Protean Career Attitude, Competency Development & Career Success: A Mediating Effect of Perceived Employability

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Abstract
Universities built for the purpose of earning profit have sprung up in nearly every nook and cranny of Pakistan. Education has become an industry. Therefore competition is stiff in the university business. The very nature of contract between the employee and employer is changing and organization cannot guarantee the worker lifetime employment through vertical progressions. Instead the employees have to mold themselves into a “protean career attitude” by taking care of his or her employment needs and assure their “employability” by “developing the competencies” in shape of KSAO’s. The present study shows the relationship of various variables like Protean Career Attitude, Competency Development and Employability with success of academicians in their careers. A close-ended questionnaire is built to measure the variables and to test the hypothesis. Punjab is taken as a sample, data Analysis is done through factor analysis, descriptive statistics and hierarchical regression analysis.

Keywords: Protean Career Attitude, Career Success, Employability

Introduction

The role of education cannot be understated. Aggarwal (1997, p.4) says, “Education is a continuous and lifelong process. The state of education in Pakistan is not very encouraging (Memon, Joubish & Khurram, 2010). According to the latest figures put forth by the Higher Education Commission (2012) there are a total of 124 universities out of which 62 are in the private sector. There has been an explosion of Higher Education Institutes in Pakistan in the last decade (Qadeer, Rehman, Ahmed & Shafique, 2011). Besides their tremendous growth, the two sectors of private and public are following similar patterns in Human Resource Management Practices (Qadeer et al., 2011). Pakistan is a developing country and the educational system is facing many problems (Anwar, Yousaf, Shah & Sarwar, 2008). In their study on 800
academicians working in public and private sector universities, Khan and Sarwar (2011) found the areas where academicians prefer training. According to Ali, Khan, Qadeer and Shahzad (2009) universities do not respond to market trends and are essentially divorced from the world of work. Foreign scholarships, research grants and training programs are various effectual measures taken by the administrators to lure the academicians (Aslam, 2011). There is not much difference in job satisfaction among academicians working in public and private institutes when taking into consideration the demographic characteristics like age, gender, qualification, experience, status and income (Ghafoor, 2012). The country has witnessed a large number of Private universities to appear as a result of the poor quality of education in the government universities (Andrabi, Das & Khwaja, 2002).

The growth of private universities is tied to the economy of the country. Statistics below show the unemployment rates from Jan, 2008 to Oct, 2011, which is the highest since the last two years:

**Figure 1** Number of Unemployed (percentage of labor force)

![Unemployment Rate Chart](http://www.tradingeconomics.com/pakistan/unemployment-rate)

It shows the unemployment rate rising to 6% in July 2011, compared to 5.6% a year ago (Labor Force Survey of Pakistan, 2011). The career success of academicians working in the private institutions is thus affected by poor conditions that dishearten potential good candidates and at the same time also makes senior academicians want to leave the profession (Yousaf, Sultana, Naseeruddin & Rehman, 2010). A concept known as ‘protean career attitude’ is taking shape in the new economy represented by sudden changes in the organization due to de-layering, outsourcing, and rightsizing (Grimland, Vigoda-Gadot & Baruch, 2011). The organization cannot assure life-time employment rather the employees will have to make themselves employable though a pattern of self management activities by increasing their Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Opportunities (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Employees’ participate in different developmental activities to increase their competitiveness (De Vos & De Hauw, 2010).

**Problem Statement**

Career success has been defined as the positive psychological or work related achievements that the individual accumulates as a result of work experience (Seibert, Crant & Kraimer, 1999).
Articles on career success (Abele, Spurk & Volmer, 2011; Allen, 2011; Ballout, 2008; Baruch, 2004; Barnett & Bradley, 2007; Callanan, 2003; Chudzikowski, 2011; Gattiker & Larwood, 1986; Dolan, Bejarano & Tzafrir, 2011; Grimland, Vigoda-Gadot & Baruch, 2011; Hay & Hodgkinson, 2006; Heslin, 2003; Judge, Higgins, Thoreson & Barrick, 1999; Judge, Klinger & Simon, 2010; Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman, 2005; Seibert, Crant & Kraimer, 1999; Singh, Ragins & Tharenou, 2009) appearing in journals have applied their research on employees working in the western countries. However, there are very few studies in the Pakistani context centered on the aspects of the ‘new career’. Therefore, the present study tries to fill in the theoretical gap by pointing to Baruch and Sullivan’s (2009) call for research on the possible differences in career enactment due to national and cultural differences.

Developing a protean career attitude is important that leads to career success (Briscoe et al., 2006). In the new business scenario employees are seen as responsible for acquiring the Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Opportunities that are valued by employers both current and prospective (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Most private universities are built for the purpose of earning profit, whose administration is not interested in the needs and aspirations of academicians (Ali, Khan, Qadeer & Shahzad, 2009). According to Khan and Sarwar (2011) institutional reforms depend upon the quality of the academicians. The research output and quality of academic programs of an institution depend on the quality of the faculty (Ali et al., 2009). Some studies that come close include those by Akhtar (2010) who concludes that competence, motivation and opportunity are the three core areas that affect performance, Arif (2011) who purports that employees must learn and balance their emotional and professional needs so as to stay in the field and advance in their careers, Malik, Nawab, Naeeem and Danish (2010) who claim that satisfaction with work-itself, quality of supervision and pay satisfaction has a significant positive influence on organizational commitment, Mangi, Soomro, Ghumro, Abidi and Jalbani (2011) who state that motivation has a significant impact on the overall job satisfaction and Noor and Arif (2011) who discuss that spirituality in the context of workplace should not be neglected as it has a key role to inculcate employees’ job satisfaction Therefore, it is important to work upon the career success and factors that lead to it. Indeed there is a need to promote a closer examination of the relationships between personal variables like protean career attitude, competency development and employability with that of career success.

**Research Questions**

To further understand the study with respect to its dependent variable, independent and mediating variables the following research questions are devised:

1) What is the relationship of Protean Career Attitude, Competency development and perceived employability with Career Success?

**Objectives of the study**

In order to understand the relationship between individual’s career success, competency development, protean career attitude and perceived employability the following research objectives are formulated:

1) To examine the relationship of Protean Career Attitude and Career Success
2) To find the relationship of Competency Development and Career Success
3) To determine the relationship between Protean Career Attitude and Perceived Employability
4) To find the relationship of Competency Development with Perceived Employability
5) To find out the relationship between Perceived employability and career success.
6) To determine how Perceived Employability mediates the relationship between protean career attitude and Career Success
7) To determine how Perceived Employability mediates the relationship between Competency Development and Career Success?

Literature Review

Career Success

The word “Career” is both a descriptive and evaluative term (Super 1980). Career success has been defined as the accumulation and psychological outcomes that result from one’s work performance (Callanan, 2003). Individual’s career success is a set of desired outcomes, and these outcomes vary between men and women (Baruch, 2004). Ng et al. (2005) mention that there are two mobility perspectives to career success: (i) The contest mobility perspective (ii) The sponsored mobility perspective. The supervisors are responsible for providing support and guidance to individuals in their careers who have a potential to excel (Restubog, Bordia & Bordia, 2011). Ballout (2008) states two broad factors explain the phenomenon of career success: (i) individual level experiences and (ii) organizational level experiences. Individuals want to feel successful with regards to their career aspirations, values and achievements; and this is why organizations conduct employee satisfaction surveys (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986). Heslin (2003) purports that there are two ways in which subjective career success can be evaluated: (i) self-referent and (ii) other-referent. In self-referent subjective success, an individual compares against his own career relative to personal standards and aspirations. Career aspirations are significantly tied with the subjective career success (Rasdi, Ismail, Uli & Noah, 2009). A positive relationship between individual career aspirations and career success for men is found to exist, but not necessarily for their women counterparts (Dolan, Bejarano & Tzafrir, 2011). Men and women may differ in their expectation of work and achievements and women may define success on a different note (Dann, 1995). Subjective success is said to be the main aim of working life (Abele, Spurk & Volmer, 2011). The success of an individual in his or her career is said to bring an overwhelming feeling of not only achievement but also satisfaction (Akhtar, 2010). Extrinsic career success is linked to General Mental Ability (Judge, Klinger & Simon, 2010). Similarly mentoring is found to predict promotions and turnover intentions (Singh, Ragins & Tharenou, 2009). Hay & Hodgkinson (2006) purport in their study that students with Masters in Business Administration take career success more in terms of external criteria i.e., hierarchy and salary. However this did not apply to all graduates. In an online survey on 4,811 employees and 28 companies working in India, Stumpf, Doh and Ty mon (2010) found that performance management and professional development were positively related to career success. In his study on the effects of HRM, social support on career success of men and women, Nabi (2000), purports that peer support is a significant predictor of men’s career success rather than women’s. Career success has two off-shoots that correspond to the objective and subjective dimensions: (i) intrinsic and (ii) extrinsic. Here extrinsic career success includes salary, promotion and hierarchical status (Judge et al., 1999). Organizational support,
proactive personality and career management behaviors positively relate to career satisfaction whereas career management behaviors mediate the relationship between proactive personality and career satisfaction (Barnett & Bradley, 2007). Career transitions are defined as inter or intra organizational movement of employees or changes in functional domain (Chudzikowski, 2011). Individuals employed on a temporary basis tend to be less entrenched in the social networks and are less committed to their professional work, as compared to permanently employed individuals (Allen, 2011).

Network resources have been found to associate with intra-organizational career success over and above human capital, demographics and mentoring received, and there was a fundamental difference found between instrumental and expressive network resources in the way they associated with career success (Bozionelos, 2003).

**Protean Career Attitude**

The word "protean" is taken from the Greek word Proteus which symbolizes a Greek myth in which Proteus had a strange ability to change shapes to avoid threats. Through a protean career attitude employees make themselves employable through a series of self-management activities so that they can realize their full potential and accordingly set goals so as to achieve career success (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). The protean career attitude utilizes his or her own values rather than organization’s to guide career (Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth, 2006). Protean career according to De Vos & De Soens (2008) sets the basis for career management initiatives which might include one or both of the following: (i) Learning about oneself and (ii) Taking practical initiatives. Interestingly industries attract individuals who are labeled as ‘protean career architects’ (Buelens & Van den Broeck, 2007). Similarly satisfaction of employees towards the company has decreased while job satisfaction and involvement has increased towards their own career. This was found in a study conducted by Stroh, Brett and Reilly (1994). Career success for women is positively related with self-direction and negatively related with their own values (Enache, Sallan, Simo & Fernandez, 2011).

**Boundaryless Career**

As discussion about protean career began to widen, researchers tried to sort out the difference between the boundaryless and PCA. The boundaryless career or the post-corporate career started in the 1980’s and picked up momentum in the 21st century (Baruch, 2006). Arthur (1994) in his work on boundaryless careers mentioned this concept as the opposite of traditional career. In a study by Heilmann (2011) to examine the relationship between boundaryless career and competency development on 15 Finnish managers from information and communication business sector found that managers were themselves responsible for acquiring the competencies: updating skills meant that managers were incharge of their careers and independent in decision making. The physical side of mobility is the observable side of crossing boundaries while psychological is the people’s attitude towards this act (Verbruggen, 2011). BM has an effect on the career success as it leads to high promotions and salary (Verbruggen, 2011). According to Enache et al. (2011) boundaryless career has two branches: (i) boundaryless mindset and (ii) organizational mobility preference. These off-shoots correspond with physiological and physical mobility respectively. Components of boundaryless career are more related with objective career success (Volmer & Spurk, 2011).
Competency Development
In the new business environment employees are seen as responsible for acquiring the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities that are valued by employers both current and prospective (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Participation by employees in different development activities offered by the organization increase their competitiveness (De Vos & De Hauw, 2010). Three distinct career competencies known as ‘ways of knowing’ are a central component of one’s career (Eby, Butts & Lockwood, 2003). Such competencies provide access to better, newer contacts and job opportunities (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). ’Knowing-why’ competency among global manager relate to work life balance, international exposure, professional identification, center of decision making, career progression and search for challenge (Cappellen & Janssens, 2008).
Here it should be mentioned that the concept of career boundarylessness is related to career competencies i.e., know-why, knowing-how and know-what (Colakoglu, 2011). Career control and networking are strongly associated with career success. A competency model developed by a private bank focused not only on developing the KSA’s but also on how people are selected, trained, evaluated, and rewarded after implementation of the new strategy (Vakola, Soderquist & Prastacos, 2007). In a case study carried out by Vakola et al. (2007) on a bank that transformed itself from a bureaucratic to customer focused institution, the secret of success lay in the competency model known as “Pegasus” which helped in redefining the HR methods by focusing on job-related competencies. Similarly, in their study by Lertwannawit, Serirat and Pholpantin (2009) the correlation between career competencies and career success of Thai employees in the tourism and hospitality sector is assessed. Competency is inextricably linked to performance, and performance is necessary for career advancement (Chong, 2011). In a research on 10,624 physicians, Litanen, Ruskoaho, Vanska, Halila and Patja (2011) described as to why professional competencies changes during the physician’s career? The present study employs two dimensions of competency development: (i) Employee participation and (ii) perceived support. These dimensions are in line with De Vos, De Hauw and Van der Heijjin (2011) survey on 561 employees of a large financial institution.
Employee participation informs the organization to develop the employees in the shape of training, on-the-job learning and career development. The second dimension perceived support informs the employees about being aware of the organizational support provided for the growth of one’s competencies (Schneider, Brief & Guzzo, 1996). It is concluded here that competency development shows a positive relationship with career success. The Knowledge, Skills and Abilities have to be developed that can ensure the employees survival. Knowledge is ever changing so the employees have to stay in touch with the latest tools and techniques.

Perceived Employability
If the word “employability” is looked at more carefully it could be seen that it is a combination of two words: employment and ability; ability here is the employee's stockpile of skills and competences relative to labor market demands (De Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnunen & Määkikangas, 2011). In their study, Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) purported general competences as significant dimensions of employability. These are grouped as: (i) anticipation
and optimization (ii) personal flexibility (ii) corporate sense, and (iv) balance. In the present
study the researcher uses two dimensions of perceived employability: (i) Occupational
Expertise and (ii) Personal Flexibility. Occupational expertise is an important human factor for
organizations (Van der Heijden & Van der Heijde, 2006); and is related to anticipation and
optimization, corporate sense, and balance. Personal Flexibility refers to the capacity for
smooth transitions between jobs and organizations, adapting easily to all kinds of changes in
the internal and external labor market (Van der Heijden & Van der Heijde, 2006). In a study by
Kinnunen, Mauno, Mäkikangas, Na¨tti and Siponen (2011) on 1,014 university academicians
and researchers from two Finnish universities found that perceived employability is important
to all employees regardless of the type of employment contract. Fugate et al. (2004) suggested
that employability helps individuals come to terms with work transformations in disruptive
employment settings. According to Seibert et al. (1999) a proactive personality includes the
ingredients of feeling of control, self-efficacy, self-direction and information seeking. By
continuous learning, individuals can enhance their human capital, thereby becoming
employable (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994). Bridgestock (2009) stated that current shifts in labor
market policies have made universities to think twice about how to produce employable
graduates. The onus for managing and developing one’s employability lies with each individual
(Nilsson, 2010). For the front-line workers in retail industry it is the soft skills that are required
to access entry-level jobs (Nickson, Warhurst, Commander, Hurrell, & Cullen, 2011). A study
carried out by Benson (2006) on 667 full time technical staff in two separate business units
found that on-the-job training was positively related to organizational commitment and
negatively related to intention to quit. Employees enjoy their social work ambience when they
have a job that makes them to innovate and produce ideas. This was concluded in a study by
Van der Heijden & Bakkar (2011) on 303 employee/supervisor pairs in a large Dutch
company. Employability is seen as an important ingredient for those employees who are undergoing
problems of job security (Wittekind et al., 2010).

Gap in the Literature
There have been a few studies from a Pakistani perspective that try to establish a link between
public and private universities together or only with public universities but none has focused
exclusively on private universities. There is an increasing need to know the level of career
success among faculty members working in the private universities. So the present study tries
to measure the career success of academicians from different strata like lecturers, assistant,
associate and full professors in the private sector. Studies like those of Arif (2011) Malik et al.
development but not necessarily career success. However Akhtar (2010) tries to form an
understanding of stereotypical roles prevalent in the private sector of the country by describing
successful managers as possessing inner ability and luck. The role of gender did not have an
over effect on the career success of individuals. Such studies on career success focus solely on a
single demographic variable i.e., gender. There is need to focus on the new economy and
broaden the antecedents used in achieving success.
De Vos and Soens (2008) discuss the mediating role of self management behaviors between protean career attitude and career success. Self management is more related to career competencies with its reflective and behavioral component. The former relates to the realizations of ones aspirations while the later concerns development of concrete actions like networking to attain goals formed. The relationship between protean career attitude, perceived employability and career success is unique and never studied before. In a latest study on career success, De Vos, De Hauw and Van Der Heijin (2011) have taken perceived employability as mediating the relationship between competency development and career success. The study is focused on only one organization i.e., a large financial institution in Belgium. Therefore there is need to generalize the findings to organizations all over the country. Moreover studies by Colakoglu (2011) are limited as they focus certain community i.e., MBA students and alumni working in a private university. Women and other minorities can differ in terms of career attitudes and decisions. Therefore the present study will try to generalize the perceived effects of employability on the relationship between career success and competency development.

There are some biases reported. Studies by Colakoglu (2011) suffer from common method and non response bias. Non response bias is when a low response is had from the sample studied. Similarly those by De Vos et al. (2011); Stumpf et al. (2010); Nabi (2000) also suffer from common method bias by using only a single survey instrument to gather data to derive all variables i.e., by having all the responses from online survey. Self report inevitably weakens the strength and reliability of the findings. Interviews can be had to remove the bias.

Underlying Theoretical Framework
Social Cognitive Career Theory is derived primarily from the social cognitive theory with the intention to describe how an individual develops his or her vocational interests, does occupational choices and achieves career satisfaction and success (Yean, 2008).

The father of Social Cognitive Theory is Albert Bandura. It was Bandura (1986) who in extension of his theory told that all mature sensible individuals possess a self system that enables them to exercise thoughts, feelings and actions. In Social Cognitive Theory the person is fully integrated with the environment within which he or she is learning. Bandura (1986) says that the environment, behavior and the person are inseparable from each other. It was Bandura (1986) who propounded that both outcome and self efficacy expectations work in tandem to motivate the individual in achieving his or her long-term goals and thereby successfully perform the life’s critical tasks. Again it was Bandura (1986) who visualized bidirectional interplay of cognitive, environment and behavioral factors that result in a “triadic reciprocality” model of interaction. So the Social Cognitive Career Theory Model connects the Bandura’s General Social Cognitive theory with the individuals career related choices, plans and explorations.

The theory of Social Cognitive Career was first developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett first in 1994, and then it was expanded upon by the same in the year 2000. The Theory has two “predictors”. First of these predictors is the self efficacy and the other is outcome expectations. Lent et al (1994) state that the word ‘career’ means ‘interests and choice processes’ that are relevant to both the academic and career choices. According to SCCT, personal inputs include gender, race, and proactive personality whereas contextual factors include social status, cultural, and organizational support for career development.
An extended version of the Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) proposed by Lent and Brown (2006) signify the relationship among contextual and individual factors towards career satisfaction. The figure below shows such a relationship:

Career satisfaction takes into account the individuals’ belief that career progress is in line with their own goals, values and preferences (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Here career satisfaction is related to subjective career success which is the individuals’ judgment of their career progression, accomplishments and anticipated outcomes (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). People with a proactive nature tend to see opportunities and follow them, persevering until they influence their environment. Proactive personalities tend to have a positive relationship with career satisfaction and career management behaviors (Seibert & Kramer, 2001).

Programs that aid in the competency development of employees also known as organizational career management or organizational sponsorship are the processes by which employers enhance their employees’ career success (Ng et al., 2005). Behaviors that enhance the employability are called career management behaviors. These help a person in their career goals (Crant, 2000). These behaviors include career exploration, development of KSA’s, networking and promoting one’s achievements.

The Relationship between variables
The relationships between Competency Development, Protean Career Attitude, Perceived Employability and Career Success are presented below. Through extensive literature review, the hypotheses are formulated. These are given as follows:

**Protean Career Attitude and Career Success**
The protean career attitude is described as a feeling of personal agency, which makes an individual manage his or her own career and this, in turn, should increase feelings of career success (De Vos & De Soens, 2008). Similarly De Vos and De Soens (2008) described career success as an outcome of PCA in a survey of 297 Belgian Employees. The findings reveal that after receiving career counseling, those individuals with a protean career attitude reported higher levels of career satisfaction. Therefore,

H1: Protean Career Attitude and Career Success are positively related to each other

**Competency development and Career Success**
When there is talk of boundaryless career (Ebby, Butts and Lockwood, 2003) suggest that career competencies predict career success. In a study on 458 alumni from a large Southeastern university in the USA the researchers found that the various competencies like know-how, know-whom, know-what relate to success. Employees need to create a success out of their careers and the only way to do it is by the incessant fulfilling, acquiring or creating work by maximum use of one’s competencies (Forrier & Sels, 2003). Therefore,

H2: Competency development and Career Success are positively related to each other

**Protean Career Attitude and Perceived Employability**
A protean career attitude helps in feeling of psychological success that adds to the employability (De Vos & De Soens, 2008). As an attitude it is said to lay the basis for the employability of a person. It includes developing career insight and taking initiatives to manage the career (De Vos & De Soens, 2008). The protean career attitude includes the self-directed,
value-driven behaviors (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Individuals with a more proactive personality are shown to depict a more protean attitude and are thus more employable (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Individuals who have had a more traditional approach to managing their careers tend to be more passive and look up to the organization for support (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Therefore,

**H3:** Protean Career Attitude is positively related to perceived employability

**Competency Development and Perceived Employability**
Competency development leads to employability (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). By making employees more employable has benefits for both the individual and the organization (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Considering the war of talent that is in full swing in the labor market, employees that are highly employable act as a bulwark against the ever changing environment (Forrier & Sels, 2003). Thus,

**H4:** Competency development is positively related to perceived employability.

**Perceived Employability and Career Success**
Perceived Employability has become important for individuals to achieve career success (Hall, 2002). Guo, Niu and Yang (2009) found in a study undertaken in Dalian and Shanghai on 10 foreign-owned enterprises. A total of 184 knowledge worker joined in the survey. The results showed a positive relationship between employability and career success. Yorke and Knight (2004) purport about the relationship between employability and career success as, a pattern of ‘achievements’ – ‘skills’, ‘understandings’ and ‘personal attributes’ – that contribute to graduates employment needs and career success. Therefore,

**H5:** Perceived Employability and Career Success are positively related to each other

**Protean Career attitude, Perceived Employability and Career Success**
Research on the relationship between protean career attitude and career success with employability as the mediating variable has been scarce so far. However several researchers have tried to make sense of the three variables and their inter-relationships (De Vos & De Soens, 2008). A protean career attitude is taken up as an important determinant to achieving career success (De Vos & De Soens, 2008). Moreover De Vos and De Soens (2008) in their article worked upon the effects of protean career attitude on career success with self-management as the mediating variable. Here self management can be taken up as employability, since it involves the development of ones competencies and being aware of the environment. Therefore,

**H6:** Perceived Employability mediates the relationship between protean career attitude and career success.

**Competency Development, Perceived Employability and Career Success**
There is empirical evidence to suggest that competency development is related to employability and employability in turn contributes to the career success of individuals (De Vos, De Hauw & Van Der Heijin, 2011). A survey was conducted by De Vos, De Hauw and Van Der Heijin (2011) on 561 employees in a prominent financial institution in Belgium. The results supported the fact that competency development initiatives has an effect on enhancing employability. Similarly employability positively influences the career success. Therefore the
variable employability mediates the relationship between competency development and career success. Thus,

**H7:** Perceived Employability mediates the relationship between Competency Development and Career Success

**Methodology**

**Design of the study**

Quantitative analysis is found most suitable for this study. The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between academicians’ protean career attitude, competency development, perceived employability and career success. A correlational approach is more appropriate for this study as the researcher wants to identify the important factors that are associated with the dependent variable. Besides, this study is conducted in a cross-sectional manner. It takes a snapshot of a population and allows for conclusions to be drawn about a phenomenon in a given time that is representative of the entire population. Moreover, a closed-ended questionnaire is used to gather data.

**Population and Sample**

The population for this study is the total private university academicians in Punjab. The unit of research in this study is the ‘university academician’. All academicians in the country are exposed to the same external and internal conditions. Internal conditions include company politics, performance management and supervisor subordinate relationships while external might include socio-cultural, economic and technological. Besides, all private universities in the country follow the same recruitment policies: an advertisement is placed in a newspaper or website, candidates are invited for interview, best get selected, trained by seasoned academicians and paid according to the scale developed by the entrepreneur. So it doesn’t make difference whether the sample is chosen from Punjab, Baluchistan, Sind or North West Frontier Province. According to the Data provided by the HEC (2011) the total number of Full and Part Time Faculty Members in the country working in private sector in the year 2003-04 was 6,180. Since the data is old and there is no current statistic showing the exact number of academicians in Punjab by 2012. Moreover according to HEC (2011) there are a total of 22 universities in Punjab in the private area. The study employs disproportionate random stratified sampling by dividing sample into three strataums according to ranks i.e., Professors, Associate Professor, Assistant Professors and Lecturers. According to Roscoe’s (1975) “rule of thumb”, a sample size greater than 30 and less than 500 is appropriate. So researcher chooses a sample size of 160. Moreover the researcher employs simple random sampling in picking exactly 16 universities; the number of academicians should exceed the number in the sample. Out of which the researcher chooses 40 lecturers, 40 assistant professors, 40 associate professors and 40 professors through disproportionate random stratified sampling. A set of 10 questionnaires will be given to each university.
### Data Collection

Contacts will be made with as much universities as possible so as to exceed the minimum 273 sample size. Upon agreement, a set of questionnaires will be delivered to the representative of each University. The representative will distribute the questionnaires to their full-time as well contractual employees. The representatives are asked to inform the respondents’ regarding the purpose of this study, importance of their participation, and the confidentiality of data; explaining to them that this study is being conducted for academic purposes only. The researcher then collects the questionnaires from the representative on an agreed date. A close-ended questionnaire is used to gather information about individuals’ protean career attitude, competency development, perceived employability, and career success. The subsequent sections explain the instruments employed for each of the variables.

### Career Success

Career success is related to the individual academician’ perceptions of career success and is measured using a Perceived Career Success Scale developed by Turban and Doherty (1994). The instrument has an excellent reliability i.e., $\alpha=0.87$ and measured on a 7 point Likert scale i.e., 7 = to a very great extent; 6 = to a great extent; 5 = to a fairly great extent; 4 = to a moderate extent; 3 = to a small extent; 2 = to a very small extent; 1 = not at all.

### Protean Career Attitude

Protean career attitude is measured using the Protean Career Attitude Scale developed by Briscoe and Hall (2006). It has two dimensions: (1) Self Directed Management (2) Value Drive. The former has a Cronbach’s alpha reliability of $\alpha =0.75$ and the later has reliability of $\alpha =0.70$.The first 8 items measure Self Directed Management while items 9-14 measure Value Drive. The protean career attitude is measured using Likert Type Scale with 1= “to little or no extent” and 5= “to a great extent”.

### Competency Development

Competency development of academicians is measured by scale used by De Vos, De Hauw and Van der Heijin (2011). It consists of two dimensions: (i) Employee participation and (ii) perceived support. There are a total of 24 questions and coefficient reliability is $\alpha =0.82$ which is quite good. The first 13 items measure employee participation while items from 14-24 measure perceived support. Competency Development is measured using Likert Type Scale with 1= “little or no extent” and 5= “a great extent”.

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**Table 1 Division of Academicians**

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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>No of academicians chosen</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professors</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate Professors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Professors</td>
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<td>Lecturers</td>
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</table>
Perceived Employability
The researcher uses perceived employability to measure the variable employability. The researcher uses a total of two dimensions of the scale and 11 questions. These dimensions include (i) Occupational Expertise and (ii) Personal Flexibility. Perceived employability has the individuals’ beliefs about the easiness of finding new employment. Perceived employability is measured using Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) scale which has reliability of $\alpha = 0.85$. Items 1-8 measure occupational expertise while items 9-11 measures personal flexibility. It is measured using Likert Type Scale with 1= “to little or no extent” and 5= “to a great extent”.

Questionnaire Design
Questionnaire is designed in English and is divided into 5 parts with a total of 60 questions. Each questionnaire is attached with a cover letter stating the purpose of study, confidentiality of data, anonymity of identity, and instructions on how to return the completed questionnaire to the researcher. Besides each section of the questionnaire has its own instruction.

Data Analysis
To analyze the data collected from the questionnaire survey, the “Statistical Package for Social Sciences” SPSS latest version 20.0 is used. While, for the purpose of data analysis and hypothesis testing, several statistical tests are conducted. Factor analysis is carried out to establish the interrelationships of variables that belong together. Factor analysis under the extraction method of principal axis factoring with the rotation method of varimax with Kaiser Normalization is used to analyze the scales of protean career attitude, competency development, perceived employability, and career success. Subsequently reliability analysis of each factor is computed. Descriptive statistics is conducted by calculating the mean scores and standard deviation of each dimension of the variables. In order to understand the direction of the relationship and amount of correlation between the dimensions of independent variables, mediating variable and dependent variable Pearson product Moment is used. Hierarchical regression analysis is used to examine the hypothesis presented in the study. Four sets of hierarchical regression analysis is carried out: (i) first set examines the relationship between the independent variables and mediating variable, (ii) second analyzes the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable, (iii) third investigates the relationship between the mediating variable and dependent variable and (iv) the last examines the mediating effect of perceived employability on independent variables and dependent variable.

Significance of the Study
This study hopes to provide significant theoretical and practical contributions in the area of employee’s career success. From a theoretical perspective, the study stresses upon several potential factors that might influence Pakistani academician’s career success. These factors are identified as protean career attitude, competency development and perceived employability which till date received no attention by previous researchers in Pakistan. As far as the practical benefits, it will help not only the academicians but also the Higher Education Commission to have a first hand look as to where does the academic body stand in terms of achieving success. The HEC can use the data in training academicians in areas of career
development and success. At the same time funds can be channeled through where needed most. It will also help the administrators of the universities to better develop training programmes fined tuned to the needs of the academicians. It will help the owners of private firms to make sure whether there funds are channeled through to priority areas and whether further investment is needed. It will inculcate awareness among the employees working in the private sector about the new economy so that they can take remedial actions though competency development and increase the employability.
REFERENCES


employees compared to permanent employees. Career Development International, 16(2), 140-160.


