

# Differences regarding job satisfaction and job involvement of psychologists with different dominant career anchors

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In order to contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction, job involvement and productivity, a match or fit should be established between the dominant career anchor associated with a specific occupation and that of the employee. A career anchor is an individual's set of self-perceived talents, abilities, motives, needs and values that form the nucleus of one's occupational self-concept. Psychologists have always been part of the service orientated careers and therefore one would expect that it is likely that their dominant career anchor would be service orientation. If this is the case, psychologists with service as their dominant career anchor are supposed to have greater job satisfaction and job involvement compared to those with different career anchors. However, according to literature, this assumption is not necessarily correct.

The primary goals of the current study were to determine whether in fact service is the dominant career anchor of psychologists in the Free State and whether there are significant differences regarding job satisfaction and job involvement between psychologists with and without service as their dominant career anchor. A third goal was to determine whether psychologists with different dominant career anchors differ significantly from one another regarding job satisfaction and job involvement.

Questionnaires measuring career orientations, job satisfaction and job involvement were sent to 165 of the 171 registered psychologists in the Free State region. Only 75 psychologists (45,5%) responded which exceeded the traditional return rate of 20 to 30%. Due to the small sample of respondents, a nonparametric statistical test, namely the Mann Whitney U test was conducted to determine possible differences.

An analysis of the data showed that 21 respondents had entrepreneurship as their dominant career orientation while 12 fell in the technical/functional, 12 in the challenging, 9 in the service and 8 in the autonomy categories of dominant career anchors. No significant differences regarding job satisfaction between psychologists with and without service as dominant career orientation could be determined. Both groups experienced a fairly high degree of job satisfaction and a higher level of intrinsic job satisfaction occurred compared to extrinsic job satisfaction. A significant difference between the two groups in terms of job involvement occurred. Psychologists with service as dominant career orientation showed a higher level of job involvement, although the degree of job involvement for both groups was fairly low. No significant differences regarding job satisfaction and job involvement among psychologists with different career orientations could be found.

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## Abstrak

Om hoër vlakke van werkstevredenheid, werksbetrokkenheid en produktiwiteit tot stand te bring is dit nodig dat 'n passing bewerkstellig word tussen die dominante loopbaananker wat met 'n bepaalde beroep geassosieer word en die dominante loopbaananker van die individu. 'n Loopbaananker is 'n individuele stel selfwaargenome talente, vermoëns, motiewe, behoeftes en waardes wat die kern van sy beroepselfkonsep vorm. Sielkundiges was altyd nog deel van diensgeoriënteerde beroepe en daarom kan verwag word dat hulle dominante loopbaananker waarskynlik diensoriëntasie sal wees. Indien dit die geval is, is sielkundiges met dienslewering as dominante loopbaananker veronderstel om meer werkstevredenheid te ervaar en werksbetrokkenheid te toon as diegene met andersoortige loopbaanankers. Volgens die literatuur is hierdie aanname egter nie noodwendig korrek nie.

Die primêre doelwitte van die huidige studie was om te bepaal of dienslewering wel sielkundiges in die Vrystaat se dominante loopbaananker is en of daar beduidende verskille ten opsigte van werkstevredenheid en werksbetrokkenheid tussen sielkundiges met en sonder dienslewering as dominante loopbaananker voorkom. 'n Derde doelwit was om te bepaal of sielkundiges met verskillende dominante loopbaanankers beduidend van mekaar verskil ten opsigte van werkstevredenheid en werksbetrokkenheid.

Vraelyste wat loopbaanoriëntasies, werkstevredenheid en werksbetrokkenheid meet is aan 165 van die 171 geregistreerde sielkundiges in die Vrystaatstreek gestuur. Alhoewel slegs 75 sielkundiges (45,5%) gereageer het, is die reaksiekoers nog beter as die tradisionele koers van 20 tot 30%. Vanweë die klein steekproef respondente is 'n nie-parametriese toets, naamlik die Mann Whitney U-toets gebruik om moontlike verskille te bepaal.

'n Ontleding van die data het getoon dat 21 respondente se dominante loopbaananker entrepreneurskap was, terwyl 12 respondente in die tegniese/funksionele, 12 in die uitdaging, 9 in die dienslewering en 8 in die outonomie kategorieë van dominante loopbaanankers geval het. Geen beduidende verskille ten opsigte van werkstevredenheid tussen

sielkundiges met en sonder dienslewering as dominante loopbaanoriëntasie kon vasgestel word nie. Beide groepe het 'n redelik hoër vlak van werkstevredenheid ervaar en 'n hoër vlak van intrinsieke werkstevredenheid vergeleke met ekstrinsieke werkstevredenheid het voorgekom. 'n Beduidende verskil tussen die twee groepe in terme van werksbetrokkenheid het voorgekom. Sielkundiges met dienslewering as dominante loopbaanoriëntasie het 'n hoër vlak van werksbetrokkenheid getoon, alhoewel die vlak van werksbetrokkenheid van beide groepe redelik laag was. Geen beduidende verskille ten opsigte van werkstevredenheid en werksbetrokkenheid tussen sielkundiges met verskillende dominante loopbaanoriëntasies kon geïdentifiseer word nie.

## Introduction

In order to ensure high levels of productivity in organisations, it is essential to create a favourable atmosphere that is conducive to enabling employees to willingly channel their energy and efforts in the direction of the achievement of organisational goals. Employees must get sufficient opportunities to realise their full potential and to experience job satisfaction and job involvement. To achieve this goal, according to Schein (1978; 1985) and Holland (1973) a match or fit must be created between the needs of the individual and the needs of the organisation. The responsibility of employees in this regard is to acquire a clear picture about their occupational self-concepts, which include their skills, abilities, interests, values and personality traits, as well as the requirements of specific jobs and occupations in terms of these attributes.

The concept of occupational self-concept relates to Schein's concept of a career anchor. According to Schein (1985) a career anchor is a set of self-perceived talents, abilities, motives, needs and values that form the nucleus of one's occupational self-concept, which develops after a few years of exposure to the real-life work situation. A career anchor is a person's self-image of what he or she excels in, wants, and values. It also provides reasons for choices, because a person is likely to try to fulfill his or her own self-image.

As employees gain more job experience,

they will gain more self-insight and become more able to make better career choices. These choices are guided by career anchors which represent the self-observed talents, abilities and values of the individual that guide, stabilise, integrate and constrain careers (Schein, 1987). Schein identified nine distinctive career anchors, namely technical/functional competence, managerial competence, autonomy/independence, geographical security, job security, service/dedication, pure challenge, entrepreneurship and life-style integration.

In order to contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction, job involvement, and productivity, a match or fit must be found between the career anchor of a specific occupation and that of the employee (Schein, 1978). Schein (1978, 1990) also suggests that individuals are supposed to have only one dominant career anchor. Psychologists have always been part of the service orientated careers (Schein, 1978) and therefore one would expect that it is likely that their dominant career anchor would be service. If this is the case, psychologists with service as their dominant career anchor are supposed to have greater job satisfaction and job involvement compared to those with different career anchors. However, according to literature this assumption is not necessarily correct. Boshoff, Kaplan and Kellerman (1988), Kaplan (1990) and James (1993) in studies conducted in South Africa have identified functional/technical competence as the dominant career orientation of psychologists, followed by autonomy and service.

The research goals of the present study therefore were to determine whether in fact service is the dominant career anchor of psychologists in the Free State and whether there are significant differences between the job satisfaction and job involvement of psychologists with and without service as their dominant career anchor. Additional goals include determining the general levels of job satisfaction and job involvement of psychologists in the Free State, and to determine potential differences regarding job satisfaction and job involvement among psychologists with different dominant career orientations

In the context of this study job satisfaction is defined as a positive

attitude towards one's work, which is global in nature, and which is the result of many specific work related experiences (Sharma & Bhaskar, 1991). Job involvement is regarded as the degree to which one psychologically identifies with one's job, a cognitive or belief state of psychological identification with a particular job (Kanungo, 1982).

## Method

### Subjects

According to the Professional Board for Psychology in South Africa the total number of professional psychologists in the Free State (one of 11 provinces in South Africa) is 171. Questionnaires were sent to 165 of these individuals as the addresses of 6 were not known. Only 75 psychologists (45.5%) responded which exceeds the traditional return rate of 20–30%. An analysis of the data showed that 21 respondents had entrepreneurship as their dominant career anchor, while 12 fell in the technical/functional, 12 in the challenge, 9 in the service and 8 in the autonomy categories of dominant career anchors. This finding is in contradiction with what Schein (1985) suggested as well as with the findings of Boshoff, Kaplan and Kellerman (1988), Kaplan (1990) and James (1993) who have identified functional/technical competence as the dominant career orientation, followed by autonomy and service.

Demographic variables on which information was gathered, included sex, age, workplace, and marital status. The sample consisted of 38 male and 24 female psychologists. Thirteen of the respondents were in the age category of 20–29 years, 20 between 30–39 years, 10 between 40–49 years, 15 between 50–59, 1 between 60–69 and 4 between 70–79 years. The average age of the respondents was 42 years with a standard deviation of 12.9. Forty six respondents were married, 10 unmarried, 4 divorced, and 2 living together with someone else. Thirteen respondents held managerial positions, 13 were university teachers, and 36 were private practitioners.

### Procedure

Sampling was done from a professional register obtained from the Professional Board for Psychology in South Africa. From this register 171 professional psychologists could be identified. The survey was carried out by mailing to each

member of the sample a range of three questionnaires, in English or Afrikaans, accompanied by a covering letter encouraging participation and ensuring confidentiality. The decision as to which language to regard as the home language of the person, was derived from the home language indicated in the professional register or from the language in which the person's address was recorded in the register. Questionnaires were excluded from the survey when any item was left unanswered.

Respondents were divided into two different groups. One group consisted of psychologists with service as dominant career orientation, while the other group displayed different dominant career orientations. A career orientation was regarded as a dominant career orientation when a respondent's score on that career orientation exceeded the career orientation with the second highest score with two or more points.

### Measuring instruments

The measuring instruments consisted of Schein's Career Orientation Questionnaire, the short form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and Kanungo's Job Involvement Scale.

The Career Orientations Inventory used in this study is a revision of previous questionnaires in which attempts were made to measure the career anchors of individuals engaged in a variety of occupations (De Long, 1982, 1984). Schein (1985) distinguished between a career anchor and a career orientation. A career anchor is that set of self-perceptions pertaining to one's motives and needs, talents and skills and personal values that one would not give up if one was forced to make a choice, while abilities and talents are not included in the concept of career orientation. Schein's Career Orientation Questionnaire makes provision for nine respective career orientations, namely technical/functional competence, managerial competence, autonomy/independence, job security, geographical security, service/dedication, pure challenge, entrepreneurship and life-style integration. The questionnaire consists of 41 items and respondents have to respond by using a 10-point scale. The reliability coefficient as determined by virtue of the test-retest procedure varies between 0.83 and 0.91 for the respective scales. In a South African study Kaplan

(1990) found that the scale was portable to South African samples, having high construct validity and high internal reliability.

Job satisfaction was determined by means of the short form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, developed by Weiss, Dawis, Lofquist and England (1967). The short form of the MSQ provides for three respective dimensions, namely general satisfaction, intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic satisfaction. The reliability coefficient for the general satisfaction scale varies between 0.87 to 0.92, for the intrinsic satisfaction scale between 0.84 to 0.91 and for the extrinsic satisfaction scale between 0.77 to 0.82. Kamfer, Venter and Boshoff (1998) identified a Cronbach Alpha-coefficient of 0.90 for general satisfaction, 0.75 for intrinsic satisfaction and 0.87 for extrinsic satisfaction.

Job involvement was measured by means of Kanungo's Job Involvement Scale (Kanungo, 1982). This questionnaire was developed as an improvement on the previously widely used job involvement measure of Lodahl and Kejner (1965). The scale as developed by Kanungo attempts to measure the job involvement construct, defined purely as psychological identification with one's work and is seen by Kanungo as a unidimensional 10-item scale with Cronbach Alpha reliabilities in different studies being between 0.83 and 0.87 (Kanungo, 1982 and Blau, 1985). Kanungo's measure is reported to be valid (Blau, 1985). In studies done by Boshoff and Hoole (1998) it was found that the Job Involvement Inventory designed by Kanungo was portable to the SA situation with high construct validity and high internal reliability. Similar results were found by Hoole and Boshoff (1998) in a later study. The 10 items are presented by using a 10-point scale with responses ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

## Results

One of the aims of the study was to determine possible differences regarding job satisfaction and job involvement between psychologists with service as dominant career orientation and psychologists who display different dominant career orientations. Due to the small sample of respondents, a nonparametric statistical test, namely the Mann Whitney U test was conducted to determine possible differences. The

**Table 1 Differences regarding job satisfaction and job involvement between psychologists with and without service as dominant career anchor**

Variable	Psychologists with service as dominant career orientation N = 9		Psychologists without service as dominant career orientation N = 10		U-value	p-value
	M	SD	M	SD		
General job satisfaction	79.78	7.51	82.30	7.17	37.00	0.51
Intrinsic job satisfaction	50.22	5.17	51.50	5.19	40.00	0.68
Extrinsic job satisfaction	20.89	3.95	21.40	3.62	42.00	0.80
Job involvement	51.33	12.90	38.60	12.79	21.00	0.04*

\* p < 0.05

\*\* p < 0.01

number of respondents with service as dominant career orientation was 9, while the number of respondents without service as dominant career orientation was 53. It was argued that the big difference between the two groups regarding the number of respondents could contaminate the outcome of the computations. To address this problem, a representative sample of 10 respondents was pro rata selected from the respective career orientation groups. The results regarding possible differences in terms of job satisfaction and job involvement are reflected in table 1.

From table 1 it is clear that there are no significant differences between the two groups regarding the respective dimensions of job satisfaction. It seems that both groups are experiencing a fairly high degree of job satisfaction and that a higher level of intrinsic job satisfaction occur compared to extrinsic job satisfaction. Boshoff, Kaplan and Kellerman (1988) attempted to predict job involvement and job satisfaction by means of career anchor scores and concluded that low correlations between career anchors and job satisfaction scores occur. Kaplan (1990) in his research regarding the relationship between career anchors, job involvement and job satisfaction of professional people, could find no significant correlation between career orientations and job satisfaction.

From table 1 it can also be seen that a significant difference (p<0.05) between the two groups in terms of job

involvement occurs. Psychologists with service as dominant career orientation shows a higher level of job involvement, although the degree of job involvement for both groups is fairly low. Van Wyk, Boshoff and Cilliers (2001) found career orientation to be a good predictor of job involvement. One would expect that high levels of job satisfaction would be accompanied by high levels of job involvement. According to research done by Boshoff, Kaplan and Kellerman (1988) regarding the prediction of job involvement and job satisfaction by means of career anchor scores, relatively low correlations occur between job involvement and job satisfaction. This finding is also echoed by research done by Kaplan (1990) in this regard.

Another objective of the study was to determine potential differences regarding job satisfaction and job involvement among psychologists with different dominant career orientations separate from the main objective. Five different groups of dominant career orientations were identified.

Due to the fact that more than two groups are involved in the comparison and that the number of respondents in each group are relatively small, a nonparametric test, namely the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was conducted. The results are reflected in table 2.

According to the contents of table 2 no significant differences regarding job satisfaction and job involvement among psychologists with different dominant career orientations occur.

## Discussion

According to the findings of this study, the dominant career anchor of psychologists in the Free State is entrepreneurship (34%), followed by technical/functional competence (19%), pure challenge (19%), service/dedication (15%) and autonomy (13%). In other studies conducted in South Africa (Boshoff, Kaplan and Kellerman, 1988; Kaplan, 1990; and James, 1993) functional/technical competence was identified as the dominant career orientation of psychologists, followed by autonomy and service. These findings contradict Schein's notion that there is only one ideal and preferred dominant career anchor associated with a specific occupational field. Further evidence to the contrary is the finding in this study that job satisfaction and job involvement are not related to career orientation as reflected by the non-existence of significant differences among the respective career orientation groups in terms of job satisfaction and job involvement.

The general, intrinsic and extrinsic level of job satisfaction of psychologists in the Free State is fairly high, while their job involvement is fairly low. Research done in South African showed no significant correlation between job satisfaction and job involvement.

No significant differences regarding general, intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction between psychologists with and without service as dominant career orientation could be found. Future and more comprehensive research could

**Table 2 Differences regarding job satisfaction and job involvement among psychologists with different dominant career anchors**

Variable	Technical/functional N = 12		Autonomy N = 8		Service N = 9		Challenge N = 12		Entrepreneurship N = 21		H <sub>i</sub> -value	p-value
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
General job satisfaction	77.42	9.26	73.62	12.43	79.78	7.51	76.33	10.08	77.43	11.58	1.12	0.89
Intrinsic job satisfaction	50.17	5.40	48.75	7.30	50.22	5.16	48.66	4.59	50.19	5.99	1.95	0.74
Extrinsic job satisfaction	19.33	4.09	18.50	4.66	20.89	3.95	19.42	3.68	19.61	5.09	1.51	0.83
Job involvement	46.83	12.30	42.75	11.03	51.33	12.90	49.16	8.32	41.57	8.75	8.17	0.09

\* p < 0.05

\*\* p < 0.01

focus on the relevance of the assumption that a fit between a required dominant career orientation associated with a specific career field and the dominant career orientation associated with a specific occupation is essential for job satisfaction and job involvement. The fact that a significant difference regarding job involvement between psychologists with and psychologists without service as a dominant career orientation was identified in this study, indicates some merit in the above-mentioned suggestion. What is alarming, however, is the fairly low level of job involvement displayed by both groups.

Due to the relatively small sample of respondents, especially in the category of service as dominant career orientation; the fairly low response rate and the fact that only psychologists in one province of South Africa were involved in the study, the results are not reflecting the national South African trend. A similar study has to be replicated involving a more representative sample of the population at large.

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