A Development of Training Model for Instructors' Career Success at Private Undergraduate Universities in Changsha City, China

Ai Yanhong[1], Velankanni ALEX[2*]

  1   *Stamford International University, Thailand*
  2   *Stamford International University, Thailand*
  *   *Corresponding Author, E-mail: 2010200045@students.stamford.edu*

Abstract

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research, to examine the factors influencing the career success of instructors in private undergraduate universities from the perspective of organizational career management. The research investigated the role of organizational career management in shaping career outcomes and proposed a targeted training model to enhance instructors' career success. The study drew on theoretical frameworks, including organizational career management and social capital theory, to explain the underlying mechanisms. A total of 481 participants were randomly selected, and survey data were analyzed using statistical methods. The findings revealed that (1) bridging social capital and career self-efficacy significantly impacted career success, with bridging social capital being the strongest predictor; (2) both variables partially mediated the relationship between organizational career management and career success, whereas career resilience showed no significant mediating effect; (3) the two-month training model led to a 15% improvement in career success scores among participants; and (4) the model provided an effective framework for supporting instructors' career development in private universities. These results contribute both theoretically and practically by offering evidence-based insights into the determinants of career success and by proposing a validated training model that institutions can adopt to strengthen faculty career development.

Keywords: Organizational Career Management, Bridging Social Capital, Career Self-efficacy, Career Resilience, Career Success

Introduction

Career success has become an important field of inquiry in management studies, as both organizations and individuals increasingly recognize that effective career planning and management can enhance job satisfaction, life fulfillment, and long-term professional success. Many organizations have adopted career management systems to assist employees in developing and pursuing their career goals (Adler & Kwon, 2002). For organizations, such systems foster employee satisfaction and loyalty, strengthen organizational attractiveness, and reduce turnover. For employees, they provide pathways to professional growth, skill development, and expanded career opportunities (Anderson-Bill, Winett, & Wojcik, 2023). However, global evidence shows limited institutional support: a 2018 survey by Right Management reported that only 16% of employees believed their organizations offered adequate career development assistance (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999).

Within the context of the knowledge economy, higher education faces unprecedented changes, and the career success of university instructors has become a pressing concern for educational leaders (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). Effective career management for instructors involves planning, developing, and sustaining their careers in ways that enhance satisfaction and professional achievement (Zhao & Chen, 2023). Beyond personal well-being, instructors' career success significantly influences educational quality and institutional performance (Arnold & Cohen, 2020). In response, several countries have introduced policies to support instructors' career development, such as continuous professional training and structured career guidance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

Nevertheless, disparities remain in the implementation of career management across global higher education. According to an OECD survey in 2019, only 30% of instructors reported receiving sufficient institutional support for career development. Similarly, Education International found that around 60% of instructors expressed a strong need for more professional development opportunities (Zhao & Luo, 2005). Institutions with robust career management frameworks can help instructors set clear career goals, access consistent development opportunities, and benefit from effective support systems that directly contribute to career satisfaction and long-term success (Burt, 2000).

In China, these challenges are particularly pronounced in private undergraduate universities. Instructors in cities such as Changsha often face limited promotion opportunities, insufficient institutional support for research, and uncertainty regarding career stability (Zhang, 2007). These conditions may hinder professional growth and reduce instructors' sense of career accomplishment (Burt, 2004). Addressing these issues requires a systematic approach that not only identifies the key factors affecting career success but also proposes actionable strategies to strengthen career management systems in private universities (Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

Building on these challenges, the purpose of this research is to systematically investigate the factors influencing the career success of instructors in private undergraduate universities in Changsha, Hunan Province, China. Specifically, the study aims to explore how organizational career management, career self-efficacy, bridging social capital, and career resilience contribute to instructors' professional advancement and satisfaction (JianFeng & Worapongpat, 2024). To achieve these objectives, the research employs a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, conducted during the academic year 2024.

The rationale for this study arises from the pressing need to address the limited career development support available to instructors in private universities, which has led to issues such as reduced motivation, unclear promotion pathways, and insufficient institutional support (Makjod, Worapongpat, Kangpheng, & Bhasabutr, 2025). By identifying the causes of these challenges and testing a structured training model, the study seeks to provide evidence-based solutions (Worapongpat & Kangpheng, 2025). The outcomes will benefit not only the instructors and their institutions by fostering career growth and organizational commitment but

also policymakers in higher education, who can adopt the findings as a guideline for formulating effective professional development frameworks (London, 1993).

This research article presents a comprehensive investigation structured around four objectives: (1) identifying the factors affecting instructors' career success, (2) describing the current level of career success and related influences, (3) analyzing the relationships among organizational career management, self-efficacy, social capital, and resilience, and (4) proposing and evaluating a practical training model to enhance career success. The results are expected to contribute both theoretically, by extending existing knowledge on career development in higher education, and practically, by offering actionable recommendations to improve career support systems in Chinese private universities and beyond.

Questions

1. What factors influence the career success of instructors in private undergraduate universities in Changsha, China?

2. What is the current level of career success among instructors in private undergraduate universities in Changsha, China, and what factors contribute to it?

3. How effective is the proposed training model in enhancing the career success of instructors in private undergraduate universities in Changsha, China?

Objectives

1. To identify and analyze the factors influencing the career success of instructors in private undergraduate universities in Changsha, China.

2. To assess the current level of career success among instructors and its related influencing factors in private undergraduate universities in Changsha, China.

3. To develop a training model aimed at enhancing the career success of instructors in private undergraduate universities in Changsha, China, and to evaluate its effectiveness.

Hypothesis

H1: Organizational Career Management (OCM) has a significant positive effect on instructors' Career Success (CS).

H2: Bridging Social Capital (BSC) has a significant positive effect on instructors' Career Success (CS).

H3: Career Self-efficacy (CSE) has a significant positive effect on instructors' Career Success (CS).

H4: Career Resilience (CR) has a significant positive effect on instructors' Career Success (CS).

H5: Organizational Career Management (OCM) positively influences Bridging Social Capital (BSC).

H6: Organizational Career Management (OCM) positively influences Career Self-efficacy (CSE).

H7: Organizational Career Management (OCM) positively influences Career Resilience (CR).

H8: Bridging Social Capital (BSC) mediates the relationship between Organizational Career Management (OCM) and Career Success (CS).

H9: Career Self-efficacy (CSE) mediates the relationship between Organizational Career Management (OCM) and Career Success (CS).

H10: Career Resilience (CR) mediates the relationship between Organizational Career Management (OCM) and Career Success (CS).

Literature Reviews

1. Organizational Career Management (OCM) and Career Success

Research has consistently demonstrated that effective organizational career management plays a pivotal role in enhancing employee career satisfaction and success. Stam, W., Arzlanian, S., & Elfring, T. (2014). emphasized that career planning and systematic support from organizations improve employees' loyalty, skill development, and long-term performance. More recent studies Worapongpat, N., Kanokon Boonmee. (2025). revealed that, within the Chinese context, organizational career management significantly impacts not only job satisfaction but also opportunities for career progression. However, studies focusing specifically on private undergraduate universities remain limited. This study addresses that gap by analyzing OCM practices in Changsha's private institutions.

2. Social Capital and Career Success

Social Capital Theory Sturges, H. A. (2002). highlights the importance of professional networks in accessing resources and career opportunities. Bridging social capital, in particular, has been linked to enhanced career mobility and innovation Worapongpat, N. (2025c). found that employees with diverse professional networks exhibit higher adaptability and success. Yet, limited research has examined how bridging social capital operates among university instructors in China, especially in private institutions. This study thus investigates the extent to which bridging social capital contributes to instructors' career success in Changsha.

3. Career Self-efficacy and Resilience

Self-efficacy Theory Sturges, J., Conway, N., Guest, D., & Liefooghe, A. (2005). posits that individuals' belief in their capabilities strongly predicts career performance and persistence.Worapongpat, N. (2025b). demonstrated that career self-efficacy influences career decision-making and success. Similarly, resilience literature Wang, X. & Li, Y. （2019） .indicates that the ability to recover from challenges contributes to sustained career satisfaction. Worapongpat, N. (2025a). While studies in Western contexts have validated these findings, empirical evidence from Chinese private universities is scarce. This study therefore examines the roles of career self-efficacy and resilience in shaping instructors' career trajectories in Changsha.

While prior research has established the significance of organizational career management, social capital, and self-efficacy in enhancing career outcomes, few studies have examined these factors collectively within the unique context of private undergraduate universities in China. In particular, bridging social capital and career resilience remain underexplored as mediating variables between organizational support and career success. This study addresses these gaps by integrating these constructs into a comprehensive model and empirically testing their effects among instructors in Changsha.

Methodology

Major Findings of Research Objective One

To explore the factors affecting instructors' career success, this study conducted an extensive literature review, analyzing approximately 200 scholarly articles on career development, organizational career management, social capital, self-efficacy, and resilience. This review established a solid theoretical foundation by identifying key variables commonly associated with career success in higher education. Prior studies highlight that career success is shaped not only by personal capabilities and intrinsic motivation but also by external supports such as organizational career management and professional networks

Nevertheless, significant research gaps remain. Most existing studies have focused on developed countries, leaving limited evidence concerning the unique challenges of instructors

in China's private undergraduate universities Furthermore, while the positive role of social capital in career advancement is acknowledged, operational definitions of bridging social capital vary across studies, leading to measurement inconsistencies. Similarly, the long-term influence of career self-efficacy and resilience on career success remains underexplored in the Chinese context. Research specific to private universities often centers on stress, burnout, and job satisfaction, overlooking comprehensive models of career success. Instructors in such institutions frequently encounter unstable salaries, unclear promotion pathways, and insufficient research support, factors that significantly hinder career growth This study thus responds to these limitations by investigating the interplay of organizational career management, bridging social capital, self-efficacy, and resilience in shaping career success in Changsha's private universities.

Major Findings of Research Objective Two

To assess the current level of instructors' career success and its related factors, a structured questionnaire survey was administered to 550 instructors at private undergraduate universities in Changsha. A total of 481 valid responses were collected and analyzed using IBM SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated for the constructs of organizational career management, bridging social capital, career self-efficacy, career resilience, and career success.

The analysis revealed that overall career success among instructors was moderate, with variations across subdimensions. As shown in Table 1-12, career satisfaction emerged as the highest-rated dimension, whereas competitiveness outside the organization scored the lowest. This suggests that while instructors feel relatively satisfied within their institutions, their external career mobility remains constrained. These findings highlight the urgent need for organizational interventions and capacity-building programs to strengthen instructors' professional resilience and external competitiveness.

Result

Table 1: Career Satisfaction

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I am satisfied with the achievements I have made in my work	5.64	1.22	Quite High
2	I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward my income goals	5.46	1.40	High
3	I am satisfied with the progress I have made in acquiring new skills	5.64	1.24	Quite High
	Overall Mean	5.58	1.29	Quite High

Summary: Instructors reported a high level of satisfaction with their career progress, particularly regarding achievements and skill development.

Table 2: Competitiveness Within the Organization

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Because of my experience, the school considers me valuable	5.70	1.21	Quite High
2	The school considers me a valuable resource	5.46	1.40	High
3	I have many development opportunities within the school	5.49	1.39	High
	Overall Mean	5.55	1.33	Quite High

Summary: Instructors feel valued within their institutions, particularly for their experience.

Table 3: Competitiveness Outside the Organization

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I can easily find a similar job in another organization	5.70	1.21	Quite High
2	Other organizations consider me a valuable resource	5.46	1.40	High
	Overall Mean	5.58	1.30	Quite High

Summary: Respondents feel confident in their marketability outside their current institutions.

Table 4: Career Awareness

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	The school provides teaching feedback to help me improve	5.80	1.28	Quite High
2	Teaching assignments are rotated to enrich experience	5.74	1.32	Quite High
3	Career paths are planned to support development	5.41	1.53	High
	Overall Mean	5.65	1.38	Quite High

Summary: High levels of awareness and support are present, though career path planning is slightly lower.

Table 5: Providing Information

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Clear criteria for faculty qualifications are established	6.05	1.15	Quite High
2	Job vacancy information is clearly shared	5.67	1.42	Quite High
3	Career development information is timely	5.66	1.41	Quite High
4	Guidance from experienced mentors is provided at the start	6.02	1.22	Quite High
	Overall Mean	5.85	1.30	Quite High

Summary: Faculty perceive the institution as proactive in providing relevant career information.

Table 6: Promotion Fairness

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	The school has a comprehensive promotion system	5.78	1.34	Quite High
2	Promotion criteria and outcomes are accessible	5.64	1.41	Quite High
	Overall Mean	5.71	1.38	Quite High

Summary: Instructors are generally satisfied with the fairness and transparency of promotion systems.

Table 7: Focus on Training

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Training programs are provided	6.16	1.15	Quite High
2	Financial support for personal development is offered	5.73	1.42	Quite High
3	Opportunities to attend seminars/training are accessible	5.75	1.39	Quite High
	Overall Mean	5.88	1.32	Quite High

Summary: Instructors appreciate the institution's commitment to their ongoing training and development.

Table 8: Connectivity (Bridging Social Capital)

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I connect effectively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds	5.83	1.22	Quite High
2	I build mutually beneficial relationships with colleagues	5.56	1.36	Quite High
3	I expand my professional network with colleague support	5.61	1.30	Quite High
	Overall Mean	5.67	1.29	Quite High

Summary: Instructors are confident in building and maintaining diverse professional networks.

Table 9: Strengthening Capabilities (Bridging Social Capital)

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I have opportunities to meet key figures in the school	5.59	1.28	Quite High
2	I develop friendships from colleague relationships	5.72	1.18	Quite High
3	I can find ways to connect with key individuals	5.41	1.35	High
	Overall Mean	5.57	1.27	Quite High

Summary: Respondents have confidence in nurturing relationships and engaging key stakeholders.

Table 10: Expanding Capabilities (Bridging Social Capital)

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I build internal relationships via work or expertise	5.54	1.31	Quite High
2	I build external relationships via work or expertise	5.51	1.32	Quite High
3	I can create new connections where none previously existed	5.26	1.50	High
	Overall Mean	5.44	1.37	Quite High

Summary: Instructors feel capable of expanding networks within and beyond their institutions.

Table 11: Career Self-Efficacy

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I stay calm under work-related pressure	5.84	1.12	Quite High
2	I can manage all challenges at work	5.74	1.20	Quite High
3	Past work experience prepares me for the future	5.91	1.13	Quite High
	Overall Mean	5.83	1.15	Quite High

Summary: Participants show high levels of self-confidence in managing career tasks.

Table 12: Career Resilience

Item	Description	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I can handle any teaching-related situation	5.72	1.13	Quite High
2	I bounce back after difficulties	5.95	1.07	Quite High
3	Challenges do not make me want to give up	5.89	1.16	Quite High
	Overall Mean	5.85	1.12	Quite High

Summary: Instructors demonstrate strong resilience and perseverance in their professional roles.

Discussion

Results from Research Objective 1 found that both personal attributes (e.g., self-efficacy and resilience) and organizational factors (e.g., institutional support and career development opportunities) significantly influenced career success. This may be because private university instructors rely on both intrinsic motivation and external resources for career progression. This finding corresponds to Super's Career Development Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory, which emphasize the interaction between personal characteristics, environmental support, and self-belief in achieving career outcomes (Super, 1957; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Long, Fang, & Ling, 2002).

Results from Research Objective 2 found that instructors expressed high satisfaction in skill development and job achievement but only moderate satisfaction regarding income progression. This may be because private universities often provide fewer financial incentives while emphasizing skill enhancement and intrinsic professional growth. This finding corresponds to the model of career anchors by Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, and Li (2005), and the framework proposed by Worapongpat (2025e), which suggest that subjective indicators such as a sense of accomplishment and professional mastery often outweigh financial compensation in determining job satisfaction among academic professionals.

Results from Research Objective 3 found that Organizational Career Management (OCM) had the strongest impact on Career Success ($\beta = .725$), followed by Bridging Social Capital (BSC) and Career Self-Efficacy (CSE). This may be because well-structured organizational policies and practices help create clear pathways for advancement and foster meaningful social connections that directly support career outcomes. This finding corresponds to the theory of self-efficacy as outlined by Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000), and the social capital framework proposed by Worapongpat (2025d), both of which emphasize how

organizational context enhances access to critical resources and reinforces individual confidence in achieving career goals.

Results from Research Objective 4 found that the training model led to improvements in Career Resilience, Career Self-Efficacy, and Organizational Career Management (OCM). However, Bridging Social Capital (BSC) showed limited gains. This may be because the development of social capital typically requires longer-term engagement in network-building processes, rather than short-term interventions such as training. This finding corresponds to the perspective of McDonald and Hite (2018), who argue that both resilience and social capital are cultivated through sustained organizational culture and consistent community involvement.

New Knowledge from the Research

From the study entitled "The Strategic Development of Career Success among Instructors in Private Undergraduate Universities in Changsha, China", new knowledge was synthesized and presented in the form of a conceptual framework, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 illustrates that the primary factors influencing instructors' career success include Organizational Career Management (OCM), Bridging Social Capital (BSC), Career Self-Efficacy (CSE), and Career Resilience (CR). CSE and CR serve as mediating variables, especially highlighting the strong direct influence of OCM on Career Success (CS), while the effect of CR appears more marginal and long-term in nature.

This research article explores the key factors influencing the career success of instructors in private undergraduate universities in Changsha, China, drawing upon Super's Career Development Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Social Capital Theory. The study revealed that Organizational Career Management (OCM) exerts the strongest influence on career success, followed by Bridging Social Capital (BSC) and Career Self-Efficacy (CSE). These findings contribute to the development of a training model that aims to enhance professional growth and long-term success for university instructors.

Suggestions

Suggestions for Applying the Research Results

1. Based on Research Objective 1 to examine the factors influencing career success among instructors in private undergraduate universities in Changsha the study found that both organizational support (OCM) and individual attributes (CSE, CR) significantly affect career success. Therefore, relevant institutions, especially private undergraduate universities, should implement systematic career development programs that focus on structured organizational support, transparent career planning, and regular mentoring. Institutions should assess current policies and adjust them to better accommodate career progression needs, particularly for early- and mid-career instructors.

2. Based on Research Objective 2: To analyze the current state of instructors' career success and perceptions of organizational career management. The findings revealed moderate to high satisfaction in most areas of career success, but lower satisfaction regarding promotion fairness and income. Therefore, educational institutions should prioritize creating fair, clear, and transparent promotion systems and compensation policies. Regular feedback from faculty members should be collected to better align institutional practices with instructors' expectations.

3. Based on Research Objective 3 To analyze the relationships between OCM, BSC, CSE, CR, and CS through structural equation modeling The results confirmed that OCM significantly impacts both BSC and CSE, which in turn influence career success. CR showed a weaker impact. Therefore, institutions should invest more in social capital development and self-efficacy enhancement strategies, such as inter-institutional collaboration, academic networking platforms, and confidence-building training. Career resilience, while important, should be integrated more holistically through wellness and psychological support programs.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study uncovered important insights into the interaction between organizational mechanisms, social capital, and individual attributes in shaping career success. The key takeaway is that career success in academic contexts is multifaceted and influenced by dynamic internal and external factors. Future research should: Explore longitudinal designs to examine how career trajectories develop over time in relation to policy or economic changes. Conduct comparative studies across different cities, institutions, or cultural contexts to test the generalizability of the model. Investigate digital career management platforms and their effectiveness in improving organizational support and faculty engagement. Further examine the psychological dimensions of resilience in high-stress academic environments and their indirect influence on retention and satisfaction. Include additional mediating/moderating variables such as leadership style, organizational justice, or work-life balance, to deepen the understanding of career success mechanisms.

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