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Friends With Professional Benefits:

A Quantitative Study of the Relationships Between Social Capital, Gender, and
Career Success in the University-to-Work Transition

Supervisor:

Émilie Lapointe

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Summary

This master thesis explores the relationships between social capital, gender, and career success in the university-to-work (UTW) transition. Through a quantitative self-reported survey, we have found positive relationships between social capital (operationalized as ‘social capital developmental behaviors’ and ‘network size and tie strength’) and career success (operationalized as the achievement of ‘positive work relationships’, ‘financial success’, and ‘work-life balance’) in the UTW transition. Furthermore, we have found that gender (operationalized as men vs. women) moderates the relationship between social capital and financial success, indicating that when it comes to achieving financial success, women benefit more from participating in social capital developmental behaviors than men do, and that women benefit more from having a larger network with stronger ties than men do. Lastly, we explored the relationship between gender and perceptions of subjective career success (operationalized as the importance aspect of ‘positive work relationships’, ‘work-life balance’, and ‘financial success’) in the UTW transition. Our findings suggest that in the UTW transition, men value financial success significantly more than women, while women value positive work relationships and work-life balance significantly more than men do.

In summary, this master thesis suggests that both men and women in the UTW transition benefit from investing in developing their social capital, but in different ways. Although there is a significant positive relationship between social capital and career success, men and women, it seems, follow somewhat different paths. Our findings also indicate that organizations should tailor their Employer Value Propositions (EVP) to their target demographic, in order to attract and retain talent.

1. Introduction

Existing research on the university-to-work (UTW) transition has explored factors that may influence one's success in entering the labor market. UTW refers to the transition from higher education to work (Ryan, 2001) and is arguably a research topic of growing importance, as there is an increasing occurrence of UTW transitions in today's modern context, with an average of 36.6% women and 31.2% men completing tertiary education in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (OECD, 2022a, 2022b).

Examples of factors that may influence one's career success during this transition include inescapable individual circumstances (socioeconomic status of one's family, current labor market conditions, etc.) and intentional conscious efforts (job search strategies, education attainment, etc.) (Defloor et al., 2015; Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2017). Previous research has also suggested that networking, a facet of social capital, may help facilitate this transition (Ng et al., 2019; Obukhova, & Lan, 2013). However, we still know relatively little about how this relationship between social capital and career success in the UTW transition is moderated by gender. The relationships between gender, social capital and career success are arguably important, as "[g]ender, through stereotypes, norms, and expectations, affects relationships and thus cannot but affect social capital" (Lips, 2012, p. 179).

Adler and Kwon (2002) posit that social capital may roughly be understood as "the goodwill that is engendered by the fabric of social relations and that can be mobilized to facilitate action" (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 17). They further argue that the breadth of social capital as a concept reflects a basic feature of social life; that social ties of one kind may be used for different purposes (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Friendships may for example be used for both work and non-work-related advice. There are many factors that can influence the utility of one's network, whether it's the number of connections that work in relevant fields, the level of seniority that these connections have in their respective organizations, or the strength of the connections themselves. Therefore, every network is different, and it is too broad to weigh everyone's networks equally (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

The social capital of many recent or upcoming graduates may still be relatively less developed compared to that of more established professionals, because they have had less time to participate in community activities, which help facilitate the development of social capital and soft skills (Andreas, 2018). This

makes it an interesting area to explore. Understanding the size and strength of network ties may help us better understand the successes and failures of an individual's ability to successfully navigate the UTW transition. Additionally, studying any efforts made to further develop and accrue more social capital may help us better understand some of the best practices for obtaining early career success.

Career success, also referred to as job success, encompasses “the real or perceived achievements individuals have accumulated as a result of their work experiences” (Judge et al., 1999, p. 621). Real or objective career success refers to measurable and therefore quantifiable attainments such as one's salary, position, and promotions (Heslin, 2003). Perceived or subjective career success is measured by an individual's reaction to their career experiences, such as sense of purpose and work-life balance, also referred to as career satisfaction (Heslin, 2005).

Researchers (e.g., Briscoe et al., 2021; Heslin, 2003; Heslin, 2005) have argued the importance of including subjective measures in addition to objective measures of career success, though the subjective side of career success is much harder to measure reliably and consistently (Greenhaus et al., 1990). Objective measures that compare salaries and promotions alone can be influenced and contaminated by outside variables (e.g. state of the economy, nature of the industry), and they are largely seen as deficient in their ability to capture all relevant facets of career success, as they ignore less tangible outcomes that are often desired, such as work-life balance and a sense of purpose at work (Campbell et al., 1970; Heslin, 2003).

Nevertheless, we narrowed the scope of this study to focus on subjective measures. To study objective measures such as salary, we would have to control for participants' job titles, industries, and locations, thus increasing the complexity, as GDPR laws might make this difficult. In addition, we felt that we might be able to learn more about individual perceptions of career success in the UTW transition beyond salary and promotion expectations. Previous research by Hupkens and colleagues (2021) studied changing perceptions of subjective career success across the lifespan. Their findings pointed to some common patterns, but their participants were separated into different ‘career processes’ based on age. Recognizing that not everyone follows the same timing in their careers, we hope to increase our understanding of early perceptions of subjective career success on the basis of the earliest career transition, rather than age.

When approaching career success in the UTW transition, there are certain measures of success that we expect to be particularly salient. Research specifically focused on the job satisfaction of recent university graduates indicates eight subdomains that are positively correlated with overall job satisfaction: satisfaction with pay, fringe benefits, general work environment, work relationships, intellectual challenge, job responsibilities, the possibility of professional development, and working hours (De Santis et al., 2021). Therefore, it may be important to tailor the measurements to the audience being analyzed. Due to the scope of this thesis however, we have chosen to limit our measures to those of financial success, positive work relationships and work-life balance.

Building on this, our analysis concentrates on understanding how the relationships between our chosen social capital and career success variables are moderated by gender during the UTW transition. Previous studies have found that women's network isolation may be a source of gender inequality in the workplace (Castilla, 2011; Ibarra, 1997). Moreover, studies have found that there are still significant gender gaps in terms of power and status, despite women's increased participation in the labor force (Stainback et al., 2016). Lastly, a study by Spurk and colleagues (2015) found that the gender composition of an individual's network was related to measures of subjective career success. Namely, men's networks on average consisted of a higher proportion of male to female supporters, which was then positively related to career success (Spurk et al., 2015). Indeed, perceived external marketability was slightly lower among female respondents, suggesting fruitful opportunities to support women in enhancing this particular area of career development (Spurk et al., 2015).

However, there is room for further exploration with regard to gender and social capital theory. Many of these studies look at individuals' careers as a whole in order to find overarching trends and patterns, and as such the pool of research explicitly exploring the early stages of individuals' careers may still be relatively smaller. Therefore, while some research points to the fact that social capital may help facilitate this transition from university to work (Ng et al., 2019; Obukhova, & Lan, 2013), much still remains to be explored, especially with respect to gender.

In their meta-analysis, Ng et al. (2005) found evidence to suggest that educational investments, rather than work experience, showed greater payoffs for women than for men, and called for more research on women and career success

(Ng et al., 2005; Traavik & Richardsen, 2010). Other studies have found that gender is related to salary and salary increases (Cox & Harquail, 1991; Melamed, 1995). Moreover, studies have found evidence to suggest that biased perceptions and expectations might make it more difficult for women to form positive reputations that would lead to positive work relationships. In turn, this isolation from networks of resources, information, and opportunities to establish a reputation challenges women in the pursuit of attaining career success. (Briscoe & Kellog, 2011; Correll et al., 2014; Shin & Kim, 2021).

From this, we gather that gender remains an important topic for study in the context of career success. Though wage gaps and workplace inequalities are well documented in previous research, we again note that many of these studies predominantly focus on individuals' careers as whole. Recently, some researchers have highlighted the need to focus more on the earlier career stages (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021), and thus on studying the effects of gender specifically in the UTW transition. Such studies may help to shed new light on how social capital impacts career success, and how women and men navigate their careers.

1.1 Research Goals

Based on current research on the topics briefly introduced, we have noticed an opportunity to further explore the relationships between gender, social capital, and career success in the UTW transition. Therefore, our goal for this study is to examine the moderating effect of gender on the relationships between social capital variables and subjective career success variables. Due to the scope of our research, we limit this study to exploring social capital development behaviors, network size and tie strength, and subjective measures of career success that are particularly salient in the UTW transition (i.e., importance and achievement of financial success, positive work relationships, and work-life balance) (De Santis et al., 2021). Thus, our study aims to make two contributions to existing literature and practical applications:

First, we add to the field of research on the UTW transition by analyzing the moderating effect that gender has on the relationship between social capital and subjective career success during the UTW transition. Just as gender has been found to impact career progression in terms of salary and the “glass ceiling effect” as a whole (Bertrand et al., 2019), we intend to shed more light on the effect of gender on subjective success attainment in this crucial first career stage.

Second, our study may provide some guidance to individuals navigating the UTW transition in search of early success. That is, we believe our data will present some pattern(s) of behavior in leveraging one's network that offer a greater positive impact on career success, and that these perceived patterns will vary across gender. Our research may provide some insights that new graduates may find useful, the aim being to identify potential inequalities on the basis of gender in their networking and job search behaviors. Such insights may be used to form actionable items, and to take positive action towards career success.

If our research suggests for example, a pattern where men value and achieve financial success more than women as a result of leveraging their social capital, one may take this as a suggestion for recent female graduates too: They may be well advised to pay more attention to this aspect of career success when engaging in networking behaviors. Women who do value financial success, might take a more proactive approach to developing their social capital, thus increasing their chances of monetary success. Similarly, such results could be valuable for recruiters wanting to understand what motivates young professionals.

2. Theory

We turn to previous research to understand what already exists in the area and the dynamics between social capital and career success.

The first part of this section looks at the theoretical framework of *social capital theory*. We have chosen this theory because it is suitable for explaining the underlying connection between networking variables and career success in our research, and because it may provide a deeper understanding of our findings. With social capital, we will be focusing on social capital developmental behaviors, as well as on network size and tie strength. We have chosen to examine the impact of these variables based on their importance in social capital literature (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

The second part of this section provides a theoretical background to *career success*. With career success, we will be focusing on both the importance aspect and the achievement aspect of financial success, positive work relationships, and work-life balance. The importance aspect refers to how important one considers a certain type of career success, while the achievement aspect refers to how happy one is with the level of achievement one has obtained for each. As previously mentioned, we have chosen to examine these variables based on their importance

in literature, focusing on exploring the experience of recent university graduates (De Santis et al., 2021).

The third part of this section deals with the *UTW transition*. We present and elaborate on the theoretical model of career transitions (Super, 1957). The fourth part of this section will cover relevant research on the concept of *gender*, as it pertains to our thesis.

Finally, the last part of this section concerns our research model and hypotheses, as well as an elaboration on the variables included in this model. Thus, this part of the paper represents a central area of study and provides further context for our research.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Social Capital Theory

The core assumption guiding social capital research is that goodwill, which is the sympathy, trust, and forgiveness offered to us by others, is a valuable resource (defined simply as what enables individuals to achieve their goals; Halbesleben et al., 2014) that constitutes social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002). The effects of goodwill stem from the information, influence, and solidarity made available to us, resulting in different value for different individuals, depending on several moderating factors (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Social capital depends on the social structure that actors are located in (Adler & Kwon, 2002). That is, social capital is a resource made available to actors as a function of their location in the structure of their social relations. There are three different dimensions of social structure, rooted in different relations: Market relations, where products or services are traded or exchanged for money, hierarchical relations, where obedience is exchanged for security, and social relations, where favors and gifts are exchanged. Social relations underlie the concept of social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

A direct benefit of social capital is information: social capital facilitates access to broader sources of information and improves its quality (Adler & Kwon, 2002). For example, network research has shown that network ties help actors gain access to information about job opportunities (Boxman et al., 1991; Burt, 1992; Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997; Granovetter, 1973; Lin et al., 1981;

Meyerson, 1994). Other benefits of social capital may include increased influence, power, and control, as well as solidarity from others (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Because social capital is a resource made available to the individual through their social relations, and networking is one way of building social relations, participating in networking behaviors is one way of building social capital. Thus, in order to gain access to the benefits associated with increased social capital, individuals may benefit from actively participating in networking behaviors. Moreover, the individual characteristics of a network may also help foster access to further resources (Forret & Dougherty, 2004).

2.2 Theoretical Background

2.2.1 Career Success

Subjective career success will depend on, and reflect, an individual's values and preferences for their own careers (Heslin, 2003; Hughes, 1958). Due to the inherently individualistic nature of this approach, it has been difficult for researchers to reach a consensus on what constitutes an adequate approach to measuring subjective career success. Greenhaus and colleagues (1990) most commonly operationalized career success as career satisfaction and developed a single five-item scale to measure this construct. Despite its popularity and wide use, other researchers have sought to improve it, such as Heslin's (2003) introduction of an other-referent aspect to supplement the original self-referent aspect. This is in line with Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory (SCT), which states that "individuals are motivated to evaluate the outcomes they achieve" and that "they attempt to do so by comparing their actions and outcomes to those of other people" (Heslin, 2003, p. 266).

Other researchers (Briscoe et al., 2021; Dries et al., 2008; Heslin, 2005; Judge et al., 1995; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009;) have recently proposed other approaches to measuring career success, such as the multi-faceted approach (e.g., Briscoe et al., 2021; Dries et al., 2008; Heslin, 2005), where career success is the summation of several subjective factors such as financial stability, work-life balance, and sense of achievement or contribution to one's organization. As Greenhaus and colleagues' (1990) single-faceted scale may be too narrow in its approach to measuring career success, multi-faceted measures may be preferred for their flexibility of relevance to a particular research question, as well as their

ability to cover a larger variety of personal definitions of career success (Briscoe et al., 2021). Therefore, it is recommended that a variety of measures be included in future research in order to obtain a more complete measure of career success, and those measures should be tailored to the area of research as necessary.

As previously mentioned, we have opted to focus on a multi-faceted approach to measuring subjective career success in this study. The advantages of this are two-fold. First, by focusing on facets that we believe are particularly salient for recent graduates (De Santis et al., 2021), we may obtain a more concise pool of data on the perceptions of career success of individuals in this demographic. Second, by focusing on subjective measures, we are better able to maintain the privacy and anonymity of participants in this study, thereby hopefully increasing the reliability and validity of responses (Ong & Weiss, 2000).

Lastly, we have included both the importance aspect and the achievement aspect of the measures of subjective career success because, as stated by Briscoe and colleagues (2021, p. 4), “People can be driven by certain aspirations without feeling fulfillment in that area; alternatively, they may experience high achievement on a certain dimension without attaching relatively greater importance.” Therefore, we believe “knowing the reality of the contrasting feelings of success for a particular career dimension” is important for us to understand any individual’s subjective career success (Briscoe et al., 2021, p. 4).

2.2.2 UTW: University-to-Work Transition

While the term UTW refers to the transition from higher education to work, the school-to-work (STW) transition is more broadly associated with the transition from high-school to work. As implied by the name, the STW transition typically refers to the “period between the end of compulsory schooling and the attainment of full-time, stable employment” (Ryan, 2001, p. 35). It is important to note that the terms UTW and STW are not synonymous, as they refer to two different points of transition for those pursuing higher education. Moreover, STW is often used as a more general term, while UTW is narrower. Both transitions can, however, be used to signify the first major stage of a larger model that encompasses the various career transitions throughout one’s adult life (Super, 1957).

Reviewing existing research on career transitions, much focus has been given to later career transition stages (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021) such as the advancement stage, which occurs after individuals settle into a career and start to build upon it (Super, 1957). As such, the UTW transition remains relatively underexplored in comparison to other career stages, warranting further exploration. This is also concurrent with our initial interest in studying participants who have completed some form of higher education.

2.2.3 Gender

Gender discrepancies in career success exist. For example, men tend to earn more and obtain higher status positions than women (Frear et al., 2018). Moreover, according to Kossek and colleagues (2017), there is a growing body of evidence supporting the notion that women are underrepresented in leadership and major institutions. While women make up half of the population, they make up less than 5% of CEOs and 19% of corporate board members (Catalyst, 2015). Women who have backgrounds similar to men are more likely to turn over and less likely to advance in STEM (science, technology, and math) fields (Lubinski et al., 2014). Thus, there is arguably a need for more research on women's career equality, a phenomenon reflecting the degree to which women, compared to men, have equal access to and participate in career opportunities and experience equal work and nonwork outcomes, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Ensuring women's career equality is important because research indicates that when women are better represented across organizations, both the individual women and the organization as a whole will benefit (Krishnan & Park, 2005).

Women tend to suffer from lack of access to important organizational contacts. As such, networking behavior is highlighted as an especially important strategy that women can utilize to break through the glass ceiling. By building relationships with others and extending their reach into the upper ranks of organizations, women might be able to gain access to more organizational contacts (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). However, while women have been encouraged to participate in networking behavior, previous research indicates that women and men do not benefit equally from the investments they make in their careers. Several different factors may contribute to the continued existence of unbalanced power structures in organizations (Forret & Dougherty, 2004).

Findings from Forret and Dougherty (2004) indicate that gender differences impact the utility of networking behavior as a career enhancing strategy. Consistent with previous research on male and female career attainment, involvement in networking behavior was found to be more beneficial for men's career progress than women's. Increasing internal visibility was significantly related to the number of promotions and total compensation for men, but not for women. Moreover, engaging in professional activities was positively related to total compensation for men, but not for women. Thus, this study (Forret & Dougherty, 2004) shows that while engaging in networking behaviors may be viewed as a promising career management strategy, networking behaviors are not as advantageous for women as for men. However, this study consisted of a sample of highly educated, full-time managerial and professional employees.

Another study, by van den Brink and Benschop (2013), found that both men and women may show a tendency to mobilize masculinity in organizational recruitment, thus contributing to the persistence of structural gender inequalities. Mobilizing masculinity refers to men's actions of aligning with other men in ways that benefit self, others, or both (van den Brink & Benschop, 2013, p. 466). Across the gender line, women mobilize masculinity by emulating men in order to avoid being negatively compared to men or otherwise discriminated against, based on organizational stereotypes that favor masculinity (van den Brink & Benschop, 2013). Furthermore, findings indicate that the gender practice of mobilizing femininities is a less common practice than mobilizing masculinities. Mobilizing femininities (in which women search for and support women candidates) in networking, while meant to counter gender inequalities, is precariously done and thus only partially successful (van den Brink & Benschop, 2013). However, it is important to note that this study took place exclusively in public universities in the Netherlands, and participants were all experienced members of their institutions (deans, vice-deans, HR managers, etc.).

Based on the aforementioned studies (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; van den Brink & Benschop, 2013) it therefore appears as though a potential avenue for further research is to explore the networking behaviors and perceptions of success among less established participants in the UTW transition, because while previous studies have produced interesting findings, the generalizability is uncertain.

By exploring the networking behaviors of participants in the UTW transition, underlying trends contributing to long term inequalities may be

identified and thus addressed directly, which is one aim of this thesis. A 2019 study (Cengage, 2019) used existing public data and a survey of 2,500 recent graduates (in the past 12 months) and upcoming graduates (in the next 12 months) in the U.S. across several majors (business, biological sciences, healthcare, humanities and social sciences, and STEM). Their results indicate that 96% of the men felt strongly that they would be able to land a new job in their fields within 6 months of graduation, compared to 91% of the women who were surveyed. The gender gap increases when it comes to salary expectations, with 75% of men feeling confident they would be able to land a job that meets their salary expectations, compared to 62% of the women (Cengage, 2019). Thus, it is arguably important to explore the networking behaviors of less established professionals because there is still more that can be done to make this first major career transition a more level playing field for everyone entering the workforce.

2.5 Research Model and Hypotheses

Figure 1, located at the end of this paper, presents our overall model to illustrate what our study will investigate. All study variables are included, though we are conducting separate tests for each hypothesis, as is explained in detail in the subsequent sections.

2.5.1 Social Capital and Career Success

As previously mentioned, social capital is a resource made available to actors as a function of their location in the structure of their social relations (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Adler and Kwon's (2002) broader definition suggests that this resource can be applicable for various ends, including moral and material support as well as work and non-work advice. In the realm of work advice, one may have more access to information about job opportunities as a result of one's network ties (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Indeed, there have been several studies that have found social capital influences career success (Adler & Kwon, 2002). It stands to reason, then, that social capital should continue to show a relationship to career success in this study as well. More specifically, networking is highlighted as an important facet of social capital theory and should present a similar influence on career success as the broader 'social capital' (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

More recent research lends further support to the notion that networking behavior should have a direct relationship to valuable career outcomes, as

participating in networking behavior is one means that individuals can use to develop their social capital (Forret & Dougherty, 2004) and networking is an important career self-management strategy associated with career success (Blickle et al., 2012; Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Kim, 2013; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Spurk et al., 2019; Wolff & Moser, 2009, 2010).

Networking is defined as “individuals’ attempts to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or career” (Forret & Dougherty, 2001, p. 284, cited in Davis et al., 2020, p. 2), and research has linked networking to career related outcomes such as job search success (Van Hoye et al., 2009; Wolff & Moser, 2010) and career satisfaction (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Wolff & Moser, 2009).

However, Dobrev and Merluzzi (2018) have argued that while previous research on social capital has highlighted the positive returns of social capital to specific career outcomes, there has been a lack of research on understanding how the pursuit and accrual of social capital, which is done via networking, may shape career trajectories. One way this could be accomplished is by taking a closer look at a stage early in one’s career trajectory. Therefore, we aim to contribute to filling this gap in research by investigating the relationships between social capital measures (social capital developmental behaviors and network size and tie strength) and subjective career success measures (achievement aspect of positive work relationships, work-life balance, and financial success), specifically in the UTW transition.

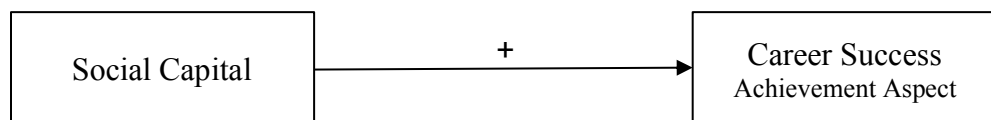
When measuring social capital, we focus on social capital developmental behaviors and network size and tie strength, which are established and valid measures of social capital (Ng & Feldman, 2010; Van Hoye et al., 2009). Because each individual’s network is unique, we recognize a necessity for research on social capital to include measures of both tie strength and network size. We also recognize the importance of factoring in one’s active social capital development behaviors, because such behaviors have been shown to lead to increased job attainment success (Defloor et al., 2015; Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2017).

For career success, we focus on positive work relationships, work-life balance, and financial success because literature on recent university graduates highlight these as significant facets of subjective career success for individuals currently undergoing the UTW transition (De Santis et al., 2021). Furthermore, we

focus only on the measures on the achievement aspect because we want to focus on career success outcomes, rather than perceptions of importance.

Consequently, in order to investigate the relationship between social capital and career success, this thesis focuses on social capital in terms of social capital developmental behaviors, as well as network size and tie strength, and career success in terms of subjective measures of achieving positive work relationships, work-life balance, and financial success. Therefore, based on social capital theory (Adler & Kwon, 2002) and aforementioned research, we hypothesize the following.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between social capital (i.e., social capital development behavior and network size and tie strength) and the achievement aspect of career success (i.e., positive work relationships, work-life balance, and financial success) in the UTW transition.



Model 1.1

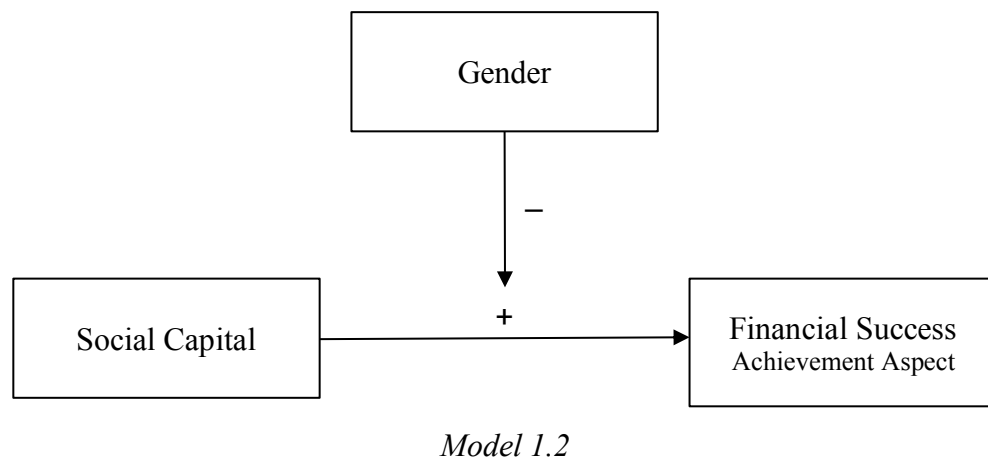
2.5.2 Gender as a Moderator

According to social capital theory (Adler & Kwon, 2002), participating in networking behaviors is one way of building social capital (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). Furthermore, due to its broad nature, social capital can come from any relation, both formal and informal. Thus, social capital theory encapsulates such instances where friendships and close personal ties can lead to information sharing, which in turn may lead to professional gains (Adler & Kwon, 2002). As such, Adler and Kwon (2002) emphasize the importance of understanding the content of one's network ties. They focused on the engendered norms and beliefs that are shared between ties, as well as the common abilities, but did not touch upon demographic differences and similarities as much. In the conversation about the content of one's network ties, it stands to reason that demographic variables like gender and age may have some underlying influence. Indeed, previous research has shown that gender has a moderating effect on the relationship

between networking behaviors (Spurk et al., 2015) and measures of career success (Cox & Harquail, 1991; Melamed, 1995).

In terms of gender differences when it comes to career success, existing research has shown that there is a major gender disparity in reports of financial success in particular, as women continue to earn less than men (Frear et al., 2018; OECD, 2013). As such, we expect that gender will have a significant moderating effect on the relationships between social capital development behaviors and network size and tie strength, and participants' achievement of financial success. Based on this, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2: Gender (men vs. women) will moderate the relationship between social capital variables and financial success such that this relationship is stronger (i.e., more positive) among men.



Since gender will be coded as 0 = Male, 1 = Female, Model 1.2 indicates a strong positive relationship for men and not women via the negative arrow.

We do not predict that gender will have a significant moderating effect on the relationships between the social capital variables and the other career success variables (positive work relationships, work-life balance) because previous research suggests that gender may not play a significant role in moderating these relationships.

We do not expect that gender will significantly moderate the relationship between our social capital variables and positive work relationships. A study performed by van Emmerik (2006) investigated gender differences in the creation

of different types of social capital. Findings from this study suggest that both men and women were effective in using resources to create soft social capital (i.e. positive work relationships), and that women were not better than men in the creation of soft social capital (van Emmerik, 2006).

Furthermore, we do not expect that gender will significantly moderate the relationship between our social capital variables and work-life balance. A study performed by Nakahori and colleagues (2021) found evidence to suggest that workplace social capital can help mitigate the association between depression and workplace and family stress in Japan. Their results showed that “[a]fter adjusting for workplace social capital, the associations between depression and... moderate family-to-work conflict declined” for both men and women, and were no longer significant (Nakahori et al., 2021, p. 726). These results suggest then, that while there may be a significant relationship between social capital and work-life balance, it is present for both men and women, meaning gender may not significantly moderate this relationship.

2.5.3 Gender and Career Success Variables

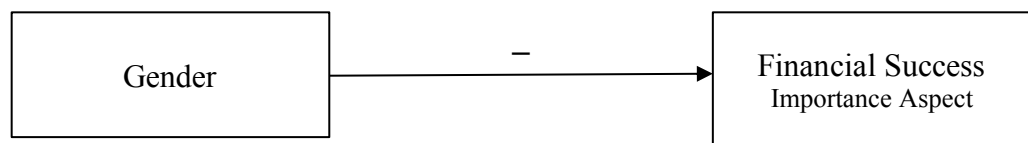
Furthermore, based on existing gender research (Cox & Harquail, 1991; Melamed, 1995), we hypothesize that gender will influence the extent to which people report certain aspects of subjective career success as important. That is, gender will be related to the importance aspect of subjective career success. This might be because men and women value different things, and as such will conceptualize success differently. This is further elaborated upon via more specific hypotheses as described in the subsequent sections. For each hypothesis, gender is quantified as 0 = Male, 1 = Female. As such, a negative relationship will indicate a stronger relationship towards men, and a positive relationship will indicate a stronger relationship towards women.

2.5.3.1 Gender and Financial Success

With regard to gender and financial success, existing research has found evidence to support the notion that money is a masculine value (Weisgram et al., 2010), and that men value financial success more than women do (Bird & Sapp, 2004; Eddleston & Powell, 2008). That is, research indicates that money is a more important resource for men than for women. As such, seeking financial success in a variety of ways is also more important for them. We therefore posit that men

will report placing greater value on financial success than women. However, in light of recent societal trends showing an increased interest in the financial aspect of career success among younger women entering the workforce (Ng & Wiesner, 2007; Schweitzer et al., 2014), we are curious to learn whether our study will produce the same results with participants who are currently going through the UTW transition. Based on this we present the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3.1: Men will value financial success more than women will, such that gender will have a negative relationship with financial success.

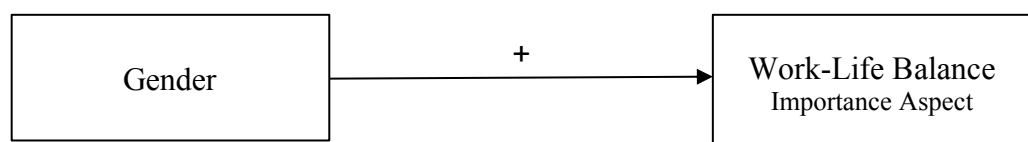


Model 1.3

2.5.3.2 Gender and Work-Life Balance

Furthermore, regarding gender and work-life balance, existing research indicates that women value work-life balance more than men do (Emslie & Hunt, 2009). That is, research indicates that work-life balance is a more important resource for women. Based on these findings we therefore hypothesize that women in this study will report placing greater value on work-life balance than men. Furthermore, because previous studies (such as Emslie & Hunt, 2009) have been largely focused on the experiences of more established men and women, we are curious to learn whether our study will produce the same results with participants who are currently navigating the UTW transition. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3.2: Women will value work-life balance more than men will, such that gender will have a positive relationship with work-life balance.

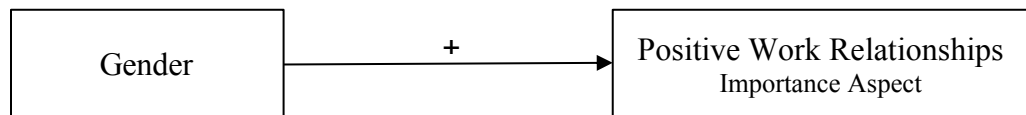


Model 1.4

2.5.3.3 Gender and Positive Work Relationships

Lastly, existing research on gender and positive work relationships suggests that women value positive work relationships more than men do (Inceoglu et al., 2012; Scandura, 1998; Shin & Kim, 2021; Warr, 2008). That is, research indicates that women value having pleasant people to work with and meeting people to a greater degree than men do (Warr, 2008). As such, positive work relationships appear to be a more important resource for women. Based on these findings we hypothesize that women will report placing greater value on positive work relationships than men do. Again, we are interested to learn whether our specific sample of participants currently going through the UTW transition will produce the same results as previous studies. We therefore present the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3.3: Women will value positive work relationships more than men will, such that gender will have a positive relationship with positive work relationships.



Model 1.5

3. Method

Based on the theoretical background presented, in the following we will discuss the methodology of the study by elaborating on our approach to design, data collection, and measures. Following this, the validity, reliability, and ethical considerations for this study will be addressed.

3.1 Research Design

Exploratory research designs seek to explain the relationships between variables in a situation that may be investigated through certain means, such as statistical testing (Saunders et al., 2019). As we are building our research on previously suggested relationships between social capital, career success and

gender, in the specific context of the UTW transition, an explanatory design is most suitable for this study.

Additionally, the nature of the research we are conducting and the amount of existing theory will impact our choice of research approach (Saunders et al., 2019). Due to the utilization of existing theories on social capital and career success, our design approach is most aligned with that of a deductive approach, rather than an inductive approach, where one would collect data before exploring and use it to develop a new theory (Saunders et al., 2019). The deductive approach is generally associated with quantitative research methods, where hypotheses are deduced and tested by quantifying attitudes, opinions, and behaviors (Bryman & Bell, 2015). By combining a deductive strategy with a quantitative research method, we can use a questionnaire or survey to collect data and make more generalized findings that can help to explain the relationships between variables (Wilson, 2014).

3.2 Data Collection

In line with many quantitative strategies, as well as our research goals, using a questionnaire to collect data has proven to be ideal (Saunders et al., 2019). More specifically, we have opted for a survey strategy with self-reported questionnaires administered through Qualtrics, a web-based tool that BI Norwegian Business School provided access to (See Appendix 2).

Regarding the timing for our data collection, we could either choose a cross-sectional approach or a longitudinal approach (Saunders et al., 2019). Due to the limited time frame available for this thesis, as well as the goals of our study, a cross-sectional approach was the most appropriate. A cross-sectional approach involves studying a phenomenon at a single point in time. A longitudinal approach on the other hand, allows one to investigate whether a phenomenon changes over time, thereby reducing potential error due to the use of a single rater or source, otherwise known as common method variance (CMV). The cross-sectional approach thereby raises a potential issue for CMV. Additionally, a cross-sectional approach may result in potential causal inference (CI), which is the ability to infer causation from observed empirical relations (Rindfleisch et al., 2008, p. 261). These two concerns are therefore addressed at a later point in this thesis.

3.3 Sample and Procedure

To test our hypotheses, we collected data from participants who recently completed some form of higher education, and who have been working in their first full-time job for no more than 3 years. This cut-off period was chosen in order to target participants who may be categorized as “recent graduates”, and who are therefore in the midst of the UTW transition (Turmo-Garuz et al., 2019).

Our sample was obtained through contacting university alumni at BI Norwegian Business School and other educational institutions, as well as heads of departments and universities’ social networks (e.g., Facebook and LinkedIn). We also made an informal announcement of the survey, through some connections in larger organizations known to hire substantial recent graduates every year. Moreover, we utilized our personal networks by posting the survey on our respective social media pages such as LinkedIn and Facebook, as well as digital communities such as Discord.

Our approach may thus be characterized as a combination of snowball recruiting as participants were referred to us through our network, and convenience sampling as we announced the study on various platforms and participants could self-select if they wanted to participate. It is important to note that because participants may come from different countries and our survey does not ask the participants to list their nationality, the results cannot be generalized to a specific location (Stratton, 2021). Additionally, our survey does not ask participants about the field in which they work, so the results cannot be corrected for industry trends. Potential limitations as a result of these methodological choices are discussed at a later point in this thesis.

The measures we used were originally published in English and therefore so was the questionnaire. Kahneman and Egan (2011) argue that participants should be able to answer questionnaires in their first language to prevent misunderstandings and avoid risks to the reliability of the results. As our approach to sample gathering was also conducted in English, and participants could opt-in based on this, we did not see the need to translate the measures into any other language.

According to Taherdoost (2016), samples need to be of an adequate size to generalize the findings and to avoid sampling errors or other biases. Furthermore, Dawson (2014) argues that sample size may be the most significant factor that affects the statistical power of a study. In other words, the larger the sample size,

the more reliable or statistically powerful a study's results are expected to be (Dawson, 2014). That said, a smaller sample size does not necessarily indicate a lack of reliability (Dawson, 2014). Therefore, our goal was to obtain at least 200 participants. Data collection officially started on February 1, 2022, and continued through March 31, 2022, for a total of two months of data collection. We received 200 responses, and out of those 136 were fully completed responses. From there, we invalidated three more responses. Two responses were removed for having completed the questionnaire in less than two minutes, which we decided was too fast for the integrity of the answers to be viable, based on a median completion time of 7.5 minutes. A third response was removed for answering all questions with the same answer, including negative items that should be reverse scored. In total, we removed two speeders and one straight-liner. Our final sample was therefore 133 responses, which corresponds to a 67% completion rate out of the 200 recorded responses we received.

Out of 133 responses, 32% are male, 68% are female, and 0% are non-binary or other. The ages range from 21 to 41 with a mean age of 27 years. Furthermore, 48% have completed a bachelor's degree, while 52% have completed a master's degree or higher. Participants graduated from their highest level of education between 2018 and 2021, and only four of the 133 respondents reported not working currently. Of the 129 who are currently employed, 75% have jobs relevant to their field of study and 25% are working outside their field of study. Lastly, the average time it took participants to obtain their first job was 2.7 months.

3.4 Research Ethics

As with any study, there are ethical considerations that must be taken into consideration (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In our research, we primarily focused on obtaining full consent from participants prior to the study, as well as the protection of participants' privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity.

Jacobsen (2015) argues that participants should be clearly informed about the purpose of the research prior to the study, as well as how their data will be stored during and after the project. This ensures that participants are well informed prior to voluntary involvement. In order to achieve this, we provided information about the purpose of our research on the first page of our

questionnaire. Moreover, we also added information about the confidentiality and anonymity of responses on the first page of the questionnaire (see Appendix 1).

To ensure the protected privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants, we contacted the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) to determine whether their approval to collect and process data was necessary. While our questionnaire contains identifiable items such as gender, age, and year of graduation, we do not ask for additional personal identifiers like name, contact info, or geo-location. Therefore, NSD decided their involvement was not necessary for this study (see Appendix 3).

3.5 Measures

For a study to be successful and valuable to the field of research, it is important that it includes credible measures. Credibility is determined by the data's reliability and validity (Saunders et al., 2019). According to Carmines & Zeller (1979, pp. 11-12), “[R]eliability concerns the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials,” whereas “validity concerns the crucial relationship between concept and indicator.” Part of ensuring our study is reliable, includes being transparent about how we analyze our data, as well as the accuracy and method in which the data is gathered.

Furthermore, our questionnaire consists of previously validated measures (Briscoe et al., 2021; Ng & Feldman, 2010; Van Hove et al., 2009). In addition to choosing relevant measures for our study focus, pre-validated measures help to ensure credibility. The reliability of such measures can be determined by looking at their Cronbach's alpha (α). A measure that has an alpha greater than .70 is generally considered adequate (Cortina, 1993), and all of ours meet this benchmark. In the subsequent sections, we elaborate on the variables and measurement methods for each of the 60-items in our questionnaire (see Appendix 2 for the complete survey).

3.5.1 Gender

For gender, we include three options: a. Male; b. Female; and c. Non-binary/I do not fully identify with either option a. or b. We have chosen to include this third option because it is in line with an inclusive view of gender identity. However, participants who choose option c. will be excluded from the statistical

analysis, because this research falls outside the scope for this thesis. None of the participants chose option c, so none were excluded on this basis.

3.5.2 UTW Transition

The duration of the UTW transition and the quality of the job obtained can be seen as their own indicators of career success. Therefore, participants are asked when they graduated, whether they currently have a job, and if that job is relevant to their field of study. Additionally, participants are asked, ‘Between the time you started searching for a job related to your field of study, and the time you obtained a job related to your field of study, how long did it take you?’ Answers are to be given in terms of the nearest rounded month.

3.5.3 Social Capital

To measure participants’ networks, while also accounting for the breadth of variety that can occur, we included three different pre-validated measures by Ng and Feldman (2010) and Van Hoyer and colleagues (2009). We chose to include the measure used by Ng and Feldman (2010) because it measures actionable external social capital development behaviors. We chose to include two of the measures used by Van Hoyer and colleagues (2009), which measure both network size and tie strength. Ng and Feldman (2010) found their reliability coefficient to be .95 at Time 1, .95 at Time 2, and .96 at Time 3. Van Hoyer and colleagues (2009) found their coefficients to be .85 for network size, and .78 for tie strength. For this study, the Alpha coefficients were .91 for Ng and Feldman’s (2010) measures and .82 for Van Hoyer and colleagues’ (2009) measures. For the purposes of this study, Van Hoyer and colleagues’ (2009) two measures of network size and tie strength are treated as one combined measure. This is because together, they capture the structural aspects of one’s network, which we believe contrasts and compliments Ng and Feldman’s (2010) measure, which captures the actionable external behaviors of an individual towards their network.

External Social Capital Development Behaviors. Items include ‘I spend a lot of time developing connections with others in my occupation,’ and ‘In my occupation, I know a lot of important people and am well connected’. All six items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Social Network Characteristics. Measures are originally distinguished between *network size* and *tie strength*, but are combined into one measure for this study, referred to as *network size and tie strength*. Items measuring network size include ‘I know a lot of people who can help me find a job’ and ‘I have connections I can talk to to help me find a job’. Items measuring tie strength include ‘Most people who might help me find a job: Are people I know very well, such as family or friends’ and ‘Most people who might help me find a job: Are people I often talk to’. Items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Completely Disagree) to 5 (Completely Agree).

3.5.4 Career Success

Existing research on measuring career success has highlighted the limitations of objective measures, such as salary and promotion, as these do not account for circumstances beyond an individual’s control. Also, additional intangible factors that people take into consideration when they measure their own career success are not included. Thus, we employed the Dual Aspect Importance & Achievement Career Success Scale (DAIA-CSS; Briscoe et al., 2021). The entire scale includes seven constructs of subjective career success, each of which is composed of several sub-construct items. However, the authors cross-culturally validated and represented each construct, allowing one to pick and choose which sub-scales to include without compromising the overall validity, because each subscale can stand on its own. Therefore, we focused on only three (20 items total) of the seven constructs, based on their relevance to recent graduates who are in the first few years of their careers: Positive work relations, work-life balance, and financial success. Each construct is measured for both importance and achievement on 5-point Likert scales, where 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important for the importance aspect, and 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree for the achievement aspect.

Briscoe and colleagues (2021) found the reliability coefficient for positive work relationships in Phase 4 of their study to be .74 on both importance and achievement scales. For work-life balance, the coefficients were .74 for both aspects. For financial success, the coefficients were .72 for the importance aspect and .73 for the achievement aspect. Our alpha coefficients for this study were as follows: .74 for the importance aspect and .79 for the achievement aspect of positive work relationships, .94 for the importance aspect and .95 for the

achievement aspect of work-life balance, and .77 for the importance aspect and .89 for the achievement aspect of financial success.

3.5.5 Control Variables

We included age and highest education level as potential controls. Because individuals complete their education and begin working at different ages, we did not place any age restrictions on a participant's ability to be part of this study, but research has shown a relationship between age and career success (Nyberg et al., 2015). Therefore, we controlled for age in our statistical analysis. In addition, we asked participants if their highest level of completed education is a bachelor's degree or a master's degree. We control for this in our study because research has shown a relationship between education level and career success (Nyberg et al., 2015).

4. Analysis

The primary program used to describe, analyze, and explain the data collected was IBM SPSS Statistics v.28. Additionally, MPlus 8.3 was used to complete the confirmatory factor analysis.

First, we tested all measures for internal reliability via Cronbach's alpha. As previously stated, a Cronbach's alpha greater than .70 is generally considered reliable, so we followed this guideline. Then, we used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which examines the underlying measurement structure of our model that was constructed based on prior theoretical grounds, to see whether the model is a good fit.

Hierarchical linear regression analysis was used to test Hypothesis 1 to evaluate the linear relationships between the independent and dependent variables and account for the effects of our control variables. Moderated hierarchical regression analysis was used to test Hypothesis 2 to evaluate the moderating effects of the variable gender on the linear relationships between the independent and dependent variables, while also accounting for the effects of our control variables. Hierarchical linear regression analysis was used for Hypotheses 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 to test the strength of the relationships between gender and the importance aspect of the subjective career success measures. When testing each hypothesis, we ensured that we were controlling for variables that have significant correlations with our main study variables (Becker et al., 2016).

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 at the end of this paper presents the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), correlations, and alpha coefficients (along the diagonal) for all variables in the questionnaire. As indicated in the table, every variable studied in the data analysis has high internal consistency with Cronbach's alphas greater than .70. Interestingly, all significant relationships between the independent variables of social capital and the dependent variables of subjective career success are positive and significant. Also, the results show some significant relationships between gender and some of the subjective career success variables, both positive and negative depending on the variable.

5.1.1 Control Variables

As shown in Table 1, some significant correlations between age and highest level of education and the dependent variables were found, indicating that there is a need to control for both.

5.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to examine the distinctiveness of the study variables. Analyses were performed with the maximum likelihood method of estimation. Due to the similarity in the wording of the career success variables (i.e., the achievement aspect vs. the importance aspect) and because only the achievement-related career success variables are used together with networking variables in our tests for Hypotheses 1 and 2, we compared a model including the two networking variables and the three achievement facets of career success to more parsimonious models.

In this series of analyses, the adequacy of alternative models was assessed using chi-square (χ^2) difference tests, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), with values higher than 0.90 and 0.95 on the CFI, and lower than 0.08 and 0.06 on the RMSEA and the SRMR, indicating adequate and excellent model fit, respectively (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The hypothesized model displayed a reasonably good fit to the data: $\chi^2(220) = 409.94$, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.08, CFI = 0.90, SRMR = 0.07. This model was also found to be superior to

more parsimonious models. These results suggest that this study's variables were distinguishable.

5.3 Hypothesis Tests

5.3.1 Hypothesis 1

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test Hypothesis 1. One regression analysis was conducted for every combination of independent social capital variables and dependent subjective career success variables. Controls (age and highest level of education) were entered into step 1, while one of the social capital variables was entered into step 2. Refer to Table 2 and Table 3 for the results of the hierarchical regression analyses. As shown in Table 2, social capital development behavior (Networking 1) positively predicted the achievement aspect of positive work relationships ($\beta = .39, p < .001$), the achievement aspect of work-life-balance ($\beta = .27, p = .002$), and the achievement aspect of financial success ($\beta = .31, p < .001$). Table 3 shows that network size and tie strength (Networking 2) positively predicted the achievement aspect of positive work relationships ($\beta = .27, p = .001$), the achievement aspect of work-life-balance ($\beta = .21, p = .017$), and the achievement aspect of financial success ($\beta = .30, p < .001$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported. That is, the more individuals invest in developing their social capital and the better their network is in terms of size and tie strength, the more they seem to be happy with their achievement of positive work relationships, work-life balance, and financial success.

5.3.2 Hypothesis 2

Moderated hierarchical regression analysis was used to test Hypothesis 2. One regression analysis was conducted for every combination of independent social capital variables and dependent career success variables, with gender as the moderator. Controls (age and highest level of education) were entered into step 1, one social capital variable (centered) and gender moderator were entered in step 2, and the interaction term was entered in step 3 (Dawson, 2014). The achievement aspect of financial success was entered as the dependent variable. Tables 4 and 5 show the results of the moderated hierarchical regression analyses. As can be seen from Table 4, the interaction term for social capital development behaviors and gender ('Networking 1 \times Gender') was significant ($\beta = .38, p = .005$), and Table 5

shows that the interaction term for network size and tie strength and gender ('Networking 2 × Gender') was also significant ($\beta = .38, p = .017$). 'Networking 1 × Gender' explained 5.2% of unique variance in the achievement aspect of financial success, while 'Networking 2 × Gender' explained 3.9% of unique variance in the achievement aspect of financial success. Simple slope analyses showed that Networking 1 was positively related to the achievement aspect of financial success among women ($t(133) = 5.06, p = .00$) but not among men ($t(133) = 1.02, ns$). Networking 2 was also shown to be positively related to the achievement aspect of financial success among women ($t(133) = 4.46, p = .00$) but not men ($t(133) = 0.52, ns$). See Figures 2 and 3 for graphical representations. Hypothesis 2 is therefore not supported.

5.3.3 Hypothesis 3.1–3.3

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test Hypotheses 3.1–3.3. We conducted one analysis per dependent subjective career success variable, where controls (age and highest level of education) were entered into step 1, gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female) was entered into step 2, and subjective career success measures were treated as the dependent variable. This type of test was used in place of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) mean difference test because of its ability to account for control variables. Table 6 shows that men on average placed significantly greater value on financial success than women, as indicated by the negative regression coefficient ($\beta = -.21, p = .014$). Hypotheses 3.1 is thus supported. Next, women on average placed significantly greater value on work-life balance ($\beta = .19, p = .027$) and positive work relationships ($\beta = .41, p < .001$) than men, both of which are indicated by their positive regression coefficients. Hypotheses 3.2 and 3.3 are therefore supported.

6. Discussion

Above, we have presented the results from our self-reported survey from 133 recent graduates where we explored the relationships between social capital, gender, and subjective career success in the UTW transition. Based on predictions from social capital theory (Adler & Kwon, 2002), this study found a significant positive relationship between our observed social capital variables and the achievement aspect of the subjective career success variables in the UTW transition.

Next, gender was found to significantly moderate the relationship between social capital variables and the achievement of financial success, such that this relationship is stronger (i.e. more positive) among women. That is, the more women engage in social capital development behaviors and possess strong network ties, the more they achieve financial success. This is not found to be true for men.

Furthermore, men and women were found to significantly differ in their valuations of subjective career success. Men placed significantly greater importance on financial success than women, while women placed significantly greater importance on work-life balance and positive work relationships than men.

As expected, we did not find gender to have a significant moderating effect on the relationships between the social capital variables and positive work relationships or work-life balance in either importance or achievement. We also did not find gender to have any significant relationships with the achievement aspect of the subjective career success variables worth noting.

The following section discusses these findings and attempts to connect and compare them with existing aforementioned theory and research.

6.1 Social Capital and Career Success

Hypothesis 1 posits that there will be a positive relationship between social capital and career success in the UTW transition. Hypothesis 1 is supported by the results, as both of our social capital variables were positively related to the achievement aspects of all three subjective career success variables.

Our development of Hypothesis 1 was founded on social capital theory (Adler & Kwon, 2002), as well as previous research which highlights the connection between social capital (i.e., networking behavior, human capital, and organizational support) and career success (Blickle et al., 2012; Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Kim, 2013; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Spurk et al., 2019; Traavik & Richardsen, 2010; Wolff & Moser, 2009, 2010). Thus, our findings are consistent with existing literature. Moreover, our study contributes to this field of research by finding significant relationships specifically among participants in the UTW transition.

That said, it is interesting that our study, which consisted of participants currently navigating the UTW transition, produced similar findings to previous research, which has largely been focused on more established professionals

(Forret & Dougherty, 2004), as one might expect some unique distinctions to emerge among our sample demographic. By finding a positive relationship between social capital and the achievement aspect of subjective career success specifically in the UTW transition, our findings indicate that students or recent graduates may benefit from participating in networking behavior in order to build their social capital, which in turn might benefit their careers.

One way that individuals might invest in building their social capital while still being students, includes participating in networking behaviors with faculty members at their universities. Studies indicate that on-campus connections with faculty and staff members constitute a valuable form of social capital (Baker, 2013; Barbatis, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2018). Moreover, research has found evidence to suggest that having connections with institutional agents, meaning people in key positions who can facilitate access to services, opportunities, and resources, might prove especially important for students when they seek to achieve career success upon graduation (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). These findings stress the important role that the individual plays in building and developing their own careers. Examples of concrete individual efforts that may help students connect with faculty members, and in turn develop their social capital, include contributing to class discussions, reaching out via email with questions, attending office hours, applying for positions in faculty research labs, and reaching out to professionals in a specific career or interest area. Lastly, recent graduates may also benefit from joining alumni networks, as a means of connecting with institutional agents within their fields (Schwartz et al., 2018).

It is important to note that we cannot make any claims regarding whether these actions will lead to greater career success in the long term, as this would require further longitudinal studies. This provides an interesting direction for future research.

6.2 Gender as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Social Capital and Career Success

Hypothesis 2 posits that gender (men vs. women) will moderate the relationship between social capital variables and the achievement aspect of financial success, such that this relationship is stronger (i.e., more positive) among men. Hypothesis 2 is not supported by our results, as we found that this

relationship is stronger among women. Thus, the result of this hypothesis provides grounds for discussion.

Finding that Hypothesis 2 is not supported is surprising, as it is not consistent with existing literature. Previous studies have found that women continue to earn less than their male colleagues, and across OECD countries, men's median earnings are about 11.7% higher than women's (OECD, 2022c).

However, these previous studies have largely measured objective financial success, while our study measures subjective financial success. One potential avenue of reasoning which might help explain our findings is therefore related to expectations. Research shows that women consistently report lower career expectations than men, both in terms of salary and advancement expectations (Heckert et al., 2002; Hogue et al., 2010; Jackson et al. 1992; Kaman & Hartel 1994; Keaveny & Inderrieden 2000; Lips & Lawson 2009; Major & Konar, 1984; Ng et al., 2010; Schweitzer et al., 2011). This gap in expectations is critical because individuals make career choices based on their expectations, and expectations about pay can have an impact on actual pay received (Hojat et al. 2000; Lips, 2012; Major et al. 1984). Therefore, if women's salary expectations are lower than those of men, they may be more readily met by employers, thereby increasing achievement rates, but also perpetuating existing wage gaps in the workplace (Schweitzer et al., 2014). This trend might be reflected in our results.

Another study investigating the gender gap in pre-career salary expectations among undergraduate students found that young women reported lower initial and peak salary expectations than their male counterparts (Schweitzer et al., 2014). Women have also been shown to be more risk averse than men regarding financial decision making (Byrnes et al., 1999; Sapienza et al., 2009). Moreover, studies suggest that women may perceive a tradeoff between salary and other work-related benefits such as good co-workers, favorable work hours, job security, work-life balance, and the opportunity to help others, which is a perception that may not be found among men (Schweitzer et al., 2014). All of this adds to the idea that women may have lower expectations of financial success, which in turn might influence the existing wage gap.

This then raises the question of whether our findings reflect these gendered perceptions of expected success, resulting in lower (i.e., more attainable) yielded outcomes, rather than our original intention of measuring equitable success across gender. The achievement aspect of the financial success variable in our study

captures the extent to which people are satisfied with the level of financial success they have achieved, which could suggest that women may be setting lower financial expectations compared to men, and therefore reporting higher rates of achievement.

In sum, our results initially seem to be in contradiction with the existing research that informed our hypothesis. Studies indicate that women tend to earn less than their male colleagues (OECD, 2013), and networking behaviors have been proven less advantageous for women than for men (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). Thus, women should have reported lower financial success than men in this study. However, the results were the opposite, showing a significantly stronger moderating effect for women than men. Reflecting on our choice of measure, we recognize that our results may be in line with different existing research which focuses less on actual financial success, and more on gendered perceptions of financial expectations leading to relative financial success outcomes.

It is important to note that the survey used in this study did not ask participants to list their actual compensation or job title. As such, we cannot draw any further conclusions regarding this topic. Potential avenues for exploring this topic further will be discussed in a later section.

6.3 Gender and Career Success

6.3.1 Financial Success

Hypothesis 3.1 posits that men will place greater value on financial success than women. Hypothesis 3.1 is supported by the results, which indicate that men on average placed significantly greater value on financial success than women. Finding that Hypothesis 3.1 is provided with support is consistent with prior research on gender and career success (Bird & Sapp, 2004; Eddleston & Powell, 2008), which indicates that men value financial success more than women do when measuring their overall career success.

However, while prior research has examined more established professionals, our study has focused on recent graduates in the UTW transition. It is therefore surprising that our study has produced the same results, considering the fact that more recent trends show changing societal attitudes among the newer generations of men and women, as well as new employment and pay equity

legislation, and increased representation of women in traditionally male dominated fields (Ng & Wiesner, 2007; Schweitzer et al., 2014). Based on these trends, one might expect that men and women in the UTW transition would value financial success at similar levels. However, it might be the case that social change is slow, and as such it might take longer before the recent trends are reflected in research.

Another potential reason as to why the men and women in our study reported different valuations of financial success might be related to the fact that society has recently made progress in offering employees more diverse benefits packages. These new packages include, but are not limited to, company stocks, paid leave and family healthcare (Miller, 2019). A 2019 Society for Human Resource Management's (SHRM's) survey of 2,763 random SHRM members found that “[e]ighty-six percent of employers that responded to the survey believe health-related benefits are very important or extremely important to their workforce.” Moreover, the study found that employers are enhancing their employee benefits offerings to help attract and retain top talent (Miller, 2019). Therefore, while women are entering more and more previously male-dominated echelons of organizations (Ng & Wiesner, 2007; Schweitzer et al., 2014), what they are being offered and what they are therefore considering in terms of total compensation may also have evolved.

One example of companies that are offering more diverse benefits and fringe benefits to employees is the dating app Bumble, which is women led and mostly women run (Lui, n.d.). In addition to flexible working conditions, Bumble offers minimum “six months paid leave for the birth, adoption or surrogacy of a child and a minimum of four weeks flexible working to transition back into work for caregivers” (McKeever, 2021). Furthermore, employees have an additional 12 weeks minimum per year that can be used to take care of a family member, and the company also has paid leave allotments for employees who need to take off for other life emergencies (McKeever, 2021). As such, Bumble seems to be diversifying its value proposition for employees by including more social benefits that may be particularly salient for its female dominated workforce.

Perhaps participants in our study are members of organizations like Bumble, which offer non-financial-based incentives that could have contributed to lower reported importance of financial success for women. It would be an interesting avenue for future research to further explore potential reasons for why

we ended up with such findings, and perhaps to further dissect financial success and the strength and relevance of alternative benefits and determine the level of importance for each across gender.

6.3.2 Work-Life Balance

Hypothesis 3.2 posits that women will place greater value on work-life balance than men. Hypothesis 3.2 is supported by the results, which indicate that women on average placed significantly greater value on work-life balance than men. This is again consistent with previous research (Emslie & Hunt, 2009).

It is interesting to note that our results again mirror some previous studies, despite our sample focusing on participants in an earlier career stage. One might expect recent female graduates to be less concerned with the concept of balancing work and personal life than more established women professionals who are more likely to have a family to consider. Thus, this finding provides some interesting avenues for discussion.

One possible explanation might be connected to the aforementioned discussion regarding expectations. Croft and colleagues (2019) performed a study to test whether young heterosexual women's expectations of their future roles are complementarily tied to their expectations of men's changing or unchanging gender roles (Croft et al., 2019). Findings suggest that women who have been primed to expect that men will increasingly take on more childcare, more readily envision becoming breadwinners and are less likely to envision becoming primary caregivers. Conversely, women who have been primed to expect that men will take less responsibility, are more likely to envision the opposite (Croft et al., 2019). Thus, these findings suggest that women's stereotypes about men's gender roles might constrain their own expectations regarding work and family roles. That is, regardless of current personal obligations, women may proactively constrain their work-life balance expectations in anticipation of potential future obligations.

It is important to note that our survey does not ask the respondents about their family situations, and as such we cannot draw any further conclusions regarding this topic, though it provides an interesting direction for future research.

6.3.3 Positive Work Relationships

Hypothesis 3.3 posits that women will place greater value on positive work relationships than men. Hypothesis 3.3 is supported by the results, which indicate that women on average place significantly greater value on positive work relationships than men do. Finding that Hypothesis 3.3 is provided with support, is in line with previous research (Inceoglu et al., 2012; Scandura, 1998; Shin & Kim, 2021; Warr, 2008), which suggests that women value positive work relationships more than men do.

As previously mentioned, research has found networking behavior to be more beneficial for men than for women (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). In short, the rate of return on investment in one's career seems to be higher for women. As such, it may be that women have been conditioned to pay more attention to their network and actively work towards accruing more as a result of this disparity. Women may recognize that more conscious effort needs to be put in to receive similar outcomes, in contrast to men who invest less time in their work relationships and network. If men do not have to work as hard on developing their network, it is possible they also end up with lower perceptions of the value of this aspect of career success.

It would be interesting to dive deeper into understanding how the playing field regarding developing positive work relationships appears for women versus men in the UTW transition period, as it may provide insights on why and how that playing field remains uneven throughout later career stages.

6.4 Practical Implications

Based on the discussion above, our findings suggest that recent graduates should be aware that investing in their social capital might result in greater subjective career success. Additionally, gender differences regarding financial success seem to exist even in the earliest career stage. Moreover, our findings suggest that employers should be aware that there are gendered differences in what employees value in a potential job.

Students or recent graduates currently in the UTW transition should make conscientious investments in actively developing their social capital and having a larger network with stronger ties, so that they will better achieve subjective career success and therefore feel happier with the level of achievement they have obtained, as is suggested by the results of Hypothesis 1. This can be deliberately

done in a variety of ways. Particularly, social capital may be accrued through participating in networking behaviors. Building a network of considerable size and with strong ties, might help to facilitate access to vital information about potential opportunities, which in turn may facilitate greater satisfaction with achieving financial success, among other factors.

Furthermore, female students or recent graduates should be mindful of their initial financial expectations, as these might be lower compared to their male peers. In order to increase their odds of achieving equitable financial success, women could benefit from setting and vocalizing expectations based on industry standards, thereby mitigating potential low-balling on their end. These individual efforts should also be further supported by organizational initiatives to help close the wage gap. Examples of such initiatives may include McKinsey's Next Generation Women Leaders events (McKinsey, n.d.), the International Labor Organization's Equal Pay International Coalition (ILO; n.d.) or the OECD's International Network on Financial Education (OECD, n.d.).

Organizations that employ young graduates should pay particular attention to what this specific target demographic values in a job. In other words, they should tailor their Employer Value Proposition (EVP) to the needs of recent graduates currently in the UTW transition. EVP “provides current and future employees with clear reasons to choose and stay with an employer” and “conveys what employees can expect from an employer and what is expected of them in return” (Maurer, 2017). Based on our findings, it appears that employers might be able to specifically attract female talent by emphasizing how they can offer opportunities for work-life balance and positive work relationships. Moreover, they might be able to specifically attract male talent by emphasizing their opportunities for financial growth. Thus, our study may provide valuable insights to employers looking to hire recent graduates.

6.5 Strengths, Limitations and Directions for Future Research

In order to further enlighten the reader of the context of our study, the following section will discuss the most important strengths and limitations of the processes and procedures used in the development of this thesis.

6.5.1 Strengths

One major strength of this study stems from the relatively high internal consistency and reliability of the measures adopted from previous research. The high validity and reliability of these measures strengthen our study. Therefore, despite our somewhat smaller sample of 133 recent graduates, we were able to produce several statistically significant results, which we believe to be strong in part due to the validity and reliability of our measures.

Moreover, it is a strength that our study only encompasses recent graduates currently experiencing the UTW transition. Arguably, this enables our data to be more specific and valid for this group of people in this particular transition. However, there are limitations in terms of generalizability which will be discussed below. Lastly, it is a strength that our study uses two different measures of social capital and captures multiple facets of career success specifically relevant to recent graduates. This makes our study rather comprehensive, especially in light of some previous research solely focusing on overall career satisfaction.

6.5.2 Limitations

Given the fact that our data collection has depended on self-reports, as well as the fact that our research has been restricted to single-source data (i.e. responses from recent-graduates), issues regarding common method biases may be raised (Williams et al., 1989). In particular, Williams and colleagues (1989) argue that the accuracy of self-reported responses is subject to mood states, which refer to either consistent positive or negative affects regarding personal assessments or the environment in general, as well as temporary fluctuations in mood that may influence the manner in which respondents view themselves. We must weigh responses at face value, assuming that participants have a similarly objective outlook on themselves. Thus, other sampling techniques, such as interviews that are administered by researchers, or questionnaires that are administered at the same time and/or location, may be advised for future research with a view to obtain a better understanding of the results. For example, a study that employs both a self-reported questionnaire and a follow-up interview within a short time frame could help increase the consistency of the results. Of course, there are other logistical barriers that come into play with such a research design and that would have to be accounted for.

In addition, although our sample size produced statistically significant results, it is worth mentioning that a sample size of 133 might raise some questions about the generalization of the findings. Most notably, our sample size may have impacted the success of the CFA, as this analysis tends to be very sensitive to sample size (Kline, 2015). Moreover, the gender breakdown of our sample was skewed towards women (68%) and away from men (32%). Therefore, the generalizability about male perceptions and reports of networking and career success may be particularly unclear.

It is also important to note that our study does not account for participants' country of residence, and as such the results cannot be generalized to one specific location. Furthermore, our choice to only measure subjective career success may have limited our ability to standardize these results across industry and cultural regulations. By not collecting data on participants' salary, job title, industry of work, and location of that work, we were not able to further evaluate the results for Hypothesis 2 under the notion of perceptions versus actual achievements of financial success across gender.

Regarding our choice of career success variables, we acknowledge the particular salience of certain subjective measures in the context of recent graduates (De Santis et al., 2021). However, due to the scope of this study, we limited ourselves to three measures: financial success, positive work relationships and work-life balance. It could be argued that these only captured five out of the eight total domains reported in De Santis and colleagues' (2021) findings (satisfaction with pay, fringe benefits, general work environment, work relationships, and working hours). Therefore, we may have missed out on obtaining the full picture of respondents' perceptions of subjective career success and would advise the inclusion of at least the 'learning & development' measure from Briscoe and colleagues' (2021) complete list of measures in future studies.

Finally, the time frame of this thesis limited our study to a cross-sectional approach. A cross-sectional approach does not come without its limitations, including causal inference (CI) and common method variance (CMV) (Rindfleisch et al., 2008, p. 261). Additionally, with a cross-sectional approach, we could not draw any conclusions about the long-term effects of investing in social capital early on, that is, leading up to graduation, as a way of ensuring greater career success in the future.

6.5.3 Directions for Future Research

Because our study has relied on self-reports and single-source data, future research might benefit from employing other sampling techniques for a more comprehensive understanding of the results. We have acknowledged the limitations of our smaller sample size and gender unbalance, so future research should conduct larger studies with a more balanced gender demographic.

Another research design recommendation is to use a longitudinal approach. In doing so, we may gain a better understanding of the long-term effects of gender as a moderator on the relationships between social capital and subjective career success, as young professionals in the UTW transition navigate their way into later stages of their career. As previously mentioned in our discussion of the results for Hypothesis 1, our data may not provide a sufficient basis for formulating concrete recommendations. Therefore, longitudinal studies may further solidify our findings so that eventually, suggestions for specific actionable items, backed by reliable data, may emerge.

There were some interesting potential angles to consider for why Hypothesis 2 was not supported by the results. However, we recognize our limitations in being able to draw any conclusions, as we do not have participants' salary or job titles available to make direct comparisons. One possible explanation mentioned is that our findings may be in keeping with other research that has found that women tend to have lower and more realistic salary expectations than men, resulting in more attainable goals and therefore a higher rate of achievement of financial success. Therefore, future research ought to ask for information like participants' salary, job title, and industry of employment, so that comparisons may be made between reports of achieved financial success and actual salaries and determine whether there are any significant patterns or discrepancies. However, it is important to note that such studies would have to obtain permission to process such sensitive information and be vigilant in maintaining participant confidentiality.

In addition, our discussion of the results from testing Hypothesis 3.1 raised questions regarding the role that other benefits play in a person's perceptions of how important salaries are. Future research might benefit from further dissecting what actual financial success means, including determining the importance of alternative benefits (such as paid family leave and company stocks), as well as the level of importance of such benefits for each gender.

Our findings for Hypothesis 3.2 tell us that even women early on in their careers, who are seemingly less likely to have other personal commitments to consider, may still place greater value on work-life balance if they anticipate having personal obligations in the future. Because we have not asked for participants' current family or personal situations, we cannot make any further conclusions regarding this. Asking participants about their current family situation and comparing this to their valuations of work-life balance, presents an interesting direction for future research.

Finally, our findings for Hypothesis 3.3 raise the question of whether the playing field for women versus men in the UTW transition is uneven regarding positive work relationships. We have touched upon the fact that men seem to achieve a higher rate of return on these work relationships than women do, and as such, gaining a better understanding could lead to new insights on how this disparity may continue and become more uneven throughout later career stages.

On the same note, we recognize the absence of questions regarding participants' location or industry of employment in our study. Such questions may shed important light on the uneven playing fields for women versus men. It would be interesting to investigate whether our findings can be replicated in specific countries or industries, examining the effects of these variables in a more organized sample. Research performed by Briscoe and colleagues (2021) is one example of a study that factored in nationality, and simultaneously measured individual reports of career success values and satisfaction with achievements, and compared them across cultural, institutional, and organizational contexts. By following Briscoe and colleagues' (2021) map of nations and career success variables, future researchers can select the most relevant career success variables for recent graduates in a particular country.

Lastly, asking for participants' industry of employment may present other interesting avenues for exploration. Beyond controlling for external influences, there is existing research that has examined how gender stereotypes can influence one's own behaviors (Oswald, 2008). Gender stereotypes of masculine occupations could refer to labor intensive jobs and positions of power or high public office, whereas female occupations would refer to fields involving care or education (Lembré, n.d.). Exploring the breakdown of masculine vs. feminine occupations vs. gender identity and seeing how these may impact the relationships between social capital and career success, could be worth studying.

7. Conclusion

Our study confirms previous literature and research that emphasizes how investing in one's social capital might help facilitate one's career success. More specifically, this study explores the relationships between social capital and career success in the UTW transition, with an added emphasis on the role played by one's gender.

Referring to our research goal, which was to “explore the relationships between gender, social capital, and career success in the UTW transition”, we found a significant positive relationship between social capital and career success, specifically among participants in the UTW transition. We also found that gender moderates the relationship for the financial aspect of achieving career success, such that it is stronger among women, indicating that women perceive that they achieve greater financial success through participating in social capital developmental behaviors than men. Lastly, we also found that men and women measure career success differently.

Our findings indicate that individuals should deliberately develop their social capital in order to impact their own career success positively. Moreover, women should be mindful of their financial expectations, so as not to undervalue themselves in salary negotiations. Finally, organizations should tailor their EVP based on the talent they wish to attract. With this, organizations may arguably benefit from reassessing their current employer branding strategy to focus on the elements found to be especially important to men and women in the UTW transition.

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9. Tables and Figures

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations for Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1 Age	26.78	3.27	—																
2 Gender	1.68	0.47	-.07	—															
3 Highest level of education	1.52	0.50	.18	.07	—														
4 Job search duration	2.74	3.18	.07	.11	-.09	—													
5 Importance - PWR	4.22	0.59	.00	.40	.04	.08	(.74)												
6 Importance - WLB	4.21	0.94	-.14	.18	-.18	.08	.32	(.94)											
7 Importance - positive impact	3.99	0.83	.14	.14	-.03	-.06	.52	.26	(.78)										
8 Importance - financial success	3.66	0.77	.07	-.22*	-.06	-.10	-.11	.06	-.12	(.77)									
9 Self-referent career success	3.82	0.93	.17	.08	.21*	-.08	.27	-.04	.14	.00	(.89)								
10 Other-referent career success	3.75	0.79	.05	.09	.15	-.23**	.34	-.08	.27	.07	.65	(.88)							
11 Achievement - PWR	3.99	0.67	.01	.28***	.12	-.01	.30	.03	.21	-.01	.35	.43	(.79)						
12 Achievement - WLB	3.57	1.14	.04	-.10	.05	.04	.15	-.02	.20	-.04	.26	.30	.27	(.95)					
13 Achievement - positive impact	3.76	0.72	.15	-.05	-.03	-.04	.14	-.07	.34	-.02	.22	.35	.40	.26	(.80)				
14 Achievement - financial success	3.22	1.06	.08	-.08	.17*	-.14	.15	-.02	.25	.09	.43	.65	.30	.39	.25	(.89)			
15 Social capital development behaviors	3.25	0.99	.11	.54	.05	-.02	.19*	-.17	.18*	.08	.23**	.38***	.39***	.27**	.30***	.32***	(.91)		
16 Network size and tie strength	3.41	0.71	.05	.05	.00	-.16	.25**	.07	.32***	.05	.21*	.31***	.27***	.21*	.32***	.30***	.47	(.82)	
17 Networking job search behavior	2.60	1.05	-.09	.00	-.07	.38***	-.18*	-.07	-.14	-.16	-.18*	-.13	-.16	.06	-.09	-.13	.18*	-.02	(.83)

Note: N = 133. For Gender: 0 = Male, 1 = Female; for Highest level of education: 1 = Bachelor's degree, 2 = Master's degree or higher; PWR = 'positive work relationships'; WLB = 'work-life balance'. Cronbach's alpha values are presented on the diagonal line.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2*Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses of ‘Social Capital Development Behaviors’*

Variable(s) entered	Achievement Aspect					
	Positive Work Relationships		Work-Life Balance		Financial Success	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Age	-.01	-.05	.03	.00	.05	.01
Highest level of education	.13	.12	.05	.04	.16	.15
Networking 1		.39***		.27**		.31***
ΔR^2		.15***		.07**		.09***

Note: Networking 1 = Social capital development behaviors. Except for the ΔR^2 row, entries are standardized regression coefficients.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 3*Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses of 'Network Size and Tie Strength'*

Variable(s) entered	Achievement Aspect					
	Positive Work Relationships		Work-Life Balance		Financial Success	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Age	-.01	-.02	.03	.02	.05	.03
Highest level of education	.13	.13	.05	.05	.16	.17
Networking 2		.27***		.21*		.30***
ΔR^2		.08***		.04*		.09***

Note: Networking 2 = Network size and tie strength. Except for the ΔR^2 row, entries are standardized regression coefficients.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 4

*Results of Moderated Hierarchical Regression Analysis of
'Networking 1 × Gender'*

Variable(s) entered	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age (centered)	.05	.00	-.01
Highest level of education	.16	.16	.13
Gender		-.11	-.10
Networking 1 (centered)		.31	.01
Networking 1 × Gender			.38**
ΔR^2			.05**

Note: Dependent variable = Achievement aspect of financial success; For Highest level of education: 1 = Bachelor's degree, 2 = Master's degree or higher; for Gender: 0 = Male, 1 = Female; Networking 1 = Social capital development behaviors; Except for the ΔR^2 row, entries are standardized regression coefficients.

Final model statistics: $F(5, 127) = 5.86, p < .001, R^2 = .19$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 5

*Results of Moderated Hierarchical Regression Analyses of
'Networking 2 × Gender'*

Variable(s) entered	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age (centered)	.05	.02	.05
Highest level of education	.16	.17	.15
Gender		-.11	-.09
Networking 2 (centered)		.30	-.03
Networking 2 × Gender			.39*
ΔR^2			.04*

Note: Dependent variable = Achievement aspect of financial success; For Highest level of education: 1 = Bachelor's degree, 2 = Master's degree or higher; for Gender: 0 = Male, 1 = Female; Networking 2 = Network size and tie strength. Except for the ΔR^2 row, entries are standardized regression coefficients.

Final model statistics: $F(5, 127) = 5.15, p < .001, R^2 = .17$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 6*Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses of Gender*

Variable(s) entered	Importance Aspect					
	Positive Work Relationships		Work-Life Balance		Financial Success	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Age	-.01	.03	-.11	-.09	.08	.07
Highest level of education	.04	.00	-.16	-.18	-.07	-.06
Gender		.41***		.19*		-.21*
ΔR^2		.16***		.04*		.05*

Note: For Gender: 0 = Male, 1 = Female. Except for the ΔR^2 row, entries are standardized regression coefficients.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Figure 1:

Overall research model for the study

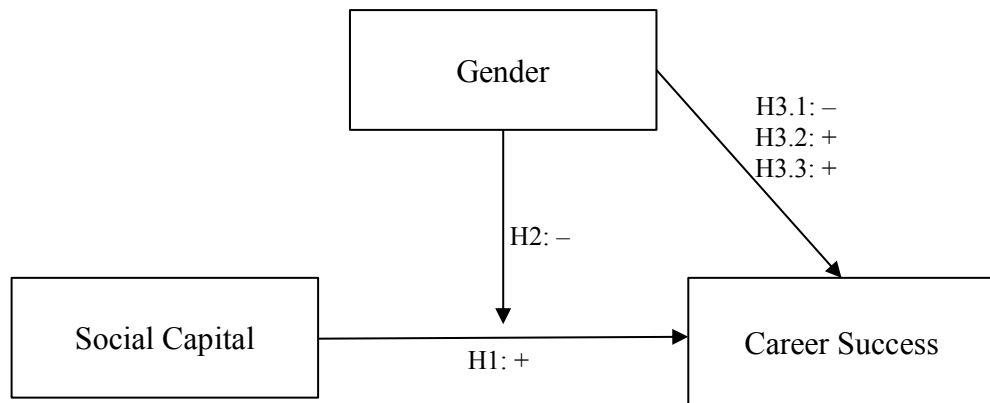


Figure 2

Graphing the Interaction of 'Networking 1' × Gender at ± 1 SD

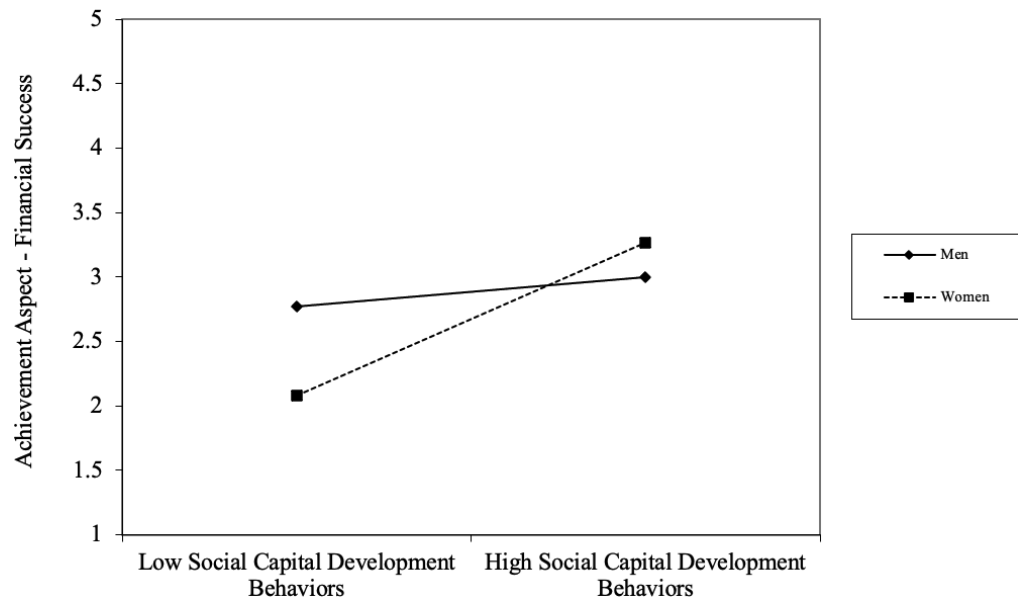
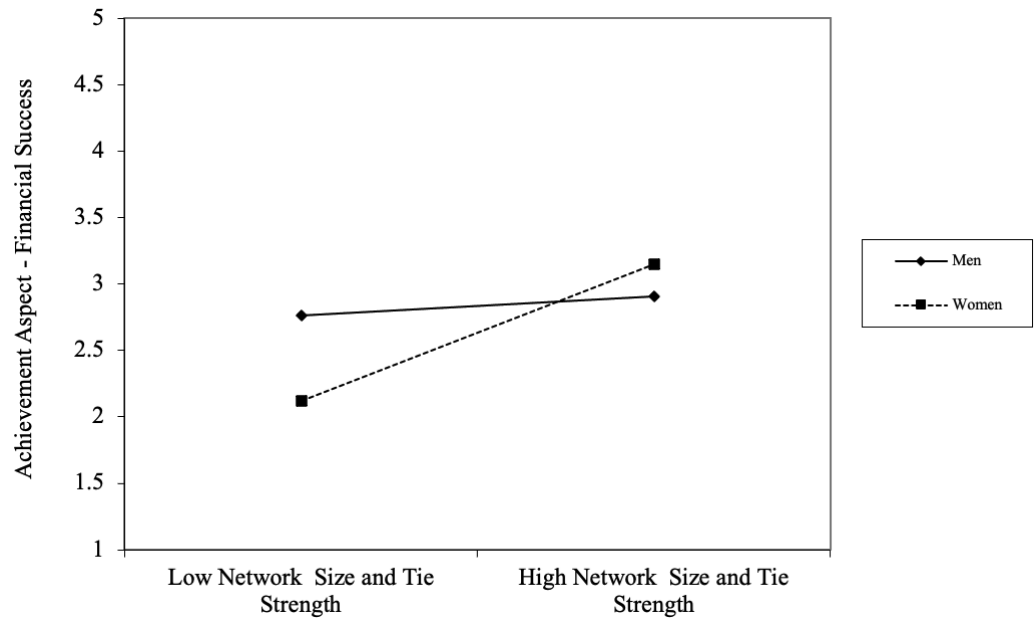


Figure 3

Graphing the Interaction of 'Networking 2' × Gender at ± 1 SD



10. Appendix

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

"An exploration of the relationships between gender, social capital, and job success in the school-to-work transition"

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to explore the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between social capital and job success in recent graduates. In this letter, we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The current research project aims to explore how recent graduates navigated the school-to-work transition to obtain a job relevant to their major, specifically how they used their social capital (network) to do so. We aim to investigate whether gender has a moderating effect on how one interacts with and utilizes their network to obtain early career success.

Who is responsible for the research project?

BI Norwegian Business School is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You are invited to take part in the survey because you have recently graduated and have started your first job after graduating in the last 1-3 years.

What does participation involve for you?

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve you filling in an online survey. It will take approximately 5 minutes. The survey includes questions about your professional network and how you used this network to obtain your current job, as well as your job success thus far. Your answers will be recorded electronically. Participation is voluntary. If you choose to start filling in the survey, you always have the right to stop. All information will be anonymous and used for research purposes only.

What will happen to the data at the end of the research project?

The anonymous data for this project will be used for generating original scientific research, follow-up studies, and archiving for future research.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, please contact:

- Nora Dietz (nora-c-nora@hotmail.com) or Amy Fivis (afivis@gmail.com)
- BI Norwegian Business School via Emilie Lapointe
- Our Data Protection Officer: Ingrid Østensen
- NSD-The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Amy Fivis and Nora Dietz

Consent form

I have received and understood the information about the project "An exploration of the relationships between gender, social capital, and job success in the school-to-work transition" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I give consent (by checking the box)

to participate in the online survey

Appendix 2: Survey

How old are you?

Please choose the gender category you identify most with

Male

Female

Non-binary / I do not fully identify with male or female

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree or higher

When did you graduate from your highest level of education? (year)

Do you have a job at the moment?

Yes

No

Is this job relevant to your field of study?

Yes

No

Between the time you started searching for a full-time job, and the time you obtained a full-time job, how many months did it take you? (Round to the nearest month)

The following statements are about career success. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

I am satisfied with:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The success I have achieved in my career, relative to my career aspirations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income, relative to my career aspirations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals, relative to my career aspirations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement, relative to my career aspirations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills, relative to my career aspirations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following statements are about career success. Please indicate how important each statement is to you.

Thinking about my career success, I consider:

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Fairly important	Important	Very important
Experiencing positive relationships with peers and colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing positive relationships with superiors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting positive feedback from supervisors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting positive feedback from colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Achieving a satisfying balance between work and family life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having time for non-work interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Achieving balance between work and non-work activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contributing to the development of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaving people and places better as a result of my career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Achieving wealth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receiving incentives, perks or bonuses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Steadily making more money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following statements are about networking behavior. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I spend a lot of time and effort networking with others in my occupation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am good at building relationships with influential people in my occupation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my occupation, I know a lot of important people and am well connected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend a lot of time developing connections with others in my occupation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am good at using my connections and network in this occupation to make things happen for my career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates in my occupation whom I can call on for support when I really need to get things done	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following statements are about career success. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

I am satisfied with:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The success I have achieved in my career, relative to my career peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income, relative to my career peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals, relative to my career peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement, relative to my career peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills, relative to my career peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following statements are about career success. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

In regard to:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Experiencing positive relationships with peers and colleagues, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing positive relationships with superiors, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting positive feedback from supervisors, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting positive feedback from colleagues, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Achieving a satisfying balance between work and family life, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having time for non-work interests, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Achieving balance between work and non-work activities, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contributing to the development of others, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping others, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaving people and places better as a result of my career, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Achieving wealth, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receiving incentives, perks or bonuses, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Steadily making more money, I have achieved a level I am happy with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following statements are about networking behavior. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I know a lot of people who might help me find a job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can count on many relatives, friends or acquaintances for information about jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know few people who might help me search for employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have connections I can talk to to help me find a job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following statements are about your network. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Most people who might help me find a job are people:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I know very well, such as family or friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often talk to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable talking to, even about touchy subjects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following statements are about networking behavior. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

In the past three months or until you found a job, how much time have you spent on:

	No time at all	Little time	Some time	Much time	Very much time
Looking for jobs on the internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visiting job sites or employer recruitment sites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contacting people you know to help you find a job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking people you know about possible job leads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 3: NSD Approval

Melding

24.01.2022 16:07

Behandlingen av personopplysninger er vurdert av NSD. Vurderingen er:

It is our assessment that this project will not process data that can directly or indirectly identify individual persons, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 24.01.2022. As a result, the project does not need an assessment from the data protection services.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO IF YOU ARE GOING TO PROCESS PERSONAL DATA?

If the project is changed in such a way that you will process personal data, you will need to notify this to us by updating the Notification Form. Wait for a reply before you start processing personal data.

END OF FOLLOW-UP

As the project will not be processing personal data, we end all further follow-up of the project.

Contact person: Karin Lillevold

Good luck with your project!