

The Relationship Between New Career Approach Attitudes and Subjective Career Success Perceptions of Typical and Flexible Employees

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Abstract

This study centers on the examination of three distinct concepts, which have undergone adaptation from conventional paradigms to contemporary perspectives. The primary focus of this research lies in the comparative analysis of full-time and part-time employees concerning their assimilation of these new conceptual frameworks. This study aims to compare and examine the relationships between typical employees and flexible workers and examine the boundaryless career attitude, protean career attitude, subjective career success perceptions, and their sub-dimensions. The research was conducted using 895 questionnaires (412 flexible-time employees, 483 full-time employees) administered to individuals working in private employment agencies. T-test analysis was employed to test the research hypotheses and identify differences. According to the results, flexible workers have higher boundaryless career attitudes, psychological mobility, physical mobility, and value-driven career attitudes compared to typical workers. Regarding subjective career success, typical workers have higher perceptions of recognition, meaningful work, influence, quality

work, authenticity, growth and development, and satisfaction than flexible-time workers. In general, it was found that flexible workers have higher boundaryless career attitudes, while typical workers have higher perceptions of subjective career success.

Keywords: Flexible Working, Career Development, Boundaryless Career, Protean Career, Subjective Career Success

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Until recently, the traditional career development model, which emphasized full-time, long-term organizational employment and a solid commitment to one's employing organization, had been the foundation of much of the career research (Valcour & Ladge, 2008). However, significant changes have occurred within the context of the knowledge-driven economy. These changes, driven by globalization, rapid technological advancements, organizational downsizing, relentless competitive pressures, and the democratization of working life (Gratton & Ghoshal, 2003), have reshaped the world where

careers unfold (Enache et al., 2011). Factors such as reduced job security (Cappelli, 1999), increased workforce diversity, outsourcing practices, widespread adoption of flexible and temporary employment (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009), and a growing emphasis on leveraging intellectual capabilities to create and sustain competitive advantage (Powell & Snellman, 2004) have all contributed to these transformative shifts. The current academic landscape prominently highlights the evolving nature of careers, with contemporary scholarly articles consistently delving into this paradigm shift. Indeed, careers have changed substantially in recent years, assuming a more intricate and unpredictable trajectory (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017).

The significant changes in today's work environment, such as rapid technological advancements, flattened hierarchies, and financial collapses leading to decreased job stability, have reduced individuals' opportunities to pursue linear upward movements with preplanned careers within a single organization over time. This phenomenon has brought about a perspective on careers characterized by the shifting of career responsibilities from organizations to employees (Volmer & Spurk, 2011).

The changes like work have also impacted the concept of individual careers in the contemporary business world (Greenhaus et al., 2000). With the increased flexibility in work arrangements, the boundaries of career fields are also expanding (Arthur et al., 1999). Employment contracts have also evolved in the context of career change in rapidly transforming economies. Individuals have managed their careers and assumed responsibility for them (Rousseau, 1995; Arthur et al., 1999). In contemporary work environments, employees are increasingly expected to manage and direct their careers (Volmer & Spurk, 2011).

In the context of reduced job stability and frequently changing work environments, it has become increasingly challenging for employees to pursue a linear, upward trajectory within a single organization throughout their careers. Gradually, employees face an increased need to take responsibility for their careers (Volmer & Spurk, 2011). Individuals' thoughts about their careers also need to adapt to the changing paradigm of careers.

Many researchers in the field of careers argue that boundaryless careers are inevitable and need to be embraced. In this regard, project-based work has been designed since the 1980s. Transactional relationships have replaced organizational commitment, and boundaryless careers have become dominant (Banai & Harry, 2004). Many

definitions also include an unquestioned comparison with traditional careers. For instance, considering today's more dynamic and unstable corporate environments, individuals no longer expect lifelong employment at a single organization or a steady climb on the corporate ladder (Eby et al., 2003). Contemporary research (Kost et al., 2020; Duggan et al., 2022; Kundi et al., 2021) also indicates the proliferation of boundaryless careers across sectors.

Studies examining the motivators of boundarylessness have found that when engaging in boundary-spanning mobility, these are generally determined by organizational or labor market factors rather than career orientation (Forrier et al., 2009). While some criticisms are related to the systemic nature of the new career, there are also various types of discussions. In the early 1990s, prevailing thoughts revolved around the nature of careers. Radical changes in organizational redesign by practitioners and rethinking by scholars have initiated debates about the changing nature of work in a changing economy (Tams & Arthur, 2007).

The notion of boundaryless careers, initially proposed by Arthur & Rousseau (1996), may be considered a misnomer as systems inherently depend on boundaries to delineate their identities (Sullivan, 1999). In practical terms, the concept of a boundaryless career does not imply an utterly limitless career

trajectory but rather signifies a career that transcends traditional boundaries (Inkson, 2006; Zeitz et al., 2009). Roper et al. (2010), critically examining the literature, argue that boundaryless careers' discourse aligns with broader neoliberal narratives, emphasizing individual responsibility instead of social or organizational responsibility for economic and career outcomes. Issues such as the risks in global financial markets, changes in the delivery of social services, and the depletion of natural resources increase the vulnerability of careers embedded in established economic production modes (Tams & Arthur, 2007).

The globalization of economies, rapid technological advancements, and increased competition have not only brought changes to organizational work environments but also made careers less predictable, directing employees to take more responsibility for their career development (Guan et al., 2019; Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020). Organizational hierarchies are becoming flatter and upward advancement opportunities are decreasing (Hall & Associates (1996). As a result, self-directed and individually customized career paths have gained importance and become more suitable for successful career development (Wiernik & Wille, 2018).

The concept of career success in the literature can be traced back to the early theoretical distinctions made by Hughes (1958). Efforts have been

consistently made to distinguish between objective and subjective career success. At the core of Hughes's framework, objective career success encompasses universally accepted and measurable values such as promotions, status, and salary. On the other hand, subjective career success is shaped by the individual's self-reactions to their increasing career experiences (Lee et al., 2006).

Career success is also one of the concepts that undergo this transformation. More specifically, it is uncertain how individual evaluations of career success have changed over time, why subjective evaluations have developed over time, and in which aspects (Shockley et al., 2016). Examining how subjective perceptions of career success change over time is essential (Hupkens et al., 2021). Recently, scholars have argued that in the current society where boundaryless careers have become a prevalent phenomenon, the subjective indicators of career success have gained greater importance (Arthur et al., 2005; Heslin, 2005; Ng & Feldman, 2014).

Objective career success (e.g., promotions and salary increases) may appeal to some organizations (Smale et al., 2019). Many employees have adopted a boundaryless or self-directed multidimensional mindset and no longer expect traditional lifetime employment or advancement within a single organization (Hirschi & Koen, 2021; Kundi et al., 2021). As a result, changes

in organizational structure and employee attitudes emphasize the significant role of subjective career success (Shockley et al., 2016). In other words, the criteria for subjective career success have transformed into understanding what constitutes personally meaningful careers and how individuals experience their career success (Ng & Feldman, 2014). These structural and attitudinal changes together highlight the role of subjective career success, where non-objective factors play an increasingly significant role in defining career success (Arthur et al., 2005; Sullivan, 1999; Wang et al., 2012).

Career success is an essential area in human resource management research. Moreover, career success has become more significant, especially in boundaryless organizations that offer numerous career opportunities in today's context. Employees no longer rely solely on objective measures such as wages, job titles, and authority to assess their career success through established indices. Subjective career success is significant for employees (Dai & Song, 2016). When conducting an analysis of all articles published between 2012 and 2016 in four prominent career journals (Career Development International, Career Development Quarterly, Journal of Career Assessment, and Journal of Career Development), it was observed that the most researched topic by authors was career success (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017).

Many employees have now embraced a self-directed, multidimensional, or boundaryless mindset, which no longer envisions lifetime, upwardly mobile career trajectories within a single organization. These structural and attitudinal changes together highlight the role of subjective career success, where non-objective factors play an increasingly significant role in defining career success (Arthur et al., 2005; Sullivan, 1999; Wang et al., 2012).

Forty-six percent of studies on subjective career success have measured career satisfaction, 24% have measured overall success perceptions, and 4% have measured both simultaneously. In other words, subjective career perception has predominantly been investigated as a unidimensional concept with a very high percentage. Career satisfaction is an essential dimension of subjective career success, yet it alone leaves the concept incomplete (Heslin, 2003). Recently, multidimensional scales have been developed to measure subjective career success. One of these scales measures subjective career success in three dimensions (Pan & Zhou, 2015), while another measures it in eight dimensions (Shockley et al., 2016). A newly developed scale with a multidimensional and multicultural structure (Briscoe et al., 2021) has also been employed. In this study, subjective career success has also been treated as a multidimensional concept.

Literature Review

The proliferation of atypical work arrangements has led to a transformation in career approaches. Physical mobility (hierarchical or lateral) can be functionalized with various career transitions between jobs, organizations, professions, industries, geographic locations, and employment patterns (e.g., unemployment, part-time employment, full-time employment, self-employment) (Guan et al., 2019). Flexible work and new career approaches have become mutually compatible. Many researchers have explored the boundaryless and protean career as new career approaches or symbolized them as the representations of new career approaches in their studies (Aydın Göktepe, 2016; Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012; Çakmak, 2011; Gubler et al., 2014; Park, 2010; Redondo et al., 2021; Seçer & Çinar, 2011; Segers et al., 2008; Verbruggen, 2012).

The assumption that an individual's career will unfold within a single organization, which is the essence of the traditional career, is no longer feasible in today's career structure. This situation has arisen due to the increasing prevalence of flexible work arrangements, leading to decreased employment guarantees. In this context, flexible work cannot offer a linear career path. The nature of upward career advancement, commonly known as the traditional career, can also

be altered due to flexible work. As a result, employees have realized the necessity of managing their careers when organizations no longer provide employment guarantees (King, 2000).

The changing forms of work, flexibility in the career domain, employability, and networking have caused the traditional understanding of a career to change meaning, such as permanence, continuity, and stability. As the prevalence of flexible work arrangements is based on familiar work standards in the traditional career definition, it indicates the need for new career approaches to replace traditional career understanding (Marler et al., 2002). Another factor in transforming traditional to modern career approaches is the diversity of employment relationships. In traditional employment, individuals with fixed-term contracts were committed to their organizations, while in a boundaryless career, employability within the mobility framework has replaced this commitment with flexibility (Lo Presti et al., 2018). With the disappearance of this organizational commitment, individuals have become more attached to their careers rather than the organization.

Environmental changes, such as increasing globalization, rapid technological advancements, growing workforce diversity, and the rising utilization of outsourcing and part-time and temporary employment, have transformed traditional organizational structures, employer-employee

relationships, and labor dynamics (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Market forces, globalization, outsourcing, and organizational restructuring, among other emerging trends, are challenging the upward career mobility perspective (Inkson et al., 2012). Boundaryless careers have become prevalent in organizations that rely on the external labor market for staffing at all employee levels, employ seasonal or temporary workers, and transition to contract-based employment as part of their organizational downsizing strategy (Lazarova & Taylor, 2009).

Long-term, full-time employment is no longer the norm in businesses (Biemann et al., 2012), and the prevalence of alternative work arrangements (part-time work, fixed-term contracts) has significantly increased, particularly in the last decade (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Alongside the structural changes in the labor market, attitudes have shifted among many employees who seek greater control over their career progressions (Direnzo & Greenhaus, 2011). Such employees strive to achieve benefits and satisfaction according to their standards rather than relying on their employers for these outcomes (Weng & McElroy, 2012).

Businesses must adapt to various changes, such as economic, technological, and structural fluctuations, as well as increased competition in markets. These changes have brought about transformations in employment and production methods in the business world. Both employees

and employers find flexible work practices inevitable. Nowadays, more than merely ensuring production quality and employers' satisfaction with employees is required. For employees, achieving work-life balance, one of the most essential components of subjective career success, has gained significant importance. Implementing flexible work arrangements in businesses has become necessary for establishing work-life balance. In many countries that have made progress in economic and social domains, flexibility practices have been recognized as a significant factor in balancing work and personal life. In the business world, lean production, flexible production, and post-Fordist production concepts are generally expressed to meet the changing demands of customers and markets with zero stock, zero defects, and high-quality production through flexible work methods (Kavi, 1999). The same applies to personnel management in reducing idle capacity.

There are three distinct dimensions of career success among part-time working professionals and managers. These are characterized as: "having a life beyond work (work-life balance)," "performing well (influence)," and "engaging in challenging tasks and continuing professional growth and development (growth and development)." These conceptualizations of career success demonstrate that organizations have much to learn about the changing priorities and

values of their professional and managerial employees. Moreover, to remain competitive in attracting and retaining the best knowledge workers, leaders should be aware that they must redesign their reward systems and career paths (Lee et al., 2006).

The questions to be answered in this study are as follows:

- Do the new career approaches attitudes differ based on the flexible work and typical work variables?
- Does the perception of subjective career success differ based on the flexible work and typical work variables?

Hypotheses Development

The research was conducted within the framework of three main hypotheses. Hypotheses H1, H1a, and H1b were formulated for the comparison of flexible and typical workers regarding the boundaryless career and its sub-dimensions, namely the boundaryless mindset and organizational mobility attitude. Hypotheses H2, H2a, and H2b were established for the comparison of flexible and typical workers regarding the protean career and its sub-dimensions, namely self-directed and value-driven attitude. Hypotheses H3, H3a, H3b, H3c, H3d, H3e, H3f, H3g, and H3h were formulated for the comparison of flexible and typical workers regarding

the subjective career and its sub-dimensions, namely recognition, meaningful work, influence, quality work, authenticity, personal life, growth and development, and satisfaction perceptions.

The boundaryless career attitude may vary depending on whether individuals work in the public or private sector (Volmer & Spurk, 2011). This sectoral distinction may also differ based on the type of employment. In other words, the perception of boundaryless career may vary between typical and flexible-time employees.

It is known that approximately 97% of flexible workers have a fragmented career trajectory (Biemann et al., 2012). In this case, flexible working enables compatibility with changes in organizations and sectors. The boundaryless career attitude of flexible workers may be more fragmented and characterized by higher mobility. In this context, one of the research hypotheses is formulated as follows.

H1: There is a Significant Difference in the Boundaryless Career Attitudes Between Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

A person may display variable attitudes within themselves. On the other hand, they may not prefer boundaryless mobility, meaning they may rely on a single organization for career advancement. In this case, there are numerous possibilities. Is it possible for high status related to

social identity in organizations to deter mobility? (Briscoe et al., 2006). To further clarify the question, is it possible for a typical employee to consider more mobility than a flexible-time employee?

Flexible-time employees spend less time in the workplace and engage in more extra-organizational roles than typical employees (Katz & Kahn, 1978). At the same time, flexible employees are believed to have a different reference network than typical employees (Feldman, 1990; Miller & Terborg, 1979). As flexible employees have more diverse work locations, contacts, projects, and interactions with various organizations and managers compared to typical employees, the hypothesis is formulated as follows.

H1a: There is a Significant Difference in Psychological Mobility Attitudes Between Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

The study conducted by Segers et al. (2008) found that status, salary, job security, and advancement desire were the factors influencing physical mobility. In this regard, typical employees may have a lower physical mobility attitude than flexible-time employees because status, job title, traditional career progression, job security, and salary are perceived more positively for typical employees than flexible-time employees.

Previous research has shown a positive relationship between physical mobility and salary increase for typical employees (Amuedo-Dorantes & Serrano-Padial, 2007). From another perspective, if the salary remains the same or the conditions need to be improved in the new location for typical employees, it may decrease their motivation for mobility. Another study revealed that flexible employees experienced continuity issues in communication and workplace relationships with the organization (Feldman, 1995; Godfrey, 1980). Decreased communication and interaction for flexible employees could increase their physical mobility attitude.

Regarding job security, it was found that typical employees are more satisfied than flexible-time employees (Still, 1983). Thus, flexible-time employees may have higher perceptions of physical mobility than typical employees. On the other hand, a specific employment contract's binding nature may hinder typical employees' physical mobility. In this context, one of the hypotheses of the research can be formulated as follows.

H1b: There is a Significant Difference in the Physical Mobility Attitudes Between Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

Individuals with a high protean career attitude are continuous learners who are always open to new possibilities

and perceive their careers as a series of learning experiences (Hall, 2002, 2004). Individuals with a high protean career attitude are eager to enhance their talents and knowledge. These desires can allow individuals to engage in different jobs and transitions between various roles (Öngel et al., 2021). Flexible-time employees often perform tasks of different nature, continuously learn new things, and lack a standardized work routine, which can further enhance their knowledge, skills and abilities. This situation may lead to a higher prevalence of a protean career attitude among flexible-time employees.

Research suggests that a protean career positively affects individuals in situations with limited employment security regarding coping with job loss, job search, and reemployment (Briscoe et al., 2012; Waters et al., 2014). Since flexible employees generally have lower job security than typical employees, a positive impact on their protean career perceptions could align with a higher protean career attitude.

However, protean career attitudes may only be equally prevalent among some employee groups (Inkson et al., 2010). Research on flexible-time MBA students indicates that individuals' beliefs in their skills and abilities have a stronger influence on their career direction than external factors (Özbilgin et al., 2005). Hence, flexible employees may have higher protean career attitudes than typical employees.

In this context, one of the hypotheses of the research can be formulated as follows.

H2: There is a Significant Difference in the Protean Career Attitudes Between Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

Individuals who self-direct their careers imply taking responsibility for their careers themselves rather than relying on the organization for career guidance (Çakmak-Otluoğlu & Bulut, 2020). Flexible employees, often hired during busy times or by other companies, may have lower chances of the organization planning their careers compared to typical employees. Consequently, they may need to plan their career paths differently.

A protean career, which involves individuals self-directing their careers, can significantly motivate individuals to rely less on recruiters, career counselors, and employment agencies (private employment agencies) and instead take charge of their direction (Waters et al., 2014). Self-directed work in uncertain and turbulent environments enhances individuals' skills (Briscoe et al., 2012). Such uncertainty and lack of a fixed work schedule are present in flexible employment. In one qualitative study, flexible workers expressed clear statements such as "Career development is not really up to the organization. If I really want to progress, I have to take responsibility for my career advancement" (Sargent & Domberger, 2007). The self-

directed career attitude of flexible employees appears to be higher than that of typical employees. In this context, one of the hypotheses of the research can be formulated as follows.

H2a: There is a Significant Difference in the Self-Directed Career Attitudes Between Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

Being value-driven means making career decisions closely aligned with one's values rather than being guided by objective rewards or others' values (Briscoe et al., 2006). Although values themselves are seen as enduring beliefs (Rokeach, 1973), research has shown that the degree to which we express our values through our words, actions, and behaviors can vary over time and situations (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Situations where career guidance might vary based on these values can differ concerning occupation, income status, and position within the organization (Kale & Özer, 2012). In this context, one of the hypotheses of the research can be formulated as follows.

H2b: There is a Significant Difference in the Value-Driven Career Attitudes Between Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

Individuals with a high preference for mobility may be less inclined to invest in their internal career development as they prioritize limited time with their current employer (De

Feyer et al., 2001). Generally, research indicates negative relationships between flexible working arrangements and career opportunities (McDonald et al., 2008). Studies have shown that individuals with longer organizational tenure and less organizational mobility tend to report higher career satisfaction (Igbaria & Guimaraes, 1993). Similarly, findings from other studies reveal that certain forms of psychological and physical mobility may adversely affect individuals' career success (Verbruggen, 2012).

These results suggest that extreme career restraint (i.e., either inactivity or excessive mobility) can be detrimental to individuals' career success, while moderate and voluntary changes may increase it. Individuals with moderate career mobility are more likely to access new opportunities than those who do not (Guan et al., 2019). A strong correlation exists between participation in flexible work arrangements and the slowing down or halting of existing career paths (McDonald et al., 2008).

It is hypothesized that flexible employees, who often need to work with more than one employer, may have lower levels of physical and psychological mobility compared to typical employees with more stable perceptions of career success. In this context, one of the research hypotheses can be stated as follows.

H3: There is a Significant Difference Between the Subjective Career Success Perceptions of Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

The concept of partial inclusion proposes that individuals are partially or incompletely integrated into the functioning of social systems. Flexible-time employees are less integrated into the organization's social system than typical employees (Eberhardt & Shani, 1984). Additionally, it is predicted that typical employees may experience higher levels of situations such as fame, status, reputation, and recognition in their workplaces or sectors compared to flexible-time employees. On the other hand, since flexible-time employees are assigned tasks or duties with lower levels of significance compared to typical employees, there is a higher probability that their perceptions of recognition may be lower. In this context, one of the research hypotheses can be stated as follows.

H3a: There is a Significant Difference Between the Recognition Perceptions of Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

Businesses have high expectations that flexible-time employees can perform highly repetitive tasks during the busiest hours of the workday. This perception may lead to the belief that flexible-time employees' efforts and contributions differ

from typical employees (Conway & Briner, 2002). In qualitative research, flexible employees have critically questioned the meaningfulness of their work, stating reasons such as "I started questioning why I pursued this type of job experience and what it meant" and "I was involuntarily pushed into such jobs" (Sargent & Domberger, 2007).

One study found that over 78% of typical graduate employees were either very satisfied or satisfied with their jobs, while only 47.7% of flexible employees expressed satisfaction (Denton, 1987 as cited in Levanoni & Sales, 1990). Additionally, several studies comparing job satisfaction between flexible and typical employees have reported lower job satisfaction levels among flexible employees than typical employees (Wotruba, 1990, as cited in Karatuna & Basol, 2017). A study conducted in Turkey aligned with the literature, where flexible employees reported significantly higher scores for statements like "I would consider changing my employment status if given the opportunity" and expressed less satisfaction with their employment status. A significant portion of the flexible sales employees in the study indicated that they would be more satisfied with their jobs if they transitioned to typical employment. The study's findings suggest that flexible sales employees are less satisfied with their jobs than typical sales employees, primarily due to their lower incomes and dissatisfaction with their employment status

(Karatuna & Basol, 2017). In this context, one of the research hypotheses can be stated as follows.

H3b: There is a Significant Difference Between Typical and Flexible-Time Employees' Perceived Meaning of Work

Flexible-time employees lack sufficient knowledge about organizational issues and policies to express negative attitudes due to their lack of participation in organizational functionality (Eberhardt & Shani, 1984). As they usually do not hold any title or position, flexible employees cannot influence the functioning of the jobs. According to management science, decision-making is a responsibility delegated through authority transfer to managers. Managers also have an impact on achieving the overall objectives of the organization based on their expertise areas. However, flexible employees typically perform tasks that do not require expertise and can be done by anyone, resulting in limited impact on the organization. In this context, one of the research hypotheses can be stated as follows.

H3c: There is a Significant Difference Between the Perceived Influence of Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

Typical employees perceive their jobs more comprehensively than flexible-

time employees (Levanoni & Sales, 1990). Flexible work experiences may not influence professional development among young individuals, as most of these jobs are low-level, unpretentious, entry-level sales, service, or manual labor positions that pay only about 40% of the average (Stern & Nakata, 1989). Flexible-time employees working in these secondary jobs may have lower ratings regarding job performance, earnings, sense of accomplishment, ability to produce quality work, and perceptions than typical employees. In this context, one of the research hypotheses can be stated as follows.

H3d: There is a Significant Difference Between Typical and Flexible-Time Employees' Perceived Quality of Work

Some individuals may find the key focal points of career success early in their careers and adhere to them throughout their careers. For example, young entrepreneurs born into a family with an entrepreneurial attitude and mindset toward their career as self-employed may promote autonomy throughout their careers (Hupkens et al., 2021). At the organizational level, flexible-time employees have been found to be treated differently by the organization in terms of the scope of work, benefits, task variety, autonomy, and advancement opportunities (Dubinsky & Skinner, 1984; Feldman, 1995; Levanoni & Sales, 1990). Flexible-time employees'

perceptions of autonomy and authenticity may be lower than typical employees. In this context, one of the research hypotheses can be stated as follows.

H3e: There is a Significant Difference Between the Perceived Authenticity of Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

In a study, flexible work was found to be particularly important for families with young children and showed a mitigating effect on work-life balance. Flexible work is preferred to manage both childcare and livelihood (Parlak, 2016). Typical employees can achieve work-life balance when they can adjust their non-work commitments in advance and as desired, meaning that their lives are not solely centered around work. Individuals can manage their work-life balance effectively by notifying in advance of the days when they will not work during flexible working hours (Berkmen, 2018).

According to a recent qualitative study, "Now, career success is part of the bigger picture of life, so life is a big umbrella, and then career and career success are just part of it. When you were younger, you didn't think about the whole picture. You think about titles, money, and cars, but now my family comes first" (Hupkens et al., 2021). Perceptions of work-life balance may vary depending on factors such as age, marital status, and the number of children, in addition to the interplay between typical and flexible work

arrangements. In this context, one of the research hypotheses can be stated as follows.

H3f: There is a Significant Difference in the Personal Life Perceptions Between Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

Regarding the function of career communities in enhancing subjective career success, Parker et al. (2004) argue that career communities provide support to their members in increasing subjective career success through motivations of understanding why they work together, developing expertise related to the job, and building relationships with those who possess knowledge about succeeding in their careers (Park, 2010). Traditional career planning involves providing necessary training and development practices to meet future personnel demands for typical employees. Additionally, since typical employees work continuously, their perceptions of self-development may differ from those of flexible employees who work part-time. In this context, one of the research hypotheses can be stated as follows.

H3g: There is a Significant Difference in the Perceptions of Growth and Development Between Typical and Flexible-Time Employees

Flexible workers can encompass unskilled laborers, such as those working in challenging

employment conditions and precarious positions, and highly skilled professionals like architects and software engineers. The career satisfaction of flexible workers, whether skilled or unskilled, can vary significantly. Flexible workers entering the labor force with low skills tend to have fragmented and limited careers (Ashford et al., 2018; Kost et al., 2020).

Physical mobility has a negative impact on career satisfaction. This negative impact is caused by factors such as low wages, temporary job contracts, and external resourcing (Karakuş, 2017). These factors that decrease career satisfaction are inherent characteristics of flexible work. Additionally, flexible employees often engage in secondary jobs. Since most of them are in the early stages of their careers, their career satisfaction may be lower than that of typical employees. In this context, one of the research hypotheses can be stated as follows:

H3h: There is a Significant Difference in the Perceptions of Career Satisfaction Between Typical and Flexible-Time employees

Methodology

Participants and Procedure

The research was conducted on typical and flexible-time employees working under private employment agencies

in Istanbul province. In this context, private employment agencies operating in Istanbul were identified, and the purpose of the research was explained to the managers and project coordinators. Research questionnaires were administered online. Out of 908 returned questionnaires, 13 were incomplete and were excluded from the study. The research analyses were conducted with the remaining 895 questionnaires (There were 412 flexible workers, 226 males and 186 females, and 483 typical workers, 165 males and 318 females). The authors obtained a letter of approval from the university ethics committee for research permission.

Measures

Protean Career Attitude

We used the Turkish version (Çakmak, 2011) of the Protean Career Attitude Scale (Briscoe et al., 2006). It includes two dimensions: self-directed career management (eight items, e.g., “I am responsible for my success or failure in my career”) and value-driven orientation (six items; e.g., “In the past, I have sided with my own values when the company has asked me to do something I do not agree with”). Responses were collected via a five-point rating scale ranging from (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree). Cronbach’s α was 0.77.

Boundaryless Career Attitude

We used the Turkish version (Çakmak, 2011) of the Boundaryless Career Attitude Scale (Briscoe et al., 2006). It includes two dimensions: Boundaryless Mindset Scale (eight items; e.g., “I enjoy job assignments that require me to work outside of the organization”) and Organizational Mobility Preference (five items; e.g., “If my organization provided lifetime employment, I would never desire to seek work in other organizations”). Responses were collected via a five-point rating scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree). Cronbach’s α was 0.73.

Subjective Career Success

We used the Turkish version (Budak & Gürbüz, 2017) of the Subjective Career Success Scale (Shockley et al., 2016). It includes eight dimensions: recognition, meaningful work, influence, quality work, authenticity, personal life, growth and development, and satisfaction. Each sub-dimension consists of three items. Sample item: “My career is personally satisfying”. Responses were collected via a five-point rating scale ranging from (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree). Sample item is: I have found my career quite interesting. Cronbach’s α was 0.92.

Additionally, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the

underlying factor structure of the scale. The Direct Oblimin rotation method was used for all the scales. The results of KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure) and sig (significance) for the Protean career attitudes scale were KMO=.805, sig=0.000, variance=44.45% for boundaryless career attitudes scale was KMO=.821, sig=0.000, variance=49.93%, which showed that the correlation matrixes were suitable for factor analysis.

The suitability of the subjective career success scale for factor analysis was assessed based on the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, which yielded a value of 0.911 and a statistically significant p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). Subsequently, a factor analysis was conducted, revealing an eight-factor structure for the scale. The cumulative percentage of explained variance accounted for by the scale was 76.66%. Examination of the factor loadings of the individual items indicated a range of values between 0.578 and 0.910.

Results

Relationship Between New Career and Subjective Career Success

According to Table 1, there is a positive relationship between type of employment and boundaryless career (r=0.313, p<0.01), psychological mobility (r=0.180, p<0.01), physical mobility (r=0.270, p<0.01), and

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviations and Bivariate Correlations Among all Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Type of Employment**	1.46	0.49	-						
BCO	3.24	0.49	0.31*	-					
Boundaryless Mindset	3.82	0.61	0.18*	0.76*	-				
Organizational Mobility	2.32	0.83	0.27*	0.64*	-0.00	-			
PCO	3.85	0.47	0.06	0.17*	0.26*	-0.04	-		
Self-Directed	4.00	0.55	-0.09	0.06	0.24*	-0.19*	0.80*	-	
Values-Driven	3.67	0.63	0.19*	0.21*	0.17*	0.12*	0.80*	0.30*	-
SCS	3.83	0.56	-0.25	-0.10*	0.23*	-0.44*	0.28*	0.39*	0.05

Notes: *p < 0.01; ** Included Flexible-time employee/Typical employee

Table 2

Differences and Hypothesis Testing of Typical and Flexible Employees in Boundaryless Career

	Group	n	M	SD	t	p (sig.)	H	Hypothesis Test
Boundaryless Career	Typical	483	3.10	0.50	-9.966	0.000	H1	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.41	0.42				
Boundaryless Mindset	Typical	483	3.72	0.61	-5.460	0.000	H1a	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.94	0.58				
Organizational Mobility	Typical	483	2.12	0.84	-8.485	0.000	H1b	Supported
	Flexible	413	2.57	0.74				

values-driven career (r=0.197, p<0.01). On the other hand, there is a negative relationship between type of employment and subjective career success (r=-0.250, p<0.01). There is a positive relationship between boundaryless career and protean career (r=0.173,

p<0.01), while there is a negative relationship between subjective career success and protean career (r=-0.109, p<0.01).

Table 3

Differences and Hypothesis Testing of Typical and Flexible Employees in Protean Career

	Group	n	M	SD	t	p (sig.)	H	Hypothesis Test
Protean Career	Typical	483	3.82	0.47	-1.909	0.057	H2	Not supported
	Flexible	413	3.88	0.48				
Self-Directed	Typical	483	4.05	0.53	2.798	0.005	H2a	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.94	0.56				
Value-Driven	Typical	483	3.56	0.66	-6.058	0.000	H2b	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.81	0.58				

Table 4

Differences and Hypothesis Testing of Typical and Flexible Employees in Subjective Career

	Group	n	M	SD	t	p (sig.)	H	Hypothesis Test
Subjective career	Typical	483	3.96	0.51	7.631	0.000	H3	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.68	0.58				
Recognition	Typical	483	4.42	0.56	8.068	0.000	H3a	Supported
	Flexible	413	4.06	0.72				
Meaningful Work	Typical	483	4.07	0.78	7.693	0.000	H3b	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.64	0.90				
Influence	Typical	483	3.72	0.84	7.619	0.000	H3c	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.29	0.83				
Quality Work	Typical	483	3.87	0.70	4.861	0.000	H3d	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.63	0.79				
Authenticity	Typical	483	3.87	0.70	4.861	0.000	H3e	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.63	0.79				
Personal life	Typical	483	3.49	1.02	-1.655	0.098	H3f	Not supported
	Flexible	413	3.60	0.91				
Growth and development	Typical	483	4.30	0.65	8.459	0.000	H3g	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.91	0.72				
Satisfaction	Typical	483	3.62	0.88	3.325	0.001	H3h	Supported
	Flexible	413	3.42	0.93				

New Career and Subjective Career Success Differences Between Flexible and Typical Employees

As seen in Table 2, within the scope of the developed hypotheses, flexible employees significantly exhibit higher levels of boundaryless career, physical mobility, and psychological mobility attitudes compared to typical employees. Thus, hypotheses H1, H1a, and H1b are supported.

According to Table 3, there is no significant difference in protean career attitudes between flexible and typical employees. However, significant differences are found in the sub-dimensions of self-directed career management and value-driven careers. The direction of these differences is that typical employees exhibit higher levels of self-directed career management attitude than flexible employees. In contrast, flexible employees show a higher level of value-driven career attitude than typical employees. Thus, hypotheses H2a and H2b are supported.

According to Table 4, typical employees have a significantly higher perception of subjective career success than flexible employees. When analyzing the sub-dimensions of subjective career success, typical employees show significantly higher perceptions in terms of recognition, meaningful work, influence, quality work, authenticity, growth and

development, and satisfaction compared to flexible employees. However, no significant difference is found in the perception of personal life between typical and flexible employees. In this context, hypotheses H3, H3a, H3b, H3c, H3d, H3e, H3g and H3h are supported.

Discussion

The research comprehensively compares flexible and typical workers in terms of three distinct new career approaches and their sub-dimensions. These new career approaches are the boundaryless career, protean career, and subjective career success. These new career concepts and their sub-dimensions have been analyzed by comparing them in the context of traditional and contemporary employment models. In other words, an attempt has been made to understand whether typical or flexible employment is more suitable for the new career approaches.

According to the analysis conducted in the study, flexible employees have significantly higher perceptions of a protean career attitude than typical employees. This data can be attributed to the traditional sense of continuity experienced by typical employees who work in the same organization, in the same sector, and with the same people daily, leading to higher organizational commitments than flexible employees. As flexible employees experience more

fluidity in their career paths, they naturally have a more protean or boundaryless career attitude. The finding that building connections with more people increases the protean career attitude (Lazarova & Taylor, 2009) aligns with the result that flexible employees have higher protean career attitudes due to their increased interactions with various individuals.

According to the study's findings, flexible employees have a higher psychological mobility attitude than typical employees. This result can be explained by flexible employees establishing more connections, engaging in various projects, taking on more non-organizational roles, and performing their tasks in different locations than typical employees. One of the reasons for higher psychological mobility in flexible employees may be the differences in status and organizational identity within the organization. The fact that flexible employees have different reference groups (Feldman, 1990; Miller & Terborg, 1979) is also consistent with the research result.

The analysis results for physical mobility indicate a significant difference between flexible employees and typical employees. This difference suggests that flexible employees have a higher level of physical mobility attitude. The contract types of flexible employees and typical employees differ from each other. While typical employees have indefinite-term contracts, flexible employees have fixed-term or on-call work contracts,

which may contribute to increased physical mobility among flexible employees. The high level of physical mobility attitude in flexible employees is consistent with the research results, as they may have lower organizational belongingness and communication with the organization or perceive flexible work as temporary due to its nature.

The analysis results for protean career indicate that although there is no significant difference in attitude scores between flexible employees and typical employees, the scores of flexible employees are higher. Both groups have obtained high scores. Flexible employees may perceive that their knowledge, skills, and experiences rapidly increase due to their involvement in multiple job descriptions, tasks, projects, jobs requiring different competencies, exposure to different organizational cultures, and working in different cities. This situation can also enhance their employability, making it easier for them to find employment in case of unemployment or when entering the job market for the first time.

Self-directed career attitudes involve a significant amount of individuality and subjective values. Flexible employees are often hired to perform tasks for other companies. In this case, it seems unlikely that the company will include flexible employees in organizational career planning. They will have to make their career plans. The results align with the study conducted by

Waters et al. (2014). According to the results, there is a significant difference based on the work style. However, the self-directed career averages of both work styles are high.

According to the research findings, there is a significant difference in value-driven career attitudes between typical employees and flexible employees, with flexible employees showing higher levels. Value-driven career attitudes can vary over time and in different situations (Katz & Kahn, 1978) and can also differ based on work style.

According to the research findings, typical employees have significantly higher perceptions of subjective career success than flexible employees. Excessive mobility or immobility in careers can have a negative impact on career success (Guan et al., 2019). Additionally, flexible employees may have lower perceptions of subjective career success due to being responsible for multiple managers and employers, working in constantly different job characteristics, and having higher mobility. In flexible work arrangements, individuals with primary occupations other than their main job, such as students or homemakers, may also have lower career success. These findings are consistent with previous studies by Igbaria & Guimaraes (1993) and McDonald et al. (2008).

The research findings regarding the perception of recognition indicate that typical employees have significantly higher perceived recognition

than flexible employees. This could be attributed to flexible employees having lower levels of fame, status, and reputation than typical employees. Additionally, the nature of flexible work may involve less significant tasks compared to typical roles, which complements the analysis results.

Typical employees have higher scores in the dimension of perceived meaningful work compared to flexible employees. In other words, typical employees find their work more meaningful than flexible employees. Previous studies such as Conway & Briner (2002), Sargent & Domberger (2007), and Karatuna & Basol (2017) support the findings of this research, as they indicate that flexible employees often work during the most demanding hours, perform similar tasks repetitively, involuntarily engage in flexible work, and express less satisfaction.

The research indicates that typical employees have significantly higher perceived influence levels than flexible employees. Flexible employees may lack sufficient knowledge about organizational issues and policies (Eberhardt & Shani, 1984). Moreover, flexible employees generally do not hold titles such as manager or supervisor. The higher perceived influence of typical employees in organizational decisions aligns with the findings of this study.

According to the results, typical employees have significantly higher perceptions of quality work compared to flexible employees. Flexible employees

often work in low-level positions (Levanoni & Sales, 1990) and engage in unpretentious jobs such as sales and service with lower pay (Stern & Nakata, 1989), which may result in lower perceptions of quality work.

According to the authenticity perception findings, typical employees have significantly higher authenticity levels than flexible employees. The control and direction of careers may vary depending on the employment type for both flexible and typical employees. Due to differences in autonomy, job scope, and task diversity perceived by employers for flexible employees (Dubinsky & Skinner, 1984; Feldman, 1995; Levanoni & Sales, 1990), the lower authenticity level among flexible employees supports the research findings.

According to the research findings, there is no significant difference between the personal life (work-life balance) perceptions of typical employees and flexible employees. This situation can be explained by the suitability of flexible work for students attending school, mothers with children, and disabled individuals who cannot work for long periods. Within these circumstances, individuals whose primary roles are studying, motherhood, or facing physical challenges can achieve a better work-life balance through flexible work arrangements. On the other hand, the importance of establishing work-life balance becomes more apparent with age

due to the inability to spend time with family (Hupkens et al., 2021). This situation rationalizes the significance of work-life balance in every form of employment.

One of the research findings is that typical employees have significantly higher perceptions of growth and development (personal development) compared to flexible employees. Flexible employees, who often hold secondary jobs and work primarily for income, may not feel a sense of growth due to the informal and irregular nature of their learning experiences. On the other hand, typical employees benefit from systematic and organizational training within the corporate framework, allowing them to specialize by consistently performing the same tasks, thus confirming the research results.

Typical employees have significantly higher perceptions of career satisfaction compared to flexible employees. This finding is expected, as some employees may have lower incomes due to working on flexible or on-call contracts and functioning as external resources (Karakuş, 2017). Flexible employees often work in temporary positions and may face more challenging career advancement opportunities than traditional career paths.

In summary, the mode of employment plays a significant role in boundaryless career, protean career, and subjective career success. Overall, flexible employees exhibit higher boundaryless career attitudes than typical employees. Conversely,

typical employees perceive subjective career success more than flexible employees.

Practical Implications

In modern career approaches, the differentiation between typical and flexible employment is influenced by factors such as continuity in the job, the meaningfulness of work, type of employment contract, frequency of external assignments, organizational affiliation, job descriptions and responsibilities, work values, perspectives, status, and repetitive nature of tasks. In the context of new career approaches, various factors such as the downsizing of businesses, streamlining, increased use of external sources, a rise in temporary contracts, enhanced individual freedoms, inevitable career plateaus, and changes in job characteristics have driven the traditional career towards obsolescence. However, asserting that all traditional career models have been entirely replaced and universally accepted by new career models (Aytemiz Seymen, 2004) is not accurate. Despite the popularity of boundaryless and protean careers, it is essential to acknowledge that traditional and linear careers still prevail in specific organizations, industries, and countries (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Moreover, numerous studies have demonstrated that many employee groups still adhere to organizational careers even in environments where boundaryless careers are expected to dominate

(Inkson et al., 2012). Similarly, Lips-Wiersma & Hall (2007) have affirmed that the traditional career has not vanished completely.

As a new employment model, the concept of flexible working, with its pros and cons, generally benefits businesses, employees, and economic indicators. However, it is a matter that needs attention from the labor force perspective. Flexible working is a system that should be embraced in the age of neoliberalism. For those who voluntarily prefer this form of employment, flexible working is undoubtedly reasonable and has valid reasons. However, on the other hand, for those unwillingly forced into flexible working, it poses challenges regarding income, social security, career concerns, and personal development obstacles. Certain precautions need to be taken before the widespread adoption of flexible working. The social security system should also consider flexible working from a humanitarian perspective, allowing people to achieve a certain income level and gain retirement rights. In summary, for flexible working to be fully trusted, it is essential to have highly developed, humanistic, and well-crafted social policies as guarantors. Otherwise, the number of individuals with incomes well below the minimum wage, struggling to make ends meet, and elderly individuals over 65 unable to access retirement benefits will increase.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited to 895 individuals employed under private employment agencies operating in Istanbul. The research findings are limited to the data collected using the scales of protean career, boundaryless career, and subjective career success, which are used as new career approaches.

In the ethical context of the boundaryless career, there are criticisms regarding the possibility of experiencing low consumption and employment in relatively smaller jobs due to one's capacities (Van Buren, 2003). In this context, it is essential to ask the following question to ensure the appropriateness of the recommendations at the end of the research: Are modern career principles only for highly employable individuals with good education, such as doctors and engineers? If so, academic and sectoral studies should be directed accordingly.

Further studies can be conducted on how flexible workers affect businesses' human resource policies or practices. Generally, human resource practices are modeled after typical employment. Investigating the effects of this transformation on human resource functions would be beneficial. On the other hand, most academic studies on flexible work focus on social security and labour law. There is a need for more research on the performance, adaptation,

and organizational commitment of flexible workers.

Conclusion

More conceptual research is needed to increase awareness among both typical and flexible workers. On the other hand, the logic of individuals' ability to direct their careers and values should be questioned because it is not conceivable for an individual to be more professional than organizational career planners or training and development specialists. In this case, individuals need to direct their careers according to the demands of the job market. In other words, if individuals develop themselves according to their desires, preferences, and values, but the qualifications demanded by the job market are different, they will not be able to meet the supply and demand of the job market.

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