The prediction of objective career success based on psychological data.

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Abstract

Objective. Psychology has long recognized the role psychological factors play in predicting objective career success (Judge Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007). However, researches (1) study psychological determinants of success - personality, motives and cognitive ability - separately, missing out on interaction effect, (2) are conducted using global framework, like the FFM, preventing granular understanding, (3) lack practical usefulness for business decisions makers. The purpose of this study is then twofold: it aims, first, at identifying the personality, motives and cognitive predictors of objective career success at facet-level and to determine potential interaction between them, and, second, at developing an algorithm predictive of success.

Methods. For our study, 452 participants completed a questionnaire measuring several objective career success variables. They also took a series of psychometric tests of an online assessment platform, measuring personality traits, motives and cognitive abilities. Data were analyzed using linear regression and hierarchical models. At step one, analysis were conducted to identify psychological predictors of objective career success. At step two, we created an algorithm computing a 'potential for career success' score - ranging from 0 to 100, combining predictors isolated at step one.

Results. We identified facets of extraversion, openness and conscientiousness, as well as risk-taking, self-transcendence and power-related motives, that have moderate to large effect on success. Also, we observed evidence of an interaction effect between personality and motives. Finally, preliminary correlation studies show that the 'potential for career success' score computed by our algorithm correlates well with the training set ($r = .43$, $N = 452$), and replicates on other sets ($r = .35$, $N = 13\,000$).

Conclusion. Our study allows to understand the psychological factors explaining objective career success. Also, it contributes to reduce

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the gap between science and practice by proposing an algorithm predictive of career success, applicable by business practitioners.