

# The impact of high-performance human resource practices on subjective career success: The mediating role of psychological capital and organizational commitment\*

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## Abstract

Utilizing insights from positive psychology, social exchange theory, and social cognitive career theory, this study aims to investigate the mediating role of psychological capital and organizational commitment in the relationship between high-performance human resource (HR) practices and subjective career success. Data were collected from a sample of 429 private sector employees working on European Union projects in Turkey. Hypotheses were tested using regression, correlation, and mediation analyses, as well as Sobel test statistics. Results indicate that high-performance HR practices, organizational commitment, and psychological capital positively influence subjective career success. Additionally, there is evidence that, unlike organizational commitment, psychological capital mediates the relationship between high-performance HR practices and subjective career success. Our study underscores the need for organizations to foster and develop psychological capital among their employees to maximize the effectiveness of HR practices in promoting subjective career success.

**Keywords:** subjective career success, high-performance HR practices, psychological capital, organizational commitment

**JEL Codes:** J50, J6, M12

## 1. Introduction

Naseer, Mahmood, Kanwal (2015) define a career as the cumulative employment experience of individuals, which significantly influences organizational success. Traditionally, organizations used objective data to evaluate employee performance (Arthur/Hall/Lawrence 1989). Nonetheless, with the rise of the positive psychology movement, researchers have increasingly emphasized the significance of individuals' subjective perceptions of their career success (Kuen/Nesbit/Ahlstrom 2013; Shockley/Ureksoy/Rodopman/Poteat/Dullaghan 2016; Zhou/Sun/Guan/Li/Pan 2012). These perceptions can vary depending on their

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personality traits, motivation levels, individual skills, and their relationship with the organization and the job (Ng/Feldman 2014).

Research indicates that career satisfaction, training and development opportunities, and personal success significantly influence both career success and organizational performance (Naseer/Mahmood/Kanwal 2015). High-performance human resource (HR) practices, considering their sociological and psychological influences, enhance job performance, well-being, and overall organizational performance (Gürbüz/Mert 2011; Mihail/Kloutsiniotis 2016; Sayilar 2004; Zhang/Morris 2014), which suggests that high-performance HR practices may play a role in subjective career success (SCS).

Since individual level factors may contribute to employees' perceptions, one possible variable related to SCS may be their psychological capital (PsyCap), which is believed to boost job satisfaction and desired outcomes (Luthans 2002a; Luthans/Youssef 2007). Building on the emerging positivity approach (Seligman 1998), scholars have developed the PsyCap construct, focusing on enhancing employees' strengths and psychological capacity to thrive (Luthans 2002a). In this study, we propose that an individual's PsyCap may positively influence their SCS. We anticipate that as an individual's self-efficacy and resilience increase, their positive resources will also increase, subsequently impacting their perception of career success. It is highly likely that employees who overcome obstacles, driven by their belief in their skills and resilience in the face of organizational challenges, will experience a higher sense of achievement.

SCS is also associated with life satisfaction (Abele/Hagmaier/Spurk 2015), general mental health (Hall 2002), and organizational commitment (OC) (Meyer/Stanley/Herscovitch/Topolnytsky 2002; Sen/Mert/Aydin 2017). Consequently, we posit that employees who find fulfilment in their job, express their ideas at work, and form emotional bonds with the organization are more likely to experience an enhanced sense of career success. Therefore, in this study, we aim to address the research call made by scholars (e. g., Cenciootti/Alessandri/Borgogni 2017; Naseer et al. 2015; Moon/Choi 2017) by investigating the mediating role of PsyCap and OC in the relationship between high-performance HR practices and SCS.

Research suggests that OC is related to high-performance HR practices (Qiao/Khilji/Wang 2009) and to employee career success (Bozionelos 2007; Meyer et al. 2002; Sen et al. 2017); high-performance HR practices predict career success (Maurer/Chapman 2013; Sundstrom/Lounsbury/Gibson/Huang 2016); and PsyCap influences goal attainment and success (Abele/Spurk 2009; Day/Allen 2004; Judge/Cable/Boudreau/Bretz 1995). Despite these studies, no study to date has sought to investigate the interplay between a contextual-level variable (i. e. high-performance HR practices) and individual-level factors (i. e. OC and PsyCap) to comprehensively explain the phenomena of SCS, which is the

gap our study aims to address. Furthermore, drawing on positive psychology, social exchange theory, and social cognitive career theory, our study employs a mediation model to investigate whether individual-level variables transmit the effect of contextual-level variables through other individual-level variables, which has not been examined in previous studies.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

As opposed to objective career success defined by an external measure, SCS refers to psychological career satisfaction at the individual level (Moon/Choi 2017). Shockley et al. (2016) identified eight subdimensions of SCS. Accordingly, (i) recognition refers to employees feeling respected by others in the organization and acknowledged for their efforts; (ii) meaningful work is when employees have a fulfilling and socially valued job that brings happiness to their personal life; (iii) influence refers to the feeling that one makes important contributions to the organization; (iv) quality work takes place when employees believe they produce outstanding outcomes for the organization; (v) authenticity is employees making their own career decisions and taking control of their career direction; (vi) personal life is having a career that does not invade personal life but brings life satisfaction; (vii) the growth and development dimension relates to the knowledge and skill learning opportunities offered by the organization; and (viii) satisfaction is the overall happiness employees feel about their career (Shockley et al. 2016).

Research provides evidence that SCS is shaped by organizational factors. For instance, job design is seen as a pivotal factor in producing high-quality work (Gibson/Ivancevich/Donnelly/Konopaske 2011; Hackman/Oldham 1975; Hackman/Oldham 1980). Additionally, providing extensive training opportunities for employees may positively impact their career success (Sundstrom et al. 2016). Supporting employees through effective career development practices is another crucial organizational factor in enhancing SCS (Maurer/Chapman 2013). Furthermore, studies show that HR practices have wide-ranging positive effects on various aspects of individuals' work lives. These effects encompass human capital development, emotional well-being, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and overall productivity (Andersen/Minbaeva 2013; Becker/Huselid 1996; Becker/Huselid 1998; Datta/Guthrie/Wright 2005; Gibson et al. 2011; Guthrie 2001; Huselid/Jackson/Schuler 1997; Martin-Alcazar/Romeo-Fernandez/Sanchez-Gardey 2005; Quick/Macik-Frey/Cooper 2007; Paauwe 2009). These influences, however, may be perceived differently by individuals, leading to variations in their SCS.

Although many researchers (e. g., Huselid 1995; Becker/Huselid 1996; Fan/Cui/Zhang/Zhu/Hartel/Nyland 2014; Gürbüz 2009; Zhang/Zhu/Dowling/Bartram 2013) use various expressions to explore the dimensions of high-performance

HR practices, in this study, we adopt the most recently studied dimensions of the high-performance HR practices construct (Kooij/Jansen/Dikkers/Lange 2010; Sun/Aryee/Law 2007): (i) extensive training, (ii) internal mobility, (iii) employment security, (iv) clear job description, (v) results-oriented appraisal, (vi) incentive reward, (vii) participation, and (viii) selective staffing. Based on our analysis of these dimensions and the existing research, we anticipate that high-performance HR practices, as an organizational-level variable, may be associated with an individual's SCS.

According to the positive psychology approach, issues pertaining to human well-being cannot be effectively addressed using negative approaches (Sheldon/King 2001). To improve the quality of life and to benefit from positivity one should concentrate on bolstering the positive qualities of individuals (Luthans 2002a; Luthans 2002b; Luthans/Youssef 2004; Seligman 1998; Seligman/Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Emerging from the principles of positive psychology, PsyCap is a positive, state-like capacity of individuals to grow and develop (Luthans/Youssef/Avolio 2007). It encompasses positive human attributes such as self-efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism: self-efficacy pertains to individuals' belief in their own capabilities; resilience is the ability to rebound from difficult life experiences; hope involves a belief in overcoming obstacles while striving to attain predetermined goals; and optimism is the perspective that sees difficulties as opportunities for growth (Luthans 2002a; Luthans/Youssef 2007). Given the principles of positive psychology and its emphasis on empowering employees, it is plausible that employees' PsyCap is related to their SCS.

Another individual factor that may shape employees' perception of career success is their OC, which represents a positive aspect of organizational life. OC is defined as the psychological attachment to the organization and the internalization of the organization's perspective (O'Reilly/Chatman 1986). Meyer and Allen (1987) have identified three dimensions of OC: affective commitment, characterized by employees' emotional attachment to the organization; continuance commitment, rooted in the feeling of commitment due to the costs of leaving the organization and the fear of potential losses; and normative commitment, defined as feeling morally obliged to remain in the organization, even when the employee may not be entirely satisfied with their current position (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Recognizing the potential relationship between organizational-individual level variables and SCS, our present study seeks to explore the relationship between high-performance HR practices and SCS. Moreover, we aim to investigate the mediating roles of PsyCap and OC within this relationship. The subsequent section outlines the formulation of our research model and hypotheses.

## 2.1. Research model and hypotheses

Datta et al. (2005) assert that high-performance HR practices enhance employee skills, job commitment, and productivity. According to social exchange theory, employees anticipate organizational outcomes in return for their performance, and similar to Vroom's expectancy model, they are motivated to exhibit higher performance to attain valued outcomes (Gibson et. al. 2011; Lent/Brown/ Hackett 1994). Therefore, when high-performance HR practices are well-designed and effectively managed, employees may develop stronger commitment to their organizations (Qiao/ Khilji/ Wang 2009), which, in turn, may lead to greater career success. This is consistent with the idea that employees who are emotionally attached to their organizations tend to experience more success in their careers (Bozionelos, 2007).

PsyCap is recognized as having a significant impact on an individual's capacity to achieve their goals and to succeed at work (Judge/Cable/Boudreau/Bretz 1995). Based on Bandura's social cognitive theory (1999), the social cognitive career theory aims to elucidate career-related phenomena, with a particular focus on individual career progression (Lent et al. 1994; Wood/Bandura 1989). This theory underscores the interplay of behaviour, cognition, and the environment, providing insights into the positive and negative psychological effects on one's career (Lent/Brown/Hackett 2000). It offers explanations for an individual's self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals (Lent et al. 1994). According to the social cognitive perspective, self-efficacy can predict an individual's performance levels, contingent on how they leverage their resources (Bandura, 1991; Bandura, 1997; Lent et al. 1994; Rasdi/Ismail/Uli/Noah 2009), and this self-efficacy can be strengthened by high-performance HR practices (Mackay 2015). Additional studies also indicate that high-performance HR practices bolster employees' psychological resources, and PsyCap positively influences their career success and career satisfaction (Abele/Spurk 2009; Day/Allen 2004).

### 2.1.1. High-performance HR practices and SCS

Today's employees evaluate their careers using both internal and external factors. Internally, they consider past achievements and future goals (Greenhaus/Parasuraman/Wormley 1990) while externally they focus on influences such as colleagues, leaders, and family (Clark/Arnold 2008). Through this evaluation, individuals estimate their proximity to their career objectives (Greenhaus et al. 1990; Ng/Foley/Ji/Loi 2005). Their SCS is also influenced by high-performance HR practices. Practices such as offering comprehensive training opportunities, development programs, and providing support to attain their career objectives have a positive impact (Chas/Fontela/Casal 2014; Chinyamurindi 2016; Ference/Stoner/Warren 1977; Maurer/Chapman 2013; Sundstrom et al. 2016).

However, certain factors within organizations may detract from employees' sense of career success. For instance, Çolakoğlu (2011) argues that job insecurity may limit individuals' career choices, thereby diminishing their SCS. Additionally, clearly defined tasks may boost job satisfaction (Humphrey/Nahrgang/Morgeson 2007), and performance measurements that emphasize results positively may influence career success (Heijden/Lange/Demerouti/Heijden 2009). An efficient performance management system is also highlighted as a means to bolster employee commitment (Nawaz/Pangil 2016). Moreover, a fair reward system is identified as a high-impact HR practice that positively affects employee motivation, job satisfaction (Chas et al. 2014), job performance, and affective commitment (Kooij et al. 2010). Ultimately, this contributes to employees' career success (Ference et al. 1977; Ng/Feldman 2014). Likewise, employee participation in decision-making processes may enhance employee satisfaction and their feelings of professional success (Maurer/Chapman 2013). Drawing from both theoretical insights and empirical evidence, we hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 1: The dimensions of high-performance HR practices have a positive impact on subjective career success.*

### *2.1.2. High-Performance HR practices, PsyCap, and SCS*

Research underscores the potential significance of high-performance HR practices as a key predictor of PsyCap (Luthans/Avey/Patera 2008). Given that high-performance HR practices may influence various aspects of employees' psychological well-being, such as resilience, creativity, psychological resources, and stress (Agarwal/Farndale 2017), it is reasonable to expect that these practices may result in more favourable career evaluations and an enhanced perception of achievement. Additionally, psychologically resilient employees are more satisfied with their jobs and more committed to their organizations since they are able to bounce back quickly from adversity and difficult circumstances (Çetin/Basım 2011). In line with these premises, we propose the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2: The dimensions of high-performance HR practices have a positive effect on PsyCap dimensions.*

PsyCap dimensions (self-efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism) exhibit a negative relationship with undesirable attitudes such as stress, cynicism, and the intention to quit (Avey/Reichard/Luthans/Mhatre 2011). Furthermore, there is a positive association between PsyCap and career success (Ngo et al. 2014). Employees who have clear goals and high self-efficacy are likely to enhance their performance (Stajkovic/Luthans 1998) and satisfaction, which is one of the sub-dimensions of SCS (Abele/Spurk 2009). Likewise, there is a positive correlation between employees' resilience, job satisfaction, and SCS (Cenciotti et al.

2017; Wei/Taormina 2014). Additionally, hopeful and optimistic employees tend to possess a strong belief in future success, leading to increased job satisfaction, happiness at work, and improved performance (Avey et al. 2011; Ngo et al. 2014; Youssef/Luthans 2007). These findings collectively suggest that SCS is significantly influenced by employees' positive psychological resources.

Research suggests that organizational variables interact with individual variables. For instance, individuals who lack adequate organizational resources may experience lower psychological resources (Cenciootti et al. 2017). Job design also plays a crucial role in influencing individuals' career success (Batt 2002; Hackman/Oldham 1980; Monks/Kelly/Conway/Flood 2013; Sun et al. 2007). Furthermore, a robust correlation exists between empowerment practices within the organization and job satisfaction (Gürbüz 2009), as well as opportunities for training and development, mobility, and employee motivation (Edwards 1979; Huselid 1995), and participation in decision-making and job satisfaction. Based on the research reviewed above, we predict:

*Hypothesis 3: The dimensions of PsyCap have a positive effect on SCS.*

*Hypothesis 4: High-performance HR practices are positively related to SCS and PsyCap.*

### *2.1.3. High-performance HR practices, OC, and SCS*

Studies indicate that OC is linked to various factors, including opportunities for internal and external mobility (Kalleberg/Mastekaasa 2011), incentive rewards (Batt 2002; Osterman 1994), and career success (Bozionelos, 2007; Poon 2004). In other studies, high-performance HR practices have been found to reinforce OC (Datta et al. 2005; Hsiao/Chen 2012; Rhoades/Eisenberger/Armel 2001), and are positively related to job satisfaction and career success (Hsiao/Chen 2012; Joo/Park 2010; Rhoades et al. 2001). Taken together, we hypothesize the followings:

*Hypothesis 5: The dimensions of high-performance HR practices have a positive impact on OC.*

*Hypothesis 6: The dimensions of OC have a positive effect on SCS.*

*Hypothesis 7: High-performance HR practices are positively related to OC, and SCS.*

### *2.1.4. PsyCap as a Mediator*

Based on the reviewed research, we contend that when employees hold a positive perception of high-performance HR practices, these practices may enhance and fortify their psychological resources. This, in turn, is likely to

have a positive impact on their SCS. Our theoretical framework suggests that when employees benefit from supportive training and development programs, receive fair recognition for their achievements, and are given diverse roles and responsibilities within the organization, they are more inclined to augment their psychological resources and develop a strong belief in their ability to overcome challenges in their roles. This, in turn, may lead to an enhancement of their SCS. Hence, we posit that employees whose PsyCap is strengthened through high-performance HR practices will perceive greater success in their careers. Put differently, we anticipate that PsyCap serves as a mediating mechanism between high-performance HR practices and SCS. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

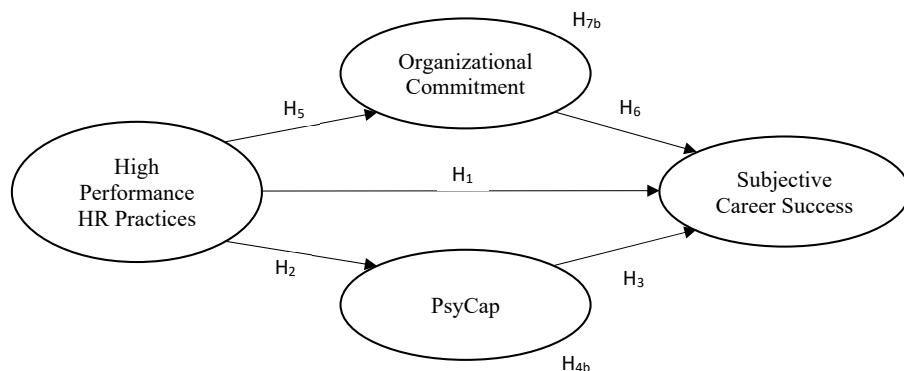
*Hypothesis 4b: PsyCap mediates the relationship between high-performance HR practices and SCS.*

#### *2.1.5. Organizational Commitment as a Mediator*

Research has demonstrated that OC plays a mediating role in the relationships between high-performance HR practices, job satisfaction and intention to leave (Clugston 2000; Williams/Hazer, 1986). We believe that the dimensions of SCS may be enhanced through the implementation of human resources practices. While high-performance HR practices are often perceived as adopting an objective stance, it is equally essential to emphasize that subjective and objective career success are interconnected and cannot be separated (Nicholson/Waal-Andrews 2005). Previous research indicates that when employees hold a positive perception of high-performance HR practices, they are more likely to demonstrate a stronger commitment to their organizations. Consequently, they may better leverage organizational resources and create opportunities for career advancement. In line with these arguments, we posit that the dimensions of SCS may be increased by high-performance HR practices, which however may not be accomplished without the existence of OC. Therefore, we argue that OC serves as a mediating mechanism through which high-performance HR practices exert their effects on SCS. Thus:

*Hypothesis 7b: Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between high-performance HR practices and SCS.*

Based on our hypotheses, we have formulated the following research model (see Figure 1), which integrates high-performance HR practices (as an organizational variable) and OC, PsyCap, and SCS (as individual variables).

**Figure 1. Hypothesized model**

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research design and procedures

We employed an empirical research design to investigate the influence of contextual-level variables, such as high-performance HR practices, on SCS. Furthermore, we investigated whether individual-level factors, namely OC and PsyCap, mediate this relationship. The data collected for the study were analysed using SPSS version 22.0 and AMOS version 22.0. Before conducting the analysis, the data were assessed for normality using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. Sampling adequacy was checked using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity. Descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients, and inter-item correlations were computed, and a confirmatory factor analysis was performed to assess the validity and internal consistency of each construct. Additionally, regression and mediation analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses.

In the related literature, researchers have employed various methods to investigate the effect of a mediator on the relationship between independent and dependent variables. These methods include regression analysis, structural equation models, Sobel test, and Hayes SPSS Process Macro (Abu-Bader/Jones 2021). In our current study, following the approach outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986), we utilized Sobel test statistics (Sobel 1982). These statistics were calculated using standard error and non-standardized coefficients obtained from the regression analysis, with a focus on those coefficients that were found to be statistically significant. Furthermore, as the data for this study were gathered through a single-source survey, we took measures to assess and address the potential common method bias. To do so, we followed Harman's one-factor test, as recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003). In this test, we compared the fit of a one-factor model with our hypothesized

four-factor model. The findings showed that the single-factor model explained only 21.824 % of the total variance, falling below the 50 % threshold. This implies that the presence of common method bias is unlikely to have had a significant influence on our results.

### 3.2. Measures

In this study, the questionnaire used for data collection employed 5-point Likert-type scales, with responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Totally Agree). To capture the perceived sense of career success, we utilized the SCS scale, which was originally developed by Shockley et al. (2015) and adapted into Turkish by Budak and Gürbüz (2017). The scale consists of eight dimensions and 24 items. To measure employees' OC, we utilized the OC scale, which consists of three dimensions and 25 items. This scale was originally developed by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) and later adapted into Turkish by Wasti (2000). For the assessment of employees' PsyCap, we employed a four-dimensional scale with a total of 24 items. This scale was developed by Luthans et al. (2007) and adapted into Turkish by Basım and Çetin (2011). Following Brislin et al.'s (1973) method, we translated and adopted the high-performance HR Practices scale developed by Sun et al. (2007) into Turkish for use in this study.

### 3.3. Sample

The target population for our study comprised employees working in businesses that offer management consulting services and are involved in technical support projects during the transition period to the European Union. The exact number of employees in this sector was not publicly available. Thus, we adopted a convenience sampling approach. We contacted ten businesses believed to have a well-established corporate structure and a strong history of project acquisition and implementation in the industry. Seven of these businesses agreed to participate in the research. The questionnaire was distributed to 823 potential participants across the selected businesses, and 444 of them responded. After addressing missing data and conducting endpoint analysis, we included data from 429 participants in the study. Among the participants, a majority were female (231 individuals, 54 %), and the majority held a bachelor's degree or higher (408 individuals, 95 %). Furthermore, 66 % (283 individuals) of the participants were married, and 58 % (248 individuals) had children.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive statistics

The majority of the participants who responded to the SCS scale indicated that they feel recognized within the organization. ( $M=4.57$ ,  $SD=0.52$ ), and

influential in the organization ( $M=3.88$ ,  $SD=0.86$ ), find their job meaningful ( $M=4.1$ ,  $SD=0.79$ ), believe they produce quality work ( $M=4.26$ ,  $SD=0.60$ ), can shape their own career ( $M=3.53$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ), lead a good personal life ( $M=3.64$ ,  $SD=0.94$ ), obtain and utilize growth and development opportunities ( $M=3.89$ ,  $SD=0.76$ ), and have career satisfaction ( $M=3.57$ ,  $SD=0.93$ ).

The scores for OC reveal that affective commitment has the highest mean value ( $M=3.81$ ,  $SD=0.87$ ). Continuance commitment has a mean value of 3.00 ( $SD=0.95$ ), and the normative commitment is 2.95 ( $SD=0.93$ ), which falls slightly below the average scale value of 3.00. The results suggest that most of the respondents have a strong affective attachment and loyalty to their organization.

The scores on the PsyCap scale indicate that they are above the average scale value of 3.00. The participants are relatively optimistic ( $M=3.65$ ,  $SD=0.85$ ), hopeful ( $M=4.16$ ,  $SD=0.55$ ), psychologically resilient ( $M=4.13$ ,  $SD=0.57$ ), and self-efficient ( $M=4.30$ ,  $SD=0.58$ ). The mean scores of the participants concerning each sub-dimension of high-performance HR practices are relatively higher than the average scale value of 3.00, but the results-oriented performance appraisal ( $M=3.11$ ,  $SD=1.13$ ) and incentive reward ( $M=3.15$ ,  $SD=1.28$ ) are relatively close to the average. Participants perceive that their organizations offer a relatively high level of job security ( $M=3.60$ ,  $SD=1.01$ ).

## *4.2. Findings on the reliability and validity of the scales*

### *SCS Scale*

The scale's KMO sample fit test yielded a result of 0.881, and the Bartlett test result was significant ( $p=0.00$ ). Four questions were removed from the Turkish version of the scale, resulting in a 20-item scale. The Cronbach's Alpha for this revised 20-item scale was calculated as 0.906, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability. The confirmatory factor analysis for the 20-item scale, while preserving the 8-factor construct, indicated a good fit ( $\chi^2=334.977$ ;  $df=142$ ;  $\chi^2/df=2.359$ ;  $RMSEA=0.056$ ;  $TLI=0.946$ ;  $CFI=0.96$ ). The scale explained 64.469 % of the total variance.

### *OC Scale*

KMO sample fit result of the scale was calculated as 0.928 and the Bartlett test statistics were significant ( $p=0.00$ ). One question was removed from the Turkish version of the scale, resulting in an improved Cronbach's Alpha of 0.927. The item analysis revealed that the reliability of the affective commitment dimension increased from 0.735 to 0.886. This increase contributed to a rise in the overall Cronbach alpha score, which went from 0.913 to 0.927. In the confirmatory factor analysis, while maintaining the 3-factor structure, the results showed a

good fit for the model ( $\chi^2=735.681$ ;  $df= 236$ ;  $\chi^2/df=3.117$ ; RMSEA=0.007; TLI=0.899; CFI=0.913). The scale explained 59.351 % of the total variance.

### *PsyCap Scale*

The scale's KMO sample fit test resulted in a value of 0.920, and the Bartlett test was significant ( $p=0.00$ ). The reliability of the 18-item scale was calculated as 0.915, demonstrating strong internal consistency. After conducting item analysis, the reliability score for the optimism dimension increased from 0.580 to 0.637, further enhancing the scale's overall reliability. In the confirmatory factor analysis, the results indicated a good fit for the model ( $\chi^2=390.838$ ;  $df=123$ ;  $\chi^2/df=3.178$ ; RMSEA=0.071; TLI=0.908; CFI=0.926). The scale explained 53.243 % of the total variance.

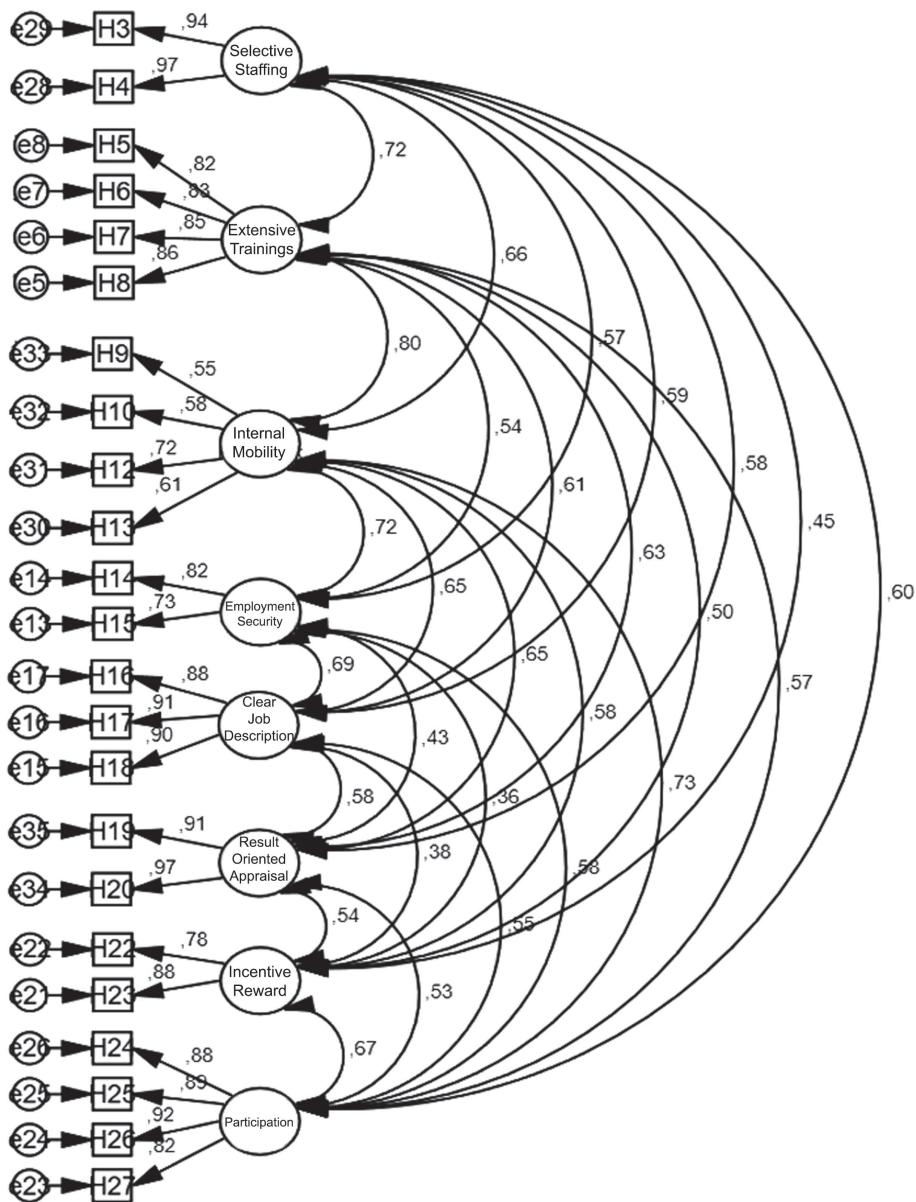
### *High Performance HR Practices Scale*

In the pilot study of the translated scale, it was observed that the total correlation coefficient for item 11 of the internal mobility dimension was only 0.014, which is lower than the acceptable lower limit of 0.20. As a result, item 11 was removed from the scale. In the 26-item version of the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha for the selective staffing dimension was increased to 0.955 by eliminating 2 items. Additionally, the Cronbach's Alpha for the result-oriented performance evaluations dimension was raised to 0.941 by removing 1 item. Consequently, the reliability coefficient of the 23-item total scale in its final version was calculated as 0.947.

In the current study, the original 8-factor construct from Sun et al. (2007) was retained, and a structural equation model was established. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using the maximum likelihood estimation method (see Figure 2). The scale's  $\chi^2/df$  value was calculated as 2.769 ( $\chi^2=550.971$  and  $df=199$ ). The root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.064, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) value was 0.944, and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value was 0.956. The scale explained 53.976 % of the total variance.

As depicted in Table 1, OC exhibits a negative relationship with the education level of the respondents. This suggests that higher levels of education may have a negative impact on OC. Overall, there is either no significant correlation between the demographic variables and the dependent and independent variables, or the correlation is very low.

Figure 2: Structural Equation Model of High-performance HR Practices



**Table 1: Correlations Between Demographic, Dependent, and Independent Variables**

|   | 1        | 2        | 3        | 4      | 5        | 6        | 7        | 8        | 9         | 10        | 11       | 12     | 13   |
|---|----------|----------|----------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------|------|
| 1. SCS                                      | 1        |          |          |        |          |          |          |          |           |           |          |        |      |
| 2. PsyCap                                   | 0.658*** | 1        |          |        |          |          |          |          |           |           |          |        |      |
| 3. OC                                       | 0.215*** | 0.169*** | 1        |        |          |          |          |          |           |           |          |        |      |
| 4. High-performance HR Practices            | 0.395**  | 0.276*** | 0.434*** | 1      |          |          |          |          |           |           |          |        |      |
| 5. Employment in Current Institution (year) | 0.034    | 0.068    | 0.279*** | -0.047 | 1        |          |          |          |           |           |          |        |      |
| 6. Work Experience (year)                   | 0.095*   | 0.159*** | 0.154**  | -0.055 | 0.604*** | 1        |          |          |           |           |          |        |      |
| 7. Age (year)                               | 0.095    | 0.126**  | 0.124*   | -0.062 | 0.534*** | 0.878**  | 1        |          |           |           |          |        |      |
| 8. Number of Children                       | 0.08     | 0.085    | 0.153**  | 0.039  | 0.427*** | 0.615**  | 0.573*** | 1        |           |           |          |        |      |
| 9. Position                                 |          | 0.226*** | 0.212*** | 0.041  | 0.105*   | 0.275*** | 0.410*** | 0.360*** | 0.277***  | 1         |          |        |      |
| 10. Education Level                         | 0.064    | 0.042    | -0.219** | -0.081 | -0.069   | 0.002    | 0.046    | -0.025   | -0.190**  | 1         |          |        |      |
| 11. Sex                                     | -0.032   | -0.037   | 0.003    | -0.072 | -0.072   | -0.072   | -0.152** | -0.138** | -0.243*** | -0.205*** | 0.087    | 1      |      |
| 12. Residence Inhabited the Longest         | 0.063    | 0.037    | 0.05     | 0.05   | 0.067    | 0.08     | 0.078    | 0.09     | 0.092     | 0.034     | 0.031    | 1      |      |
| 13. Income Level                            | 0.08     | 0.034    | -0.104   | -0.008 | -0.105*  | -0.059   | -0.066   | -0.025   | -0.012    | 0.096*    | 0.136**  | 0.108* | 1    |
| 14. Marital Status                          | 0.140**  | 0.135**  | 0.121*   | 0.054  | 0.303*** | 0.408*** | 0.358*** | 0.539*** | 0.278***  | 0.058     | -0.201** | 0.016  | 0.06 |

N=429 \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001 (two-tail)

#### 4.2.1. Findings of Direct Effects

The regression results examining the effects of independent variables on SCS reveal that the model accounts for 51 % of the variance in SCS ( $F=30.641$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Several variables significantly predict SCS, including optimism ( $B=1.248$ ;  $t=4.545$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), hope ( $B=1.076$ ;  $t=4.422$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), self-efficacy ( $B=0.553$ ;  $t=3.333$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), affective commitment ( $B=0.170$ ;  $t=2.005$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), continuance commitment ( $B=-0.154$ ;  $t=-2.131$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and employee

participation in decision making ( $B=0.310$ ;  $t=2.378$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The model predicting the effects of high-performance HR practices on SCS is also statistically significant, explaining 15.4 % of the variance ( $F=12.723$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Among all the dimensions of high-performance HR practices, only clear job descriptions ( $B=0.418$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and employees' participation ( $B=0.751$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) positively predict SCS, thus partially supporting *H1*.

The model predicting the influence of high-performance HR practices on PsyCap is statistically significant, explaining 10.2 % of the variance ( $F=7.064$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Among the dimensions of high-performance HR practices, PsyCap is positively predicted by extensive training ( $B=0.375$ ;  $t=2.663$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and participation ( $B=0.509$ ;  $t=3.523$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). However, it is negatively predicted by result-oriented performance appraisal ( $B=-0.616$ ;  $t=-2.428$ ;  $p<0.05$ .), which partially supports *H2*.

The model hypothesizing the effects of PsyCap on SCS is explains 46.6 % of the variance ( $F=94.437$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). SCS is only predicted by optimism ( $B=1.739$ ;  $t=6.437$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), hope ( $B=1.327$ ;  $t=5.500$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), and self-efficacy ( $B=0.612$ ;  $t=3.606$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), which partially supports *H3*.

The model proposing the impacts of high-performance HR practices on OC explains 22.2 % of the variance ( $F=16.305$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). However, only selective staffing ( $B=1.228$ ;  $t=2.500$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and employment security ( $B=2.054$ ;  $t=4.202$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) dimensions predict OC, which partially supports *H5*.

The model predicting the impact of OC on SCS explains 23.5 % of the variance ( $F=44.922$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). SCS is negatively predicted by continuance commitment ( $B=-0.455$ ;  $t=5.394$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), positively predicted by affective commitment ( $B=0.782$ ;  $t=8.595$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), and positively predicted by normative commitment ( $B=0.139$ ;  $t=1.974$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), which supports *H6*.

#### 4.2.2. Findings of Mediating Effects

To test the mediating effects of OC and PsyCap on the influence of high-performance HR practices in SCS, the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) was employed. The Sobel test assesses whether the introduction of a mediating variable in the regression model diminishes the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. If the test statistics yield significant results, it suggests either total or partial mediation (Abu-Bader/Jones, 2021).

As suggested by Judd and Kenny (1981), we followed a series of steps to assess mediation. We initially assessed whether the independent variable (high-performance HR practices) significantly affects the mediator (PsyCap). Following this, we examined whether high-performance HR practices significantly influences SCS independently of PsyCap. Subsequently, we explored whether PsyCap has a significant impact on SCS. Lastly, we checked whether the effect of high-perfor-

mance HR Practices on SCS decreases when PsyCap is included in the model. If a decrease in the model's effect was observed, we computed the Sobel test statistic value using the formula based on the Z score (Sobel, 1982). These steps were repeated to investigate the mediating role of OC.

$$z\text{-value} = a^*b/\text{SQRT}(b^2*sa^2 + a^2*sb^2)$$

The first regression analysis was conducted to explore the mediation effect of PsyCap on the relationship between high-performance HR practices and SCS. The results indicate a significant relationship between high-performance HR practices, OC, and PsyCap, thus supporting *H4*. The stepwise regression analysis of two models (see Table 2) is also significant, with the independent variables predicting the dependent variables (Model-1 Adjusted  $R^2=7,4\%$ ; Model-2 Adjusted  $R^2=48\%$ ).

**Table 2: Regression Results**

| Model              | Dependent Variable | Independent Variable          | Beta  | Standard Error | T         | Adjusted $R^2$ | F          |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------|----------------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| 1                  | PsyCap             | High Performance HR Practices | 0.145 | 0.024          | 5.941***  | 7.4 %          | 35.297***  |
| 2                  | SCS                | High Performance HR Practices | 0.143 | 0.022          | 6.374***  | 48 %           | 198.257*** |
|                    |                    | PsyCap                        | 0.697 | 0.043          | 16.369*** |                |            |
| N=429; *** p<0.001 |                    |                               |       |                |           |                |            |

In the regression results, the impact of high-performance HR practices on SCS diminishes when PsyCap is included in the model. Subsequently, we computed the Sobel test statistic value, and the results (see Table 3) are significant (Sobel test value = 5.661;  $p < 0.001$ ), providing support for *H4b*. Therefore, PsyCap acts as a mediator in the relationship between high-performance HR practices and SCS.

**Table 3: Sobel test results for the mediation effect of PsyCap**

|    | Values |            | Test Statistics | Std. Error | p           |
|----|--------|------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|
| a  | 0.145  | Sobel Test | 5.661           | 0.018      | 0.000000020 |
| b  | 0.697  |            |                 |            |             |
| sa | 0.024  |            |                 |            |             |
| sb | 0.043  |            |                 |            |             |

The second regression analysis was conducted to investigate the mediation effect of OC on the relationship between high-performance HR practices and SCS. The correlation coefficients were found to be significant (see Table 4), providing

support for  $H7$ . To analyse Sobel's Test, we conducted regression analyses for two models (see Table 4). In Model-1, high-performance HR practices predict OC ( $B=0.448$ ;  $t=9.961$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), and the regression model explains 18.7 % of the variance ( $F=99.224$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). In Model-2, the regression model is significant ( $F=40.151$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), and SCS is predicted by high-performance HR practices ( $B=0.230$ ;  $t=7.545$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), but not by OC.

**Table 4: Regression Results**

| Model | Dependent Variable | Independent Variable          | Beta  | Standard Error | T        | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | F         |
|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 1     | OC                 | High Performance HR Practices | 0.448 | 0.045          | 9.961*** | 18.7 %                  | 99.224*** |
| 2     | SCS                | High Performance HR Practices | 0.230 | 0.30           | 7.545*** | 15.5 %                  | 40.151*** |
|       |                    | OC                            | 0.032 | 0.030          | 1.079    |                         |           |

N=429; \*\*\*  $p<0.001$

The Sobel's test results (see Table 5) are found insignificant (Sobel test value=1.061;  $p=0.289$ , standard error=0.013;  $p=0.289$ , and do not support  $H7b$ . Consequently, the findings do not provide evidence for the mediation effect of OC on the relationship between high-performance HR practices and SCS.

**Table 5: Sobel Test results for the mediation effect of OC**

|    | Values |            | Test Statistics | Std. Error | p     |
|----|--------|------------|-----------------|------------|-------|
| a  | 0.448  | Sobel Test | 1.061           | 0.013      | 0.289 |
| b  | 0.032  |            |                 |            |       |
| Sa | 0.045  |            |                 |            |       |
| Sb | 0.030  |            |                 |            |       |

## 5. Discussion

Our present study demonstrates that high-performance HR practices have a positive effect on SCS. Specifically, consistent with previous research (Naseer et al., 2015; Joo/Park, 2010), employee participation in decision-making plays a significant role in predicting their SCS. Additionally, in line with studies conducted by Ng and Feldman (2014), Cohen (2014), Hackman and Oldham (1980), and Humphrey et al. (2007), our findings suggest that well-defined job descriptions and accurately delineated positions are also vital factors that may enhance employees' SCS.

Consistent with our predictions, PsyCap has both a direct and indirect positive impact on SCS. Specifically, high-performance HR practices contribute to the

enhancement of employees' PsyCap and psychological resources, which in turn lead to an increase in their SCS. It is noteworthy that a significant portion of our participants have held managerial positions during their careers, indicating they possess resources to further develop their career skills. Furthermore, the characteristics of the industry where our research was conducted indicate the presence of various opportunities for professional growth, given the adaptability of the workforce to variable work schedules. This adaptability likely provides access to a wide range of opportunities.

Youssef and Luthans (2007) have previously emphasized the significant roles of hope and optimism in influencing changes in individuals' sense of career satisfaction. Our study reaffirms these findings by showing that employees' SCS is indeed positively affected by their levels of optimism, self-efficacy, and hope. However, our research does not provide significant evidence for the mediating role of OC in the relationship between high-performance HR practices and SCS. Interestingly, our research findings suggest that employees' commitment to the organization may improve as a result of high-performance HR practices, in line with the conclusions drawn by Qiao et al. (2009).

Notably, 56 % of the participants in our study hold managerial positions, and they often manage multiple projects simultaneously within a single organization. This unique characteristic of our research sample may help explain the lack of significant results regarding OC. Additionally, while Nawaz and Pangil (2016) argue that performance management may have a positive impact on OC, our current study does not provide clear evidence to support this claim.

In our study, we observe a moderately positive correlation between OC and SCS, which aligns with the findings of Moon and Choi (2017). However, our results diverge from the conclusions drawn by Otluoğlu (2014) as they indicate a significant relationship between career satisfaction and certain demographic factors such as age, gender, and seniority. Furthermore, our research reveals that the recognition dimension of SCS is predicted by selective staffing, extensive training, employment security, results-oriented performance appraisals, and participation in decision-making. An interesting observation is that selective staffing has a negative impact on perceived career success. This suggests that the work of newcomers may not be readily acknowledged by others, possibly due to the organization's emphasis on evaluating long-term employee potential and the extensive staffing process. Additionally, it hints that an excessive number of performance criteria may lead to decreased SCS.

The concept of meaningful work in our study is predicted by clear job descriptions and participation. This implies that for work to be meaningful, employees should have a clear and accurate understanding of their job duties. Our findings further support the notion that when employees are involved in organizational decisions and have control over the outcomes of their work, they tend to experi-

ence a greater sense of purpose in their professional lives. Moreover, our results suggest that employees' perception of having various career paths through internal mobility plays a pivotal role in their career satisfaction. Similarly, when employees are actively engaged in critical decisions, have the power to initiate changes, and can voice their recommendations for work improvements, they tend to experience higher levels of career satisfaction. The findings also indicate that training programs designed to develop employees can be a crucial tool for them to achieve positive outcomes and fulfil their career aspirations. Overall, our research demonstrates that effective high-performance HR practices significantly influence employees' perceived career success.

Enhancing employees' positive psychological resources can potentially lead to higher levels of SCS. For instance, individuals who possess high levels of hope and optimism are better equipped to navigate challenges in their careers by exploring new approaches, considering alternative options, and ultimately achieving their career goals. In essence, employees with a strong PsyCap are more likely to have confidence in their ability to take the required steps for career progression and maintain a positive and hopeful outlook regarding their capacity to execute strategies for career advancement.

In line with our expectations, high-performance HR practices have a positive impact on enhancing employees' PsyCap, which, in turn, contributes to their SCS. We also hypothesized that OC would serve as a mediator in this relationship. However, despite both high-performance HR practices and OC having positive influences on SCS, the mediating role of OC is not supported. Our study reveals the positive effects of high-performance HR practices on OC and, subsequently, on perceived career success. This suggests that even if employees are not emotionally attached to the organization, they may still experience a high level of SCS. Conversely, individuals who are attached to the organization for various reasons might not feel successful in their subjective career assessments.

## 6. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in the integration of organizational-level factors and individual-level factors to elucidate the phenomena of subjective career success. It demonstrates how an organization's performance management system can enhance employees' psychological resources, subsequently improving their sense of performance and success. Additionally, our study contributes to the social exchange theory by affirming that positive perceptions of social-exchange relationships with the organization, facilitated by high-performance HR practices, lead employees to reciprocate with higher commitment. Furthermore, drawing upon the social cognitive career theory, we extend current research on SCS. Our study highlights how positive psycholog-

ical factors and organizational commitment towards the organization jointly shape employees' perceptions of career success.

In terms of practical implications, our research was conducted in management consulting businesses engaged in technical support projects during Turkey's transition period to the European Union. These projects have entailed significant investments in recent years, and the implications extend beyond the organizations themselves. The SCS of the employees in this context can potentially have positive effects on Turkey's overall outputs and success. Furthermore, our study has contributed to the enhanced reliability and validity of OC and PsyCap scales, which can benefit future research and applications in various contexts.

Additionally, our findings have practical implications for employers aiming to secure long-term cooperation and commitment from their employees. To foster a more committed and satisfied workforce, organizations should ensure that employees possess a clear comprehension of their roles and responsibilities within the company, provide opportunities for employees to manage themselves and take ownership of work processes, and establish a workplace culture that promotes long-term relationships with the company.

Finally, our study highlights the importance of employment security in positively influencing both OC and SCS. This finding aligns with Pfeffer's (1998) analysis of job security, suggesting that organizations can achieve higher overall performance in the long term by fostering long-term cooperation with their employees. To establish and maintain such cooperation, organizations should focus on selective recruitment and effective employee socialization processes. HR practitioners can play a pivotal role in guiding employees toward successful careers by investing significant efforts in staff selection. By selecting employees who are a good fit for the organization and its long-term goals, HR professionals can contribute to higher levels of OC and SCS among the workforce. This, in turn, may lead to improved organizational performance and long-term success.

## 7. Limitations and Area of Future Research Studies

Our cross-sectional study has certain limitations, primarily related to the selected sample and sector. Therefore, similar studies should be conducted in various sectors to enhance the generalizability of the findings. It is worth noting that our sample is heavily weighted towards managerial employees, which may not accurately represent all employees within organizations. Thus, the study could benefit from expansion to include non-managerial employees.

Additionally, our assessment of high-performance HR practices relied on scores obtained from scale responses. To gain a deeper understanding, future research could employ a longitudinal qualitative approach to investigate aspects such as performance management and staff selection methods in organizations. This

approach could also delve into practices like training and development programs and analyse how their effects on SCS change over time. While some studies in the high-performance HR practices literature have suggested gender-related differences, our current investigation does not provide conclusive results in this regard. Therefore, conducting additional research with a focus on both male and female employees may be advantageous to enhance the validity and reliability of findings. Moreover, in light of our findings indicating that the mediating role of OC in the relationship between high-performance HR practices and SCS is insignificant, future research may explore the potential role of professional commitment and professional identification in this context.

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