

# Perceived organizational career management and career adaptability as predictors of success and turnover intention among Chinese employees



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## ABSTRACT

Based on the theories of career construction and of social exchange, the current research examined the joint and interactive effects of perceived organizational career management and career adaptability on indicators of career success (i.e., salary and career satisfaction) and work attitudes (i.e., turnover intention) among 654 Chinese employees. The results showed that career adaptability played a unique role in predicting salary after controlling for the effects of demographic variables and perceived organizational career management. It was also found that both perceived organizational career management and career adaptability correlated negatively with turnover intention, with these relationships mediated by career satisfaction. The results further showed that career adaptability moderated the relationship between perceived organizational career management and career satisfaction such that this positive relationship was stronger among employees with a higher level of career adaptability. In support of the hypothesized moderated mediation model, for employees with a higher level of career adaptability, the indirect effect of perceived career management on turnover intention through career satisfaction was stronger. These findings carry implications for research on career success and turnover intention.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, much work has been done to examine the predictors of individuals' objective (e.g., salary, job level) and subjective (e.g., career satisfaction) career success (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). In a recent meta-analysis, Ng et al. (2005) identified four types of predictors for individual career success: human capital (e.g., education, work experience), organizational sponsorship (e.g., organizational support), socio-demographical status (e.g., gender, age), and stable individual differences (e.g., personality). In spite of the above research progress, questions pertaining to the joint and interactive effects among these predictors on career success and work attitudes have not been fully addressed. Based on career construction theory (Savickas, 1997, 2005, 2013) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), this study aimed to examine the joint and interactive effects of perceived organizational career management and career adaptability on indicators of career success (salary and career satisfaction) and work-related attitudes (turnover intention) among Chinese employees.

We first examined whether perceived organizational career management and career adaptability could make distinct contributions in predicting salary, career satisfaction and turnover intention. Although previous research has shown that both perceived

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organizational career management and career adaptability correlated positively with indicators of career success (Guan, Wen, et al., 2014; Zacher, 2014), not much work has been done to examine the joint effects of these two predictors on outcome variables (Yu & Zheng, 2013). We further examined a mediation model in which both perceived organizational career management and career adaptability predicted Chinese employees' turnover intention through the mediation of career satisfaction. In addition, this study also tested the interactive effects of perceived organizational career management and career adaptability on indicators of career success and turnover intention. We propose that the effects of perceived organizational career management on these outcomes will be stronger among employees with a high level of career adaptability (see Fig. 1 for the proposed model).

### 1.1. Perceived organizational career management, career success and turnover intention

Organizational career management refers to the management practices that aim to facilitate and promote employees' career development in organizations (Baruch, 1999; De Vos, Dewettinck, & Buyens, 2009; Gutteridge, Leibowitz, & Shore, 1993). Organizational career management consists of a variety of programs and interventions like individual assessment, training courses, mentoring, job rotation, and so on (Baruch, 1999; Baruch & Peiperl, 2000). Perceived organizational career management highlights employees' subjective perception of organizational support for their career development and the extent to which they have access to these career development opportunities (Guan, Wen, et al., 2014). As organizational career management provides the resources and opportunities for employees to develop their careers, it has been found that perceived organizational career management has positive effects on the objective indicators of career success, such as salary progression, salary level and job level (Campion, Cheraskin, & Stevens, 1994; Guan, Wen, et al., 2014).

In addition to its beneficial effects on objective career success, perceived organizational career management has also been found to correlate positively with employees' subjective career success and work-related attitudes. Drawing on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1958), previous research has reported that perceived organizational career management can promote employees' work-related attitudes by increasing their positive evaluations and expectancies of career development (De Vos et al., 2009; Guan, Wen, et al., 2014; Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefvooghe, 2005; Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Mackenzie Davey, 2002). Consistent with these findings, we propose that perceived organizational career management will promote individuals' career satisfaction (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001), which in turn will reduce employees' intention to leave their organizations.

**Hypothesis 1.** Perceived organizational career management predicts negatively turnover intention, with this relation mediated by career satisfaction.

### 1.2. The role of career adaptability

Career adaptability refers to the psychological resources that enable individuals to cope with the difficulties and challenges in their career development (Savickas, 1997). According to career construction theory (Savickas, 2005, 2013), career adaptability consists of four dimensions: career concern (considering future possibilities and preparing for those possibilities), career control (making deliberate decisions and taking conscientious actions), career curiosity (exploring various situations and roles) and career confidence (dealing with barriers and problems). Career adaptability has been established as an important individual predictor for positive career outcomes, such as promotability (Tolentino, Garcia, Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2013), employment status (Guan, Guo, et al., 2014; Guan et al., 2013), job performance (Yu & Zheng, 2013) and career satisfaction (Zacher, 2014). In this study, we propose that career adaptability will predict Chinese employees' salary, career satisfaction and turnover intention, even after controlling for the effects of perceived organizational career management.

Among the four dimensions of career adaptability, career concern inclines employees to foresee and prepare for future opportunities; career control readies employees to take actions in achieving their career goals; career curiosity disposes employees to collect relevant information for their career development; career confidence sustains employees' efforts in coping with difficulties in their work. As a result, employees with a high level of career adaptability are more likely to achieve higher salaries and greater career satisfaction. A high level of career satisfaction will further predict a low level of turnover intention (Guan, Guo, et al., 2014; Guan, Wen, et al., 2014). As career adaptability represents an important set of individual resources, its effects on career and work-related outcomes should be distinct from the effects associated with contextual factors such as perceived organizational career management. Therefore, we propose that:

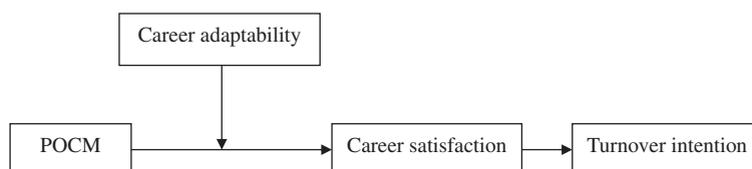


Fig. 1. The proposed moderated-mediation model.

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