
**INFLUENCE OF KNOWLEDGE WORKER'S HUMAN CAPITAL
ON CAREER SUCCESS IN CHINA**

ZHANG LI

UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA

2011

Influence of knowledge worker's human capital on career success in
China

A thesis submitted to the College of Business in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
Master of Human Resource Management
Universiti Utara Malaysia

By

ZHANG LI

© ZHANG LI, 2011. All rights reserved.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

I hereby declare that any valuable contributions and all resources have been used as an acknowledgement to this thesis research.

ZHANG LI
806350
College of Business
University Utara Malaysia
06010 Sintok
Kedah Darul Aman

June 16, 2011

PERMISSION TO USE

In representing this thesis in partial fulfillment of the post graduate degree from Universiti Utara Malaysia, I agree that the University Library make it freely available for inspection. I future agree that permission of copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by my supervisors or, in their absence, by the Dean of College of Business. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to Universiti Utara Malaysia for any scholarly use which may be made of any material from my thesis.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other use of materials in this thesis, in whole or in part should be addressed to:

Dean of Research & Postgraduate Studies

College of Business

Universiti Utara Malaysia

06010 Sintok

Kedah Darul Aman

ABSTRACT

With the development of globalization and knowledge economy, knowledge has become the strategic resources of company to create value for the enterprises and it is essential element of the enterprises core competitiveness . Especially now , knowledge workers play more and more important role in the enterprises. However, since 2008, the global financial crisis out breaking, more and more workers will face choose re-employment which also including those knowledge workers with highly education and skills. Therefore, exploring the relationships between human capital and career success of knowledge workers is particularly necessary.

This paper develops human capital scale through literature reviews. And with the questionnaire survey and statistics analysis of knowledge workers in Liaoning, Shandong and Shanghai provinces to make final human capital scale and at last tries to explore the relationships between human capital and career success of knowledge workers in China.

Key Words: Human Capital, Career Success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my gratitude to my project supervisor, Dr. Nozaruwa for her valuable support, contribution and guidance.

I wish to thank Dr Ismail Lebai Othman for his input and advice during the Research Methodology class. Special thanks are also extended to all lecturers in the Human Resource Management Group, College of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia who had helped me in getting through the hard time, also for their useful knowledge and information.

I am also wish to acknowledge the support of my respected parents. Their love, encouragement, support and sacrifice have been exemplary. Their concerns on my education as well as their continuous support had contributed in the success of this study.

Lastly, I am grateful for the encouragement that I received from all of my friends for the unconditional love in supporting my quest for knowledge has been extraordinary.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Research Questions.....	5
1.4 Research Objectives.....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study	5
1.6 Organization of Remaining Chapters.....	9
1.7 Conclusion.....	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Career Success.....	11
2.2.1 Subjective Career Success	18
2.2.2 Objective Career Success.....	22
2.3 Human Capital.....	26
2.31 Dominant Human Capital.....	37
2.32 Recessive Human Capital.....	38
2.4 The Relationship between Human Capital and Career Success.....	39
2.5Research Framework.....	43

2.6 Conclusion.....	43
 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....44	
3.1 Introduction.....	44
3.2 Research Design.....	44
3.3 Measurement.....	45
3.4 Source of Data.....	47
3.5 Sampling Design.....	47
3.6 Data Collection Procedure.....	48
3.6.1 Reliability and validity.....	49
3.7 Data analysis method.....	50
3.7.1 Descriptive Statistics.....	51
3.7.2 Correlation Analysis.....	51
3.8 Conclusion.....	53
 CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS.....54	
4.1 Introduction.....	54
4.2 Overview of Collecting Data.....	54
4.3 Respondents Profile.....	55
4.4 Goodness of Measure.....	57
4.4.1 Reliability Analysis.....	57
4.4.1.1 Reliability Analysis of Human Capital.....	57
4.4.1.2 Reliability Analysis of Career Success.....	58
4.4.2 Descriptive Analysis.....	59
4.4.2.1 Descriptive Analysis of Human Capital.....	60
4.4.2.2 Descriptive Analysis of Career Success.....	61
4.5 Major Findings.....	61
4.51 Hypothesis testing.....	61
4.6 Summary of the Findings.....	65

4.7 Conclusion.....	66
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION.....67	
5.1 Introduction.....	67
5.2 Discussion of the Findings.....	67
5.4 Recommendations.....	72
5.5 Limitation to this Study.....	74
5.6 Conclusion.....	75
REFERENCE.....76	
APPENDIX.....84	

LIST OF TABLE

No.	Title	Page
2.1	Research Framework	43
3.1	Questionnaire Structure	46
4.1	Profile of Respondents	56
4.2	Reliability Analysis of Human Capital	58
4.3	Reliability Analysis of Career Success	59
4.4	Descriptive Statistics of Dominant Human Capital	60
4.5	Descriptive and correlation analysis results of Career Success	61
4.6	Correlation analysis of Human capital and Career success	62
4.7	Correlation analysis of each variable	65
4.8	Summary of Findings	66

LIST OF FIGURES

No	Title	page
2.1	Model of human capital characteristics and employment	33

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description of Abbreviation
CS	Career Success
HC	Human Capital
OCS	Objective Career Success
SCS	Subjective Career Success
DHC	Dominant Human Capital
RDC	Recessive Human Capital
OED	Oxford English Dictionary,
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Career is an important part through people's life. It is about a people's occupational history and become more and more important in people's life now. Career success is of concern not only to individuals but also to organizations because employees' career success can eventually contribute to organization success. Therefore, it is important to both individual and organization. As a manager, his main responsibility is to manage his or her subordinates and as the subordinate, his or her main concern is to manage his own career life. It's important for the managers and employees to understand and manage their own career effectively and help organization to achieve success in the end.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the key assets which most firms competed with were physical assets. Of the top 15 firms worldwide in market capitalization in 1928, 10 owed their success to ownership of natural physical assets including minerals, oil, and land. As the 20th century progressed, the physical assets shifted from natural resources to plants and equipment, and financial assets became more important as determinants of competitive advantage (Beames, 2003). Firms such as IBM, AT&T, GM, Eastman Kodak and Sears Roebuck emerged as the world's most valuable firms by 1969 on the basis of the financial assets — i.e. the equity and debt capacity — to

The contents of
the thesis is for
internal user
only

REFERENCE

Arthur. M. K. S. & Wilderom, C. (2005). Career success in a boundaryless career world. *Journal of organizational Behavior*, Vol. 26, pp. 177 – 200.

Arthur. M. B, Han. D. T, & Lawrence. B. S (1989). Handboof of career theory. *New York: Cambridge University Press.*

Atkinson, C. (2002). Career management and the changing psychological contract, *Career Development International*, Vol. 7, No 1, pp. 14 -23.

Baruch, Y. (2004). Transforming careers: from linear to multidirectional career paths. Organizational and individual perspectives. *Career Development International*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 58-73.

Beames. C. (2003). *Managing Your Human Capital: The Ultimate Determinant of Organizational Performance?* Corporate Psychologist Principal, WRDI Institute Pty. Ltd.

Becker, G. S (1964, 1993, 3rd edit). Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education. *Chicago, University of Chicago Press.*

Becker, G. S. (1987). Human Capital in Beijing. *Beijing University Press.*

Bib-Shiaw J, Chrisfina Yu-Ping W, & Yen-Hao C. (2006). Knowledge flows and performance of multinational subsidiaries: the perspective of human capital. *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 2, pp. 225-244.

Bin. Y. (2005). *Evolution Research of Enterprises Human Capital.*

Boxman, E. A. W., De Graaf, P. M., and Flap, H. D. (1991). The impact of social and human capital on the income attainment of Dutch managers. *Social Networks*, Vol. 13, pp. 51—73.

Browning, K. (2007). Conflict management and resolution. *Retrieved from http://www.AssociatedContent.com*

Cascio, W. E. (1991). Applied Psychology in Personnel Management (4th edit). *Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice Hall.*

Cavana, R., Delahaye, B. L., & Sekaran, U. (2001). Applied business research.

Qualitative and quantitative methods. *New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.*

Chen Y. K, (2007). *Social Capital, Human Capital, and Career Success in Public Relations in Taiwan*. San Francisco, CA.

Cohen, J. (1988). Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences. Second Edition. *Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.*

Cox, T. H., & Harquail, C. V. (1991). Career paths and career success in the early career stages of male and female MBAs. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 39, 54-75.

David P, Lepark, Scott. A & Snell. (1999). The human resource architecture toward a theory-of human capital allocation and development. *Academy of Management Review*, V01. 24, pp. 13-48.

Dreher. G. and Ash, R. (1990). A comparative study of mentoring among men and women in managerial, professional, and technical positions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 75, pp. 39-46.

Eby, L. T. M. Butts. A Lockwood (2003). Predictors of Success in the era of boundaryless careers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 24, No. 5, pp. 689—708.

Friedman.S. D. & Greenhaus. J. H (2000). Allies or enemies, How choices about work an family affect the quality if men's and women's 1ires. *New York: Oxford University Press.*

Greenhaus. J. Parasuraman, S. & Wormley. W. (1990). Effects of race on organizational experiences, job performance evaluations, and career outcomes, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 64 – 86.

Grossman, R. J. (2000). Measuring Up: Appropriate Metrics Help HR Prove Its Worth. *HR Magazine*, Vol. 45(1), pp. 28—35.

Gui-lan. Y. & Hong-yu. W. (2008). The research of worker's human capital measurement and its economy value. Vol. 8, pp. 221—228.

Gutteridge, T. G. (1973). Predicting career success of graduate business school alumni. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol.16, 129-137.

Hall, D. T. (2002). Careers in and out of organizations. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hall, D. & Moss, J. (1998). The new protean career contract: Helping organizations and employees, *Organizational Dynamics*. 6, 3, pp. 22 - 37.

Hassan. B. (2007). Career success, The effects of human capital, person–environment fit and organizational support. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. Vol. 22, No. 8, pp. 741-765.

Hay, A & Hodgkinson, (2006). Exploring MBA career success. *Career Development International*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 108 -124.

Heredia. A. I. B. (2009). Determinants of Career Success for Engineering Technology Program Graduates.

Heslin. P. (2005), Conceptualizing and evaluating career success, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 26, pp. 113 - 136.

Hetty, I. (2004), The more you can get the better, *Career Development International*. Vol.9, No. 6, pp. 578 – 594.

Hirotaka Tekeuchi & Nonaka Shimizu. (2006). The research of knowledge management theories and cases.

Hughes, E. C. (1937). Institutional office and the person. American. *Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 43, pp. 404–413.

Hughes, E. C. (1958). Men and their work. *Glencoe: Free Press*.

Jaskolka. G. Beyer J.M & Trice. H. M. (1985). Measuring and predicting managerial success. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 26, pp. 189-205.

Judge T. A, Cable D. M, Boudreau J. W., & Bretz R. D. (1995). An empirical investigation of the predictors of executive career success. *PERSONNEL PSYCHOLOGY*. Vol. 48, pp. 485—519.

Judge, T. A., & Bretz, R. D. (1994). Political influence behavior and career success. *Journal of Management*, Vol. 20, pp. 43-65.

Judge. TA, Higgins. CA, Thoresen. CJ& Barrick, MR. (1999). The big five personal traits, general mental ability and career success across the life span. *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 52, pp. 621-652.

Keeton. K. B. (1996). Characterist ics of successful women managers and professionals in local government: a national survey. *Women in Management*

Review. 11(3). 27-34.

Kirchmeyer, C. (1998). Determinants of managerial career success: evidence and explanation of male/female differences. *Journal of Management*, 24(6), 73-92.

Hong-ying. L. (2008). Human Capital Research of Enterprises-based on the emspirit analysis. Vol. 10, pp. 275.

Lyness, K. S., & Thompson, D. E. (2000). Climbing the corporate ladder: do female and male executives follow the same route? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 86–101.

Magid Igbaria & Laku Chidambaram. (1997). The impact of gender on career success of information systems professionals-A human capital perspective. *Information Technology & People*, Vol. 10(1), pp. 63—86.

Mayo. A. (2000). The role of employee development in the growth of intellectual capital. *Personnel Review*, Vol. 29, pp. 1-9.

Ming-jie. R. (1999). Management: Modern Perspectives. Shanghai. *Shanghai Renmin Press*.

Nabi, G (2001). The relationship between HRM, social support and subjective career success among men and women. *International Journal of Manpower*, Vol. 22, No. 5, pp. 454 – 474.

Nabi, G. (1999). An investigation into the differential profile of predictors of objective and subjective career success, *Career Development International*, Vol. 4, pp. 212 - 224

Naisbitt, J. & Aburdene, P. (1990). Megatrends (2000). New York: William Morrow.

Nai-zhuo. X. & Gang. D. (2005). Establishing and Consolidating Capitals' Core Competence Through Strategic Human Resource Management. *Science and Technology management* Vol. 3, pp. 118-121.

Nicholson N, (2005). Playing to win: Biological imperatives, self—regulation and trade—offs in the game of career success. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 26, pp. 137—154.

Ning. Y. (2009). The relationship between Chinese knowledge work's human

capital and career success.

Nunnally, J. C, & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd edit). *New York: McGraw-Hill.*

OED (1989). *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition. *Oxford: Clarendon Press.*

Peluchette, J. V. E., & Jeanquart, S. (2000). Professionals' use of different mentor sources at various career stages: implications for career success, *Journal of Social Psychology*, 140, 549–564.

PF Drucker (1959). *Landmarks of Tomorrow: A Report on the New Post—Modern World*. *New York: Harper&Row*, pp. 249.

Pfeffer, J. & Ross, J. (1982). The effects of marriage and a working wife on occupational and wage attainment. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 27, pp. 66-80.

Poon, J. (2004). Career commitment and career success: moderating role of emotion perception, *Career Development International*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 374 – 390.

Psacharopoulos, G. (1985). Returns to education: A further international update and implications. *Journal of Human Resources*, Vol. 20, pp. 583-604.

Robbins, A. (2003). *Giant steps*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Wayne. S. J., Liden, R. C., Keraimer, M. L. & Graf, I. K. (1999). The role of human capital, motivation and supervisor sponsorship in predicting career success. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. Vol. 20, pp. 577-595.

Schultz. T. W. (1990). *Human Capital Investment: Roles of Education and Study* fMJ. *Beijing: Commercial Press*. pp. 52-53.

Seibert SE & Kraimer ML (2002). The five—factor model of personality and career success. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol.58, pp.1—21.

Sekaran, U. (1992). *Research methods for business - a skill-building approach*. *New York: John Wiley*.

Sekaran, U. (2000). *Research Methods for Business*. *USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.*

Sekaran, U. (2003). *Research methods for business* (4th edit). *Hoboken, NJ: John*

Wiley & Sons.

Snow C. C & Snell S. A (1993). Staffing as strategy, Personnel selection in Organizations. pp. 448—478.

Tharenou, P. Latimar, S. & Conroy (1994). Influences on women's and men's Journal, Vol. 37(4), pp. 899—931

Thomas W. H. N. G, Lill. J. T, Eby, Sorensen. K. L. & Feldman. D. C. (2005). Predictors of objective and subjective career success: a meta—analysis. *Personnel Psychology*. 58:367-408.

Turner, R. H. (1960). Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System. American Sociological Review, 25(6), 855-862.

Van M, J. & Schein, E. (1975). Improving the quality of work life: Career development, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*.

Wang, J. (2001). Human Capital and Economic Growth —Theory and Demonstration. *Beijing: China Financial & Economic Publishing*.

Whitely, W. Dougherty, T. W. & Dreher, G. F. (1991). Relationship of career mentoring and socioeconomic origin to Managers' and professionals' early career progress. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 34, pp. 331-351.

Wright, P.M. & Snell, S.A (1991). Toward an Integrative View of Strategic Human Resource Management. *Human Resource Management Review*. Vol. 1, pp. 203—225.

Yi. Z. (2008). Research of organization's core competitiveness based on human capital. Vol. 10, pp. 87—90.

Yu-hui. G. (2008). Research of the Relationship Model between Top Management Team and nterprise Performance Based on Human Capital Value Factors. Vol. 25, No. 9, pp. 171—176.

Yu-lin. G. (2002). An analysis on incentive effect of knowledge worker. *Contemporary Finance & Economics*, Vol. 7, pp. 84—90.

Zeng-yao. Z. (2002). The Composition and Function in Board of Directors.

Management World, Vol. 3, pp. 125-129,144.

Zhong-jun. W. (2006). The Relationship Research Between Social Capital And Career Success of Employees.

Zhong-jun. W. & Li-rong. L. (2005). The relationship research between social capita and career success in the era of knowledge economy. *Foreign economic and management*, Vol. 27, pp.18-23.

Zhong-ming. L. (1999). Human Capital-A theory Frame and Explanation to Some Questions in China. *Beijing: Economic Science Press*, Vol.12, pp. 82—83.

Zhou. Z. (1991). Human capital investment cost-benefit analysis. Shanghai: Shanghai Finance University Press

Zhu-lan. F. (2002). On the Value of Human Capital and Institutional Analysis. *Acadamic Monthly*, Vol. 10, pp. 26-32.

Ziglar, Z. (1997). Over the top. Atlanta, CA: *Thomas Nelson*.

Zikmund, W. (2003). Business Research Methods. Mason, Ohio. Thompson-South. Western.