

Role of Employee Networking Behavior in Predicting the Relationship between Perceived Supervisor Support and Career Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at exploring the role of employee networking behavior (NB) as an individual career self-management behavior of the relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and career satisfaction (CS). An online survey was conducted based on the middle managers of commercial banks in Sri Lanka (N=86). Based on a regression analysis the study found that the PSS is positively associated with NB and CS whereas NB was positively associated with career satisfaction. The study also found that the NB mediates the relationship between PSS and CS. Current study suggests that the supervisor support promotes employees to network with others in the organization, which may experience greater success in facilitating employee career satisfaction. The outcomes of this research provide implications to the theories and models such as, social exchange theory, the extended model of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and the model of proactive behavior. The managerial implications, implications for future research and the limitations of the study are also discussed.

Keywords: Career satisfaction, Perceived supervisor support, Networking behavior, Commercial banks, Sri Lanka

1. Introduction

Changes in the economic, technological and business environment during the last few decades have significantly impacted people's career attitudes and experiences (Cakmak-Otluoglu & Bolat, 2020; Hall, 2002; Pinnington and Lafferty, 2003). The nature of the work, jobs and careers are also being frequently changed in the current organizational context. These environmental changes have contributed to the establishment of a new psychological contract: the reciprocal obligations held by employees and employers (Doden, Grote & Rigotti, 2018; Hall, 2002). The predominance of organizational restructuring, de-layering and downsizing has contributed to a more flexible or “boundaryless” career environment with expectations that individuals will self-manage their careers, rather than rely on organizational direction (Arthur et al., 2005; Kossek et al., 1998).

Concurrently, despite the fact that there is an unemployment condition in Sri Lanka, the country is experiencing some skills shortages across many industries (Ranasinghe, 2018). Therefore, Sri Lankan managers face HR challenges such as attracting, motivating and retaining employees. Moreover, by being a mixed economy with more private sector dominance, the business environment is competitive in Sri Lanka, where it is increasingly hard and expensive to attract employees with the necessary skills. In this context, the organizations should convince their employees that their employers offer more opportunities, rewards and challenges than that of other competitive organizations. However, the traditional financial and non-financial rewards do less in accomplishing this aim. Thus, contemporary organizations are supposed to implement innovative ways for attracting, motivating and retaining employees (Erdogan *et al.*, 2004; Heslin, 2005).

One way that organizations may meet this challenge is to support employees to develop their own careers and increase their career satisfaction (Barnett and Bradley, 2007). This approach is consistent with the recommendation that organizations perform a new supportive, rather than directive, role in enabling their employees' career success (Baruch, 2006). This study proposes that organizations can adopt strategies to enhance employees' career satisfaction and so potentially increase the organizations' ability to attract and retain these employees. While one focus of this research is to explore the role of

organizational support in determining employees' career satisfaction, it is important to also consider the role that individuals play in their own career success in the current trend towards a protean career environment (Baruch, 2006).

The overarching research problem of this study was to determine whether employee networking behavior is a significant factor which explain the relationship between perceived organizational support and the career satisfaction. Thus, the study was aimed at examining the role of networking behavior in the relationship between perceived organizational support and career satisfaction. The contributions of this study were threefold. First, the study made an empirical contribution since no prior studies were found which have examined the role of networking behavior in determining the relationship between perceived organizational support and the career satisfaction. Second, the findings provide implications to the integrative model of proactive behaviours (Crant, 2000; Lent & Brown, 2006). Finally, the western findings for the relationship between perceived organizational support and the career satisfaction were verified based on Sri Lankan employees.

2. Literature and Hypotheses

The extended model of social cognitive career theory shows how contextual and individual personality, cognitive and behavioral variables predict vocational satisfaction (Lent & Brown, 2006; Lent et al., 2005). From an employer's perspective, understanding how personality, behavior and environmental factors function together may offer the opportunity to assist employees to become as satisfied with their careers as nature and environmental factors (Lent & Brown, 2006). Social cognitive career theory is also concerned with proximal contextual variables with environmental supports (facilitative influences) and barriers (obstacles) that people anticipate will accompany the pursuit of their goals. That is, this extended model predicts paths by which social cognitive variables such as self-efficacy and goals function jointly with personality and environmental variables to affect work satisfaction (Lent & Brown, 2006). This model extends from social cognitive career theory, which was originally developed to explain interest development, choice, and performance in career and educational domains (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). The model outlined in figure 1 integrates

some of the predictions of the extended model of social cognitive career theory of Lent & Brown (2006) and the proactive behavior model when applied to the career domain (Crant, 2000). The key classes of variables that comprise this model include career satisfaction, perceived supervisor support, and context specific proactive behaviors (networking behaviour).

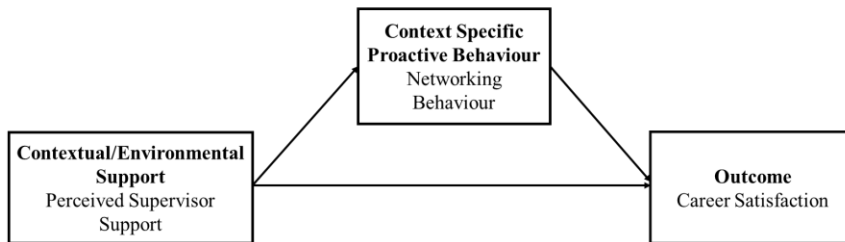


Figure 1. Integrative Model of Proactive Behaviors

Source: Adapted from Crant, 2000; Lent & Brown, 2006.

2.1 Key Model Elements

2.1.1 Perceived supervisor support

Researchers have been interested in the role of exchange processes in organizations (Rousseau & Parks, 1993). Much of the research in this area has been explained by the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Social exchange involves unspecified obligations (Blau, 1964); when one person does another a favour, he/she has an expectation of some future return (Gouldner, 1960). One major aspect of exchange processes in organizations involves exchanges between the employee and his or her leader (supervisor) which is referred to as perceived supervisor support/leader member exchange (Graen & Scandura, 1987). As a theory derived from the social exchange theory, the leader-member exchange theory proposes that an interpersonal relationship develops between the supervisor and the subordinate based on social exchange (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Therefore, the social exchange theory provides the theoretical basis for perceived supervisor support. Overall, Leader-member exchange theory proposes that an interpersonal relationship develops between supervisor and the subordinate against the background of a formal organization (Graen & Cashman, 1975).

2.1.2 Networking behavior

Career self-management is a dynamic process that involves execution of a set of occurring behaviors (King, 2004, p. 119). That is, career strategies in which individuals engage to achieve their career goals consist of a range of career self-management behaviors. Among these, networking behavior is a significant individual career behavior which includes having a relationship with influential people and gain entry into social networks (Emmerik, Euwema, Geschiere, & Schouten, 2006; Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Nabi, 2000; Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Davey, 2002). The networking behaviour, can be used to promote careers both within and outside the organization depending on the employees' career strategy (Forret & Dougherty, 2001).

2.1.3 Career satisfaction

Most of the past studies have operationally defined subjective career success either as job satisfaction or career satisfaction (Erdogan, Kraimer, & Liden, 2004; Heslin, 2003; Ngo, Lau, & Foley, 2008; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). For example, Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom (2005) reviewed 49 career success studies and revealed that 20 studies included measures of career satisfaction while 11 studies included measures of job satisfaction to measure the subjective career success. However, Heslin (2005) argued that job satisfaction is an inadequate measure of career success, since it does not cover satisfaction over a longer period, including a wide range of outcomes such as sense of purpose and work life balance. Career satisfaction is commonly considered to be the subjective version of career success, defining individuals' satisfaction with their career accomplishments (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995). Career satisfaction measures the extent to which employees believe that their career progress is aligned with their own goals, values, and preferences (Bauer, Erdogan, Liden, & Wayne, 2006). Thus, goal-specific environmental support and resources that provide social and material provision for employees' personal goals are the major predictors of career satisfaction (Barnett & Bradley, 2007). For example, Joo and Park (2010) defined career satisfaction as an indicator of subjective career success and measured career satisfaction by using a scale developed by Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley (1990). Most of career studies have also used this scale for measuring career satisfaction (e.g. Arthur et al., 2005; Aryee & Chang, 1994;

Barnett & Bradley, 2007). These studies have found that career development positively relates to the career satisfaction of employees.

Some of the items included in this scale are: 'I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my goals for income' and 'I am satisfied with the progress I have made for advancement' (Greenhaus et al., 1990). Overall, this theoretical discussion indicates that 'career satisfaction' is the most suited dimension for subjective career success.

2.1.4 Pathways to career satisfaction

By referring to the extended model of social cognitive career theory (Lent and Brown, 2006), it can be seen that the perceived supervisor support (PSS) belong to a class of environmental support and resources variables that are specifically relevant to the pursuit of an individual's career goals. Therefore, PSS which provides social support for one's personal goals is likely to be a significant predictor of career satisfaction (Barnett & Bradley, 2007, Lent & Brown, 2006). The model proposes that contextual/environmental factors (such as PSS) can also influence career satisfaction via context specific proactive behaviors such as networking behavior.

2.1.5 Perceived supervisor support and networking behavior

In the contemporary career environment, being proactive about promoting one's career within the organization may act as a form of reciprocation, whereby individuals promote themselves as good employees and attempt to strike a career deal with their employers that may lead to further future investment in their careers (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefoghe, 2005). In line with this argument, Sturges et al. (2010) found a partial support for the relationship perceived supervisor support and networking behaviours. Sturges et al. (2010) argue that, less is known about how generic forms of organizational support, such as perceived supervisor support may stimulate employees' individual career self-management behaviors. Based on this theoretical discussion, the following hypothesis can be established.

Hypothesis 1: Perceived supervisor support is positively associated with networking behavior.

2.1.6 Perceived supervisor support and career satisfaction

The extant literature suggests that supervisor support is a key factor influencing career development of employees (Maurer & Tarulli, 1994; Yarnall, 1998). The employees may receive their supervisor's support in terms of career enhancing activities such as providing challenging assignments, visibility, sponsorship, counselling, acceptance and friendship (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Igbaria & Wormley, 1992). The literature also suggests that the supervisor support in their subordinates' career development has a significant impact on subordinates' career satisfaction (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Aryee, Luk, Leung, & Lo, 1999; Colarelli & Bishop, 1990; Frye & Breugh, 2004; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Igbaria & Wormley, 1992; Jiang & Klein, 2000; Yarnall, 1998). For example, provision of information on career opportunities and helpful feedback on performance (Greenhaus et al., 1990), mentoring (Allen et al., 2004) and the level of discussion an employee maintains with his/her supervisor on personal development (Colarelli and Bishop, 1990; Yarnall, 1998) have positive relationships with career satisfaction. Although, the positive relationship between perceived supervisor support and career satisfaction is well acknowledged, most of the prior studies have been conducted in the western countries the findings of which may not be applicable to Sri Lanka and other Asian countries since the national and organizational cultures are different. Based on this theoretical discussion, the following hypothesis can be established:

***Hypothesis 2:** Perceived supervisor support has a positive relationship with career satisfaction.*

2.1.7 Networking behavior and career satisfaction

Changes in the business environment, such as organizational re-structuring, downsizing, and de-layering have resulted in a more flexible and Boundary less career environment where employees are more likely to self-manage their careers rather than relying on organizational direction (Arthur et al., 2005; Kossek et al., 1998). In such a career environment the main challenges faced by organizations are to attract, motivate, and retain their employees (Hall, 2002). One way that organizations may meet this challenge is to support employees to develop their own careers and increase their career satisfaction (Hall, 2002). Therefore, it is important to consider how career self-

management behaviors influence the career satisfaction of employees, particularly given the trends towards more individualistic career management in the last few decades (Baruch, 2006). In support of these arguments, the extended model of social cognitive career theory (Figure-1) predicts that the context specific proactive behaviors, such as participation in CSMBs directed at achieving personally valued goals in the career domain, are expected to promote an individual's career satisfaction (Crant, 2000; Lent & Brown, 2006; Seibert et al., 1999). Pursuing personally relevant goals is a keyway that people can contribute to their own wellbeing which enables the exercise of personal agency in career satisfaction. To the extent that an individual can set and work towards their own goals can perceive that they are making progress and they can promote their own career satisfaction (Lent & Brown, 2006). Barnett & Bradley (2007) explored the aggregate effect of a range of CSMBs (career planning, networking, skills development, visibility, and mobility oriented behaviors) on career satisfaction. Similarly, De Vos et al. (2009) operationalized CSMBs with a 14 items scale derived from Noe (Noe, 1996) that comprised of four types of action: creating opportunities, self-nomination, networking, and seeking career guidance. Although a positive relationship was found, this study did not identify how individual CSMBs' are related to career satisfaction. Consequently, prior studies such as Barnett and Bradley (2007) and Ng et al. (2005) demand for future studies that explore the types of individual CSMBs' that are valuable for achieving career satisfaction of employees. More specifically, less attention has been paid in studies to date as to how individual CSMBs such as networking behaviour is related to career satisfaction of employees. That is, only a limited number of studies have addressed how these individual CSMBs are related to career satisfaction (Emmerik et al., 2006; Wolff & Moser, 2009). Together, theoretical predictions and empirical findings led to the study's third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Networking behavior positively relates to career satisfaction of employees.

2.1.8 Mediating role of networking behavior between PSS and career satisfaction

Referring to the extended model of social cognitive career theory of Lent & Brown (2006) illustrated in Figure 1, goal specific environmental support such

as PSS may indirectly impact employee career satisfaction through goal pursuit (career self-management behaviors). This indirect relationship is further supported by the model of proactive behaviors (Crant, 2000) which predicts that contextual factors, such as organizational support and resources, will facilitate an individual's proactive career behaviors and career satisfaction. Although, the extended model of social cognitive career theory (Lent & Brown, 2006) provides predictions, no studies were found testing a mediating effect of networking behavior of the relationship between PSS and career satisfaction. The predictions of the extended model of social cognitive career theory (Lent & Brown, 2006) led to the study's fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Networking behavior mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and career satisfaction.

3. Method

3.1 Sample

The participants were 150 middle level managers from commercial banks in Sri Lanka out of which 86 responses were received. Many employees were male (76%). Mean and standard deviation statistics relating to these demographic variables are presented in Table-1. The mean age of respondents was 41.6 and the average organizational tenure was eight years.

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 Perceived supervisor support

The definition given by Greenhaus et al. (1990) was employed to operationalize the perceived supervisor support. That is, perceived supervisor support for career development is the extent of supervisor's support in employee career development. Greenhaus et al. (1990) developed a more comprehensive scale to measure the 'extent of supervisors' support which was used in the current study. Some of the scale items are, "My supervisor takes the time to learn about my career goals and aspirations" and "My supervisor makes sure I get the credit when I accomplish something substantial on my job".

3.2.2 Networking behavior

The networking behaviour was defined in this study as, getting introduced to people who could influence employee career development and building contacts in areas where employee would like to work (Sturges et al., 2002). The scale originally devised and validated by Sturges et al. (2002) was used to measure the networking behaviour. Some examples for the scale items are, “I have introduced myself to people who can influence my career” and “I have talked to senior management at company social gatherings”.

3.2.3 Career satisfaction

Career satisfaction was operationally defined as the extent to which individuals believe that their career progress is consistent with their own goals, values, and preferences (Erdogan et al., 2004; Heslin, 2003; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Most prior studies have used the scale developed and validated by Greenhaus et al. (1990) to measure the career satisfaction of employees. Consistent with prior studies, this study has also used this scale to measure career satisfaction. That is to say, career satisfaction was measured in terms of the extent to which individuals believe their career progress is consistent with their own goals, values, and preferences. Some of the sample items in this questionnaire were: “I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career”, and “I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my overall career goals”.

3.2.4 Control Variables

Respondents’ demographic information such as age, gender, tenure, and highest level of education completed were collected with single item questions.

3.3. Procedure

Middle managers of commercial banks in Sri Lanka were invited to complete a self-administered online questionnaire. The human resource management department of each bank distributed web links of surveys to a randomly selected sample of 150 managers of ten private sector commercial banks out of which only 86 managers responded to the survey.

3.4 Results

Means, standard deviations and inter-item correlations are shown in Table 1. The diagonal of this table presents Cronbach’s Alpha values which indicate that all measures demonstrated adequate levels of reliability. The inter-item correlation coefficients indicate that there are significant positive correlations between study variables.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations

	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	
Age	41.6	15.1						
Gender	N/A	N/A	.241**					
Tenure	8.0	2.9	.481**	.334**				
Perceived Supervisor Support	3.84	0.71	.363**	.457**	.221*	.806		
Networking Behavior	3.86	0.61	.342**	.034	.079	.810**	.915	
Career Satisfaction	3.74	0.95	.290**	.007	.359*	.631**	.702**	.891

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Survey data

3.5 Hypotheses testing

The study did not apply Structural Equation Modeling to analyze the data due to inadequacy of the number of survey responses. Therefore, the multiple hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the hypothesized relationships. The reason for employing hierarchical regression analysis was

to control the effects of demographic variables such as age, gender, and tenure on the hypothesized relationships because correlation coefficients showed that the demographic variables have significant relations with the career satisfaction. For example, as indicated in Table 1, demographic variables of age ($r=.290, p<.01$) and tenure ($r=.359, p<.05$) are correlated with the career satisfaction. Therefore, the hypotheses related to these outcome variables were tested with multiple hierarchical regression analysis to control the effects of those demographic factors. Moreover, as suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986), mediating effect of networking behaviour was tested by using multiple hierarchical regression analysis. Hypothesis 1 of the study predicted that PSS has a positive relation with networking behaviour. As shown in Table 2, PSS has a positive relationship with networking behaviour ($Beta= .799, p<.05$). Therefore, empirical results provide a strong support for Hypothesis 1 of the study.

Table 2. Hierarchical regression for the PSS-NB relationship

Outcome	Networking Behaviour	
Predictors		
<i>Step-1</i>		
Age	.342*	
Tenure	.079	
<i>Step-2</i>		
Age		.310*
Tenure		.061
Perceived Supervisor Support		.799*
Adjusted R ²	.149*	.298*
R ² Change	.157	.150
F Statistic	6.617*	10.324*

Source: Survey data *= $p<.05$

Hypothesis 2 proposed that the perceived supervisor support has a positive relationship with career satisfaction. As indicated in Table 3, perceived supervisor support is positively related with career satisfaction of employees

after controlling effects of age and tenure (Beta= .611, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis 2 of the study is accepted. Hypothesis 3 of the study suggested that the networking behavior is positively associated with career satisfaction of employees. As shown in Table 3, networking behavior is significantly correlated with career satisfaction of employees (Beta= .678, $p < 0.05$) which supports hypothesis 3 of the study.

Hypothesis 4 of the study predicts that the networking behavior mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and career satisfaction. The mediation effect was measured with the guidelines recommended by Baron & Kenny (1986). Firstly, the independent variable (PSS) and mediator (networking behavior) must each be significantly related to the dependent variable (career satisfaction). The results of testing hypotheses 2 and 3 show that PSS and networking behavior are significantly correlated with career satisfaction. Therefore, the first condition of mediation was met. Secondly, the independent variable (PSS) must be significantly related to the proposed mediator. As indicated in Table 2, PSS has a significant positive relationship with networking behavior after controlling for the effects of age and tenure (Beta = .799, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, second condition of mediation is fulfilled. Thirdly, the relationship between the independent variable (PSS) and the dependent variable (career satisfaction) should be significantly weaker (partial mediation) or non-significant (full mediation) when the proposed mediator is included in the regression equation. The results are presented in Table 3. In this step the independent variable and the mediator variable (networking behavior) were entered into the equation. As indicated in step-2 of Table 3, there is a significant positive relationship between PSS and career satisfaction prior to entering the mediator variable (Beta= .611, $p < 0.01$). However, after controlling the effect of networking behavior, the Beta weight decreased significantly in step 3 (Beta=.532, $p < 0.05$). Thus, networking behavior partially mediates the relationship between PSS and career satisfaction. Overall, this study accepts all four hypotheses.

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression for the Mediation of NB between PSS and CS

Outcome	Career Satisfaction		
Predictors			
<i>Step-1</i>			
Age	.289*		
Tenure	.359*		
<i>Step-2</i>			
Age		.270*	.235*
Tenure		.317*	.293*
Perceived Supervisor Support		.611*	.532*
Networking Behaviour		–	.678*
Adjusted R ²	.167*	.191*	.232*
R ² Change	.143	.025	.046
F Statistic			

Source: Survey data *= $p < .05$

4. Discussion

This study explored the contribution that employees and their supervisors can make to employee career satisfaction and the mechanisms by which these relationships occur. This objective was achieved by testing the relationships proposed by the extended model of social cognitive career theory (Lent and Brown, 2006) and the integrative model of proactive career behaviours (Crant, 2000). The study also addressed how PSS relates to individual networking behaviour. This objective was achieved by exploring the reciprocal relationships proposed by the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Consistent with the general argument that PSS is positively related to the career self-management behaviours (Seibert et al., 1999; Sturges et al., 2005); this study found that PSS has a positive relationship with networking behaviour after controlling demographic variables of age and tenure of employees. This means that when employees perceive that they are supported by their supervisors for career development, the employees are motivated to build contacts with people who can influence their career development. Together, these relationships support the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). That is,

being proactive about promoting one's career within the organization by developing networks with people may act as a form of reciprocity for PSS received from their organization (Seibert et al., 1999; Sturges et al., 2005).

Consistent with previous research (Allen et al., 2004; Aryee et al., 1999; Colarelli & Bishop, 1990; Frye & Breugh, 2004; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Igbaria & Wormley, 1992; Jiang & Klein, 2000; Yarnall, 1998), this study also found that PSS is significantly and positively related to career satisfaction of employees. This result supports the premise made by the extended model of social cognitive career theory (Lent and Brown, 2006) that goal relevant environment support such as PSS will be directly related career satisfaction. The empirical findings of this study reveal that the networking behaviour is positively related to the career satisfaction of employees. This suggests that the employees feel satisfied about their careers when they involve in building contacts with people who can influence their careers. This outcome supports the extended model of social cognitive career theory which states the context specific proactive behaviours, such as participation in career self-management behaviours such as networking directed at achieving personally valued goals in the career domain, are expected to promote an individual's career satisfaction (Crant, 2000; Lent & Brown, 2006; Seibert et al., 1999). This research outcome suggests that the employees tend to build contacts with influential people when they perceive that they receive support from their supervisors, in turn they employees are satisfied with their careers. This result provides support for the extended model of social cognitive career theory (Lent & Brown, 2006) and the model of proactive behavior (Crant, 2000). Referring to the extended model of social cognitive career theory goal specific environmental support such as PSS may indirectly impact employee career satisfaction through goal pursuit (career self-management behaviors such as networking). The model of proactive behaviors (Crant, 2000) predicts that contextual factors, such as PSS and resources, will facilitate an individual's proactive career behaviors like networking behavior and career satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

This study proposed that the supervisor support promotes employees networking behavior in turn employees feel satisfied with their careers.

Moreover, the results suggest that employee involvement with networking behavior leads to their career satisfaction. These results suggest that the supervisor support and supporting employees to build relations with people who can influence their careers may experience most success in facilitating employee career satisfaction.

5.1 Practical implications

These findings provide some strategies for organizations to promote employees furthering their careers within the organization and to build employee career satisfaction. The provision of supervisor support is a key factor that encourages employees' furthering their careers within the organization by building relationships with people who can influence their careers. Moreover, if organizations provide context for employees to involve in networking behavior, they tend to feel career satisfaction. Therefore, current study suggests that PSS promotes employees to involve in networking behavior which may experience greater success in facilitating employee career satisfaction.

5.2 Study limitations

Although the study has made some important contributions to the theory and practice of career development, it has some minor limitations. The selected sample of employees consisted mainly of middle managers of commercial banks in Sri Lanka. These managers usually have more opportunities for career development and are involved in career self-management behaviors, so their expectations may be quite different to employees at different levels in the organization. Therefore, there is a need to investigate employees at different levels of the organization and to see how provision/no provision of supervisor support influences their career satisfaction. This limitation may affect the generalizability of the findings to other managerial and non-managerial levels within the same industry. The study addresses this limitation to a certain extent with a broad definition given for the middle manager. That is, middle managers of this study consist of employment categories such as branch manager, assistant manager, manager, and sectional heads. Similarly, this may be the case for different country contexts since prior studies have shown that

there are differences between countries in terms of attitudes and behaviors (Kickul, Scott, & Belgio, 2004; Yu & Egri, 2005). Therefore, findings cannot be generalized to other countries. The research was limited to a cross-sectional study. Therefore, as with all cross-sectional studies, no causality between variables is implied by this study.

5.3 Implications for future research

Future studies could be conducted with a greater representation of different levels of employees in an organizational hierarchy to improve the generalizability of findings to other contexts. In addition, to increase the generalizability, more studies in various industries representing diverse employee groups are needed. Moreover, similar studies should be conducted in other emerging economies to further strengthen the knowledge in this research area. To avoid bias due to a common source, future studies should be conducted based on the information from various sources such as employees and their seniors and juniors. Moreover, a qualitative study is worthwhile to provide further support for the findings of this study. This study could be expanded by inclusion of other outcome variables such as commitment and subjective motivation. This study could be extended to other career self-management behaviors such as positioning behavior, influence behavior, visibility behavior, mobility behavior, and boundary management.

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