed manner, who is mainly driven by personal values and evaluates his or her career success based on subjective research criteria. Managers in this study explained that because their work required working in teams and having to interact constantly with others, they needed to have well-established interpersonal skills. Poon, (2004) substantiated this by stating that in order to work well with other people, an individual needs to have interpersonal perceptiveness and skills. Participants also mentioned that employees needed to have a passion for their work, because it acts as a crucial driver for your performance.

They additionally added that employees need to have self-insight as it enables them to better assess their strengths, developmental areas, job skills and interests. Self-insight also

helps one to set appropriate career objectives and realistic career plans, and to obtain the developmental experiences needed to utilise career opportunities. This was also supported by Poon (2004).

Managers should also have a clear vision of where they are going. Some of the unique findings mentioned by managers were that in order to achieve career success the onus is on the employee to build good track records of delivery and performance. Only by performing constantly on time and as expected by means of outstanding outputs, could employees be taken seriously by others and attain career success.

Although career success can be linked to certain positive career related outcomes, such as life satisfaction, general mental health (Hall, 2002), job or career satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and job performance (Coetzee et al., 2010), it could also be linked to certain negative career related outcomes that manifests mainly in consequences associated with such success. The participants in this study considered these consequences to be the sacrifices and compromises that they had to make in order to achieve career success. They defined these mainly in terms of health risks and the interference of their work in their personal life. Managers revealed that certain sacrifices and compromises had to be made for career success. They claimed these sacrifices and compromises usually involved their health and their family. Health matters specifically mentioned were health risks, ill health or compromised health, fatigue, heart attacks and burnout. The interference of work in one's personal life and family time, which could lead to broken family relationships, was also considered a significant consequence of striving to achieve success in one's career (see also Tu et al., 2006). The success in top level management positions was associated with stress and long hours of work, which may detract from managers' family and personal lives.

Implications for Organization Career Support Interventions

Organisations with the aim to facilitate employees' career success effectively can utilise the information and recommendations provided by this research. During individuals' early careers, their own personal definitions of career success are confronted with that of the organisation they are employed in. This often causes a re-definition of their own goals and roles (Duxberry, Dyke, & Lam, 1999). If these are not established, it could lead to incompatibility between personal orientation and the work environment, or miss-alignment of personal goals with the goals of the organisation. Therefore organisations should monitor these issues on a regular basis by having career discussions, career aspiration meetings and career planning and mapping. It is therefore suggested that organisations and those managers that drives career development consider the significance of more effective career matching. This can be established by providing different rewards and other ways of recognition. These can include opportunities to follow a career path that will address the diverse interests and requirements of a multi-dimensional and multi-cultural workforce (Coetzee, et al., 2010). Furthermore the aim should be to establish practices that support career development and promote positive work experiences for all race, age and gender groups. Such practices might boost individuals' intrinsic or subjective experiences of career success. It might also enrich their life and build career satisfaction and help create a general sense of wellbeing (Coetzee & Bergh, 2009)

Organisations should focus their efforts on increasing management employees' subjective career satisfaction, particularly concentrating on the factors that help provide this satisfaction (Abele & Spurk, 2009). One of the activities that organisations can undertake to increase managers' subjective career satisfaction is by paying attention to employees' unique career needs. This can be done by having career aspiration meetings and discussing future goals and the available opportunities within the organisation. They can also utilise management's full potential and tap into their resourcefulness by involving them in succession planning and management of talent in the organisation. Additionally they can develop managers' personal efficacy through proposing and presenting training directed at increasing and continually improving competence and professional skills (Simo, Enache, Sallan Leyes, & Fernandez Alarcon, 2010). It should also be a priority to give appropriate recognition for work that is well done (Peluchette, 1993).

It is also the organisation's responsibility to assist employees in addressing the consequences associated with career success. Quick and Tetrick (2002) suggests that organisational and individual career management needs to focus on achieving a balance between work and life. It is therefore crucial for organisations to deploy initiatives and interventions focusing on effective health and wellness, as well as maintaining balance between work and daily lives. Such initiatives will help employees to handle the negative consequences of career success.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study concerns the number of participants. Due to the small amount of participants, generalisation of results to the whole financial private sector becomes problematic. The themes that were recognised and explored in this study could possibly be only representative of the particular organisations and their cultures. Broadening the sample by including more financial organisations could have provided more insights. Consequently special care should be taken when generalising the research findings. Another limitation would be that the sample was not language representative in terms of the different cultural groups; the majority of the sample was English-speaking.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of the organisation as well as the role of the employee in the attainment of career success for senior management employees. Findings in this study indicate that both the individual and the organisation plays a crucial role in the attainment of career success, even more for management employees. Various aspects were identified which organisations can attend to in order to improve the overall perception of career success of management employees (e.g., appropriate career development measures, providing challenges, building supportive and sustainable relationships with staff). However, managers themselves also have a huge responsibility in the attainment of career success. For example managers should build good relationships and invest in networking, have a vision and deliver on promises made. Although management employees all aspire to obtain career success, findings from this study suggests that it comes with consequences and sacrifices mainly relating to their own health and personal lives.

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