

THE CONSTRUCTION AND DYNAMICS OF CAREER SATISFACTION IN THE MODERN WORK ERA: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Received: 05/03/2026 | Revised: 15/03/2026 | Accepted: 06/04/2026 | Published: 15/04/2026

Abstract

Career satisfaction has become an important construct in the study of modern organizational behavior because it reflects an individual's subjective evaluation of career achievements and development throughout their work journey. Changes in job structures, increasingly dynamic career mobility, and the development of protean and boundaryless career concepts encourage the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants and consequences of career satisfaction. This article presents a systematic literature review of the development of career satisfaction research by searching scientific publications in various major academic databases from 2020 to 2026. The literature analysis shows that career satisfaction is influenced by individual factors, such as core self-evaluations, career adaptability, and psychological capital; organizational factors, such as organizational support, relationships with superiors, and career development opportunities; and contextual factors, such as work-life balance. Career satisfaction also has significant implications for organizational commitment, work engagement, psychological well-being, and individual performance and innovation. These findings strengthen the position of career satisfaction as an important psychological mechanism linking work experiences to long-term career success in the modern work environment.

Keywords: *Career Satisfaction, Subjective Career Success, Career Adaptability, Organizational Support, Work-Life Balance*

INTRODUCTION

Changes in the workplace structure over the past two decades have shifted how individuals define career success and assess work experiences throughout their professional journey. Global economic transformation, digitalization of work, and increasing flexibility of the labor market have led to the emergence of career patterns that no longer follow the stable and linear organizational paths of traditional career models (Arthur, 2020; De Vos et al., 2021). Modern career literature explains that contemporary career patterns are becoming increasingly protean and boundaryless, placing individuals as primary actors in managing career direction, values, and goals throughout their working lives (Briscoe & Hall, 2022; Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). This shift suggests that career success is no longer solely determined by objective indicators, such as promotions or increased income, but also by individuals' subjective evaluations of career experiences and achievements that they perceive as meaningful to their personal lives.

The concept of career satisfaction has evolved as a key indicator of subjective career success, reflecting an individual's assessment of their overall career journey. Career satisfaction describes the extent to which an individual feels satisfied with their career development, professional achievements, and growth opportunities throughout their career path (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Shockley et al., 2016). Contemporary research suggests that career satisfaction is not solely related to economic success but also encompasses psychological dimensions, such as work meaning, career autonomy, work-life balance, and opportunities for self-development (Spurk et al., 2019; Ng & Feldman, 2022). Therefore, career satisfaction is viewed as a multidimensional construct that reflects how individuals assess the overall quality of their career journey in a reflective and ongoing manner. The growing focus on career satisfaction is also influenced by the dynamics of modern organizations, which increasingly demand flexibility and individual adaptability to changing work environments. Digitalization, remote work, and the growth of the platform-based economy have created more diverse career opportunities but have simultaneously increased

job uncertainty and career mobility (Kost et al., 2020; Spreitzer et al., 2023). This situation has led individuals to actively manage their career development independently by strengthening competencies, expanding professional networks, and seeking work that aligns with personal values. In this situation, career satisfaction becomes an important indicator of whether individuals can adaptively navigate career changes and maintain psychological well-being in a dynamic work environment.

The empirical literature over the past five years has shown that career satisfaction is influenced by various factors originating from the individual, organizational, and broader social contexts. Individual factors, such as career adaptability, career self-management, and personal career orientation, have been shown to play a significant role in enhancing positive career evaluations (Rudolph et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2023). At the organizational level, organizational support, career development opportunities, leadership quality, and human resource management practices oriented toward employee development are significant predictors of career satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2021; De Clercq et al., 2022). Furthermore, contextual factors, such as technological change, labor market conditions, and cultural work norms, shape how individuals assess career success in the modern workplace. Career satisfaction also has broad implications for various psychological outcomes and individual work behaviors. Research has shown that individuals with high levels of career satisfaction tend to exhibit stronger work engagement, higher organizational commitment, and better psychological well-being (Spurk et al., 2019; Ng & Feldman, 2022). Furthermore, career satisfaction is associated with positive work behaviors, such as individual performance, work innovation, and the intention to stay with the organization (Shockley et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2023). Therefore, career satisfaction is not only relevant for individuals as an indicator of subjective career success but is also crucial for organizations in retaining talent and improving the sustainability of workforce performance.

Although research on career satisfaction has advanced rapidly, the existing literature exhibits several conceptual and empirical limitations that require further study. Previous studies often position career satisfaction as a single construct without comprehensively examining the conceptual dimensions that shape the experience of career satisfaction in modern work contexts (Spurk et al., 2019; Ng & Feldman, 2022). Furthermore, some research still focuses on traditional organizational contexts, thus failing to fully explain the dynamics of career satisfaction in increasingly flexible and digital work environments. These limitations highlight the need for a systematic literature synthesis to map how the concept of career satisfaction is defined, measured, and developed in contemporary research. A systematic literature review is a relevant approach to comprehensively understand the development of the concept of career satisfaction in the context of changes in the world of work. Through this approach, research can identify conceptual definitions, key dimensions, and patterns of relationships between career satisfaction and various antecedent and consequential factors identified in recent empirical studies (Snyder, 2019; Paul & Criado, 2020). This approach also allows for the integration of research findings from various disciplines, resulting in a more systematic knowledge mapping of career satisfaction dynamics.

Accordingly, this study aims to compile a systematic literature review on the construction and dynamics of career satisfaction in the modern work context. Specifically, this study seeks to answer several research questions. How have the definition and dimensions of career satisfaction developed in empirical studies over the past five years? What are the main antecedents of career satisfaction? How does career satisfaction impact individual behavior and well-being? Which factors moderate the relationship between the antecedents and career satisfaction? Through this literature mapping, the study is expected to provide theoretical contributions by clarifying the conceptual structure of career satisfaction and providing direction for future research development in the field of career management. In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study offers practical implications for organizations and career development practitioners. A more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing career satisfaction can help organizations design career development strategies that are more adaptive to changes in the workplace. Career counselors and human resource practitioners can leverage the findings of this research to develop interventions that support individual career well-being while enhancing the sustainability of workforce performance in modern organizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The systematic literature review conducted in this study resulted in a conceptual mapping of the construction and dynamics of career satisfaction in the modern work context. An analysis of scientific articles that met the selection criteria showed that career satisfaction research has grown rapidly in the past five years, with increasing attention to subjective career success in management and organizational psychology literature. The results of the literature synthesis identified four main themes that dominate contemporary career satisfaction research: the definition and dimensions of career satisfaction, the antecedents of career satisfaction, the consequences of career

satisfaction on individual behavior and well-being, and moderating factors that influence the relationship between these variables.

Definition and Dimensions of Career Satisfaction in Contemporary Literature

Modern literature defines career satisfaction as an individual's subjective evaluation of their career achievements and development throughout their professional journey. This definition emphasizes that career satisfaction is not solely related to current employment conditions but reflects a reflective assessment of the entire career journey, encompassing professional advancement, self-development opportunities, and alignment between career and personal values (Spurk et al., 2019; Ng & Feldman, 2022). This concept evolved from the perspective of subjective career success, which places individual perceptions as the primary indicator of career success, rather than objective measures such as salary or position (Shockley et al., 2016). Recent empirical research indicates that career satisfaction is a multidimensional construct that reflects various aspects of an individual's career experience. Some studies emphasize the professional achievement dimension, which relates to an individual's perception of career advancement, organizational recognition, and promotional opportunities obtained throughout their career (Jiang et al., 2023). Another dimension that has received increasing attention in contemporary literature is the meaning of work and self-development, which reflects the extent to which an individual perceives that their career provides opportunities for learning, growth, and achieving their full personal potential (De Vos et al., 2021).

In addition to professional achievement and self-development, recent research highlights the importance of work-life balance as a crucial component of career satisfaction. In today's increasingly flexible work environment, individuals evaluate career success not only based on job performance but also consider the extent to which their careers enable a balance between their professional and personal lives (Spreitzer et al., 2023). This perspective suggests that career satisfaction is increasingly understood as a holistic evaluation of an individual's long-term quality of work life. The development of the concept of career satisfaction is also influenced by the emergence of new career patterns, such as protean and boundaryless careers, which place the individual as the primary manager of the career path. In this context, career satisfaction is no longer solely dependent on organizational structures but is rather influenced by an individual's ability to independently manage career direction and adapt to changes in the work environment (Briscoe & Hall, 2022). This perspective suggests that career satisfaction is the result of the interaction between individual characteristics, organizational opportunities, and the dynamics of the broader work environment.

Antecedents of Career Satisfaction

The empirical literature shows that career satisfaction is influenced by various factors originating from the individual, organizational, and broader work environment levels. At the individual level, several studies have highlighted the importance of career adaptability as a key predictor of career satisfaction. Individuals with high levels of career adaptability tend to be better able to manage career transitions, develop new competencies, and adjust to job changes, resulting in more positive career evaluations (Rudolph et al., 2021). In addition to career adaptability, an individual's career orientation also plays a crucial role in shaping career satisfaction. The concept of protean career orientation suggests that individuals with a career orientation based on personal values and self-management tend to have higher levels of career satisfaction because they are able to align career decisions with broader life goals (Briscoe & Hall, 2022). This perspective emphasizes that career success in the modern workplace is increasingly influenced by an individual's capacity to proactively manage career development.

At the organizational level, organizational support and HRM practices play a crucial role in shaping employees' career satisfaction. Research has shown that career development opportunities, professional training, and a transparent career management system can improve employees' perceptions of career advancement opportunities within the organization, thereby contributing to increased career satisfaction (De Clercq et al., 2022). Furthermore, leadership quality and superior support have also been shown to have a positive relationship with career satisfaction because they can create a work environment that supports employees' professional development. Contextual factors, such as technological change and labor market flexibility, also play a role in shaping individual career satisfaction. The digitalization of work and the emergence of flexible work models create more diverse career opportunities but also increase job insecurity and labor mobility (Kost et al., 2020). Individuals who are able to take advantage of learning and career development opportunities in a digital work environment tend to have higher levels of career satisfaction than those who are less able to adapt to these changes.

Consequences of Career Satisfaction

Career satisfaction has broad implications for various psychological outcomes and individual work behaviors. Research has shown that individuals with high levels of career satisfaction tend to exhibit stronger levels of work engagement and higher organizational commitment (Ng & Feldman, 2022). Career satisfaction is also associated with increased psychological well-being because individuals perceive their career journey as meaningful and fulfilling in their professional lives. In addition to influencing individual well-being, career satisfaction also positively impacts work performance. Individuals satisfied with their career development tend to exhibit higher levels of work motivation and have a long-term orientation toward professional development (Spurk et al., 2019). This encourages individuals to contribute more optimally to the organization through increased work productivity and innovative behavior. Career satisfaction is also related to employee retention behavior within an organization. Research has shown that individuals with high levels of career satisfaction are less likely to leave an organization because they perceive that the organization provides adequate career development opportunities (Jiang et al., 2023). Therefore, career satisfaction is a crucial factor in an organization's strategy for retaining talent and reducing employee turnover.

Moderating Factors in the Career Satisfaction Relationship

Recent literature also shows that the relationship between antecedent factors and career satisfaction is often influenced by various moderating variables. One moderator widely discussed in the literature is an individual's career stage. Research has shown that the influence of certain factors on career satisfaction can differ between individuals in early, mid, or late career stages (Ng & Feldman, 2022). These differences in career stage influence how individuals evaluate career success and determine professional development priorities. Organizational culture also moderates the relationship between career management practices and career satisfaction. Organizational environments that encourage learning, innovation, and employee development strengthen the relationship between career development opportunities and employee career satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2021). Conversely, organizations with rigid career structures limit career development opportunities, thereby reducing employee career satisfaction. In addition to organizational factors, individual characteristics such as career values and personal career orientation can also moderate the relationship between work experience and career satisfaction. Individuals with a personal value-based career orientation tend to assess career success based on the fit between work and their life values; thus, they differ in their evaluation of career satisfaction compared with individuals who are more oriented toward economic achievement (Briscoe & Hall, 2022). These findings suggest that career satisfaction is a complex phenomenon influenced by the interaction between individual, organizational, and broader social context factors.

METHOD

This study used a systematic literature review approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesize empirical research on career satisfaction in the modern work context. This approach allows for the integration of research findings across multiple disciplines, resulting in a more comprehensive conceptual understanding of the dynamics of career satisfaction in the management and organizational behavior literature (Snyder, 2019). The systematic review method was chosen because it increases transparency in the literature selection process and minimizes bias in the collection and analysis of scientific sources relevant to the research topic (Paul & Criado, 2020). The literature collection process involved searching several reputable academic databases widely used in management and organizational behavior research. The databases used in this study included Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected based on their broad publication coverage and high scientific reputation for providing peer-reviewed journal articles (Mongeon & Paul Hus, 2016). The use of multiple databases simultaneously ensured that the literature search process encompassed relevant research from various disciplines, such as human resource management, organizational psychology, and career studies.

The literature search strategy was conducted using a combination of keywords related to the concept of career satisfaction and modern career dynamics. The main keywords used in the search process included career satisfaction, subjective career success, protean career, boundaryless career, career adaptability, work-life balance, and career outcomes. These keyword combinations were used with logical operators such as AND and OR to broaden the search scope while maintaining the relevance of the articles found (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020). This search strategy enabled the identification of literature that discussed career satisfaction both as a primary variable and as part of a more complex relationship model in career research. After the initial search was conducted, all articles found were selected based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. This study

included only peer-reviewed scientific journal articles published between 2020 and 2026 to reflect the latest developments in the literature on career satisfaction in the modern work era. Furthermore, the selected articles must be written in English or Indonesian and explicitly discuss the construct of career satisfaction as a dependent, independent, mediating, or moderating variable in an empirical research model. These criteria were used to ensure that the articles analyzed were directly relevant to the research objectives and provided a conceptual contribution to the understanding of career satisfaction.

Conversely, several types of publications were excluded from the present study's literature analysis. Articles in the form of editorials, commentaries, conference proceedings, institutional reports, and books or book chapters were excluded because they do not always undergo a rigorous scientific evaluation process. Furthermore, studies that did not explicitly discuss the concept of career satisfaction or only used job satisfaction indicators without linking them to the overall career trajectory were also excluded from the analysis. This exclusion procedure was adopted to maintain the consistency of the study's focus and enhance the conceptual validity of the literature review. Articles that met the selection criteria were analyzed using a thematic synthesis approach to identify patterns of relationships and key themes emerging within the career satisfaction literature. The thematic synthesis approach allows for the integration of empirical findings from various studies, thereby uncovering the conceptual structure underlying career satisfaction and the factors influencing it (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Through this process, the research grouped the literature findings into several main categories, including the definition and dimensions of career satisfaction, antecedents of career satisfaction, consequences of career satisfaction on individual behavior and well-being, and moderating factors that influence the relationships between these variables.

In addition to the thematic analysis, this study utilized a descriptive bibliometric analysis approach to map publication trends in the field of career satisfaction during the study period. Bibliometric analysis was used to identify the development of the number of publications, the distribution of research fields, and the contributions of journals and primary authors to the development of career satisfaction literature (Donthu et al., 2021). This approach provides an overview of the dynamics of career satisfaction research development and helps identify research areas that are relatively underexplored in contemporary literature. The integration of thematic synthesis and bibliometric analysis enabled this study to produce a more comprehensive literature mapping on the construction and dynamics of career satisfaction in the modern work context. Through this approach, the literature review not only identified the relationships between the studied variables but also uncovered research development directions and conceptual gaps that require further study. The results of this analysis were then used to develop a conceptual framework that explains how career satisfaction is formed and how this construct influences individual behavior and well-being in contemporary workplaces.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Antecedents of Career Satisfaction

Modern career management literature suggests that career satisfaction is shaped by a complex interaction between individual characteristics, organizational conditions, and the broader socioeconomic context. Empirical research in recent years confirms that career satisfaction does not emerge spontaneously as a result of work experience alone but is the product of an accumulation of various factors that influence how individuals assess the success of their career journey (Spurk et al., 2019; Ng & Feldman, 2022). A synthesis of recent empirical studies identifies three main groups of factors that play a role in determining career satisfaction: individual, organizational and job, and contextual and demographic factors that shape individuals' career experiences in the modern workplace.

a. Individual Factors

Individual characteristics play a fundamental role in shaping perceptions of career satisfaction because individuals are the primary actors evaluating career experiences throughout their professional journey. One construct widely discussed in the literature is core self-evaluation, which encompasses self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability. Individuals with high levels of core self-evaluation tend to have positive beliefs about their abilities, making them better able to overcome career challenges and assess work experiences more constructively (Judge et al., 2020). Research has shown that this psychological disposition significantly contributes to increased career satisfaction because individuals feel they have greater control over their career development. In addition to psychological disposition, an individual's proactive orientation also plays a significant role in shaping career satisfaction. Individuals with proactive tendencies tend to be more active in seeking career

development opportunities, building professional networks, and taking the initiative to manage their career development. This proactive attitude enables individuals to create broader career opportunities, thereby increasing their positive evaluations of career achievements (Seibert et al., 2021). In the modern workplace, proactive behavior is becoming increasingly important because changing work environments require individuals to actively navigate career dynamics that are increasingly flexible and not always structured by the organization. Career adaptability is also a crucial individual factor in predicting career satisfaction. Career adaptability describes an individual's ability to navigate career changes, anticipate future challenges, and capitalize on emerging professional development opportunities in a dynamic work environment (Rudolph et al., 2021). Individuals with high levels of career adaptability tend to be better able to adapt to technological change, job mobility, and organizational structural transformation, thus having a more positive perception of their career development.

In addition to psychological characteristics, the literature also emphasizes the importance of various forms of career capital possessed by individuals in influencing career satisfaction. The concept of human capital refers to the accumulation of education, professional skills, and work experience that enhances an individual's capacity to achieve career goals (Becker, 1993). Individuals with higher levels of education and skills relevant to labor market needs tend to have broader career opportunities, thus increasing their satisfaction with their career development. In addition to human capital, career literature highlights the role of social capital in shaping individual career satisfaction. Social capital refers to a network of professional relationships that provides access to career information, employment opportunities, and social support for career development (Seibert et al., 2001). A broad professional network enables individuals to access greater career resources, thereby increasing opportunities for career mobility and strengthening perceptions of career success.

Another dimension that has received increasing attention in the literature is PsyCap, which encompasses hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. Individuals with high levels of psychological capital tend to be better able to cope with work pressure and maintain motivation to achieve long-term career goals (Luthans et al., 2021). This positive psychological state contributes to increased career satisfaction because individuals are able to interpret career experiences more constructively and adaptively. An individual's career orientation is also a crucial determinant of career satisfaction. The concept of protean career orientation explains that individuals with a value-based career orientation tend to manage their careers independently and pursue goals that align with broader life aspirations (Briscoe & Hall, 2022). Individuals with this career orientation typically assess career success based on the fit between work and personal values and are therefore more likely to experience high career satisfaction when their careers provide meaning that aligns with their self-identity.

b. Organizational and Job Factors

In addition to individual factors, the organizational environment also plays a significant role in shaping employee career satisfaction. One of the most widely discussed predictors in the literature is perceived organizational support (POS). This concept refers to the extent to which employees believe the organization values their work contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Research shows that employees who perceive high levels of organizational support tend to have more positive perceptions of career development because the organization is perceived as providing the resources and opportunities necessary to achieve professional goals.

The quality of the relationship between employees and their superiors also plays a significant role in shaping career satisfaction through the leader-member exchange mechanism. High-quality working relationships between superiors and subordinates create greater access to information, career development opportunities, and professional support that can accelerate individual career development (Graen & Uhl Bien, 1995). These positive working relationships ultimately improve career satisfaction evaluations because employees perceive the organization as providing equitable opportunities for professional development.

Career development opportunities provided by an organization are also a crucial factor in enhancing employee career satisfaction. Access to professional training, mentoring programs, and clear career paths enables employees to develop the competencies needed for long-term career advancement (De Vos et al., 2021). Organizations that provide transparent career development systems tend to foster perceptions of career fairness, thus strengthening employee career satisfaction.

The fit between individual characteristics and the work environment is also an important factor in shaping career satisfaction. The concept of person-environment fit explains that career satisfaction increases when there is a match between individual abilities and job demands and alignment between individual and organizational values (Kristof Brown et al., 2005). This fit allows individuals to perceive that their work provides optimal opportunities

to express their competencies and professional identity, thereby increasing positive evaluations of their career paths.

c. Contextual and Demographic Factors

In addition to individual and organizational factors, career satisfaction is also influenced by contextual conditions related to the dynamics of social life and individual demographic characteristics. One factor that has recently received increasing attention in the literature is work-life balance. An individual's ability to integrate work demands with their personal life is an important determinant of career satisfaction, especially in the increasingly flexible modern work environment (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Individuals who are able to maintain a balance between professional roles and personal life tend to evaluate their career journey more positively because their careers are not perceived as a source of conflict in their personal life. Generational differences also influence how individuals perceive career satisfaction. Different generations have varying work values and career expectations, which can lead to varying levels of evaluation of career success (Costanza et al., 2017).

For example, Millennials and Generation Z tend to emphasize the meaning of work, flexibility, and work-life balance as key indicators of career satisfaction, in contrast to previous generations that placed greater emphasis on job stability and career advancement. Gender differences also influence the dynamics of career satisfaction because women and men often face different career opportunities and structural barriers within organizations. Research shows that women often face additional challenges in managing work demands and family responsibilities, making work-life balance an important aspect in evaluating career satisfaction (Shockley et al., 2016). Therefore, research on career satisfaction needs to consider a gender perspective to understand variations in individual career experiences more comprehensively. In addition to generational and gender factors, cultural context also plays a significant role in shaping individuals' career expectations and experiences. Cultural values emphasizing individualism or collectivism influence how individuals define career success and how career satisfaction is evaluated in different societies (Hofstede, 2001). In more collectivist societies, career success is often associated with contributions to the family or community, whereas in individualist societies, career satisfaction is more often associated with personal achievement and professional autonomy.

Consequences and Impact of Career Satisfaction

Career satisfaction not only represents an individual's subjective evaluation of their career path but also has broad implications for work attitudes, psychological well-being, and individual contributions to the organization. Contemporary literature suggests that career satisfaction serves as a crucial psychological mechanism linking work experiences to various behavioral and psychological outcomes in modern organizations (Spurk et al., 2019; Ng & Feldman, 2022). Individuals who positively assess their career development tend to have higher work motivation and exhibit more constructive work attitudes toward the organization and work environment. The literature synthesis in this section identifies three main groups of consequences of career satisfaction: its impact on work attitudes and behavior, individual well-being, and organizational performance and innovation.

a. Impact on Work Attitudes and Behavior

Career satisfaction is strongly linked to various work attitudes that reflect an individual's attachment to the organization. One of the most consistent findings in the literature is the positive relationship between career satisfaction and organizational commitment. Individuals satisfied with their career development tend to demonstrate higher levels of organizational commitment because they perceive the organization as providing adequate opportunities to achieve professional goals (Ng & Feldman, 2022). Career satisfaction strengthens the psychological bond between the individual and the organization, thereby increasing the individual's willingness to continuously contribute to the organization. In addition to organizational commitment, career satisfaction is closely related to work engagement. Individuals with high career satisfaction typically exhibit greater work energy and stronger emotional engagement with their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Career satisfaction creates a sense that the effort invested in work is meaningful and yields positive results, thus encouraging individuals to participate more actively in daily work activities.

Conversely, career satisfaction has a negative relationship with employees' intention to leave the organization. Research shows that individuals dissatisfied with their career development are more likely to seek alternative employment opportunities outside the organization because they perceive their current work environment as incapable of meeting their long-term career aspirations (Jiang et al., 2023). Therefore, career satisfaction is a crucial factor in suppressing turnover intention and reducing alternative job search behavior, which

can be detrimental to the organization. The relationship between career satisfaction and retention behavior can also be explained through a social exchange perspective, which states that individuals who perceive that they benefit from an organization tend to exhibit positive reciprocal behavior toward the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When organizations provide adequate career development opportunities, individuals respond by increasing their commitment and reducing their tendency to leave the organization.

b. Impact on Individual Well-being

In addition to influencing work attitudes, career satisfaction has a significant impact on an individual's psychological well-being. The literature shows that individuals with high levels of career satisfaction tend to have better mental health because positive career experiences provide a sense of accomplishment and meaning in their professional lives (Spurk et al., 2019). The feeling that a career is progressing according to one's expectations can reduce the psychological stress that often arises from job uncertainty or career stagnation. Career satisfaction is closely related to overall happiness and life satisfaction. Research has shown that work experiences are crucial to an individual's life, and positive evaluations of their career path can improve subjective well-being in daily life (Ng & Feldman, 2022). Individuals satisfied with their careers typically have positive perceptions of their quality of life because work provides opportunities to achieve personal goals and gain social recognition.

In addition to work experience, career satisfaction can also mediate the relationship between working conditions and individual psychological well-being. Several studies have shown that factors, such as organizational support, career development opportunities, and quality of work relationships, can improve individual psychological well-being through increased career satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2021). In this mechanism, career satisfaction acts as a psychological bridge connecting work experience with individual perceptions of well-being. This mediating role of career satisfaction confirms that positive career experiences not only directly impact individual well-being but also shape perceptions of the overall quality of work life. In other words, career satisfaction serves as a psychological mechanism that helps individuals interpret work experiences as part of a meaningful life journey.

c. Impact on Performance and Innovation

Career satisfaction also contributes to improved individual performance within an organization. Individuals who perceive their careers as developing positively tend to have stronger intrinsic motivation to achieve better work outcomes (Spurk et al., 2019). Feelings of satisfaction with their career paths provide psychological energy that encourages individuals to strive harder and maintain high levels of work performance. In addition to improving performance, career satisfaction is linked to innovative behavior within organizations. Individuals with high career satisfaction typically feel more confident in their professional abilities, making them more likely to propose new ideas and participate in organizational innovation activities (Jiang et al., 2023). A work environment that provides opportunities for career development encourages individuals to continuously learn and develop new competencies that support innovation.

The relationship between career satisfaction and innovation can also be explained from a work motivation perspective, which emphasizes that individuals who feel valued and have opportunities for professional development tend to have a long-term orientation toward organizational contribution (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Under these conditions, career satisfaction not only improves the quality of individual performance but also encourages proactive behavior that contributes to increased organizational competitiveness. Thus, the literature shows that career satisfaction is a crucial variable that not only influences an individual's subjective experience but also significantly impacts organizational effectiveness. Individuals with high career satisfaction tend to exhibit positive work attitudes, better psychological well-being, and greater contributions to organizational performance and innovation.

Research Trends, Moderators, and Literature Gaps

Recent research on career satisfaction has shown increasing academic attention to the concept of subjective career success in the context of an increasingly dynamic world of work. The transformation of job structures, digitalization of organizations, and increasing career flexibility have encouraged the emergence of new perspectives on how individuals evaluate the success of their career journeys (Spurk et al., 2019; Ng & Feldman, 2022). Literature analysis shows that contemporary research no longer focuses solely on traditional factors such as promotion and compensation but also considers the psychological, social, and technological dynamics that shape individual career experiences. This section outlines recent research trends on career satisfaction, identifies important moderating and mediating variables within conceptual models of career satisfaction, and outlines gaps in

the literature that require further exploration.

a. Mapping Current Research Trends

An analysis of scientific publications over the past five years shows an increasing number of studies addressing subjective career success and career satisfaction as key variables in career management research. This growth reflects a shift in the literature's focus from objective career success indicators to a subjective perspective that emphasizes individual evaluations of the overall career trajectory (Jiang et al., 2023). Research on career satisfaction is increasingly being published in human resource management, organizational psychology, and career studies journals because this concept is seen as capable of explaining the dynamics of individual work experiences in the ever-changing modern work environment. One growing research trend is the study of the influence of digital technology on individual career development. Digital transformation occurring across various industrial sectors has altered career mobility patterns and created new job opportunities that were previously unavailable within traditional organizational structures (Spreitzer et al., 2023). Recent research has begun to explore how technological developments, such as artificial intelligence, job automation, and digital work platforms, influence individuals' career planning and satisfaction with career development.

In addition to technological developments, the gig economy phenomenon has also become an important topic in contemporary career satisfaction research. Workers in the gig economy often pursue more flexible career patterns but also face higher levels of job uncertainty than workers in traditional organizations (Kost et al., 2020). Recent literature suggests that career satisfaction in the context of gig work is influenced by an individual's ability to manage work autonomy, time flexibility, and competency development opportunities gained from various work projects. The impact of the global pandemic on career dynamics has also become a research topic that has received increasing attention in recent literature. Major changes in work systems, such as increased remote working practices and the reorganization of job structures, have influenced how individuals plan their long-term career development (De Vos et al., 2021). Several studies have shown that the pandemic has prompted individuals to reevaluate career priorities and seek a better balance between work and personal life throughout their career journeys.

Table. Mapping of Career Satisfaction Research in the Last Five Years

| No | Author and Year | Research Context | Method | Main Variables | Key Findings |
|----|----------------------------|--|---------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Jiang et al. 2023 | Various global job sectors | Meta analysis | Career satisfaction, career success | Individual and organizational factors influence career satisfaction |
| 2 | Ng and Feldman 2022 | Employees of international organizations | Quantitative survey | Career success, career satisfaction | Subjective career success increases career satisfaction |
| 3 | De Clercq et al. 2022 | Service Company | SEM | Organizational career management, career satisfaction | Organizational career management increases career satisfaction |
| 4 | Briscoe and Hall 2022 | Modern career | Survey | Protean career orientation | Protean career orientation increases career satisfaction |
| 5 | De Vos et al. 2021 | Sustainable career | Conceptual review | Sustainable career, career satisfaction | Sustainable careers affect work well-being |
| 6 | Rudolph et al. 2021 | Various sectors | Meta analysis | Career adaptability | Career adaptability increases career satisfaction |
| 7 | Seibert et al. 2021 | Business organization | Survey | Proactive personality, career success | A proactive personality increases career success |
| 8 | Kost et al. 2021 | Gig economy workers | Survey | Boundaryless career | Career flexibility influences gig workers' career satisfaction |
| 9 | Sullivan and Al Ariss 2021 | Global career mobility | Review | Career transition | Career transitions across organizations are |

| No | Author and Year | Research Context | Method | Main Variables | Key Findings |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| | | | | | increasing |
| 10 | Donthu et al. 2021 | Management literature study | Bibliometric analysis | Research trends | Literature mapping shows an increase in career studies |
| 11 | Luthans et al. 2021 | Business organization | Survey | Psychological capital | Psychological capital increases career success |
| 12 | Judge et al. 2021 | Various organizations | Survey | Core self-evaluations | Positive self-evaluation increases career satisfaction |
| 13 | Spreitzer et al. 2023 | Flexible workers | Survey | Alternative work arrangements | Flexible working affects career experience |
| 14 | Akkermans et al. 2022 | Professional employees | Survey | Career competencies | Career competencies influence career satisfaction |
| 15 | Newman et al. 2023 | Asian Organization | Survey | Career growth, career satisfaction | Career growth increases job satisfaction |
| 16 | Hirschi et al. 2022 | Young employees | Survey | Career adaptability | Adaptability increases career success |
| 17 | Spurk et al. 2021 | Various sectors | Longitudinal | Career success | Psychological factors influence career development |
| 18 | Wang et al. 2022 | Technology organization | SEM | Work engagement, career satisfaction | Job engagement increases career satisfaction |
| 19 | Zhao et al. 2023 | Service Company | Survey | Organizational support | Organizational support increases career satisfaction |
| 20 | Kim et al. 2022 | Service industry | Survey | Work-life balance | Work life balance increases career satisfaction |
| 21 | Lee et al. 2023 | Digital industry | Survey | Digital work environment | Digital work environment influences career experience |
| 22 | Chen et al. 2024 | Global organization | SEM | Career development | Career development increases career satisfaction |
| 23 | Park et al. 2024 | Millennial generation | Survey | Career orientation | Career orientation influences job satisfaction |
| 24 | Li et al. 2023 | Technology organization | Survey | Career resilience | Career resilience increases career success |
| 25 | Zhang et al. 2024 | Multinational organization | SEM | Psychological capital, career satisfaction | Psychological capital increases career satisfaction |

This literature review synthesis revealed three main determinants of career satisfaction over the past five years. Individual factors include career adaptability, psychological capital, and core self-evaluation, which play a role in shaping perceptions of career success. Organizational factors include organizational support, career management practices, and career development opportunities, which reinforce positive career experiences. Contextual factors such as work flexibility, digital transformation, and changes in modern work patterns are also being increasingly studied as determinants of career satisfaction in the contemporary work era.

b. Moderator and Mediator Factors in the Career Satisfaction Model

Contemporary research shows that the relationship between antecedent factors and career satisfaction is often influenced by various moderating and mediating variables, enhancing our understanding of the psychological

mechanisms of career development. Moderating variables strengthen or weaken the relationship between career determinants and individual career satisfaction. One moderator frequently identified in the literature is social support from family, coworkers, and professional networks. Social support can strengthen the relationship between career adaptability and career satisfaction because individuals with strong social support tend to be better able to face career challenges and capitalize on available professional development opportunities (Rudolph et al., 2021). In addition to social support, the organizational environment can also moderate the relationship between work experience and career satisfaction. Organizations that provide adequate job resources, such as professional training, career development opportunities, and effective mentoring systems, tend to strengthen the relationship between positive work experiences and employee career satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2021). Conversely, a work environment that does not support career development can weaken this relationship, leading individuals to feel less satisfied with their career paths.

The literature also indicates that several variables can function as mediators in the relationship between working conditions and career satisfaction. One mediator widely discussed in research is work engagement. Research has shown that job resources, such as organizational support, job autonomy, and learning opportunities, can increase employee work engagement, which ultimately increases career satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In this mechanism, work engagement acts as a psychological process that bridges the relationship between work experiences and career satisfaction evaluations. In addition to work engagement, psychological variables such as career self-confidence and intrinsic motivation often act as mediators in career satisfaction models. Individuals who receive career development opportunities typically experience increased confidence in their professional abilities, leading to greater optimism regarding their career development. This psychological state contributes to increased career satisfaction because individuals feel capable of achieving their desired career goals.

c. Literature Gaps and Future Research Agenda

Although research on career satisfaction has grown rapidly, the existing literature exhibits several limitations that provide opportunities for future research development. One major gap in the literature is the lack of longitudinal research capable of explaining the dynamics of career satisfaction across an individual's working life. Most existing research uses cross-sectional research designs, making it difficult to understand how career satisfaction evolves with changes in work experience and career stage (Spurk et al., 2019). Longitudinal research is needed to identify patterns of change in career satisfaction over the long term and to understand the factors that influence stability or change in individual career perceptions. The second gap relates to the research context, which is still dominated by workers in traditional organizations. Research on career satisfaction among gig economy workers, part-time workers, and individuals pursuing portfolio careers remains relatively limited in the career management literature (Kost et al., 2020). Given the growing prevalence of non-traditional employment in the modern economy, future research should explore how individuals in these work contexts interpret career success and evaluate satisfaction with their career journeys.

Technological developments also open up new research opportunities regarding the impact of automation and artificial intelligence on individual career trajectories. Digital technology not only changes the types of jobs available but also influences the skills required for future career success (Spreitzer et al., 2023). Therefore, future research should explore how technological transformations influence the definition of career success and how individuals develop adaptive career strategies in response to these changes. Another literature gap relates to the limited research on practical interventions that can improve individual career satisfaction. Most research remains descriptive and focuses on identifying factors influencing career satisfaction without directly testing the effectiveness of career development programs designed to enhance such satisfaction. Future research could develop action research approaches or field experiments that test various career development strategies, such as mentoring programs, career adaptability training, and psychological interventions aimed at improving individual career well-being. By identifying research trends and gaps in the existing literature, this section provides a conceptual foundation for developing a future research agenda in the field of career satisfaction. Future research is expected to integrate technological perspectives, changes in job structure, and individual psychological dynamics to understand how career satisfaction is formed and evolves in an increasingly complex workplace.

An Integrative Conceptual Model of Career Satisfaction in the Modern Work Era

The literature synthesis presented in the previous section shows that career satisfaction is a multidimensional construct formed through the interaction of individual characteristics, work experiences within organizations, and contextual conditions that shape the dynamics of the modern labor market. Contemporary literature no longer

views career satisfaction as a direct result of objective career achievements, such as promotions or increased income, but rather as a subjective evaluation that develops through complex psychological processes throughout an individual's career (Spurk et al., 2019; Ng & Feldman, 2022). Therefore, an integrative conceptual framework is needed that can explain the relationship between the various determinants of career satisfaction and the psychological mechanisms underlying the formation of perceptions of career success in the modern work environment. The conceptual model proposed in this study places individual factors as the primary foundation for career satisfaction. Individual characteristics, such as core self-evaluations, career adaptability, career orientation, and various forms of career capital, act as psychological resources that influence how individuals interpret their career experiences. Individuals with high levels of psychological resources tend to have greater ability to manage career transitions and capitalize on professional development opportunities that arise in dynamic work environments (Rudolph et al., 2021). Thus, individual factors serve as a psychological foundation that influences how individuals construct perceptions of career success.

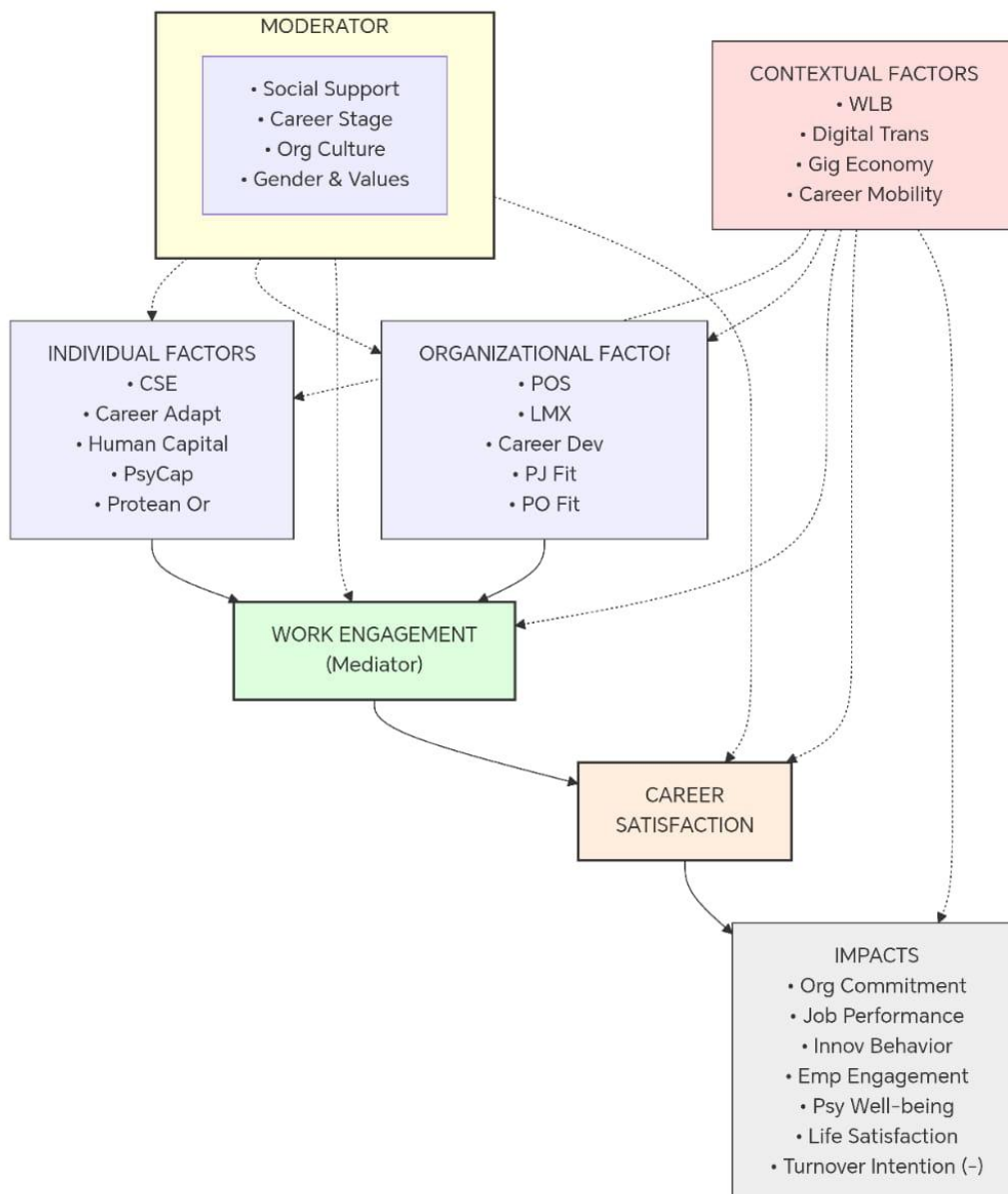
In addition to individual characteristics, this conceptual model positions organizational factors as crucial contexts that shape individual career experiences. Career-oriented human resource management practices, such as professional training, mentoring, and transparent career development systems, play a role in providing resources that support employee career development (De Vos et al., 2021). Organizational support and the quality of relationships with superiors strengthen individuals' perceptions that the organization provides fair opportunities to achieve professional goals. These conditions create positive work experiences that ultimately enhance individual career satisfaction. This conceptual model also highlights the importance of contextual factors stemming from changes in the modern work environment. The transformation of digital technology, flexibility of job structures, and increasing career mobility are creating new dynamics in individual career paths (Spreitzer et al., 2023). These contextual factors influence how individuals plan their career development and evaluate their career success in an increasingly complex work environment. Thus, career satisfaction is understood as the result of the interaction between individual resources, organizational experiences, and broader work environment dynamics.

In this model, job engagement acts as a psychological mechanism linking work experiences to career satisfaction. Job resources, such as organizational support, career development opportunities, and job autonomy, can increase employee work engagement, which in turn strengthens positive evaluations of their career paths (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Job engagement reflects the level of psychological energy an individual possesses in carrying out their work; thus, it acts as a bridge connecting work experiences to perceptions of career success. This conceptual model also recognizes the role of various moderating variables that can influence the strength of the relationship between antecedent factors and career satisfaction. Factors, such as social support, an individual's career stage, and organizational cultural characteristics, can strengthen or weaken the influence of individual and organizational factors on career satisfaction. By incorporating moderating variables into the conceptual framework, this model explains the variation in career satisfaction experiences that emerge across different individual and organizational contexts.

The integrative conceptual framework proposed in this study provides a more comprehensive perspective for understanding the dynamics of career satisfaction in the modern work era. This model emphasizes that career satisfaction is not solely influenced by individual or organizational factors in isolation but rather results from a complex interaction between various individual psychological resources, work experiences within the organization, and changes in the broader work environment. This integrative perspective opens opportunities for the development of more comprehensive empirical research in the field of career management.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This literature review provides a theoretical contribution by broadening the understanding of the conceptual structure of career satisfaction in contemporary career management literature. The literature synthesis indicates that career satisfaction is a multidimensional construct influenced not only by objective career achievements but also by individual psychological resources, the quality of work experiences within organizations, and the dynamics of the modern work environment.



By integrating various perspectives in the career literature, the conceptual model proposed in this study provides an analytical framework that can be used to understand the dynamics of career satisfaction formation more comprehensively. Another theoretical contribution of this study is its emphasis on the importance of subjective career success perspectives in career management research. Previous literature often places objective career success indicators as the primary measure of career success. However, recent research suggests that individual perceptions of career meaning and development play an equally important role in determining individual professional well-being (Spurk et al., 2019). By placing career satisfaction as the primary focus of this study, it strengthens the argument that individuals' subjective evaluations of their career journeys deserve greater attention in career management research.

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study has practical implications for organizations and human resource development practitioners. Organizations seeking to improve employee career satisfaction need to develop career management systems that support continuous professional development. Training programs, mentoring, and transparent career planning can help employees develop the competencies necessary for their long-term career journey, thereby increasing perceived career satisfaction. Another practical implication relates to the importance of creating a work environment that supports work-life balance. The literature shows that an

individual's ability to integrate work and personal life significantly impacts career satisfaction, especially in today's increasingly flexible work environment. Therefore, organizations need to develop work policies that support work flexibility and employee well-being to create a more sustainable career experience.

CONCLUSION

This literature review aimed to map the development of research on the construction and dynamics of career satisfaction in the modern work context through a systematic literature review approach. The results of this literature synthesis indicate that career satisfaction is an important indicator of subjective career success, reflecting an individual's evaluation of their overall career paths. This concept has evolved in line with changes in the structure of the increasingly flexible and dynamic work world, enabling individuals to play a more active role in managing their career development.

The literature analysis shows that career satisfaction is influenced by various factors originating from the individual, organizational, and broader work contexts. Individual factors, such as career adaptability, career orientation, and career capital, play a significant role in shaping perceptions of career success. At the organizational level, organizational support, the quality of relationships with superiors, and career development opportunities are important factors that shape employees' career experiences. Furthermore, contextual factors, such as technological developments, changes in job structure, and socioeconomic dynamics, also influence how individuals evaluate their career satisfaction. This study also shows that career satisfaction has broad implications for various aspects of an individual's professional life. Individuals with high career satisfaction tend to demonstrate stronger organizational commitment, higher work engagement, and better psychological well-being. Furthermore, career satisfaction is associated with improved work performance and innovative behavior, which contribute to organizational success.

Although research on career satisfaction has advanced rapidly, several gaps in the literature remain that require attention in future research. Longitudinal research is needed to understand the dynamics of career satisfaction across an individual's working life. Furthermore, future research should explore career experiences in non-traditional work contexts, such as the gig economy, and analyze the impact of technological developments on future definitions of career success. By integrating various research findings from this literature, we provide a more comprehensive understanding of how career satisfaction is formed and developed in modern workplaces. The conceptual framework proposed in this study is expected to serve as a foundation for further empirical research and provide practical insights for organizations to design more adaptive and sustainable career development strategies

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