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Deltaker

Navn: Amanda Garen og Fride Rikke Roska

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Navn på veileder *: Anders Dysvik

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Fride Rikke Roska

Fride Rikke Roska

June, 2022

Amanda Garen

Amanda Garen

June, 2022

Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate the influence of negatively-valenced career shocks (NCS) on subjective career success (SCS), drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and Social Support Theory (SST). The study examines the effects of career shocks on individuals' SCS. It explores potential moderating mechanisms and subgroup differences that influence the relationship. Drawing on the COR theory, which emphasizes the significance of resource loss and gains for individuals' well-being, and the SST, which highlights social support's role in mitigating stressors' impact, this study employs a cross-sectional design. Self-reported data are utilized to examine the influence of NCS on SCS. By drawing on these theoretical frameworks and employing this research approach, the study aims to investigate the relationship between NCS and SCS. Using a survey approach, the authors recruited 487 employees from two private sector companies in Norway and validated the proposed model and hypotheses in SPSS. The outcome shows a significant negative relationship between NCS and SCS. Further, individuals in leadership positions show significantly higher levels of reported SCS. Additionally, the study demonstrates that as individuals age, they tend to report significantly lower levels of occupational future time perspective (OFTP). The current study contributes to the literature on the relationship between NCS, SCS, and lifespan perspective and provides practical implications for individuals and organizations to promote career success and well-being.

Keywords: Subjective career success, negative career shocks, time perception, Conservation of Resources Theory, Socioemotional Selectivity Theory, career adaptability, employee well-being

List of abbreviations

- SCS:** Subjective Career Success
- NCS:** Negative Career Shocks
- COR:** Conservation of Resources Theory
- SST:** Socioemotional Selectivity Theory
- OFTP:** Occupational Future Time Perspective
- PO:** Perceived Future Opportunities
- PFTP:** Perceived Future Time Perspective
- LP:** Leadership Position
- TCC:** Time in current company
- TCP:** Time in current position
- CH:** Children
- GEN:** Gender
- ED:** Education

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1.0 Introduction

Over the past 50 years, a growing interest has been in investigating career success within management and applied psychology research (Spurk et al., 2019). This study examines the impact of subjective, negatively-valenced career shocks (NCS) on individuals' perception of career success, thus adding to the existing body of knowledge. By exploring these relationships, we aim to enhance our understanding of the psychological process and outcomes associated with career setbacks.

Researchers have defined career shocks as external events that are, at least partly unexpected and outside the individual's control. These incidents can exhibit varying degrees of predictability and encompass outcomes of both positive and negative valence (Akkermans et al., 2018). NCS, however, refers to the personal and individual experience of unexpected and disruptive events that significantly impact a person's career trajectory. NCS recognizes that individuals may perceive and experience the same external event differently based on their unique perspectives, values, and aspirations. The intensity of the disruption can characterize these shocks caused, the degree of unpredictability, and the perceived lack of control over the situation (Akkermans et al., 2018).

Throughout this thesis, we will exclusively focus on career shocks being negatively valenced. NCSs are characterized by their disruptive and extraordinary nature, often caused by external events beyond an individual's control, at least to some extent (Akkermans et al., 2018). The aforementioned emergent phenomena are rooted in various life experiences, which hold importance at both professional and personal levels (Seibert et al., 2013). Professional experiences may include workforce reductions, bankruptcy, or major ethical scandals, while personal experiences focus on encounters with severe physical or mental health issues (Seibert et al., 2013).

When conducting research on career success, measures of objective career success (OCS) and subjective career success (SCS) can be utilized. Objective metrics primarily focus on salary and promotional advancements and are susceptible to the influence and contamination of external variables (e.g., economic conditions, industry characteristics), thereby lacking comprehensiveness in capturing all pertinent dimensions of career success. These objective measures often overlook the intangible outcomes individuals frequently

seek, such as obtaining a work-life balance and finding purpose in their professional pursuits (Campbell et al., 1970; Heslin, 2003). Scholars (e.g., Briscoe et al., 2021; Heslin, 2003, 2005) have posited the significance of incorporating subjective indicators with objective measures when evaluating career success.

In the present study, we will exclusively employ subjective measures to assess career success. These measures encompass the elements that individuals value in their professional lives and their ability to attain their aspirations within the context of their work environment (Heslin, 2005). Previous research on factors influencing the SCS of individuals has traditionally focused on variables such as personal characteristics, biographical data, and social conditions, i.e., social position and social learning through the social cognitive perspective (e.g., Arthur et al., 2005; Judge et al., 1995; Lent et al., 1994; Tett et al., 1991). However, there is an emerging recognition that life events, such as career shocks, significantly influence how individuals perceive and shape their careers (Wang & Wanberg, 2017). This highlights the need to expand the scope of research and consider a broader range of factors that impact SCS. By acknowledging the importance of subjective measures, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of career success and its multifaceted nature.

Understanding the effects of NCS on SCS is valuable for gaining deeper insights into individuals' psychological dynamics when faced with adversity. By studying these phenomena, researchers and practitioners can develop effective interventions to assist individuals in navigating such challenges, fostering resilience, and facilitating positive career decision-making. This knowledge not only contributes to the well-being and success of individuals but also has implications for organizational effectiveness. Recognizing the impact of NCS on individuals' professional lives allows organizations to implement strategies that promote employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity, ultimately leading to collective success.

Throughout this study, we aim to examine how lifespan perspectives can moderate the relationship between NCS and SCS. Incorporating lifespan perspectives is crucial in the field of careers, considering that both age and careers are long-term processes that unfold over time (Zacher & Froidevaux, 2021). However, there is a notable gap in both theoretical understanding and empirical research when investigating the influence of career events on career success throughout an individual's lifespan. Despite the acknowledged significance of

career events in shaping career trajectories, there is a lack of comprehensive exploration and examination of this relationship across different stages of one's career.

This thesis will draw upon two prominent theoretical frameworks: the Conservation of Resources (COR) and the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST). Researchers frequently employ both COR and SST theories in the context of career research (e.g., English & Carstensen, 2014; Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020; Reed et al., 2014; Steindórsdóttir et al., 2023; Wanberg et al., 2002)

COR by Hobfoll (1988, 1989, 1998) offers a valuable framework for understanding how individuals navigate unexpected career changes or challenges, as career shocks can be. While initially conceived as a stress theory, COR has gained traction as a motivational theory, particularly in careers. This idea highlights the motivation that compels individuals to seek, preserve, and safeguard their resources (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020; Spurk et al., 2019).

According to SST, an individual's perception of time induces social goal selection and pursuit. We present the two identified types of social goals related to knowledge acquisition and emotional regulation, specifically categorized as knowledge- and emotion-related goals. In line with what is being presented in the SST, social goals should be seen in relationship with individuals' lifespan perspective, arguing that when people perceive time as being open-ended, as younger adults typically do, there is a larger chance of prioritizing knowledge-related goals. On the other hand, when time is being perceived as limited with a more present-oriented time perspective, as it typically does as people age, emotion-related goals tend to be prioritized (Carstensen et al., 1999).

Considering the influence of time perception on social goal setting and pursuit, it is reasonable to assume that it can also impact the likelihood of experiencing NCS, as well as individuals' coping mechanisms and the subsequent consequences from such exposure. We can better understand how these factors interact and influence career success by exploring the relationships between subjective career setbacks and psychological processes, such as social goal orientation.

By investigating the psychological processes and outcomes associated with career shocks, we can inform the development of interventions and support systems that effectively assist individuals in navigating and recovering from such setbacks. Consequently, this can facilitate professional advancement and augment

their overall vocational contentment. Understanding the complex dynamics between NCS, SCS, and lifespan perspectives can provide valuable insights for organizations, career counselors, and individuals seeking to thrive professionally.

1.1 Case identification

The field of research on NCS is still in its nascent stage; therefore, there remains a considerable need for further investigation to advance a comprehensive understanding of the concept. Understanding the antecedents, consequences, and coping mechanisms associated with NCS is crucial for developing effective career management strategies that support individuals in navigating these disruptions. Akkermans and Kubach's research (2017) highlighted a notable gap in the existing literature regarding NCS and chance events. Their findings underscore the significance of conducting subsequent investigations to further explore this particular domain of scholarly inquiry.

As a result of the increasing complexity and unpredictability of contemporary careers, it is becoming more likely that a rise in seemingly unforeseen events will accompany employees through the following decades. The risk of job tasks gradually becoming automated is a prevailing concern affecting employees in contemporary work environments. Frey and Osborne (2017) have estimated that within the next decade or two, approximately 47% of US occupations will be at risk of being automated. Such forecasts bear significant repercussions for individuals presently engaged in these occupations, warranting careful consideration of the ensuing career ramifications.

Past historical events, such as the global economic crisis of 2012, led to a significant increase in organizational restructurings, layoffs, and unemployment. These events had a profound impact on the career paths of many individuals. Therefore, despite the apparent neglect of NCS in the career literature, they will appear more relevant than ever in a fast-changing world (Barnett & Bradley, 2007). These trends can diminish employment security and predictability (Kalleberg & Marsden, 2015).

Further, a shift from traditional, single-employer careers to a more boundaryless career world is seen. Consequently, this has engendered a heightened frequency of career transitions spanning multiple organizations, occupations, labor markets, and countries (Biermann et al., 2012; J. P. Briscoe et al., 2006; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). The traditional lifetime employment model

has become less appealing, with many employers withdrawing from career development support and decreasing job stability (Kalleberg, 2009; Kalleberg & Mouw, 2018).

NCS plays a vital role in understanding various career outcomes (Blokker et al., 2019; Seibert et al., 2013), such as turnover decisions (Holtom et al., 2005; Lee & Mitchell, 1994). When studying turnover, traditional and often used approaches have significantly focused on job dissatisfaction as the primary antecedent to voluntary turnover (Holtom et al., 2005). However, previous research has suggested that precipitating events, such as NCS, more often seem to be the immediate cause of turnover, compared to job dissatisfaction, as priorly suggested (Holtom et al., 2005). Several studies have demonstrated that most individuals will experience significant career shocks that can alter their careers (Scott & Hatalla, 1990; Williams et al., 1998). Consequently, shocks are likely to be a notable antecedent of career development and outcome episodes, and how people respond to them may determine how successful they are in their careers (Akkermans et al., 2018).

This thesis aims to contribute valuably to the existing literature on NCS by investigating its nature, prevalence, and impact on SCS. The objective is to contribute to developing strategies that enhance employee well-being and support systems, thereby assisting organizations in effectively supporting employees facing career challenges. A notable aspect of this study is exploring lifespan perspective as a potential moderating variable. By examining variations in lifespan perspective as a potential moderator, the research aims to generate specific and tailored strategies for organizations to adapt to and support their employees more effectively through various life stages.

1.2 Research question

Throughout this thesis, we will investigate the relationship between NCS and SCS, examining the potential influence of lifespan perspective on the relationship. Systematic differences in the perception of a lifespan can affect motivation and the prioritization of social goals, hence affecting the consequences of NCS and the strategies individuals can use to cope with and recover from them. Additionally, we will investigate whether the control variables gender, age, occupational level, whether the respondent has children and leadership position (with personnel

responsibility) systematically impact the relationship. We, therefore, attempt to answer the following research question:

“Does an individual's lifespan perspective impact the relationship between negative career shocks and subjective career success?”

Through our research, we aim to contribute to the career literature in four ways. First, we contribute by filling the gap in knowledge regarding the dynamic relationship between NCS and SCS. Previous research on career shocks has primarily focused on their impact on objective measures of career success (Chen et al., 2011). By incorporating individuals' subjective experiences of NCS, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the multi-dimensional effects, challenges, and opportunities that follows NCS. This understanding can inform interventions, policies, and support systems aimed at promoting career resilience, adaptation, and well-being (J. P. Briscoe et al., 2021; Spurk et al., 2019).

Secondly, the study can contribute to a better understanding how individuals adapt and recover from career setbacks by integrating lifespan perspectives as a potential moderating variable in the relationship between NCS and SCS. This knowledge can inform the development of interventions and support systems that effectively assist individuals in navigating and recovering from career shocks through various life stages, fostering their career success and overall well-being. The global phenomenon of population aging has brought about prominent changes in the demographic composition of the workforce. Due to extended retirement ages and an increasingly age-diverse workforce, investigating the impact of lifespan perspectives on individuals' responses to NCS and how this potentially impacts their SCS can yield valuable insights. This understanding can mitigate adverse consequences, such as turnover intentions associated with NCS (Barakovic et al., 2020; Truxillo et al., 2015).

Thirdly, examining the lifespan perspective as a moderator variable provides valuable insights into how individuals' perception of time influences their coping strategies following NCS. By considering the temporal dimension, researchers can better understand the psychological process of adapting to and recovering from career setbacks. This understanding, in turn, informs the

development of interventions to mitigate the impact of NCS on SCS and foster resilience. Such interventions can benefit organizations as they enable them to support employees during challenging career transitions effectively.

Lastly, the integration of COR and SST (Carstensen, 1992; Hobfoll, 1989) allows a comprehensive examination of the impact of NCS on SCS. By considering the temporal dimension, researchers can understand the psychological process of adapting to and recovering from career setbacks. This understanding informs the development of interventions to mitigate the negative impact of NCS on SCS and foster resilience. Effective interventions can significantly benefit organizations by enabling them to effectively support employees during challenging career transitions, promoting overall well-being and productivity.

In aggregate, our study yields significant implications at an individual level, offering valuable practical insights to inform the development of strategies to empower individuals to surmount challenges and attain their career objectives. By enabling individuals to navigate NCS effectively, such interventions can foster enhanced overall well-being and heightened satisfaction within their professional domains. In an organizational context, our study can contribute to helping organizations in utilizing these insights to support employees during challenging career transitions.

1.3 Outline

The organization of the remainder of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the analysis and includes a proposal and explanation of the hypotheses. In Chapter 3, this thesis conducts the methods and outlines the sampling procedure. Subsequently, the chapter presents the analysis variables and the relevant literature supporting their significance. Chapter 4 undertakes the analysis that will permeate the entirety of the thesis. Further, chapter 5 presents the empirical analysis and results. Chapter 6 delves into a comprehensive discussion of the findings, offering valuable insights and suggestions for further research. Additionally, it acknowledges the limitations of the study. Finally, in Chapter 7, a concise summary of the investigation is provided, accompanied by synthesized concluding remarks that encapsulate the essential findings and their implications.

2.0 Theory

This section presents the relevant findings and insights from previous research on career shocks and career success. Research on SCS and NCS draws on the ideas, concepts, relationships, and assumptions linked to career theory (e.g., Arthur et al., 2005; Defillippi & Arthur, 1994). We will also introduce the theoretical framework underpinning our investigation: the COR and SST theories.

2.1 *Subjective Career Success*

To better understand the topic of SCS, it is essential to start by defining a career. Traditionally, professionals or individuals who advanced through organizational hierarchies operated within a narrow perspective, confining their careers (Arthur & Rosseau, 1996). Today, the term "career" is widely used and commonly understood as the lifelong sequence of role-related experiences of individuals (Hall, 2002). The contemporary definition of a "career" encompasses an individual's work experiences over time, spanning multiple jobs, organizations, and occupations (Feldman, 1989). These experiences show aspects of career growth, including identifying one's job interests or making a career decision, as well as handling changes and career events over time (Wang & Wanberg, 2017)

Today, employers and organizations are observed to occupy a shifting position, deviating from the traditional linear career models commonly associated with employment and upward mobility within a single organization (Eby et al., 2003). Instead, the structure of careers is moving towards more heterogeneous and self-directed trajectories, which provides greater relevance to understanding the SCS field (Ng & Feldman, 2014). SCS refers to an individual's subjective perceptions, feelings, and satisfaction evaluation toward one's career progress, accomplishments, and anticipated outcomes, which will be relative to individual set goals and aspirations (Judge et al., 1999; Seibert et al., 2001). SCS is often measured using career satisfaction scales (e.g., Career Satisfaction Scale CSS; (Greenhaus et al., 1990), where career satisfaction shows the positive psychological and work-related outcomes accumulated because of one's work experiences (Seibert et al., 2001). Therefore, SCS measures are less tangible than OCS measures, as different individuals value various factors related to how they perceive their careers and further what they consider career success. The SCS perspective describes the criterion for success as internal rather than external. In

this way, the subjective perspective on career success can be seen as consistent with the changing trends and views on careers, viewing individuals as responsible for their career management rather than relying on organizational direction (Hall & Chandler, 2005).

When individuals face a career choice or dilemma, such as a career shock, career adaptability can help them enhance their professional self-efficacy, eliminating decision-making difficulties (Urbanaviciute et al., 2014). Savickas and Porfeli define career adaptability as “an individual's resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions and traumas in their occupational roles that, to some degree large or small, alter their social integration” (2012, p. 662). Such challenges encompass a range of factors, including modifications in job responsibilities, organizational restructuring, career transitions, and unforeseen events such as layoffs or technological advancements. Career adaptability is not limited to coping with adverse events but also encompasses the ability to seize opportunities and proactively shape one's career trajectory.

2.2 The Role and Definition of Career Shocks

Significant events that transpire in people's lives have shown to have a nontrivial impact on many people's career paths (Hirschi, 2010). As such events are often unexpected by individuals, they are hard to respond to and act proactively upon (Hirschi, 2010). Researchers commonly label these occurrences as “chance events” (Bright et al., 2005) or “happenstance” (Miller, 1983) and, in more recent literature and research, referred to as career shocks (Seibert et al., 2013). Akkermans et al. defines career shock as an exceptional and perturbing incident that results, to some extent, from extraneous factors beyond the individual's control and engenders a purposeful introspection regarding one's career trajectory. The advent of a career shock may exhibit differences in prognostication and may evoke favorable or unfavorable responses (2018).

Based on the definition, some characteristics or elements appear recurrent for career shocks. First, there is a relatively broad agreement that career shocks refer to antecedents of career development that happen outside the individual's control. While career shocks may be anticipated under certain circumstances, there consistently appears to be a partial lack of control over the occurrence and its subsequent effects (Akkermans et al., 2018). Secondly, career shocks activate a deliberate thought process, leading career shocks to potentially change individual

behaviors and impact people's career paths (Akkermans et al., 2018). Third, career shocks vary in whether they are perceived as expected or unexpected. Previous studies have frequently focused on unpredicted and shocking events, such as the sudden termination or losing a close relative (Akkermans et al., 2018; Bright et al., 2005; Hirschi, 2010; Seibert et al., 2013). It is essential to note that an event can be predictable while still being perceived as shocking due to its subsequent consequences. For example, one could be aware for months that one will become a parent. However, the effects of becoming parents and the new routines, concerns, and prioritization can still be perceived as shocking (Akkermans et al., 2018).

In this thesis, we have chosen to focus exclusively on the NCS, which Seibert et al. (2013, p. 172) defined as "events that have a potential negative impact on the individual's career," professionally and personally. By studying NCS, researchers gain insights into the transformative effects of unexpected events on individuals' career trajectories. Understanding the characteristics and consequences of NCS contributes to understanding how individuals navigate and adapt to career setbacks. It provides a foundation for developing strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of such wonders and foster individuals' career success and well-being.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Several theoretical perspectives exist in the literature and can be used to broaden our understanding of the impact of NCS. Using COR and SST theories can provide a comprehensive experience of the relationship between NCS and SCS. First, COR theory suggests that individuals strive to retain and protect their resources, including job-related resources, and that the loss of such resources can have negative consequences (Hobfoll, 2001). Consequently, this line of inquiry facilitates a deeper comprehension of the potential effects of NCS on individuals and their subsequent SCS. In contrast, SST asserts that as individuals elder, they tend to prioritize emotionally meaningful goals more frequently, and this prioritization is influenced by their perception of time. Employing this theoretical framework aids in elucidating how divergent time perspectives, specifically the lifespan perspective, may shape individuals' reactions to NCS and ultimately impact their SCS (Carstensen, 1992).

Including lifespan perspective as a potential moderator of the relationship between NCS and SCS can shed light on how individual differences in perception of time may influence the coping strategies employed. Overall, this approach can offer valuable insights into the factors that contribute to resilience in the face of NCS and inform the development of interventions that may mitigate the negative impact of such shocks on SCS. Our objective is to contribute to comprehending how organizations can effectively implement interventions to support their employees during challenging transitions, which NCS can be characterized as.

2.3.1 Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

COR theory (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989, 1998) provides a valuable framework for exploring how individuals respond to unexpected career changes or challenges. COR theory was initially developed as a theory to explain stress but is now increasingly used as a theory to explain human motivation, also within the field of careers, describing the reason that drives people to acquire, maintain and protect their resources (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020; Spurk et al., 2019).

The theory is based on the understanding that humans have a built-in evolutionary-based bias to heavy resource loss and underweight resource gain. COR theory, therefore, posits that stress will occur A) when central or critical resources are at risk of being lost; (B) when central or critical resources have already been lost; or (C) when despite great effort, central or critical resources remain elusive (Hobfoll, 2001). Fundamentally, COR is a motivational theory that elucidates human behavior based on the evolutionary imperative to acquire and preserve resources for survival, a central tenet of human behavioral genetics (Hobfoll, 2001).

Previous studies on COR theory in work or organizational settings have shown that employees must acquire resources to manage their careers effectively (Hobfoll, 2001). Access to these essential resources can also enable individuals to keep pace with the rapidly evolving work environment and remain motivated to adapt to challenging career events, such as NCS (Akkermans et al., 2018). COR theory is a valuable framework showing the importance of organizational support as a resource when employees are facing NCS.

Consistent with the principles of COR theory, resources encompass tangible and intangible assets, including money, time, social support, skills, and knowledge (Hobfoll, 2001). The underlying premise of COR theory suggests that

individuals are driven to procure and safeguard resources due to their fundamental significance in facilitating survival, personal development, and overall well-being. Losing or failing to acquire resources can lead to stress, negative emotions, and diminished functioning. Furthermore, stress may arise when investments in developing new resources do not yield sufficient returns or fail to accrue as expected (Hobfoll, 1991, 2001). This shows the importance of quantity and availability of resources. Moreover, COR theory underscores the significance of the actual value of available resources, thereby emphasizing their salience within the stress equation. Consequently, individuals who can readily replenish depleted resources or strive to safeguard their existing resources are likely to be better equipped to navigate stressful situations and mitigate the detrimental outcomes to a greater extent (Hobfoll, 1989).

Another important tenet of COR theory is the actual value of available resources, which should be considered necessary in the stress equation. Individuals who can quickly regain lost resources or actively strive to safeguard their existing resources are better equipped to handle stressful situations and strains, exhibiting greater resilience against their negative effects (Hobfoll, 1989).

COR theory posits that individuals are more likely to allocate their resources towards activities or goals that align with their values and needs. Past experiences shape personal preferences, which, in turn, influence the allocation of resources (Hobfoll, 2001). For instance, when deciding whether to help someone in need, an individual may weigh the potential costs (e.g., time, effort, inconvenience) against the potential benefits (e.g., building social capital, feeling good about oneself, interchange in the future). Consequently, the theory proposes that relationships can be conceptualized as transactions, with individuals continuously assessing the costs and benefits of their interactions. Therefore, when faced with stress, individuals are thought to subconsciously prioritize resources based on the perceived *personal value* of those resources.

It is imperative to acknowledge that individuals' access to resources and perceptions of resource value can transform as they progress through various life phases. For instance, individuals rely on their caregivers during childhood and adolescence for essential resources like food, shelter, and emotional support. In contrast, they may acquire resources through education, employment, and social networks as they transition to adulthood.

Per the COR theory, stress is perceived as the outcome of a threat or loss of resources rather than a direct injury or harm inflicted upon the individual (Ford, 2009). Resources are to be seen as the key components when determining individuals' appraisals of stressful events, and the resources available define how well people can cope with these events.

Considering COR theory, exposure to NCS could deplete an individual's resources and lead to stress and various adverse outcomes. We address this topic in our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1.0 *There will be a negative relationship between career success and career shocks, leading people who have experienced career shocks to have lower scores on perceived subjective career success.*

Research has supported the idea that individuals in leadership positions have access to more resources than those not been that in leadership positions. For example, a study by Seibert et al. (2001) found that leaders tend to have higher levels of job autonomy and access to information than non-leaders. Eby et al. (2003) found that access to social support and developmental relationships predicted greater career satisfaction and success, supported by research conducted by Luthans and Peterson (2003), who found that leaders had greater access to social support, feedback, and resources than non-leaders. In summary, the research suggests that individuals who hold leadership positions typically enjoy greater access to resources, which has positively impacted their SCS. Based on the presented study, we propose our second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2.0 *Individuals in leadership positions tend to have access to more resources than those who are not in leadership positions. Higher access to resources makes leaders higher on subjective career success.*

2.2.2 Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST)

SST proves valuable in examining career shocks by highlighting the influence of goals and motivations on individuals' responses to stressors. Additionally, the theory sheds light on how individuals with varying time perspectives may employ diverse coping strategies and exhibit distinct reactions when confronted with NCS. Understanding these differences can help

organizations provide targeted support and interventions to help individuals cope with the shock and adapt to new career challenges. SST is considered a lifespan theory of social motivation which argues that the perception of time plays a fundamental role in the selection, prioritization, and subsequent preferences for social partners (Carstensen et al., 1999). To be aware of the time, not only in terms of clocks or calendars but the lifetime, can be seen as a defining human characteristic. Humans reflect on the time left in life, a central element of human consciousness, and is closely linked to human motivation and the prioritization of social goals (Suddendorf & Corballis, 1997).

Typically, individuals set goals within temporal contexts, selecting plans based on their perception of time. Even though a relatively stable set of goals motivates behavior throughout life, the perception of time affects the choice (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SST categorizes social goals into two broad categories: knowledge-oriented goals, also known as overall goals, and goals focused on emotional fulfillment (Carstensen et al., 1999). This theory emphasizes the significance of one's perception of time in determining the choice and pursuit of social goals, which has important implications for emotions, cognitive processes, and motivation (Carstensen et al., 1999).

On a day-to-day basis, social goals compete; often, emotional goals vie with knowledge-related objectives (Carstensen et al., 2003). When goals compete, the perception of time plays a decisive role in determining the priority of goals (Carstensen et al., 2003). SST argues that when time is seen as open-ended, as typically in the younger years, knowledge- or broad goals will be prioritized. In contrast, when time is perceived as limited, as it usually is age, people prioritize emotionally meaningful goals (Carstensen et al., 2003). Even though emotional goals are their category, all kinds of goal setting will always involve the affective system to some degree, and thereby the emotion system is inherent in all forms of goal-directed behaviors (Zajonc, 1984).

Consequently, this distinction does not pertain to the involvement of the affective system but rather indicates whether goals are pursued to accompany emotions or to gain new knowledge or experiences (Carstensen et al., 2003). However, the time lived will generally help people to navigate easily in daily life, as they have more experiences to use for references. Typically, when aging, people will also learn to regulate their emotions toward the environment in more proper ways (Kunzmann et al., 2000).

Overall, SST highlights the importance of goals and motivations, social relationships, and emotions in shaping individuals' behavior and experiences as they age. By understanding these changes, individuals and professionals can better navigate life transitions and adapt to new challenges.

2.2.3 Lifespan perspectives

Lifespan perspectives have been widely recognized as crucial to careers, given that age and career development are long-term processes that evolve. However, there remains a dearth of theorization and empirical research on how career transitions influence career success throughout the lifespan (Steindórsdóttir et al., 2023). Zacher and Frese (2009) propose that time perspective and age are interconnected factors that play a crucial role in shaping individuals' use of adaptive strategies in their work. According to the authors, individuals' time perspectives tend to shift with age, impacting their goal orientation and motivation, ultimately influencing their use of adaptive strategies to maintain their effectiveness and well-being at work (Zacher & Frese, 2009). Specifically, they suggest that older workers tend to prioritize the selection of tasks that align with their strengths and interests, the optimization of their performance through skill development and efficient work methods, and the compensation for limitations through the use of assistive technologies or support from colleagues. In contrast, younger workers may focus more on exploration and experimentation to learn about their strengths and interests, which may influence their use of different adaptive strategies (Zacher & Frese, 2009).

Broad goals are often pursued to get a payoff in the future, for example, by building a trustful relationship with a manager to get offered opportunities or promotions after a while. Another example is going out on dates regularly to seek out the future love of one's life. In other words, the payoff would only be received indirectly after the meetings. The contact with the manager or the dates themselves does not necessarily make one experience positive emotions, and it could conversely make one experience negative emotions such as anxiety or shame (Carstensen et al., 2003). Therefore, people with an open-ended perception of time tend to care less about the immediate payoff or consequences, instead searching for great experiences to come. On the other hand, when people perceive time as limited, the chances are higher for seeking emotionally meaningful goals, presumably because the payoff instead is the contact itself - at the moment - rather

than received in the future time (Carstensen et al., 2003). To sum up, one must balance long- and short-term requirements to successfully adapt to their specific niche in the life cycle.

As age is strongly associated with time perspective (e.g., Fung et al., 2001; Lang & Carstensen, 2002), SST posits developmental trajectories for emotional and knowledge-related goals. In early life stages, people are more motivated to prepare for the unknown and long future, as time usually is perceived as expansive. Being future-oriented with an open-ended time perception, people tend to allocate considerable resources and seek to develop new skills and obtain new knowledge. The striving for new knowledge and the eagerness to learn and develop new skills, competencies, and capabilities is especially important from late adolescence to middle adulthood (Carstensen et al., 2003). Hence, the progression toward knowledge acquisition generally demonstrates a gradual decline throughout an individual's lifespan. On the other hand, as individuals age, they tend to view their time as more limited, resulting in a diminished perception of the opportunities available to them and the benefits of pursuing knowledge-oriented goals. Emotional goals, therefore, typically exhibit a curvilinear trajectory (Carstensen et al., 2003). This leads us to our two final hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3.0 *As people become elder, they see fewer opportunities awaiting them and are therefore more likely to show lower scores on occupational future time perspective (OFTP)*

Hypothesis 4.0 *The negative relationship between career shocks and subjective career success is moderated by lifespan perspective, such that the negative relationship is stronger for individuals lower on occupational future time perspectives (OFTP)*

3.0 Method

The following section of this thesis provides a comprehensive account of the theoretical underpinnings that informed the methodological and research design decisions to obtain the results presented in this study. The theoretical framework is crucial for establishing a solid foundation and a coherent rationale

for the chosen approach, enabling us to address the research questions effectively and systematically.

Additionally, we will elucidate the employed methodology and research design that facilitated the acquisition of the findings in this study. The approach employed to address the research questions and assess the feasibility of the research will be discussed. The research design for this thesis used a quantitative method. Conventional research methodologies were employed, including problem identification through a comprehensive literature review and gap analysis, development of survey instruments, data collection with specific sample criteria, and statistical testing of the suggested hypothesis and descriptive analysis. The research findings were subsequently examined concerning the selected research questions. Based on the objectives and justification of the study, the research approach chosen is a "descriptive and correlational" design. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate for investigating relationships between variables and describing the characteristics of a particular population.

3.1 Research design

Our choice of research strategy will depend on the type of research we are doing and the amount of current theory (Saunders et al., 2019). The design approach is more in line with a deductive approach than an inductive one, where one would gather data before examining and using it to construct a new theory because it uses current ideas on social capital and professional success (Saunders et al., 2019). The deductive method is typically used with quantitative research techniques, where hypotheses are derived and tested by measuring attitudes, views, and behaviors (Bell et al., 2019). Quantitative research seeks to identify relationships between variables to create predictions and extrapolate the findings to a larger group of people (Bell et al., 2019). Based on this, using a quantitative research method and a deductive approach was acceptable for our study because it allowed us to evaluate the link between the variables we selected. A questionnaire or survey can be used to gather data, and by combining a deductive approach with a quantitative research method, we can draw more definitive conclusions that can help to explain the correlations between variables (Wilson, 2014).

A cross-sectional approach seemed most suitable for our thesis because of the constrained period available and the objectives of our investigation (Saunders et al., 2019). To discover relationships between the variables, data is gathered via

a survey at a particular time (Bell et al., 2019). Contrarily, a longitudinal technique enables one to examine if a phenomenon varies over time, minimizing common method variance (CMV) or potential mistakes resulting from using a CMV. Thus, the cross-sectional technique poses a possible CMV concern. Furthermore, a cross-sectional strategy can produce potential causal inference, which is the capacity to infer causality from noted empirical links (Ostroff et al., 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Rindfleisch et al., 2008).

3.2 Data collection

To comprehensively understand the experiences related to NCS and their perceived impact on SCS, we employed questionnaires as the chosen method for data collection. The questionnaire approach is an effective tool following various quantitative research methodologies and our research objectives (Saunders et al., 2019). Specifically, we have selected self-reported questionnaires administered through Qualtrics, a web-based platform readily available to us through BI Norwegian Business School. This approach allows us to gather the necessary data for statistical analysis and testing our hypotheses in a structured and efficient manner.

A survey study provides the advantage of examining a larger sample, supporting, and expanding the current theory, and enabling greater generalizability (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, the sample consisted of employees from one large Norwegian company in the banking and finance industry and one medium-sized Norwegian company in the consultancy/recruitment industry. However, the cross-sectional design of the study does not allow for causal conclusions to be drawn. The sample may not represent the broader population of employees, and the findings may not be generalizable to other regions or industries, which should be acknowledged as a potential limitation of this thesis.

3.3 Sample and Procedure

For this research project, it would be impracticable to collect data from the entire population (Saunders et al., 2019). Our sample was obtained by contacting two companies through personal contacts, Company X and Company Y. The sample is a convenience sample, chosen for convenience rather than based on a random or systematic selection process (Bell et al., 2019). Approximately 1150

individuals received the questionnaire using the company's intranet, and the HR departments sent out the questionnaire to each employee via email. The participants were given an introduction text before the questions were delivered to them, in which we explained the purpose of the study and the comprehensive safeguards we have put in place to protect participants' privacy. We made sure that it was made clear that all responses would remain anonymous and confidential to reduce the chance of response manipulation (Chan, 2009). In addition, we made clear to the participants that they might terminate the research at any time without facing any negative ramifications or penalties.

The questionnaire and the measurements we applied were both initially published in English. To eliminate misunderstandings and threats to the trustworthiness of the results, participants should be allowed to respond to questionnaires in their native tongue (e.g., Kahneman, 2011; Klotz et al., 2022). It is essential to match the meaning of the words to the items they refer to in both forms to achieve equivalency between the source and translated versions (Riordan & Vandenberg, 1994). Therefore, the questionnaire was translated into Norwegian, using a back translation procedure as the dominant procedure for translating scales (Klotz et al., 2022).

The best-translated items from each translator are chosen after the translated items have been checked on by an objective third party, with increased objectivity as the aim (Klotz et al., 2022). This was done to ensure that the survey flows well and that the Norwegian wording is appropriate. Because translated sentences frequently lose the native language's natural flow, phrasing is crucial. At the same time, adequate vocabulary is tailored to our sample utilizing straightforward language. To guarantee a sufficient response, this is decisive. Pre-testing is about measuring the reaction of a selected group of people to determine the importance of the various components, hence usually how easy the questions are to understand, how credible they are, and how appealing they are (Bell et al., 2019). Self-completion questionnaires are administered without a controller; thus, the research instrument must be straightforward to use, and its questions must be elementary to respond to (Bell et al., 2019). According to Bell et al. (2019), pre-testing items may help ensure construct validity and reliability. During the pre-testing phase, a sample of N=30 participants was utilized to assess the items' clarity and absence of ambiguity. The findings indicated that the items were clear, unambiguous, and the questionnaire was effectively designed, facilitating ease of

completion. Consequently, the study was deemed suitable for introduction to the intended audience. It is important to note that the results derived from the pre-test subjects will not be incorporated into the study's final analysis.

Dawson (2014) states that the sample size may be the most crucial factor influencing a study's statistical power. In other words, more reliable or statistically significant results are anticipated from studies with bigger sample sizes. It is reasonable to assume that there will be some sampling bias in the answers we receive (Bell et al., 2019), as Company X is considered a sizable Norwegian bank with approximately 850 employees. Company Y has approximately 300 employees and consultants in Norway, with a relatively significant difference in sample size. The total number of responses received for the study amounted to 535. Nonetheless, after removing incomplete respondent data during the data cleaning process, the final sample size was reduced to N=487.

3.4 Research ethics

Zyphur & Pierides (2017) suggest that all quantitative research methods operate in an ethical domain. We initially determined the primary concerns related to informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality, considering the purpose and aim of our study. Following this, several safeguards were implemented throughout the study to respect legal and ethical standards. This research operates with informed permission, anonymity, and secrecy in accordance with the proper ethical considerations to adhere to legal and ethical requirements. To guarantee informed consent, all participants are told of their right to withdraw from the study at any time and are provided sufficient information to do so (Bell et al., 2019). We obtained the Norwegian Center for research data's approval to comply with legislation governing the collection and processing of the data required for this study. Before any potential involvement, the participants were fully informed about the study's objectives and the processing, storage, and deletion of their personal data. Following the aforementioned procedures, participants were provided with a participation approval form, which explicitly requested their consent to process their questionnaire responses after providing relevant information.

3.5 Measures

Credible measurements must be used in a study to be practical and valuable to the field of research. The reliability and validity of the data determine the data's credibility (Saunders et al., 2019). Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept (Bell et al., 2019, p. 172). Additionally, validity refers to the issue of whether an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept measure (Bell et al., 2019, p. 174). Therefore, reliability indicates accuracy, whereas content's nature is marked by validity. These two concepts are strongly associated, and tests should be valid and reliable to ensure quality.

One common and often-used way to operationalize SCS has been through measures of job- and career satisfaction (Arthur et al., 2005). Our questionnaire consists of previously validated measures (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Seibert et al., 2013; Zacher & Frese, 2009). In addition to choosing relevant criteria for our study focus, pre-validated measures help to ensure credibility. We have used Cronbach's Alpha to determine whether the variables are reliable and have internal consistency. If multiple measures are to be regarded as dependable, it should generally be more than 0.7 but not too close to 1 (Bell et al., 2019). To measure the study's reliability, Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to examine the extent to which the scales used were internally consistent. Cronbach's Alpha varies between 0 and 1, and that lower limit for reliability was set at $>.700$ (Bell et al., 2019). However, striving for higher reliability is essential to ensure the measurement instrument's accuracy and consistency. By continuously improving the reliability of the measurement instrument, researchers can enhance the overall quality and validity of their research findings (Saunders et al., 2019). In Table 1, the alpha values from the reliability analysis are presented.

3.5.1 Control variables

In the questionnaire, we have controlled for gender, highest completed education, time in the current company and position, having children (how many) or not, and being in a leadership position (with personnel responsibility) or not.

3.5.1.1 Age (AGE)

We have chosen to treat age as a continuous variable, in alignment with previous research on lifespan development (Kooij et al., 2011; Kooij & Zacher,

2016). Chronological age is inextricably and negatively associated with the time left in life, leading age-related patterns to emerge (Carstensen et al., 2003). As people move through life, they often become increasingly aware of how time "runs out" and tend to focus more on making the right decisions and not wasting time (Kennedy et al., 2006). Research has shown that older adults perceive the future as significantly more limited than younger adults, leading to a linear trend as age increases (Kennedy et al., 2006). However, research has shown there are not necessarily any apparent differences related to chronological age and social goal setting; instead, age should be perceived as a continuous variable (Lang & Carstensen, 2002).

We treated age as a continuous variable consistent with prior research on lifespan development (Kooij et al., 2013; Kooij & Zacher, 2016). This approach is aligned with the principles of SST, which highlights the significance of viewing lifespan development as a flexible and continuous process rather than being confined to discrete stages (Nagy et al., 2019). Age was measured in intervals according to their current age, and the sample consisted of both early, mid, and late-career individuals. The omission of inquiries regarding absolute age was deliberate due to anonymity considerations. By refraining from requesting specific age information, respondents' anonymity and privacy are preserved, as the focus remains on gathering data without directly identifying individuals based on their exact age. This approach safeguards confidentiality and protects the sensitive personal information of participants, aligning with ethical principles and ensuring a more comfortable and secure environment for respondents to provide their responses. The various intervals used were: 18-25 years (N=47), 26-30 years (N=53), 31-35 years (N=50), 36-40 years (N=55), 41-45 years (N=50), 46-50 years (N=71), 51-55 years (N=51), 56-60 years (N=64), 61-65 years (N=36) and more than 65 years old (N=10).

3.5.1.2 Gender (GEN)

In the context of SCS, gender is important because studies have shown that different genders can experience their careers differently (Ng et al., 2005). We offer three alternatives for gender: male, female, and nonbinary/I don't entirely identify with either. This third option was included to support a comprehensive understanding of gender identity. However, because this research is outside the purview of this thesis, participants who select option nonbinary/I don't fully

identify with either will not be included in the statistical analysis. One respondent reported the option and was removed from our dataset. The careers literature has a long history of examining gender concerning SCS (Powell & Mainiero, 1992). It is a commonly held view among scholars that women's experiences in the workplace can be distinct from those of men and that these disparities may be contributing to the persistent gender inequality that women face in the workplace, which can influence SCS. This argument has been supported by research by scholars such as, e.g., Lyness & Thompson (1997, 2000) and Stroh et al. (1992). Studies on SCS have shown that women generally perceive themselves as more successful in their careers than men (Judge et al., 1995; Orser & Leck, 2010). However, using objective career measures, research has shown that men generally have tremendous career success than women and greater motivation to obtain objective success criteria (Carlson & Swartz, 1988; Frear et al., 2019; Judge et al., 1995). One explanation for the opposite relationship is that women tend to have lower expectations regarding their career progression (Judge et al., 1995).

3.5.1.3 Education (ED)

We have controlled for the highest completed education of the participants, using the following categories: 1) early childhood and primary education, 2) lower secondary, upper secondary or trade school degree, 3) bachelor's degree or equivalent, 4) master degree or equivalent, and 6) doctorate or equivalent. In line with research on the human capital theory (Becker, 1962), educational level and background are essential variables when investigating career success. The human capital theory assumes that investing in education is vital to obtain the necessary skills and training to enhance an individual's capital (Blundell et al., 2005).

3.5.1.4 Time in current company (TCC) and time in current position (TCP)

Further, we have controlled for how long the participants have been in the company they are currently working in and how long they have been in their current position. Career transitions are considered influential events in people's work, career research, and counseling practice (Arthur et al., 1989). Research shows that changes in employment, such as a promotion or transfer, can positively

and negatively affect an individual's job satisfaction, performance, and commitment to the organization (Arthur et al., 1989). Furthermore, career transitions can change an individual's self-concept, affecting their perception of career success (Schein, 1971). Therefore, controlling for the time spent in their current company and position can help account for any potential confounding factors related to career transitions that may influence the participants' experiences of NCS and their perception of SCS. Both the control variables "time in the current company" and "time in current position" was measured using the intervals 1) less than one year, 2) 1-3 years, 3) 3-5 years, 4) 5-7 years, 5) 7-10 years, 6) 10-15 years, and 7) 15 years or more.

3.5.1.5 Children (CH)

We chose to control whether the participants are having children or not and how many children they do have. Controlling whether the participants have children or not is essential in studying career success due to the potential influence of parenthood on individuals' career trajectories. Research has shown that having children can significantly impact an individual's career outcomes, including career advancement, satisfaction, and success (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Parenthood often entails significant responsibilities and demands that can affect one's career choices, opportunities, and priorities. Factors such as work-life balance, availability for overtime or travel, and career interruptions can vary between individuals with and without children. By accounting for this variable, we can better understand the unique experiences and challenges faced by individuals with children, identify potential barriers or facilitators to career success specific to parenthood, and develop targeted interventions or support systems to promote equitable and inclusive career development for all individuals. Controlling for parenthood status allows for a more nuanced examination of the complex relationship between work and family dynamics and their impact on career outcomes (Allen et al., 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

3.5.1.6 Leadership position (LP)

Lastly, we have controlled whether the participants are in a LP including personal responsibility). Several studies have examined the relationship between LPs and career success. For example, a study by Ng & Feldman (2008) found that higher levels of perceived career success were associated with a LP. Similarly, in

a study by Judge and Bono (2001), leadership emergence (i.e., the likelihood of being chosen as a leader) was positively related to an individual's time perspective, with those holding a future-oriented perspective being more likely to be selected as leaders. This suggests that individuals with a future-oriented time perspective may be more likely to seek out LPs actively and thus have higher access to resources that can lead to greater SCS. These studies suggest that individuals in LPs tend to have higher levels of career success and that future-oriented time perspective may be related to leadership emergence and greater access to resources.

3.5.2 Subjective career success (SCS)

According to previous studies (e.g., Abele & Spurk, 2009; Colakoglu, 2011; Eby et al., 2003; Heslin, 2005; Xie et al., 2016), SCS has been measured with the career satisfaction scale provided by Greenhaus et al. (1990), as one of the most common measures. The scale comprises five items and asks respondents to rate how much they agree with the following statements: career success, career advancement, salary, promotion, and skill development (e.g., I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals) (Greenhaus et al., 1990). Participants gave their answers on a five-point scale where (0) have not experienced it, 1) yes have experienced it, but had no to minimal impact, 4), Yes, have experienced it, and had a large impact).

3.5.3 Occupational future time perspective (OFTP)

The OFTP scale developed by (Zacher & Frese, 2009) has been utilized to measure occupational future time perspective. Two subscales make up the scale: *remaining opportunities* and *remaining time*. The remaining time subscale, which has three items, gauges how much time people believe they have left in their professional lives. Sample items include “My occupational future seems infinite to me.” On the other hand, the remaining opportunities subscale consists of three items and measures how many opportunities people believe they still have in their professional lifetime (e.g., “Many opportunities await me in my occupational future”). The participants were asked to respond to the statements on a scale from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree.

3.5.4 Negative career shocks (NCS)

Eight items were used to gauge NCS on a five-point scale; participants were asked to rate the impact of each event on their career on a scale from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. Seibert et al. (2013) identified two NCS which were utilized in the data gathering: “Your organization went through a significant negative event, such as a reduction in workforce, bankruptcy, or major ethical scandal” and “Had a mentor or colleague that was important to you to leave the company.” Apart from the scale developed by Seibert et al. (2013), few validated scales have been developed in the NCS field, given that the research is currently limited. Eight items were used to gauge NCS on a five-point scale; participants were asked to rate the impact of each event on their career on a scale from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. Seibert et al. (2013) identified two NCS which were utilized in the data gathering: “Your organization went through a significant negative event, such as a reduction in workforce, bankruptcy, or major ethical scandal” and “Had a mentor or colleague that was important to you to leave the company.” Apart from the scale developed by Seibert et al. (2013), few validated scales have been developed in the NCS field, given that the research is currently limited.

4.0 Analysis

The primary software employed for data description, analysis, and explanation was SPSS Statistics v29. Before the analysis, the dataset underwent meticulous review and cleaning procedures, enabling the identification and removal of any missing or inaccurate data points. (Bell et al., 2019). We further downloaded PROCESS by Hayes version 4.2 and used it to complete the moderation analysis in SPSS.

Initially, a descriptive analysis was carried out for an overview of the variables' means (M) and standard deviations (SD). Thereafter, we conducted a Pearson Correlation Analysis, which gave us an overview of the relationship between the variables. Finally, we conducted a Hayes Process Model 1 Moderation analysis. The moderation analysis is valuable for understanding the conditional effects and investigating interactions between variables. It helps explore how the relationship between two variables may change based on a third moderating variable. Additionally, it assists in testing theoretical assumptions.

The analysis can uncover nuanced relationships and provide insights into the conditional effects of variables under specific conditions or contexts.

5.0 Results

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The questionnaires were distributed to 1150 individuals, and we received 535 total responses (N=535), which corresponds to a response rate of 46.5%. By checking the frequency, it uncovered 47 unfulfilled questionnaires, and one was eliminated because the candidate indicated that they are nonbinary/I don't completely identify with either. The responses did not significantly contribute to the research question since the incomplete responses frequently omitted crucial information. The study's final number of 487 participants (N=487) remained after the incomplete responses were discarded, which resulted in a 91% rate of completed responses. When it comes to the gender distribution of the sample, it appears to be an almost equal distribution, showing a sample consisting of 53% men and 47% women. We chose to report age using intervals; therefore, finding the actual mean of the sample's age is impossible. However, we see a potential age range from 18 to 65 years. The most significant proportion of the respondents is 41-45 years (14,1%), but we observe a relatively even distribution between the different age groups. Most of our sample had completed a bachelor's (46,4%) or a master's degree (41,3%). Regarding time in one's current company, the most significant proportion, corresponding to 31% of our respondents, had been in the company for over 15 years. In total, over half of the sample (56,9%) had been in their current position for less than five years, where "less than one year" corresponded to 29% of the respondents, and "1-3 years" corresponded to 27,9% of the respondents.

5.1.1 Control Variables

We present the mean and correlations for the study variables in Table 1. As reported in the table, several significant correlations were found between the control variables and SCS, NCS, PFTP, and PO.

5.2 Correlations

In the study context, Pearson correlation was appropriate as the investigated variables (AGE, SCS, NCS, OFTP), were all continuous variables and had a linear relationship. Additionally, the assumption of normality was checked and met for all variables. Therefore, the Pearson correlation was a suitable statistical method for investigating the relationships between the variables in the study. As reported in Table 1, the results indicated that all variables, except NCS and SCS, significantly correlated with age. Further, there is shown significant negative correlations between SCS with the variables TCP, LP and NCS. There are reported positive correlations between SCS and the variables PFTP and PO.

5.3 Reliability measures

NCS has a Cronbach's α of 0.65, which is moderately acceptable, but may suggest that the construct is not fully reliable. This supports the need for further analysis, such as exploratory factor analysis (EFA), to ensure that the items measure the same underlying construct. An EFA was conducted as an additional analysis, and this is presented in section 5.8, "Additional analysis." The first part of the OFTP construct (measuring perceived future time perspective (PFTP), has a Cronbach's α of 0.91, which is very good and suggests high internal consistency among the items. The second part of the OFTP construct (PO – perceived future opportunities) has a Cronbach's α value of 0.78, which is considered good considering our desired reliability. Overall, the entire OFTP construct has a Chronbachs α value of 0.92, which is regarded very well. However, since the first and second parts have different alpha values, it is essential to consider the internal consistency of each piece separately and explore their factor structure. SCS has Cronbach's α 0.84, showing a high internal consistency among the items. This aligns with previous research on the scale, which offers good internal consistency with Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$ (Abele & Spurk, 2009).

Variable	M	SD	R	N of items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. AGE	5.12	2.55													
2. GEN	1.47	0.50			-0.13**										
3. ED	3.30	0.68			-0.13**	-0.09*									
4. TCE	4.31	2.37			0.70**	-0.08	-0.61								
5. TCP	2.93	1.97			0.60**	-0.08	-0.22**	0.61**							
6. CH	2.52	1.18			0.63**	-0.13**	-0.06	0.46**	0.28**						
7. LP	1.74	0.44			-0.27**	0.09*	-0.06	-0.34**	-0.05	-0.19**					
8. NCS	10.36	3.43	0.65	8	0.05	-0.02	0.09	-0.03	0.01	0.06	-0.07				
9. PFTP	11.08	2.68	0.91	3	-0.64**	0.14**	0.17**	-0.50**	-0.54**	-0.36**	-0.10*	-0.05			
10. PO	9.00	2.12	0.76	3	-0.75**	0.12**	0.15**	-0.57**	-0.52**	-0.46**	0.18**	0.07	0.79**		
11. SCS	18.51	3.06	0.84	5	0.03	0.13**	-0.01	-0.06	-0.10*	0.04	-0.28**	-0.15**	0.22**	-0.01	

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability measures of the study variables.

Note. GEN = gender, ED= education, TCC = time at current company, TCP= time in current position, CH = children (and how many), LP= leadership position, NCS = negative career shocks, PFTP = perceived future time perspective, PO = perceived future opportunities, SCS = subjective career success.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

5.4 Regression analysis

We conducted a regression analysis, reported in Table 2, as an initial step in understanding the direct effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, SCS. These findings indicate AGE, GEN, LP, NCS, PFTP and PO, had meaningful effects on SCS. AGE shows a coefficient of 0.37, indicating a positive relationship with SCS. The result is statistically significant on a 1% level ($t = 3.77, p < .001$). GEN shows a coefficient of 0.77, indicating a positive relationship with SCS. The effect is statistically significant on a 1% level ($t = 3.03, p < .001$). In our sample, gender was denoted as 1= male and 2= female, showing that women in our sample reported higher levels of SCS. Further, there is a negative relationship between NCS and SCS. The effect is statistically significant on a 1% level ($t = -3.434, p < .001$). Related to the variables PFTP and PO, they both show a positive and significant relationship to SCS. For PFTP, the coefficient is 0.28. The effect is statistically significant on a 1% level ($t = 3.52, p < .001$). For PO, the coefficient is 0.21. This relationship is also statistically significant on a 1% level ($t = 2.69, p = .007$). The most vital relationship is to be found between the variable LP, where the coefficient is -1.88, indicating a strong

negative relationship with SCS. The effect is statistically significant ($t = -6.00$, $p < .001$). Our sample denoted leadership position as 1 and position without leader responsibilities as 2, showing that leaders in our sample in general reported higher levels of SCS.

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1 (constant)	15.90	1.15		10.59	<0.001**
1 - AGE	0.37	0.10	0.31	3.77	0.624
2 - GEN	0.77	0.26	0.13	3.03	<0.001**
3 - ED	-0.23	0.19	-0.05	-1.23	0.37
4 - TCP	0.06	0.08	0.05	0.75	0.52
5- TCC	-0.12	0.09	-0.08	-1.36	0.012*
6 - CH	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.02	0.97
7 - LP	-1.88	0.31	-0.27	-6.00	<0.001**
8 - NCS	-0.13	0.04	-0.14	-3.43	<0.001**
9 - PFTP	0.28	0.08	0.24	3.52	<0.001**
10 - PO	0.21	0.08	0.21	2.69	0.007**

Dependent variable: SCS

Table 2: Regression analysis

Note. GEN = gender, ED= education, TCP= time in current position, TCC = time at current company, CH = children (and how many), LP= leadership position, NCS= negative career shock, PFTP = perceived future time perspective, PO = perceived future opportunities, SCS = subjective career success.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

5.5 Moderation analysis

Andrew Hayes conducted a moderation analysis using Process models following the regression analysis. A moderation analysis allows us to test whether the relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable varies depending on the level of another variable, called the moderator variable. In other words, it allows us to explore whether the strength or direction of the relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable changes depending on different levels of the moderator variable. The model can provide information on the direct effect of X on Y, the conditional or moderated effect of X on Y through W (the moderator), as well as the total effect of X on Y, which is the sum of the direct and indirect effects (Hayes, 2014). By conducting Model 1 analysis, we investigated three different moderators: 1) age (AGE), 2) perceived future opportunities (PO), and 3) perceived future time perspective (PFTP) could be seen as moderators of the relationship between SCS and NCS. In this case, NCS was

seen as the independent variable (X), and SCS was denoted as the dependent variable (Y). The control variables GEN, ED, TCC, TCP, CH and LP was included in all the three moderation analyses.

5.5.1 Perceived Future Opportunities (PO) as Moderator

The moderation analysis examining the role of PO as a moderator did not find significant evidence of moderation in the relationship between NCS and SCS. As presented in Table 3, the overall model demonstrated statistical significance ($F(9, 475) = 11.38, p < .001$) and accounted for 18% of the variance in SCS scores. Neither NCS ($p = 0.10$) nor PO ($p = 0.21$) individually showed significant associations with SCS, and the interaction term (Int_1) between NCS and PO was not significant ($p = 0.33$). Covariate analysis revealed significant associations between SCS and GEN ($p < .001$) and LP ($p < .001$).

R = 0.42 R-sq = 0.18 F = 11.38 Df1 = 9.00 Df2 = 475.00 P = 0.0000

Model	Coeff	t	p
Constant	20.44	11.40	0.00
NCS	-0.20	-1.73	0.10
PO	0.18	1.27	0.21
Int_1	0.01	0.63	0.53
GEN	0.83	3.19	0.0015**
ED	-0.10	-1.02	0.31
TCP	0.13	1.62	0.11
TCC	-0.10	-1.10	0.29
CH	0.23	1.80	0.10
LP	-2.11	-6.62	0.0000**

Outcome Variable Y: SCS
 Independent Variable X: NCS
 W: PO
 Covariates: GEN, ED, TCP, TCC, CH, LP

Table 3: Model Summary: Perceived future opportunities (PO) as moderator

Note. GEN = gender, ED= education, TCC = time at current company, TCP= time in current position, CH = children (and how many), LP= leadership position, SCSHOCK = subjective experienced career shock, PFTP = perceived future time perspective, PO = perceived future opportunities, SCS = subjective career success.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

5.5.2 Perceived Future Time Perspective (PFTP) as Moderator

The moderation analysis investigating the role of PFTP as a moderator found no significant interaction effect between NCS and PFTP on SCS. As

presented in table 4, the overall moderation model was statistically significant ($F(9, 475) = 12.65, p < .001$) and accounted for 19% of the variance in SCS scores. PFTP ($p < .005$), demonstrated a significant positive relationship with SCS. However, the interaction term (Int_1) between NCS and PFTP was insignificant ($p = 0.90$). Covariate analysis showed significant associations between SCS and the covariates GEN ($p < .001$) and LP ($p < .001$).

Model	Coeff	t	p
Constant	18.19	8.56	0.0000
NCS	-0.11	-0.74	0.46
PFTP	0.35	2.24	0.03*
Int_1	-0.00	-0.13	0.90
GEN	0.75	2.91	0.0038**
ED	-0.22	-1.16	0.25
TCP	0.12	1.55	0.12
TCC	-0.04	-0.49	0.63
CH	0.19	1.54	0.12
LP	-2.00	-6.34	0.0000**

Outcome Variable Y: SCS
 Independent Variable X: NCS
 W: PFTP
 Covariates: GEN, ED, TCP, TCC, CH, LP

Table 4: Model Summary: Perceived future time perspective (PFTP) as a moderator

Note. GEN = gender, ED= education, TCC = time at current company, TCP= time in current position, CH = children (and how many), LP= leadership position, NCS = negative career shock, PFTP = perceived future time Perspective, SCS = subjective career success.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

5.5.3 Age as a Moderator

The moderation analysis examining age as a moderator found no significant interaction effect between NCS and age on SCS. The overall moderation model was statistically significant ($p < .001$), explaining 14.1% of the variance in SCS scores, as presented in Table 5. The interaction term (Int_1) between NCS and age was not significant ($p = .68$). Covariate analysis revealed significant associations between SCS and the covariates GEN ($p < .001$), TCP ($p = .02$), and LP ($p < .001$).

Model	Coeff	t	p
Constant	22.36	15.14	0.0000
NCS	-0.11	-1.17	0.24
PO	0.12	0.67	0.50
Int_1	-0.01	-0.41	0.68
2 – GEN	0.93	3.45	0.0005**
3 – ED	-0.10	-0.52	0.60
4 – TCP	0.02	0.21	0.83
5 – TCC	-0.22	-2.32	0.02
6 - CH	0.04	0.26	0.79
7 - LP	-2.03	-6.20	0.0000

Outcome Variable Y: SCS
 Independent Variable X: NCS
 W: AGE
 Covariates: GEN, ED, TCP, TCC, CH, LP

Table 5: Model summary: Age as a moderator

Note. GEN = gender, ED= education, TCC = time at current company, TCP= time in current position, CH = children (and how many), LP= leadership position, NCS= negative career shock, SCS = subjective career success.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

5.6 Hypotheses testing

First, we tested our hypothesis regarding the relationship between SCS and NCS. As expected, we found a significant negative relationship between SCS and NCS ($r = -0.13, p < .001$), as shown in Table 1. Increased NCS values showed a decrease in SCS values, supporting Hypothesis 1. This finding is consistent with prior research emphasizing the detrimental impact of unexpected career transitions on individuals' career outcomes, subjective success, and professional satisfaction (Greco et al., 2015; Hirschi, 2010; Petersen et al., 2012).

As shown through our regression analysis presented in Table 2, the most robust relationship found is between variable 7- leadership position (LP) and SCS ($B = -0.27, t = -6.00, p < .001$). This confirms hypothesis 2, suggesting that individuals in leadership positions tend to have access to more resources and are, therefore, higher on SCS. The finding is consistent with previous research (Eby et al., 2003; Luthans & Peterson, 2003). It is plausible that individuals in leadership positions hold more significant control over their career trajectory, more autonomy in decision-making, and access to valuable networks and mentors to help advance their careers.

Hypothesis 3 posited that as individuals age, their perception of available opportunities in their occupation (OFTP) would diminish. The analysis conducted in our study provided support for this hypothesis, showing a significant negative correlation between age with both the construct making up OFTP, PO ($r = -0.75$, $p < 0.001$, and PFTP ($r = -0.64$, $p < 0.001$), as presented in Table 1. These findings suggest that as individuals grow older, they are more likely to perceive fewer opportunities awaiting them in their occupational future.

Further, hypothesis 4 stated that the negative relationship between NCS and SCS would be a moderated lifespan perspective, such that the negative relationship is stronger for individuals lower on OFTP. Our analysis did not find empirical support for this hypothesis. The lack of a significant moderation effect of OFTP on the relationship between NCS and SCS suggests that there might be other factors at play, which could include i.e., individuals' ability to bounce back, the support they receive from others, how they cope with challenges personally or the availability of training and career development options. Additionally, the non-significant moderation effect suggests that the negative impact of NCS on SCS might be a universal experience to some extent, irrespective of individuals' lifespan perspective. This underscores the importance of conducting further investigations within the field to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship and its implications.

Hypotheses	Results
1.0. There will be a negative relationship between career success and career shocks, leading people who have experienced career shocks to have lower scores on perceived subjective career success.	Confirmed
2.0. Individuals in leadership positions tend to have access to more resources than those who are not in leadership positions. Higher access to resources makes leaders higher on subjective career success.	Confirmed
3.0. As people elder, they see fewer opportunities awaiting them and are therefore more likely to show lower scores on occupational future time perspective (OFTP)	Confirmed
4.0. The negative relationship between career shocks and subjective career success is moderated by remaining lifetime, such that the negative relationship is stronger for individuals lower on occupational future time perspectives (OFTP)	Not confirmed

Table 6: Results of the hypothesis testing

5.7 Additional analysis

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the construct measuring NCS was conducted, as it showed an alpha value of 0.65, reported in Table 1. This is lower than the commonly accepted threshold value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978), with more recent guidance suggesting a minimum threshold of 0.80 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). A lower alpha value indicates that the items used to measure that construct may not be highly related to each other, or other factors may influence the scale's reliability. For this reason, it can be valuable to perform a factor analysis to explore the underlying structure of the construct and see if any underlying factors could explain the low alpha value.

Factor analysis can help identify the common variance among items and group them into distinct factors that capture different aspects of the construct. This can provide insight into the construct's underlying structure and identify areas for improvement in the measurement instrument (Harper et al., 1980). The alpha value can be increased by grouping items into factors that better reflect the measured construct, indicating higher reliability. Factor analysis can also help identify any problematic items that are not contributing to the construct's measurement and should be removed from the scale. This can help improve the measurement instrument's overall validity and reliability.

Based on the component matrix presented in Table 7, it appears that the eight items are primarily loading onto two components, with the first component being defined by strong loadings from all eight items and the second component being defined by negative loadings on the second item and weaker positive loadings on the remaining seven items. This suggests that the items measure two distinct underlying factors rather than one. Even though the alpha value is below the threshold value, it does not necessarily imply that it is an inadequate measure of the construct of NCS. NCS is a broad construct encompassing a wide range of experiences; thus, some variation in the measurements is expected to capture the entire construct. For this reason, it may be natural to expect the construct to load on several factors.

Factor Analysis - NCS

Component	Initial Eigenvalues	
	% of Variance	Cumulative %
NCS_1	30.63	30.63
NCS_2	14.18	44.81
NCS_3	12.47	57.28
NCS_4	11.25	68.53
NCS_5	9.82	78.35
NCS_6	9.62	87.98
NCS_7	6.26	94.24
NCS_8	5.76	100.00

Component Matrix- NCS

	Component	
	1	2
NCS_1	0.58	-0.58
NCS_2	0.63	-0.43
NCS_3	0.51	0.14
NCS_4	0.50	0.16
NCS_5	0.55	0.35
NCS_6	0.66	0.25
NCS_7	0.46	0.54
NCS_8	0.51	-0.30

Table 7: Factor Analysis of the construct Negative Career Shock (NCS).

6.0 Discussion

The study examined the relationship between NCS and SCS and whether an individual's lifespan perspectives seem to impact the relationship. In line with what we expected and our first hypothesis, we found NCS to be negatively related to SCS. This indicates that the experiences of these often-unexpected events that are hard to act proactively upon (Hirschi, 2010) will potentially lead to lower experienced SCS.

Further, in line with what was presented in the COR theory and our second hypothesis, we found a strong relationship between LP and SCS, where leaders generally reported higher levels of SCS compared to employees not holding a leadership position. Related to lifespan perspectives, we found that older people tend to score lower on OFTP, which confirmed our third hypothesis.

Contrary to our expectations, we did not find any support for the lifespan perspective to be a moderating variable of the relationship between NCS and SCS,

rejecting our final hypothesis. Even though OFTP showed a significant positive relationship to SCS, indicating that higher levels of OFTP showed higher levels of SCS, OFTP did not serve as a moderator of the relationship between the two variables. This finding can indicate that providing support during periods characterized by unexpected negative events may be equally essential, irrespective of individuals' lifespan perspective. However, it also points out the need for further research on NCS and the investigation of other potential moderating variables of the relationship.

Remarkably, our analysis unveiled some intriguing findings that transcended the scope of our initial hypotheses. Notably, the correlation analysis, reported in Table 1, revealed that women within our sample exhibited significantly higher levels of SCS when compared to the men in the sample. This finding is inconsistent with other research that has found that women tend to experience lower levels of career success than men (e.g., Lyness & Thompson, 2000). The context of our study (e.g., sample size, industry) may have contributed to this discrepancy, even though we had a relatively equal gender distribution consisting of 53% men and 47% women. It is, however, an exciting finding that calls for further investigation. The study findings demonstrated a significant positive relationship between age and SCS, suggesting that individuals experience increased career satisfaction and a sense of achievement as they grow older. This aligns with previous research in the field, which has consistently shown that advancing in age is associated with various career-related benefits (Ng et al., 2005; Zacher, 2015). Precisely, it aligns with the concepts proposed by the COR theory, which suggests that older individuals often possess greater leadership experience, access to a broader network, and accumulated knowledge, thus contributing to enhanced career success (Hobfoll, 2002). These findings support our second hypothesis and further validate existing research.

Upon further examination of the correlations, additional noteworthy findings emerged regarding the relationship between perceived opportunities, future time perspective, age, and career success. Firstly, a significant negative relationship was observed between age and PO and PFTP, indicating that as individuals grow older, they tend to perceive their future as more limited and their opportunities as diminishing. Moreover, a significant positive relationship was identified between PO and PFTP with SCS, suggesting that individuals with a more limited perception of their time and opportunities generally report lower

levels of SCS. However, no significant relationship was found between age and SCS, implying that other variables might be at play later in the career. This makes people experience equal levels of SCS even though they perceive their time as more limited, and the perceived opportunities are decreasing.

6.1 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

Some essential conclusions can be drawn from our study. Firstly, we found a negative relationship between NCS and SCS, indicating that employees who have experienced NCS are more susceptible to lower degrees of SCS. This finding can have significant implications for organizations, highlighting the need for prioritizing individualized approaches to support employees who have undergone career setbacks. By understanding each employee's unique challenges and needs, organizations can tailor resources and development opportunities to effectively assist them in navigating career setbacks. Personalized support strategies can ultimately enhance employees' SCS and well-being.

Furthermore, our study revealed a significant, negative relationship between OFTP and PO with SCS. This finding expands our theoretical understanding of lifespan development and its influence on individuals' career decision-making processes. It aligns with theories such as the Social Selectivity Theory, suggesting that individuals' perceptions and priorities change during a lifetime. Specifically, our study demonstrates that as individuals progress through their careers and approach the later stages of their lives, their OFTP becomes less optimistic, showing a decrease in perceived opportunities. This insight emphasizes the importance of considering age-related factors when designing career development initiatives and interventions. By recognizing the diminishing perceptions of future opportunities among older individuals, organizations can tailor their support and resources to address their specific needs and foster ongoing career satisfaction and success.

From a practical standpoint, our study has several implications both on an individual and organizational level. Firstly, the findings emphasize the significance of implementing individualized approaches to support employees who have experienced NCS. By recognizing and addressing these employees' unique challenges and needs, organizations can provide the necessary resources and development opportunities to help them effectively navigate and recover from career setbacks. This personalized support can positively impact employees' SCS

and well-being.

Additionally, the study highlights the need for organizations to consider age-related factors in their career development initiatives and interventions. The significant negative relationship between OFTP and PO with SCS suggests that individuals' perceptions of prospects change over time. Organizations can respond to this by tailoring their support and resources to meet the changing needs of employees at different career stages. For example, providing opportunities for skill development, mentoring, and flexible career paths can help older employees maintain career satisfaction and adapt to changing work environments.

Even though our study did not find support for the final hypothesis that lifespan perspective moderates the negative relationship between NCS and SCS, the findings still have significant implications. Specifically, the results highlight that experiencing NCS is perceived as challenging regardless of one's career stage and lifespan perspective. This finding aligns with the COR theory, which posits that individuals' access to and valuation of resources change as they progress through different life phases (Hobfoll, 2001). Initially, we expected that these transformations in resources and priorities would lead to distinct patterns between younger and older employees regarding their response to NCS. However, the lack of significant differences related to lifespan perspective as a moderator suggests that individuals in different life stages value and have access to varying resources, influencing their perception and response to NCS.

For instance, despite having fewer resources, younger individuals may prioritize broad goals and perceive more time ahead in their careers, which mitigates immediate fear when faced with NCS (Hobfoll, 2001). On the other hand, workers with a more limited lifespan perspective, such as those closer to retirement age, may have access to more secure resources, such as financial stability, which compensates for their perceived limited future opportunities. Understanding these dynamics can inform organizational practices and interventions to support employees during career setbacks.

6.2 Limitations

Although the current study provides valuable practical and theoretical contributions, some limitations should be noted. The subsequent section will examine the limitations of the processes and procedures employed in developing this thesis.

We opted for a cross-sectional design and relied on self-reported data. This approach has limitations, such as the potential for CMV and social desirability bias, which can artificially inflate the observed associations. We tried to mitigate CMV by adopting various scale formats to address these concerns, as Rindfleisch et al. (2008) recommended. Additionally, we ensured that the questions used familiar constructs, enabling precise and concise wording, following the guidelines by Rodríguez-Ardura and Meseguer-Artola (2020). However, despite these precautions, we cannot establish a causal relationship based solely on our findings. For future research, we suggest that longitudinal data should be obtained to understand better the causal influences among the variables (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010).

Further, a subjective approach has been employed to measure career success using self-reported measures. It is essential to acknowledge that using SCS measures has received criticism due to inherent limitations (Abele et al., 2011). Scholars have posited that the utilization of standard measures to assess SCS represents an objectivist approach that fails to acknowledge its social constructivist nature (Arthur et al., 2005; Brown & Lent, 2013; Dries et al., 2008). Further, the findings from such measures may be challenging to generalize, as individuals can assign varying degrees of importance to different subjective outcomes such as income, job security, work location, status, career advancement opportunities, and work-life balance (Arthur et al., 2005). Individual differences in these aspects may lead to inconsistent responses and impact the validity of the findings. Moreover, stable individual differences such as personality traits can also influence responses, contributing to variations in results (Ng et al., 2005). Finally, subjective constructions of career success may also be dynamic and can change over time and with career stages (Abele et al., 2011).

Our study did not explicitly consider individual differences, which could have influenced the outcomes. It is plausible that participants employed by the two companies in this study share similar personality traits, resulting in homogeneous responses. To address this potential limitation, future research should involve multiple companies representing diverse sectors to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

The study relies on convenience sampling based on availability and accessibility rather than rigorous selection procedures. This may result in a sample that must accurately represent the broader population, which severely hampers

generalizability (Staetsky, 2019). Convenience sampling introduces selection bias, as easily accessible participants may possess unique characteristics that differ from the overall population, leading to distorted results and inaccurate conclusions. Self-selection bias is another concern, as specific individuals may choose to participate or not based on specific characteristics or motivations, introducing bias. Additionally, convenience sampling may lead to a lack of diversity within the sample, as participants recruited through convenient methods may share common traits or experiences, limiting response variability and potentially overlooking critical perspectives or subgroups within the population. This can skew the results and restrict generalizability (Emerson, 2015).

In addition to the previous points discussed, it is essential to highlight that the sample used in this study consisted exclusively of participants from two Norwegian private sector companies. Although the study encompassed respondents from diverse geographic locations within Norway, the geographic location itself was not considered a demographic variable in the present investigation. This limitation may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. To enhance the external validity of future research, it would be beneficial to include multiple companies from various sectors. This would enable a more diverse representation of employees and increase the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, it may be valuable for future studies to examine the potential impact of geographic location on employees' coping mechanisms in response to NCS. By considering geographic variations, we can understand how individuals from different regions navigate and cope with career shocks.

The current study focused solely on the use of self-reported SCS measures. As highlighted, there are limitations related to defining and measuring career satisfaction and success through exclusively subjective or objective measures. One way to deal with such limitations is to include subjective and objective career success measures (e.g., Briscoe & Kellogg, 2011; Heslin, 2003, 2005).

6.3 Future research

Exploring additional variables and potential subgroup differences, potentially moderating the relationship between SCS and NCS, can enhance our understanding of the nuanced dynamics at play. Understanding the factors that affect employees' career success and potential subgroup differences is essential for

organizations seeking to develop motivated and competent workforces. One such factor that recently gained prominence in career research is self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Previous research (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Day & Allen, 2004; Poon, 2004) has shown that individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to report higher levels of SCS. Future research could therefore investigate self-efficacy as a potential moderating variable between NCS and SCS.

Resilience is another factor that may influence the relationship between NCS and SCS. Resilience refers to an individual's ability to bounce back and adapt to adversity (Kuntz et al., 2016). Numerous studies have consistently highlighted resilience as a prominent personal characteristic associated with career success (Salisu et al., 2020; Wei & Taormina, 2014). Han et al. (2021) posit that resilient individuals exhibit adaptive behavioral patterns characterized by perseverance in the face of career setbacks. Therefore, assessing resilience levels and examining its potential moderating role in the relationship could provide insights into the protective factors contributing to individuals' ability to bounce back from career setbacks, including exposure to NCS

Social support is crucial to mediating the relationship between NCS and SCS. As presented previously by the COR theory, access to, e.g., resources such as supportive relationships, mentors, colleagues, or family members can offer emotional support and advice and serve as valuable resources when facing career challenges (Hobfoll, 2001). Strong social support networks can positively influence individuals' SCS despite experiencing shocks. Future research could explore the mediating effect of social support by examining the quality and quantity of support networks and their influence on career outcomes.

Career adaptability, referring to the capacity to adjust career goals and behaviors in response to changing circumstances (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), may also moderate the relationship between NCS and SCS (Akkermans et al., 2018). Individuals with high career adaptability are more likely to proactively seek new opportunities and make necessary adjustments following career shocks. This adaptability may buffer the effects of NCS shocks on SCS.

Throughout this study, we have investigated subgroup differences through our control variables; however, further investigating other potential subgroup differences influencing the relationship between NCS and SCS is essential for a

comprehensive understanding. Some examples of subgroup differences to explore are variations across occupations or industries, cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic status.

Exploring variations across industries or occupations can reveal unique challenges and opportunities in different professional fields. Further, investigating cultural background can provide insight into how cultural contexts shape the impact of career shocks on subjective career experiences. Analyzing data based on socioeconomic status (e.g., income, social class) can uncover potential differences in the effects of NCS on SCS among individuals with varying levels of resources and social support. Often objective measures of career success focus on variables related to socioeconomic status. Therefore, combining subjective and objective measures of career success can be fruitful when further investigating the relationship of interest. By examining potential moderating variables in addition to subgroup differences, a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between NCS and SCS can be gained. These factors highlight the importance of psychological processes, social support systems, and adaptability in shaping individuals' career outcomes in the face of unexpected career events.

7.0 Conclusion

The current study offers valuable insight into the relationship between negative career shocks and subjective career success from both the Socioemotional Selectivity and Conservation of Resources theories. Referring to our research goal, which was to explore rather an individual's lifespan perspective impact the relationship between negative career shocks and subjective career success, our study confirms a negative relationship between negative career shocks and subjective career success. This shows the importance of supporting employees when facing career setbacks. Further, in alignment with the Socioemotional Selectivity theory, our research supports that individuals with a limited time perspective generally experience lower levels of subjective career success than those with a more open-ended time perspective. In line with the Conservation of Resources theory, our research shows that leaders tend to offer higher subjective career success levels than employees not holding leadership positions. While our findings did not provide evidence for lifespan perspective as a moderating variable of the relationship between negative career shocks and

subjective career success, the results offer valuable insights into the significance of supporting employees regardless of their career trajectory or lifespan perspective when faced with disruptive and unexpected events, such as career shocks.

Based on the findings and results of our study, several implications for individuals, organizations, and future research can be drawn. First, our study highlights the need for organizations to provide support and resources to individuals who have experienced career shocks. This could include offering counseling, training, or job search assistance programs. Individuals can also take proactive steps to prepare for potential career shocks by developing transferable skills and building professional networks outside their current job. Second, our study emphasizes the importance of leadership development programs for organizations to promote subjective career success. Individuals aspiring to leadership positions should seek opportunities to develop their skills and expand their professional networks. Overall, our study contributes to the literature on the relationship between negative career shocks, subjective career success, and lifespan perspective and provides practical implications for individuals and organizations to promote career success and well-being. We believe that both conceptually and practically, our research has contributed to expanding the corpus of knowledge. Our results can be a strong starting point for additional research on career success and shocks.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- Full survey



Dette er en forespørsel til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt som vår avsluttende masteroppgave ved Handelshøyskolen BI, Oslo. I dette skrivet vil vi gi deg en oversikt over prosjektets formål, og hva din deltakelse vil innebære.

Formål med prosjektet

Forskningsprosjektet ønsker å utforske hvorvidt ulike uforutsette hendelser i karrieren har en innvirkning på karrierevalg. Vi ønsker å gjøre undersøkelser på din nåværende arbeidsplass for å undersøke om det vil være forskjeller i tilknytning til ulike variabler som kjønn, alder og hvor du jobber i dag.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Handelshøyskolen BI er ansvarlig institusjon for dette forskningsprosjektet.

Hva innebærer deltakelse for deg?

Deltakelse i prosjektet skjer på en frivillig basis, og det vil ikke komme frem negative følger av å ikke delta. Dersom du ønsker deltakelse i prosjektet, innebærer dette at du fyller ut et spørreskjema som tar om lag 6 minutter å gjennomføre. Spørreundersøkelsen er formulert på norsk og består av spørsmål satt sammen med hensikt om å undersøke forskningsspørsmålet vi har formulert. Svarene du gir i spørreskjemaet vil bli registrert elektronisk.

Ditt personvern

Svar gitt i spørreskjemaet er anonyme og personopplysninger vil kun bli brukt til de formålene som er beskrevet i dette dokumentet. De vil videre bli behandlet konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Vi vil ikke innhente personopplysninger som IP-adresse, navn eller kontaktinformasjon. De opplysningene som innhentes er kun de som blir besvart i spørreskjemaet. Dataene for dette prosjektet vil kunne bli brukt til å generere original vitenskapelig forskning, oppfølgingsstudier og arkivering for fremtidig forskning. Dine responser vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjonen av denne forskningen. Materialet vil anonymiseres ved prosjektslutt august 2023.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke. På oppdrag fra Handelshøyskolen BI har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Har du spørsmål knyttet til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta gjerne kontakt med oss: • Handelshøyskolen BI Oslo ved veileder Anders Dysvik (anders.dysvik@bi.no)

- Fride Roska (fride.roska@gmail.com)
- Amanda Garen (amanda.garen@outlook.com)
- Vibeke Nesbakken (Personvernombud Handelshøyskolen BI) (personombud@bi.no)

Dersom du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet kan du ta kontakt med: NSD – Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata AS
personverntjenester@nsd.no

Med vennlig hilsen,
Fride Roska & Amanda Garen

Samtykkeskjema

Jeg har lest og forstått det som er beskrevet overfor, og samtykker til å delta i forskningsprosjektet.

Ja

Nei

Hvilken bedrift jobber du for i dag?

Hvor gammel er du?

18-25

26-30

31-35

36-40

41-45

46-50

51-55

56-60

61-65

Over 65

Hvilket kjønn identifiserer du deg som?

Mann

Kvinne

Ikke-binær/Jeg identifiserer meg ikke som mann eller kvinne

Hva er din høyeste gjennomførte utdanning?

Grunnskoleopplæring	<input type="radio"/>
Videregående utdanning eller fagbrev	<input type="radio"/>
Bachelorgrad eller tilsvarende	<input type="radio"/>
Mastergrad eller tilsvarende	<input type="radio"/>
Doktorgrad eller tilsvarende	<input type="radio"/>

Hvor lenge har du jobbet hos nåværende arbeidsgiver?

Mindre enn ett år	<input type="radio"/>
1-3 år	<input type="radio"/>
3-5 år	<input type="radio"/>
5-7 år	<input type="radio"/>
7-10 år	<input type="radio"/>
10-15 år	<input type="radio"/>
15 år eller lenger	<input type="radio"/>

Hvor lenge har du jobbet i nåværende stilling?

Mindre enn ett år	<input type="radio"/>
1-3 år	<input type="radio"/>
3-5 år	<input type="radio"/>
5-7 år	<input type="radio"/>
7-10 år	<input type="radio"/>
10-15 år	<input type="radio"/>
15 år eller lenger	<input type="radio"/>

Hvor mange barn har du?

0	<input type="radio"/>
1	<input type="radio"/>
2	<input type="radio"/>
3	<input type="radio"/>
4 eller flere	<input type="radio"/>

Er du i en lederstilling i bedriften i dag, herunder om du har et personalansvar (mellomledelse)?

Ja	<input type="radio"/>
Nei	<input type="radio"/>

Under finner du ulike karriererelaterte hendelser som du kan ha opplevd i løpet av de siste tre årene. Hvis du har opplevd en eller flere av hendelsene, indiker i hvilken grad dette har påvirket din karriere eller dine karrierevalg på en skala fra 0) jeg har ikke opplevd dette til 4) Ja, jeg har opplevd dette, og det har hatt stor påvirkning på meg.

	Jeg har ikke opplevd dette	Ja, jeg har opplevd dette, men det påvirket meg minimalt	Ja, jeg har opplevd dette, og det påvirket meg til en viss grad	Ja, jeg har opplevd dette, og det har i større grad påvirket meg	Ja, jeg har opplevd dette, og det har hatt en betydelig påvirkning på meg
Organisasjonen du nå jobber i eller har jobbet i, har gjennomgått en betydelig negativ hendelse, for eksempel nedbemanning, konkurs eller en sak som har påvirket omdømme til organisasjonen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Du mistet jobben (f.eks. at kontrakten din ikke ble fornyet eller at du ble sagt opp).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Du fikk ikke forfremmelsen du forventet/ønsket å få.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Du opplevde en betydelig reduksjon i lønn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dine eksterne jobbmuligheter ble drastisk redusert.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Du hadde en alvorlig konflikt med en leder eller kollega.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Du utviklet en fysisk eller psykisk sykdom eller lidelse.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
En kollega eller mentor som var viktig for deg forlot organisasjonen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Videre vil du bli presentert for noen påstander om ditt fremtidige yrkesliv. Vennligst vurder følgende påstander på skalaen fra 1= Svært uenig til 5= Svært enig.

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig
Det venter meg mange muligheter i mitt fremtidige yrkesliv.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg forventer at jeg vil sette meg mange nye mål i mitt fremtidige yrkesliv.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mitt fremtidige yrkesliv er fylt med muligheter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Det meste av mitt yrkesliv ligger foran meg.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I mitt fremtidige yrkesliv venter det endeløst med muligheter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Etterhvert som jeg har blitt eldre, opplever jeg at min yrkesmessige fremtid begrenses i større og større grad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I den neste delen av undersøkelsen ber vi deg ta stilling til din situasjon her og nå og vurdere det du har oppnådd så langt i din karriere. Vennligst vurder følgende påstander på skalaen fra 1= Svært uenig til 5= Svært enig.

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig
Jeg er fornøyd med det jeg har oppnådd hittil i karrieren min.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg er fornøyd med fremgangen jeg har hatt med å nå mine overordnede karrieremål.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg er fornøyd med fremgangen jeg har hatt med å nå mine mål tilknyttet inntekt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg er fornøyd med fremgangen jeg har hatt med å nå mine personlige mål for utvikling (eks. gjennom stillingsforfremmelse).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg er fornøyd med fremgangen jeg har hatt med å nå mine mål for utvikling av nye ferdigheter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I denne delen ønsker vi at du tar en vurdering ut fra nåsituasjon. Vennligst vurder følgende påstand hvor 1 = Jeg vurderer absolutt ikke å gjøre en karriereendring til 5 = Jeg er i ferd med å gjøre en karriereendring.

	Jeg vurderer absolutt ikke å gjøre en karriereendring	Det er lite sannsynlig at jeg vil gjøre en karriereendring	Jeg har ikke tatt stilling til om jeg vil gjøre en karriereendring	Jeg vurderer å gjøre en karriereendring	Jeg er i ferd med å gjøre en karriereendring
Vennligst vurder din intensjon til å gjennomføre en karriereendring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 2 – Approval from NSD

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Skriv ut

08.02.2023

Referansenummer
702169

Vurderingstype
Standard

Dato
08.02.2023

Prosjektittel
Master Thesis: Subjective Career Shocks

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
Handelshøyskolen BI / BI Oslo / Institutt for ledelse og organisasjon

Prosjektansvarlig
Anders Dysvik

Student
Amanda Garen

Prosjektperiode
01.01.2023 - 01.08.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger
Alminnelige
Særlige

Lovlig grunnlag

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)
Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 01.08.2023.

[Meldeskjema](#)

Kommentar

OM VURDERINGEN

Sikt har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket.

TYPE PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Prosjektet vil behandle særlige kategorier av personopplysninger om helse.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

Vi har vurdert at du har lovlig grunnlag til å behandle personopplysningene, men husk at det er institusjonen du er ansatt/student ved som avgjør hvilke databehandlere du kan bruke og hvordan du må lagre og sikre data i ditt prosjekt. Husk å bruke leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med (f.eks. ved skylagring, nettspørreskjema, videosamtale el.)

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1 f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Se våre nettsider om hvilke endringer du må melde: <https://sikt.no/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Vi vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!