



Labour Market Dynamics
Research Programme

Innovative research in employment

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF CAREER SUCCESS
IN AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND:
AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS**

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Brent Gardiner

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Labour Market Dynamics Research Programme
Massey University
Private Bag 102 904
North Shore Mail Centre
AUCKLAND
<http://lmd.massey.ac.nz>

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INTRODUCTION

'Emerging insights about the essence of career success, however, provide reason to rethink our conclusions about what leads individuals to experience their careers as successful.'

In contrast to the multitude of studies predicting career success, curiously little attention has been devoted to exploring and understanding the nature of career success' (Heslin, 2005, p.376).

As the above quote indicates, the nature of career success has had very little attention from researchers. Individuals' perceptions of career success have had even less (Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom, 2005; Gattiker and Larwood, 1998). There seem to be no published studies that investigate the phenomenon of career success in New Zealand and none internationally that explore the concept among young people. This research is important, for it will inform the facilitation of pathways to and through employment within educational institutions, workplaces and communities, as well as at the socio-political and policy level.

Traditionally, an assumption that people perceive career success from a 'getting-ahead' orientation underlies career development facilitation and interventions. Yet it is likely that considerable diversity exists in perceptions of career success in contemporary society and particularly among young people. As Cloward (1999, p.1) points out:

The most silent revolution in the workplace has been the increasing number of serious careerists who look at the ladder leading to the executive suite - and then look away. They love their work. It has a high priority in their lives. They have career plans and carry them out. But they simply don't want to manage the organization.

Policy and interventions then, may need to be tailored differently for a variety of types of career aspirations, not just the 'getting ahead' one.

The lack of research is highlighted by Kim (2005, p.49) who remarks, 'little literature has empirically explored the relationship between career orientation and career development intervention.' Therefore, in order to examine that relationship, this study firstly investigates whether or not a variety of subjective views of career success exist. Secondly, it attempts to group or categorise those assorted perceptions. The aim of this research report is to achieve these two objectives by an analysis of a specific component of data

collected as part of the Pathways to Sustainable Employment (PASE) project (see also Dupuis, Inkson and McLaren, 2005).

As an element of that project, a sample of younger people (15-34 year olds) in Aotearoa / New Zealand (n=66) were interviewed about their experience of, and views on, a number of matters primarily concerning employment, education and future aspirations. This report examines data from the future aspirations section of those interviews, specifically that pertaining to the participants' perceptions of career success. The analysis first groups those career success orientations based on theoretically derived categories. It then examines the data in an exploratory manner to ascertain whether the theoretical categories used are adequate to explain the variety of views expressed and to highlight any additional emergent categories.

In this way, the study begins to address the gap in the research literature identified by Heslin (2005) in the opening quotation. In addition, it starts to craft a framework for empirical examination of the connection between career orientations and appropriate interventions that is noted for its absence by Kim (2005).

The following sections first examine the understanding of the expressions 'career' and 'career success' described in the relevant literature. The report then details the method and findings from this exploratory analysis of the current data as it relates to the career orientations of younger people in New Zealand. Finally, it discusses those results in light of the study's limitations and the consequent implications for further research.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEANING OF CAREER

'What do we mean when we use the term 'career'? Once again, we end up in a fog of ambiguity.' (Gunz and Heslin, 2005, p. 106).

As the above quote suggests, even understanding the term career itself is imprecise. Therefore, this report first examines the development of the construct of 'career' prior to examining the notion of 'career success'.

The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) defines career as it relates to life and work life in particular, as:

A person's course or progress through life (or a distinct portion of life), *esp.* when publicly conspicuous, or abounding in remarkable incidents: similarly with reference to a nation, a political party, etc. b. In mod. language (after Fr. *carrière*) freq. used for: A course of professional life or employment, which affords opportunity for progress or advancement in the world.

The entomological root is the French word *carrière*, meaning racecourse or highroad, or the course over which one passes, as well as the now obsolete usage meaning a short gallop, a gambol or frolic. Certainly, the meaning of the word in its work-related sense has itself gamboled and frolicked during the past century. Today, the debate continues to rage in the academic literature, with the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (2005) devoting its special March edition to the issue of conceptualising career and career success. Indeed, O'Doherty and Roberts (2000, p.145) go so far as to describe the existential unease related to modern-day careers as 'an epistemological and ontological crisis.'

This section traces the changes in meaning and usage of the word *career* through the past century. It does so chronologically, as a way of identifying those changes and emphasising the developmental nature of that transformation.

Early 20th century

The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) cites usage of the term in this work related sense as early as the beginning of the 19th century, but it first appears in the academic literature in the seminal work of Frank Parsons in 1909 (McDaniels and Gyspers, 1992). Parsons (1909, p.4) discusses the notions of 'the building of a career' and planning 'a working career'. However, he seems to use the term interchangeably with the terms 'occupation' and 'vocation'. In the subsequent decades, the latter two terms prevailed in the literature with writers only occasionally using the word career. Even then, it was largely used as a synonym for occupation. For example, Brewer (1922, p. 290) defines life career as 'the occupation of a person; that which offers him opportunity for progress and satisfaction in his work.'

The 1950s and 1960s

Broader more developmental views of career began to develop in the 1950s and use of the word 'career' gained popularity (McDaniel and Gysbers, 1992). For example, Super, Tiedman and Borow (1961, p.11) defined 'career' as 'the sequence of occupations, jobs, and the positions in life of an individual.' Some writers took an even wider view. For instance, McDaniels (1965) suggested that career should be conceptualised in a broader framework, including leisure, and that a work plus leisure definition would allow career to be constructed as an holistic notion.

The 1970s and 1980s

By the 1970s the likes of the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) defined career as a 'time-extended working out of a purposeful life pattern through work undertaken by the individual' (National Vocational Guidance Association, 1973, p.7). Even then, there was a wide-ranging view of the meaning of 'career'. This spread from a synonym for occupation on one hand, to a broad pattern incorporating almost all life's activities, on the other. The most significant shift by the beginning of the 1970s was that the boundary of time was broken and career was viewed as occurring through the lifespan rather than in an occupational moment. Super and Bohn (1970, p.115) emphasise that 'It is well...to keep clear the distinction between occupation (what one does) and career (the course pursued over a period of time).' By now, a developmental approach to understanding careers was in place and the focus shifted from occupational criteria to career criteria (Jordaan, 1974).

In the late 1970s, four key contributions that led to current interests in the concept of career were made by an initiative of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (Arthur, 1994). These became the foundation for the construct of boundaryless careers, which is discussed later. First of these, was to advocate for the adoption of a definition of career that covered all workers. This definition was drawn jointly from 'both 'Chicago' sociology (Hughes, 1958) and 'Columbia' educational psychology (Super, 1957)' (Arthur 1994, p. 297). It applied to all people and all organisations. Second, was the importance of the time dimension (i.e. developmental process) as a key factor in relationships between individuals and organisations, as opposed to constructs like job satisfaction, for example. Third, was to promote the establishment of career as a focus for interdisciplinary study involving psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science and economics. Finally, they recommended that career be viewed from both subjective and objective perspectives.

It was also during this era that a notion of career that is currently relevant was first put forward by Hall (1976), namely the 'protean career', a term derived from the Greek god Proteus who could change shape at will. Hall (1976, p.201) defined the protean career as follows:

The protean career is a process which the person, not the organization, is managing. It consists of all the person's varied experiences in education, training, work in several organisations, changes in occupational field, etc. The protean career is not what happens to the person in any one organization. The protean person's own personal career choices and search for self- fulfillment are the unifying or integrative elements in his or her life. The criterion of success is internal (psychological success), not external. In short, the protean career is shaped more by the individual than by the organisation and may be redirected from time to time to meet the needs of that person.

The concept of protean careers is further discussed later in this section.

The 1970s not only marked the definitional breaking of boundaries concerning time, they also marked the breaking of boundaries concerning role. Jones, Hamilton, Ganschow, Helliwell and Wolff (1972) proposed a conceptualisation of career that incorporated development across an individual's lifestyle, including occupation, education, personal and social responsibilities. Gysbers and Moore (1975) developed an holistic view of the human career in relation to specific roles (work, leisure, education, family and community), settings (home, school, community, workplace), and the events (work, non-work and family) in a person's life. Super (1976, p.20) refined and expanded his earlier definition to:

The sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout his preoccupational, occupational, and post- occupational life; includes work-related roles such as those of student, employee, and pensioner, together with complementary vocational, familial and civic roles. Careers exist only as people pursue them. They are person-centred.

During this period, sense and meaning making also began to be discussed as a key element of the term's definition. For example, drawing from the French and Latin meanings of career, Carlsen (1988, p.186) states '...when I use the term career I am not thinking of just a job - I am thinking of a guiding image or a concept of a personal path, a personal significance, a personal continuity and meaning in the order of things.'

The 1990s

By the 1990s, new notions of career began to prevail. In particular, conceptualisations of career as boundaryless emerged. Arthur (1994) first promoted the notion of boundaryless careers. In doing so, he emphasised that the idea was not to replace the organisational career as a basis for research enquiry, but to promote the boundaryless career perspective as a second alternative basis for such enquiry. Boundaryless careers are defined by six characteristics: moving across organisations and employers; drawing validation and marketability from outside the current employer; being sustained by external networks; where traditional career boundaries have been broken; where patterns of paid work are broken for family or personal reasons and where an individual perceives a boundaryless future regardless of constraints. In essence, the core emphasis is independence from rather than dependence on organisational structures (Arthur, 1994).

The foundation for this approach was the earlier work emanating from MIT in the late 1970s. Arthur (1994) went on to point out that the MIT's work also contradicted the boundaryless perspective, in that there was a strong emphasis on intra-organisational versus inter-organisational phenomena, also that the work assumed stable versus changing organisational environments and that

organisational structures were assumed to be hierarchical. An examination of the literature by Arthur (1994) showed that those assumptions had largely persisted in career research and that the opportunity to explore careers across the whole workforce, and from both subjective and objective views, had not been realised. He also noted that the role of individual enterprise had largely been omitted along with that of the related concept of entrepreneurship.

More recently, Hall and Mirvis (1996) have argued that the 'new' career is protean and the 'new success' is psychological. They view this new career as separated from any one organisation or even from paid employment, and in that sense, boundaryless. While the two constructs of protean and boundaryless careers are similar, they are not the same. The protean career emphasises the idea of internally driven measures of success, that is, from within the individual, as opposed to being influenced by external values, for example, those of an organisation. Furthermore, a protean career is likely to be marked by an independent and autonomous approach to learning and career management compared to a greater reliance on external guidance. While this means that protean careers may display boundary crossing behaviours, they do not require them. Boundaryless career actors, on the other hand, seem to enact careers across organizational boundaries. In that sense, a penchant for employment mobility is a critical ingredient of boundaryless careers.

The new, boundaryless career it seems, may not indeed be really so new. It has been in place for a large proportion of people in the workplace as well as for entire industries (Littleton, Arthur and Rousseau, 2000). This seems especially so in the New Zealand context (Arthur, Inkson and Pringle, 1999). In New Zealand, business is dominated by small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). Some 91.3 percent of businesses may be classified as micro-businesses employing less than 10 people, compared with the United States' 44.6 percent micro-businesses (Ministry of Economic Development (MED), 2002). The opportunity for traditional careers is less in New Zealand than in the United States where much of the traditional career discourse has arisen. Additionally, Sullivan (1999) has described boundaryless careers as a misnomer, because it is necessary for all systems to have boundaries in order to be defined. Another criticism is a lack of empirical evidence which supports their existence (Eby, Butts and Lockwood, 2003). Furthermore, the notion has been challenged because it is unavailable to many, primarily because of their sociopolitical context. As such, it is argued by Walton (2000) that the 'new' career discourse is no more inclusive than that of the traditional career. There is also little consideration of the entrepreneurial aspects of boundaryless careers in the literature.

The concept of boundaryless career also seems unlikely in the New Zealand situation to sit well with a large number of Māori. The model of career

portrayed by the New Zealand careers industry has been described as often not clearly understood and its worth not plainly recognised by many Māori (Te Puni Kokiri, 2001). Durie (2002) also argues for an emphasis on the possibility of dual career goals for Māori and other indigenous populations. That is, a conceptualisation of career that recognises both participation in te ao Māori (the Māori world), as well as in New Zealand society at large. One could argue though, that this dual goal requires and legitimises boundary crossing between the two worlds, and therefore fits with the boundaryless career construct.

Despite these reservations, the concept of boundaryless careers persists. Further, its proponents remind us that its conception is not designed to capture any particular career structure, but to expand the conceptualisation of career to include 'a range of possible forms that defy traditional employment assumptions' (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996, p.6). What is apparent is that the form of many careers is changing. The essential aspects of that change include: the increase of disjointed careers for both genders due to the entwining of family and work responsibilities; more people will be self-employed; more people will be employed by small and medium-sized businesses as opposed to large businesses; lifelong learning will be required; the traditional hierarchical, organisational career will be less common but lateral movement between occupations will increase; increases in occupational changes will mean losing previously secure jobs; future planning will be more uncertain for individuals; people will be more isolated with less collegial connections; self-reliance will replace loyalty in the psychological contracts between employers and their employees; the quality of production will supersede quality of life; and temporary team assignments will replace fixed job descriptions (Krumboltz, 1998).

CAREER SUCCESS

The specific literature on career success spans multiple disciplines and this report draws primarily from the management literature that has taken up the topic of career success most extensively in recent years. However, important insights on the topic are contained in the literatures of psychology and sociology. This section highlights how individuals' perceptions of the meaning of career success have been explored by scholars at different times, using different terms and criteria.

Career success has been researched significantly since the 1950s but the study of both subjective and objective career success did not occur until 1988 (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988). These authors argued that it was important to advance our knowledge of the criteria by which individuals judge their own career success. Almost two decades later, Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom (2005) searched 15 empirically oriented social science journals for articles concerned with career success. They found 68 articles between 1992 and 2002 after removing 12 that were not directly pertinent to their task of comparing the theoretical assumptions within those articles with existing career theory. Surprisingly, none of these studies involved collecting the research participants' own view of their measures of career success. This led these authors to ask, 'How can subjective careers be adequately researched when the subjective interpretations of career actors themselves....are not allowed expression?' (Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom, 2005, p. 196). They conclude that the answer lies in more qualitative research into the subjective criteria that people bring to their own career situations. In an extension of this search in those same journals through 2005, this author found no published studies that identify those criteria, though a number of studies did operationalise the subjective criteria using measures of job satisfaction.¹ Therefore, the current study aims to address this substantial knowledge gap.

Conventional career theories then, have defined career success primarily from the standpoint of measurable objective factors such as salary or number of promotions (e.g. Gattiker and Larwood, 1988). Progression, earnings and recognition have been the typical indicators. However, some researchers have explored career success from a subjective perspective. For instance, Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk (2000) divide the conventional

¹ The journals searched were Academy of Management Journal, Administrative Science Quarterly, Career Development Quarterly, Human Relations, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Career Development, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Journal of Social Psychology, Journal of Vocational Behavior, Organization Science, Organization Studies and Personnel Psychology

conceptualisation of career into two broad views. The first sees career as structural and the property of an occupation or organisation, or of both. The second sees career as the property of the individual, that is, the individual's unique pattern of jobs and experiences. Within the individual perspective, these writers identify three key themes: an 'advancement' theme (career equals progress in status or money); a 'profession' theme (something that doctors and lawyers have, but clerks and machinists do not); and a 'stability' theme (transitions among connected jobs equal a career). They further suggest that the limitations of the definitions contained by these three themes have led to the emergence of less restrictive definitions. These authors then, prefer to define career as 'the pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life' (Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk, 2000, p.9). They see this definition as not restricted by the limitations associated with the requirements of advancement, professional status or occupational stability. Further, they claim that this definition accounts for both objective and subjective interpretations of career and suggest that it fits well with the changing nature of the world of work. These writers also see this definition to be consistent with the notion of 'boundaryless' career and that of the 'Protean' career. Moreover, they argue that these new conceptualisations of career respect multiple ways for careers to unfold and support the idea of four different career patterns proposed by Driver (1980).

Driver (1980) adopts what he calls a pluralistic approach incorporating four career concepts. These are (i) the linear career concept (marked by hierarchical progression through positions with greater authority and responsibility); (ii) the expert career (a lifelong commitment to a specific field or occupation with progress marked by increasing expertise and competence); (iii) the spiral career (marked by periodic moves between fields, often with a seven to ten year time-frame allowing time for substantial competence to be developed) and (iv) the transitory career (movement every three to five years to a very different field or job). This author points out that these four concepts may be combined to form a basis for the description of a variety of forms of career experience. A very different set of motivators drives each of the four concepts. The linear career concept fits the traditional organisational understanding of career, and the key motives are the need for power and achievement. Core motives for the expert career are a desire for technical competence along with security and stability. For spiral careers, motives are mainly personal development and creativity whereas for transitory careers, motives are the need for variety and independence achieved by exposure to a constant range of new experiences.

Van Maanen and Schein (1977) investigated individuals' subjective views about their work life and their roles within that. From this inquiry, they developed the concept of a career anchor. They describe a career anchor as an

occupational self-concept that both channels and amalgamates the individual's career. Schein (1978) identified five forms of career anchor: managerial competence, autonomy, security, technical/functional competence and entrepreneurial creativity.

Delong (1982) further developed the idea of Schein's (1978) career anchors, though he proposed that the term career anchor be replaced by the term career orientation. Career orientation is defined as the capacity to select aspects of an occupation for investment according to one's motivation, interests and capabilities.

Derr (1986) expands Delong's (1982) term 'career orientation' to 'career success orientation'. He states that this refers to the way people define their success at work and that individual perceptions of career success reflect individual values, attitudes and motivation with respect to both work and life in a broader sense. Derr (1986) developed five dimensions to describe the range of career success orientations that he found among populations of US Navy employees, MBA students and multinational executives. The five dimensions that he derived are:

1. Getting ahead: This type reflects the traditional career success type mentioned previously marked by visible metrics of advancement in status, responsibility, salary and authority
2. Getting free: This dimension comprises individuals who pursue personal freedom and autonomy. It includes many entrepreneurs who develop their own service or product and individuals who value independence and freedom from external interruption.
3. Getting secure: This dimension includes persons who value stability, security and predictability at work. They seek long-term job security, are loyal and committed to employers where they feel recognized and value security over advancement.
4. Getting high: Individuals who pursue technical or functional skill development dominate this form. The focus is continued growth in these areas with becoming expert in their chosen area of interest the main aspiration.
5. Getting balanced: This group sees balance between personal and work life as most important. They prefer a work context that respects personal and family life. For them, career success means integration with personal and family growth and development.

Baruch (2004) also categorises contemporary measures of career success into five similar core types. The first type has a focus on the development of competencies; the second on achievement through lateral rather than upward movement; the third via the security gained by enhancing employability; the

fourth with a target of autonomy and entrepreneurship; and the final type aimed at quality of life and work-life balance.

Mayrhofer, Meyer, Steyrer, Maier and Hermann (2004) introduced the concept of career fields. They identify four main career fields. Individual members of the workforce enact their careers within the societal context of these fields. Interviews with a sample of 21 graduates of an Austrian business school found that those within each of these have differing orientations to career success.

In the 'company world' field, the success focus is on promotion, getting into top positions, upward mobility and higher salaries. Critical dimensions are cultural capital, particularly in the form of good formal education and social capital, especially relationships with other career actors, with a social network and through collaboration with colleagues. The important contributors to that success are luck and contextual factors. Those in the 'free floating' professional field take more of a progress and development view. Here the view of career success is separated from promotion and focused on self-set objectives and the development of technical and social competencies. Fun and satisfaction at work and attainment of those self-set goals are the measures of success. Interviewees in the 'self employment' field see no part to be played by coincidence, luck, or external context. Crucial measures of success are repeat customers resulting from the development of a good image as opposed to good marketing, being able to deal with the scope and quantity of work, and having no worries about future business or finances. Those in the final field, 'chronic flexibility', rely to some extent on objective measures of success with the money dimension apparent but not so strongly as the company world field. Internal factors are also emphasised. Interesting tasks, enjoyment, recognition and satisfied customers are all key measures of success.

Kim (2005) makes a particularly useful effort to consolidate the different interpretations and labels applied to career success, namely, career anchors (Schein, 1978), career orientations (DeLong, 1982), career concepts (Driver, 1980), career success orientations (Derr, 1986) and measures of career success (Baruch, 2004). Despite the different terms and criteria used at different times, Kim (2005) argues that five types of career orientation may be determined and are common to most of the above. This consolidation of types of career orientation is summarised in Table 1. It is returned to later in this paper as the basis for categorizing the data collected in this research. The table not only merges the various typologies from various authors into 5 types but in the bottom line attempts to describe the criteria which each typology uses. For example, Schein, (1978) describes career anchors as using self-perceived talents as criteria, and DeLong (1982) portrays career orientation as using self-perceived values.

Table 1: Comparison of theories of career orientation.

| Types | Description of common characteristics | Schein's (1978) career anchor | Delong's (1982) career orientation | Driver's (1980) career concept | Derr's (1986) career success orientation | Baruch's (2004) measures of career success |
|----------------------|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Type 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing up the organizational hierarchy • Increased responsibility, authority • High status, prestige, income | General management competence | Managerial competence /identity | Linear | Getting ahead | Self development competencies |
| Type 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised expertise in one area • Excitement to test one's talents and skills • Continued growth and experience | Technical/functional competence or pure challenge | | Spiral | Getting high | Lateral transitions; spiral movements |
| Type 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability, predictability, security • Long-term commitment, loyalty | Security/stability | Security | Steady-state | Getting secure | Employability |
| Type 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of freedom, avoidance of restrictions • Creation of own service or product • A variety of different experiences | Autonomy/independence or entrepreneurial creativity | Autonomy, creativity or variety | Transitory | Getting free | Self-management; entrepreneurship |
| Type 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A balanced life • Respect for personal and family life • Flexible time and job sharing | Lifestyle | | | Getting balanced | Quality of life; work-family balance |
| Other types | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedication to a cause, making a contribution to improve the world | Service/dedication to a cause | Service | | | |
| Criteria of typology | | Self perceived talents, values and motives | Self-perceived attitudes, values and needs | Frequency, time, direction of career change | Subjective definition of success | |

Source: Kim (2005, p.50)

It should be pointed out here that the consolidation by Kim (2005) includes neither the 'career themes' (Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk, 2000) nor the 'success within fields' discussed by Mayrhofer et al. (2004). Future work could therefore expand the consolidation shown in Table 1 to include these concepts within the five types as well. For example, the advancement theme (Greenhaus et al., 2000) appears to match closely the Type 1 career orientation (Kim, 2005), as does the 'company world' success dimension (Mayrhofer et al., 2004). The current study, however, examines the data gathered from participants in New Zealand using the theoretically derived types in their original form as identified by Kim (2005).

In addition to the five types recognised by Kim (2005), some authors have suggested that there may be additional career orientations that do not fit within the five types. In particular, Kim (2005) has acknowledged this by including in the summary table under 'other types' a 'service or dedication to a cause' type identified by both Schein (1978) and DeLong (1982) as an additional career orientation. DeLong developed three further types of career orientation in addition to Schein's (1978) original five career anchors. These were identity, service and variety. Van Maanen and Schein (1977) suggest there may be four additional career anchors. These are (i) the need for identity; (ii) a desire to express affiliative needs and interpersonal talents; (iii) a motivation to seek power, influence and control and (iv) a need for variety. Schein (1978) modifies the second of these slightly to become the 'service to others' anchor noted by Kim (2005). Schein (1978, p.170) also writes that:

.....all of the research so far on career anchors has been done on men and it has been suggested that were women included, one might find that a higher percentage of them would be anchored in the more affiliative, service kinds of career pre-occupations because of their prior socialization to be more affiliative.

Consequently, a secondary aim of this research is to examine the data in an exploratory manner for evidence of the existence of any other categories of career success orientation that are in addition to the five core types classified by Kim (2005). Furthermore, in response to Schein's (1978) suggestion that women may have different career orientations than men, this research seeks to investigate the implications of gender variables on career orientation preferences. The report also examines age variables.

METHOD

The pathways to sustainable employment project (PASE)

This is a five-year project funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology to examine the ways in which young people (15-34) in Aotearoa/New Zealand understand and negotiate various pathways into employment and the effect this has on individuals and communities, as well as the response from employers. There are two core components. The first looks at supply side issues such as the contribution of training and education to various employment options and outcomes, the acquisition of skills and search techniques, utilisation of social networks and the planning and aspirations of individuals (Dupuis, Inkson and McLaren, 2005; Cunningham, Fitzgerald and Stevenson, 2005). The second component scrutinises the strategies and expectations of employers in organising labour supply in the changing labour market (de Bruin, McLaren and Spoonley, 2005; Fitzgerald and McLaren, 2006). Overall, the project will inform policy and strategies for achieving the economic goals of sustainable employment and establish the degree of current and potential future alignment between labour supply and demand for this cohort.

Data collection

Data collection for the first phase of the first objective was completed using a dual approach. An Auckland-based research company carried out a computer aided telephone interview (CATI) of a sample of 866 younger people during June and July 2004. These younger people in four New Zealand geographic regions were selected by random digit dialling and surveyed. The four regions were Manawatu-Whanganui, Gisborne-East Coast, Auckland and Wellington. A separate but parallel survey of 100 Māori participants was conducted using the same interview schedule and regions. This sample was chosen from a current longitudinal study of Māori households - 'The Best Outcomes for Māori: Te Hoe Nuku Roa'. The interview schedule comprised up to 130 questions based on the participant's employment status. A standard range of questions to determine demographic data was also asked (Dupuis et al., 2005). Furthermore, participants were asked whether they were willing to participate in the second phase of data collection. That resulted in face-to-face interviews with 66 participants.

The interview schedule contained up to 26 questions arranged within four domains. These four areas were perceptions of the world of employment, education, social capital and aspirations. This report examines the data on aspirations. A specific question was included to explore the issue: "If you look back on your career in years to come, and you could then describe it as 'successful', what might it look like?" The question was designed to avoid any predefinition of the term 'career' or of 'successful' and allowed the participants to apply their own definition. Interviewers explored the responses to establish what the participants meant. All interviews took

place between June and September 2005. Interviews were transcribed and the data relating to aspirations was interrogated in the following way.

Data analysis

The transcribed data specific to the career success question was analysed using content analysis (Weber, 1985). The Kim (2005) consolidation of categories (Table 1) was used as a basis for this. Each interview transcript was perused and coded for the principal type of career success orientation using the description of common characteristics for each type in that summary. A count of the number of times each type was predominant was performed for the full sample, for each gender, and by age group. Those counts were then converted into percentages. The results section that follows summarises these. Early in the analysis, it was noted that several participants clearly favoured the 'service to community or others' success orientation which Kim (2005) had not assigned a separate type to, listing it as 'other'. For this analysis, that orientation is named 'Type 0 - Service'. Each of the other 5 types were assigned a representative name as follows: Type 1 - Advancement; Type 2 - Competence; Type 3 - Security; Type 4 - Autonomy and Type 5 - Balance. Where it was difficult to determine which of two or more types predominated, the first elaborated was coded.

In a commentary on reliability in content analysis, Krippendorf (2004) notes the sad state of providing an indication of reliability in published research using content analyses. That author concludes that while,

as a critical scholar, I defend the principle of encouraging multiple voices to speak through a text....but mathematical objects such as agreement measures and their use as indices of the reliability of data....should speak louder than majority opinions, even when published in respectable journals' (Krippendorf, 2004, p.430).

The paper makes a number of recommendations relevant to this analysis with respect to that process. First, that the sample of the data used to test the reliability of the full sample must be representative. Second, that multiple coders must work independently using unambiguous and communicable coding instructions. Third, that reliability coefficients of .90 or greater are acceptable, though there is a debate about adequate levels below that. Finally, that while percent agreement is listed as one of seven recommended statistical formulae for measuring inter-coder reliability by Neuendorf (2002, p.242), it is considered a liberal measure that loses accuracy as the number of categories increases (Krippendorf, 2004). Therefore, in this research, a colleague coded the data independently from the author. There was agreement on the coding for 60 of the 66 transcripts. This is an inter-rater reliability of 90.9 percent, which is acceptable based on the recommendations of Neuendorf (2002) and Krippendorf (2004).

The primary approach taken here is a deductive scientific approach using categories drawn from the theoretical literature and decided, along with coding rules, prior to

the examination of the data. However, the study also examines the data inductively for career success orientations that might not fit well with the existing categories and that may suggest the need for a further category. The results of these additional observations are also recorded below.

RESULTS

The results are shown in Table 2. The gender distribution is skewed with only 17 males and 49 females. This is discussed later with respect to its effect on the results by age group. As Table 2 shows, the sample was also divided into two age subgroups of equal size (n=33) and the results summarised for each of these groups.

Table 2: Results of data analysis

| Success Orientation | Full sample (n=66) | Full sample (%) | Male (n=17) | Male (%) | Female (n=49) | Female (%) | Younger group (age27-35; n=33) | Younger group (%) | Older group (age15-26; n=33) | Older group (%) |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------|---------------|------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Type 0 Service | 8 | 12.6 | 2 | 13.5 | 6 | 12.5 | 6 | 18.6 | 2 | 6.25 |
| Type Advancement | 12 | 18.5 | 6 | 36.0 | 6 | 12.5 | 10 | 30.1 | 2 | 6.25 |
| Type 2 Competence | 19 | 29.5 | 4 | 25.6 | 15 | 31.5 | 6 | 18.6 | 12 | 37.7 |
| Type 3 Security | 4 | 6.3 | 1 | 7.4 | 3 | 6.25 | 1 | 3.0 | 3 | 10.55 |
| Type 4 Autonomy | 6 | 9.6 | 2 | 12.2 | 4 | 8.5 | 4 | 12.2 | 2 | 6.25 |
| Type 5 Balance | 16 | 23.1 | 2 | 12.2 | 14 | 29.3 | 6 | 18.6 | 10 | 31.4 |
| Don't know | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | |

As can be seen, a portion of participants fell into each of the six categories of career success orientation. In the full sample, Type 2 - competence, was the clear winner with 29.5 percent opting for this description of their career success orientation. These are younger people who see career success as having developed a high level of technical competence and achieved continuing growth and experience. This type was also most favoured by the female sample (31.5 percent) and the younger (age 15-26)

group (37.7 percent), though the females almost equally chose Type 5 - balance (31.4 percent). This option, Type 5 - balance, was also the second most preferred group for the full sample and the younger subgroup and second equal for the older subgroup along with Type 0 - service, and Type 2 - competence. Type 5 - balance indicates a preference for maintaining lifestyle and work-life balance as the primary determinant of career success.

Inductive examination of the data categorisation and items of disagreement between raters identified one group worthy of further investigation. That group may represent a separate category of career success orientation and is labelled here as 'relationships'. An example is one participant who responded to the career success question as follows:

One of the things that I've noticed that can make a significant impact in terms of the working environment is just the people that you are with and...sometimes that can be a significant...can have quite a significant impact on your dissatisfaction of the roles to whether you gel with people around you and you're able to connect with them in a way that..... you're able to work in a constructive way.

Another example began her response: '...it's the relationships....' Several other transcripts talked about affiliations with others or the relationships that have been established, as perhaps their primary determinant of career success. However, this study did not anticipate this element and did not code for it. Further analysis or additional research is needed to examine this.

One of the striking findings is that for the full sample, the 'traditional' notion of career success, Type 1 - advancement, is well down the list (18.5 percent) among this group of New Zealand's younger people, although it is the dominant category among males. That finding for males needs to be treated with some caution due to the small number in the sub-sample (n=17). The gender imbalance in the sample is also problematic for the age group findings. While the younger age sub-group is reasonably gender balanced (14 males; 19 females), the older group is not (3 males; 30 females). This means that the data in the older group may simply be reflecting female preferences. To test this, the analysis examined the female only results by age with the results depicted in Table 3. The male sample was too small to do this.

The results in Table 3 do show a clear difference between the two age groups for females, with the younger sample divided mainly amongst Types 0, 1, 2 and 5. Over two-thirds of the older group however, conceptualise career success as either Type 2 or 5. While these findings tend to support the notion that the age findings for the whole sample may be partially reflecting the gender differences in each group, the differences between age cohorts within the female sample is interesting. Explanations for this may lie in two different causes. First, it may be that career success orientation is not an age stable phenomenon and that as females age, the emphasis for some shifts, primarily to a family and work-life balance focus. Second, the discrepancy may reflect a shift in the socio-cultural context which each cohort

has experienced up to this point in their lives, with that difference leading to different values as far as career is concerned. Further research is necessary to clarify this.

Table 3: Comparison of results for female participants by age

| Success Orientation | Younger females | Younger females (%) | Older females | Older females (%) |
|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Type 0 Service | 4 | 21 | 2 | 7.8 |
| Type 1 Advancement | 4 | 21 | 2 | 7.8 |
| Type 2 Competence | 3 | 16.8 | 12 | 41.4 |
| Type 3 Security | 1 | 5.3 | 2 | 7.8 |
| Type 4 Autonomy | 2 | 10.6 | 2 | 7.8 |
| Type 5 Balance | 5 | 26 | 9 | 31.4 |
| Don't know | | | 1 | |

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study confirms that younger New Zealanders display individual difference in their conceptualisation of career success and use a variety of criteria as their primary determinant of that. Thus, the research begins to address the lack of knowledge about individuals' career success criteria. Furthermore, it starts to establish what those criteria are and whether they match the existing measures in the theoretical and empirical literature. This research shows that the six categories established by Kim (2005) provide a useful framework for grouping the career orientations of this sample. Nevertheless, it also suggests that at least one further category, 'relationships', may be necessary in order to establish a suitable framework for exploring the connection between career success orientation and preferred or effective strategies and interventions. Further research is necessary to confirm this.

The sample selection for this research was limited to those accessible by telephone in the first instance. From those, the interview participants were individuals who volunteered and were still contactable a year later and who had provided e-mail contact. Therefore, the sample was not matched demographically to the larger New Zealand population of younger people. While this clearly limits the ability to generalise from this research, the study raises some important questions and provides an interesting set of conclusions about the career orientations of younger New Zealanders.

In addition to the primary finding, the study found age and gender differences within the sample. The disparity between age cohorts that is evident in the female sample is interesting because it suggests that career success orientation is either not a stable phenomenon, or it varies due to changing external influences such as socio-cultural context. Conclusions here remain cautious though, due to the smaller sizes of the respective sub-samples. Again, further investigation is necessary to determine both the extent of any difference and causality.

However, age and gender differences in career success orientation are less important in identifying effective strategies in promoting sustainable employment for younger people. Strategies aimed at all categories of career orientation will capture age and gender differences alike. The significant finding here is that for 80 percent of this sample of younger people, it is not accurate to assume that advancement, income, status and other traditional 'getting ahead' measures of career success are primary drivers. This is consistent with the finding of Dupuis and McLaren (2006) with respect to non-standard work amongst younger workers in New Zealand. They conclude that younger people negotiate pathways through the world of work in a way 'very different from the linearity which characterised the employment and life expectations of their parents' generations' (Dupuis and McLaren, 2006, p. 33).

A key objective of the PASE project is to inform strategies for achieving the economic goals of sustainable employment. There is a tension between that goal and the individual goals and aspirations of younger people. Therefore, the development of interventions, strategies and policies that consider the disparate career orientations of individuals in their target populations, yet still meet the economic goals of sustainable employment, is an important challenge.

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