

Career Commitment, Subjective Career Success and Career Satisfaction in the Context of Hazelnut Processing Industry in Giresun/Turkey

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Abstract

This study aims to study the effect of career commitment on subjective career success with the mediating role of career satisfaction in the context of hazelnut processing industry in Giresun/Turkey. Giresun is one of the cities that placed in the Blacksea Region of Turkey. Giresun's hazelnut quality is the highest quality hazelnut in the world (Hazelnut Promotion Group (HPG), 2013). Therefore, hazelnut processing industry is vital for Giresun's economy. This study was conducted on employees who work in hazelnut processing industry in Giresun, Turkey. This study's results make a valuable contribution to both career commitment and subjective career success literatures by presenting findings of the mediating effect of career satisfaction on the relationship between career commitment and subjective career success in the context of hazelnut processing industry in Giresun. It argues that the effects of career commitment on subjective career success can be mediated by career satisfaction in this context.

Keywords: career commitment, career satisfaction, subjective career success, hazelnut processing industry, Turkey

1. Introduction

The term "career" is more broadly applied and is commonly considered to be the lifelong sequence of role-related experiences of individuals (Hall, 2002). In general, career commitment involves the development of personal career goals and an identification with and involvement in those goals (Collarelli & Bishop, 1990). Career success is defined as the accumulated positive work and psychological outcomes arising from one's work experiences (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Subjective career success refers to individuals' evaluation of their career progress, accomplishments and anticipated outcomes, relative to their own goals and aspirations (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). Jen-Ruei Fu (2010) defined career satisfaction as the level of overall happiness experienced through one's choice of career. This study aims to study the effect of career commitment on subjective career success with the mediating effect of career satisfaction. In the literature, only one study has been done to search the relationships between those three variables (Srikanth & Israel, 2012).

Hazelnuts that grown in Turkey are two types: Giresun quality and Levant quality. Giresun quality hazelnuts are mainly grown in Giresun and some districts in Trabzon. These are the highest quality hazelnuts in the world (HPG). Besides, hazelnut processing industry is the most important industry in Giresun. Hence, this study's results make a valuable contribution to both career commitment and subjective career success literatures by presenting findings of the mediating effect of career satisfaction on the relationship between career commitment and subjective career success in the context of hazelnut processing industry in Giresun/Turkey. This study argues that the effects of career commitment on subjective career success can be mediated by career satisfaction in this context. Participants who have high career satisfaction would increase their commitment to attain subjective career success as opposed to those who have less career satisfaction and less committed.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Career Commitment

"Career" is more broadly applied and is commonly considered to be the lifelong sequence of role-related experiences of individuals (Hall, 2002). Researches have defined 'career' term from different point of view in

the literature. Greenhaus (1987) described a career as a series of jobs held during an individual's lifetime. Hall (1976) described a career as an identification with and involvement in one's profession. Career commitment is defined as "the strength of one's motivation to work in a chosen career role" (Hall, 1971). Blau (1988) described a career commitment as 'one's attitude towards one's profession or vocation'. Career commitment involves the development of personal career goals and an identification with and involvement in those goals (Collarelli & Bishop, 1990). Career commitment refers to identification with and involvement in one's occupation (Mueller, Wallace, & Price, 1992). Carson and Bedeian (1994) defined career commitment as "one's motivation to work in a chosen vocation". To sum up, career commitment involves the development of personal career goals and an identification with and involvement in those goals (Collarelli & Bishop, 1990).

Career commitment is characterized by the development of personal career goals and the individual's attachment to, identification with and involvement in those goals (Collarelli & Bishop, 1990). Individuals being unable to depend on a single organization to sustain an entire career (Bremner, Robello, Schiller, & Weber, 1991; Nussbaum, 1991). Career commitment involves self-generated goals and commitment to one's own career, which may lead to employment in several organizations (Randall, 1987). Work environments and the pace of careers in organizations have led employees to exhibit more commitment to their careers and perhaps less or conditional commitment to their organizations (Noordin, Williams, & Zimmer, 2002). Career commitment has become a significant source of occupational meaning and continuity as organizations become flatter and less able to provide secure jobs or careers (Collarelli & Bishop, 1990; Aryee, Yue, & Chew, 1994).

2.2 Subjective Career Success

Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence (1989) have defined a career as an "evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time." A broad definition of career success commonly referred to in the contemporary literature is "the experience of achieving goals that are personally meaningful to the individual, rather than those set by parents, peers, an organization, or society" (Mirvis & Hall, 1994). The accumulation of achievements (real or subjective) arising from these work experiences is career success (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995). "career success" can be defined as the "positive psychological and work-related outcomes accumulated as a result of one's work experiences" (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Career success is highlighted as having both objective and subjective components (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988; Baruch 2004; Breland, Treadway, Duke, & Adams, 2007). Objective career success is defined by reference to societal or cultural factors and includes lateral (increased job security, longer vacations) or hierarchical (promotion, different job title) factors (Nabi, 1999).

The traditional career model defines success in terms of observable, socially recognized indicators (e.g., income and advancement) and posits that subjective career success results from achieving objective career success (Judge et al., 1995). Gattiker and Larwood (1986) asserted that unlike objective success criteria, subjective measures may detect important career outcomes that are not readily assessable from personnel records or by expert raters. They also indicated that subjective career success is more of an internal perspective that refers to an individual's own disposition for development in a chosen occupation or profession. According to Hall and Chandler (2005) and Hall and Mirvis (1995), because of the change in career context, individuals aren't expected to rely on their organization's directions for career improvement. They are expected to self-manage their own careers. Subjective career success refers to individuals' evaluation of their career progress, accomplishments and anticipated outcomes, relative to their own goals and aspirations (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Subjective career success reflects an individual's perception of his or her career experiences (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986). It is one's feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction with one's career (Judge et al., 1995).

2.3 Career Satisfaction

Career satisfaction is the satisfaction that individuals derive from the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their careers, including pay, advancement, and developmental opportunities (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990). Jen-Ruei Fu (2010) defined career satisfaction as the level of overall happiness experienced through one's choice of career.

Employees' career satisfaction reflects how they feel about their career-related roles, accomplishments and success. Significant predictors of career satisfaction include goal-specific environmental support and resources which provide social and material support for an employee's personal goals (Barnett & Bradley, 2007). Career satisfaction measures the extent to which individuals believe their career progress is consistent with their own goals, values and preferences (Erdogan, Kraimer, & Liden, 2004; Heslin, 2003; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001).

2.4 The Relations among Career Commitment, Career Satisfaction, and Subjective Career Success

In the literature, there is only one study that conducted with these variables. Besides, there is not any study

which is conducted in the hazelnut processing industry. However, an association between career commitment and career success was found in several studies (Jones & Whitmore, 1995; Day & Allen, 2004; Poon, 2004). According to Kidd and Green's study (2006) career commitment and organizational commitment are some of the determinants of career success. Ballout's (2009) study showed that career commitment was predicted by subjective career success.

Hall (1971) asserted that career commitment is effected by the extent to which an individual feels herself/himself as competent and successful in her/his career. Aryee and Tan (1992) found that there is a significant influence of career satisfaction on career commitment. Aryee and Debrah (1993) concluded that career satisfaction has a significant direct effect on career commitment.

Carson, Roe, Birkenmeier and Philips's (1999) study elicited that individuals who have high career commitment have a higher career satisfaction than those who have lower career commitment. According to Goulet and Singh's (2001) study, the more satisfied employees are also more committed to their careers. Day and Allen's study (2004) showed that career commitment is positively related to career satisfaction. According to Poon's (2004) study, intrinsic job outcomes like subjective career success are influenced by career satisfaction, career mentoring, career commitment and perceptions of career success.

In a study of careers of women which conducted by Punnett et al. (2007) showed that career satisfaction is influenced by career success. Ballout's (2009) study revealed that, career commitment has a significant influence of career satisfaction through the moderation effect of self efficacy. According to the study of Jen-Ruei Fu (2010), career satisfaction is found as the most important determinant of participants' career commitment. Myrtle, Chen, Lui, and Fahey (2011) found that satisfaction with one's career has a direct impact on career commitment.

Thus, this study's hypothesis and the conceptual framework are presented below and in Figure 1., respectively.

H1: Career commitment is positively related to subjective career success.

H2: Career commitment is positively related to career satisfaction.

H3: Career satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between career commitment and subjective career success.

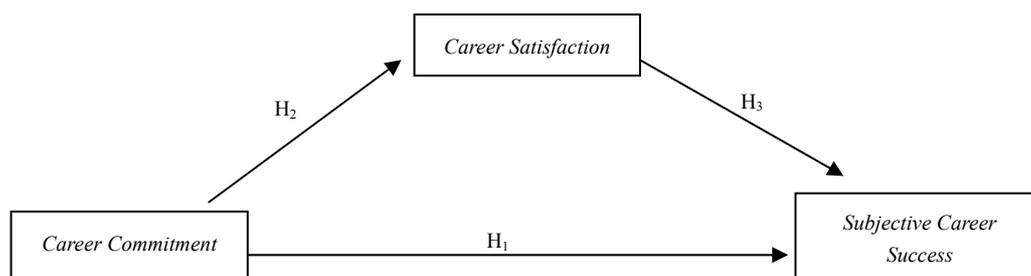


Figure 1. The Conceptual framework

3. Method

Career commitment scale is adopted from Blau's (1985) study. This scale consists of eight items on a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Some of the statements that it includes: "I spend a significant amount of personal time reading job-related journals or books"; "This is the ideal vocation for a life work". This scale has a coefficient alpha of 0.82 which is consistent with Nunnally's (1967) suggested reliability estimates of 0.70 (minimum) as the cut-off value.

Career satisfaction scale is adopted from Greenhaus et al. (1990) study. Career satisfaction is measured with five items on a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Some of the statements they asked were "I'm satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement"; "I'm satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals". This scale has a coefficient alpha of 0.88 which is consistent with Nunnally's (1967) suggested reliability estimates of 0.70 (minimum) as the cut-off value.

Subjective career success is adopted from Turban and Dougherty's (1994) study. This scale consists of four items (1=considerably below average, 5=considerably above average). This scale has a coefficient alpha of 0.81 which is consistent with Nunnally's (1967) suggested reliability estimates of 0.70 (minimum) as the cut-off

value. Some of the questions they asked were “How successful do your ‘significant others’ feel your career has been?”; “Given your age, do you think that your career is on ‘schedule’, or ahead or behind schedule?”

This study was conducted in the hazelnut processing industry in Giresun/Turkey. Giresun is one of the cities that placed in the Blacksea Region of Turkey. Giresun’s hazelnut quality is the highest quality hazelnuts in the world (HPG). For this reason, hazelnut processing industry is a vital issue for Giresun’s economy. According to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Giresun, over 150 hazelnut processing companies do business in Giresun. This study was conducted on employees who work in these companies.

During adaptation of the measures into Turkish, the method of Brislin, Lonner and Thorndike (1973) was used, which consisted of four steps: forward translation, assessment of forward translation, backward translation, and assessment of backward translation. All of the English versions of the questionnaires were translated into Turkish by the researcher and reviewed by a colleague who is native in both Turkish and English and an assistant professor of English to assure clarity of terminology.

Stevens (1995) asserts, an acceptable reliability using individual employee survey data can be achieved by having at least 15 respondents per organization. For achieving that target, Stevens (1995) suggests the distribution of a minimum of 24 questionnaires for each participating organization. In total, those 150 manufacturers’ were contacted to participate to this study. A total of 25 companies agreed to participate (a response rate 16,66 per cent).

Participants were explained the purpose of the study and invited to fill out the survey. Four hundred surveys were distributed. Distributed surveys were collected after 5 days. From some companies only received five or four questionnaires which were excluded because of Stevens’ target. Other organizations, fortunately, provided 15, 16 or 17 completed surveys. As a result, the number of questionnaires that involved in this study is 351. The response rate is 87,75%. All of the participants were choosen from non-managerial positions. Approximately, 42% of the participants’ were females. Demographic characteristics of employees weren’t asked (except gender) to increase the participation to study.

4. Results

According to the reliability analysis, the cronbach’s alpha value of career commitment scale is 0.786. Subjective career success’ and career satisfaction’s cronbach’s alpha values are 0.817 and 0.774, respectively. For ensuring the uni-dimensionality of scales, career commitment (CC), career satisfaction (CS) and subjective career success (SCS), factor analysis were done and presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of factor analysis using principal component analysis

Items	Communalities	Eigen Values	Percentage Explained	Variance	Cumulative Variance Explained	Percentage
CC1*	0.527	3.856	48.200		48.200	
CC2	0.447	0.916	11.450		59.650	
CC3*	0.546	0.677	8.460		68.110	
CC4	0.407	0.641	8.010		76.120	
CC5	0.403	0.556	6.950		83.070	
CC6	0.476	0.513	6.412		89.482	
CC7	0.552	0.459	5.573		95.055	
CC8*	0.498	0.382	4.945		100.000	
SCS1	0.657	2.610	65.250		65.250	
SCS2	0.702	0.570	14.250		79.500	
SCS3	0.653	0.454	11.350		90.850	
SCS4	0.598	0.366	9.150		100.000	
CS1	0.625	2.747	54.940		54.940	
CS2	0.495	0.699	13.980		68.920	
CS3	0.431	0.657	13.140		82.060	
CS4	0.589	0.539	10.780		92.840	
CS5	0.607	0.358	7.160		100.000	

Note. “*”: Reverse coded items.

For following the steps of Baron and Kenny's (1986) study, multiple regression analysis were done and presented in Table 2. After that, Sobel test was done to show the significance of mediation.

Regression with career commitment as an independent variable and career success as a dependent variable was resulted in significant association between the variables ($F = 217.64$, $p < 0.0001$, $\text{Std. } \beta = 0.641$). Regression with career commitment as an independent variable and career satisfaction as a dependent variable resulted in significant association between the variables ($F = 193.47$, $p < 0.0001$, $\text{Std. } \beta = 0.658$). Regression with career satisfaction as an independent variable and subjective career success as a dependent variable resulted in significant association between the variables ($F = 237.73$, $p < 0.0001$, $\text{Std. } \beta = 0.694$).

Multiple regression with career satisfaction and career commitment as independent variables and career success as the dependent variable resulted in significant association between among the variables ($F = 164.62$, $p < 0.0001$, $\text{Std. } \beta = 0.347$ for career satisfaction and $\text{Std. } \beta = 0.421$ for career commitment). These are the steps that should be followed according to Baron and Kenny's study. The purpose is here to establish zero-order relationships among the variables that exist. If at least one of these relationships is non-significant, it can be said that mediation is not possible in this test.

Table 2. Results of Baron and Kenny's test

Steps	Variables	Sig.	B	Adj. R2
1	CC & CS	0.000	0.497	.423
2	CC & SCS	0.000	0.426	.427
3	CS & SCS	0.000	0.594	.506
4	CC and CS & SCS	0.000	0.227	.571
		0.000	0.385	

According to results of Baron and Kenny's test (as shown in Table 2), steps from one to three, all of this study's hypothesis are supported. In the fourth step, it can be concluded that, career commitment is statistically significant implying partial mediation by career satisfaction.

Finally, the Sobel test was done for mediation effect of career satisfaction in this study. According to the test results, it can be concluded that the mediation effect of career satisfaction is statistically significant for all three models in this study (Sobel's z-statistics > 1.96).

5. Discussion

Nowadays, organizations that want to sustain their competitive advantage should be aware of the importance of 'careers' in their workforces. For retaining and motivating a competent and satisfied workforce, it is important to understand the factors which may affect the employees' subjective career success. Traditional career types have been disappearing and turning into protean careers. So, understanding and creating new approaches for career commitment is a vital mission for the organizations which want to survive and compete for a long time. Besides, researchers assert that career commitment is becoming an important management concept (Baruch, 1998; Poon, 2004).

According to the test results, career commitment was found to predict subjective career success in this study. In addition to that, the mediation effect of career satisfaction was tested. Test results showed that, career satisfaction mediated the positive effects of career commitment on subjective career success. These results are similar with the results of Srikanth and Israel's study (2012). This present study may guide organizations' human resource management departments for getting and understanding today's workforce's point of view on subjective career success from the perspective of career commitment and career satisfaction structure.

In this study, there are some limitations. One of them is, this study is a cross-sectional study and perhaps this cross-sectional data would not allow us to draw causal inferences concerning various hypothesised relations. The other limitation is, the assessment variables were self-reported in a one survey by combining three scales of this study, namely career commitment, career satisfaction and subjective career success. Because of that reason, common method bias could have inflated correlations between this study's variables. Since a common source bias exists in this study, a longitudinal and a cross-cultural study may provide a better understanding in future studies. Besides, researchers have used career satisfaction as a measure of subjective career success (Heslin, 2003; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). A longitudinal research design may be used to bring to light the

linkage between subjective career success and career satisfaction.

This study's sample is taken from hazelnut processing industry in Giresun; so for the future studies, the participants can be chosen from different territories, industries, status or even countries. Besides, other factors than career satisfaction (personality traits, work-life balance, etc.), as a mediator, can be included in the models. In the literature, since there is not any study that conducted in hazelnut processing industry in this study's context; so, this study makes a valuable contribution to the literature.

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