The meaning of career success across people- vs. technology-oriented occupations: Empirical evidence from German-speaking Europe

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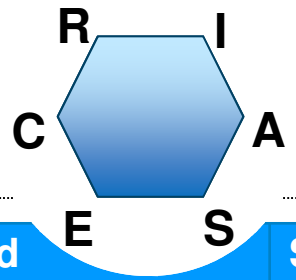
Theoretical Background, Rationale

- Meaning of career success is subjective (e.g., Arthur et al., 2005)
- 5C: seven globally valid CS dimensions (Mayrhofer et al., 2016)
- Person-Environment Fit approach:
  People choose occupations based on their interests and values (e.g., Holland, 1997)
  → Individuals working in the same occupation are likely to have similar (work) values and conceptualizations of career success
- Occupation-specific patterns of career success conceptualizations have practical implications for career management systems

Occupational profiles
(Holland, 1997)



	Values	Personality characteristics	Preferred activities	Sample careers
Realistic	tradition	practical, mechanical	manual, physical, mechanical, athletic	mechanic, builder
Investigative	**indepen-dence**	**analytical, intellectual**	**work with ideas, solve intellectual problems**	**computer systems analyst, researcher**
Artistic	aesthetic experience	expressive, creative	use imagination, creative expression	artist, actor
Social	**altruism**	**cooperative, empathetic**	**interact with and help people, guide**	**teacher, counselor, nurse**
Enterprising	economic achievement	persuasive, assertive	lead, manage, persuade, organize	manager, lawyer, politician
Conventional	obedience	conforming, controlled	order, attend to details	accountant, banker, office manager

Source: adapted from Nauta (2013: 58-59)

How will teachers, health-care workers and IT professionals differ in regard to career success conceptualizations?

Hypotheses

Based on vocational choice theory (Holland, 1997)
and literature on IT, healthcare (H) and teaching (T) occupations

(e.g., Arnold et al., 2006; Gubler, 2011; Harris & Adams, 2007; Igbaria et al., 1999; Saxenian, 1996; Scholarios et al., 2008)

H1: T and H rate financial success as **less** important than **IT**.

H2: T and H rate entrepreneurship as **less** important than **IT**.

H3: T and H rate positive work relationships as **more** important than **IT**.

H4: T and H rate positive impact as **more** important than **IT**.

H5: T and IT rate learning/development as more important than **H**.

H6: T and IT rate work-life balance as more important than **H**.

Sample and Method

- Sample:

Prim./sec. school teachers	N=240	72.9% f	Age *M*=43.1	*SD*=10.9
Healthcare professionals	N=185	74.1% f	Age *M*=42.7	*SD*=11.7
IT professionals	N=125	19.2% f	Age *M*=42.7	*SD*=11.3

  - Focus on Germany, Austria and Switzerland ("DACH" region) to exclude institutional context and culture as potential confounds

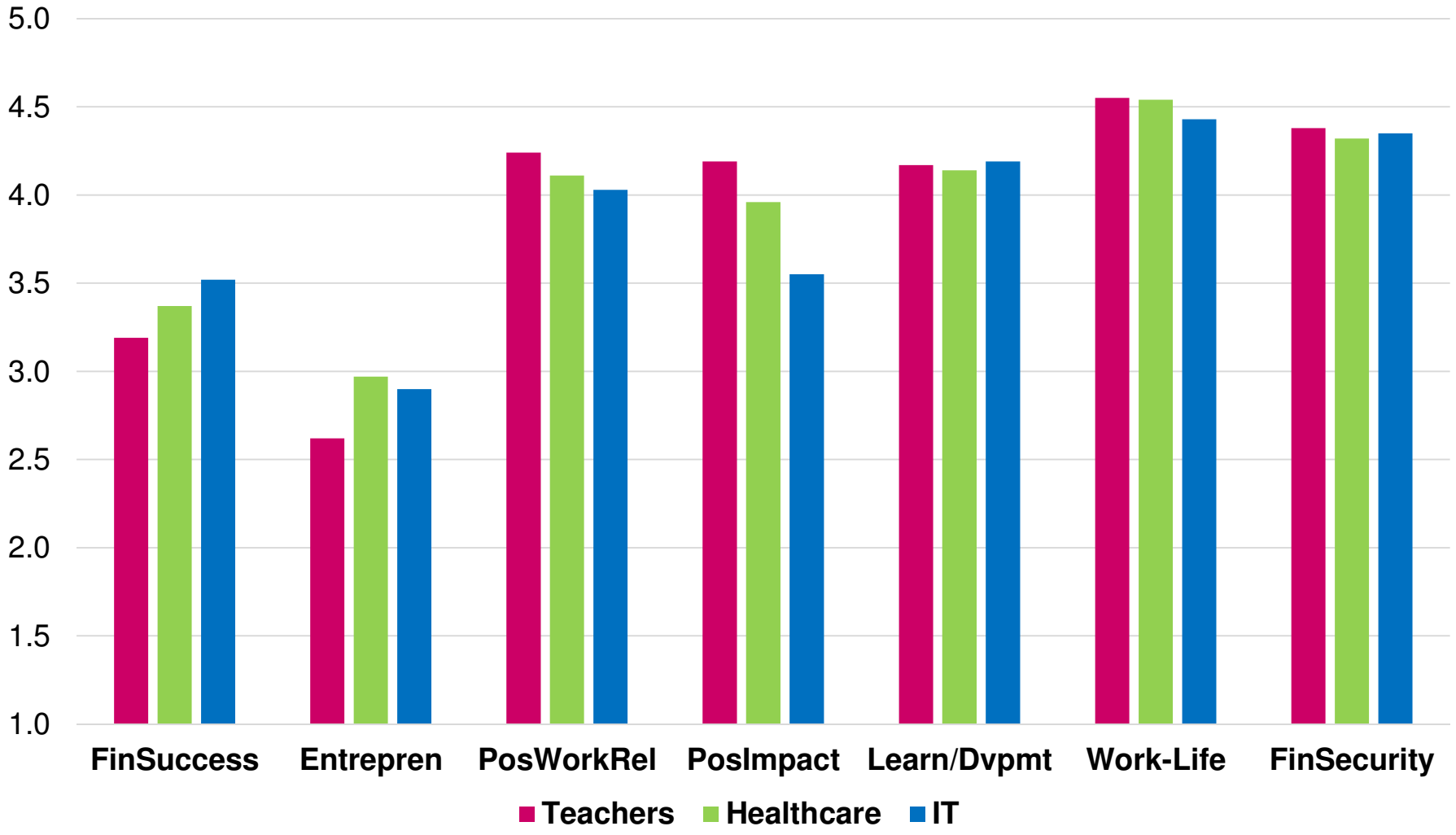
- Measures:
  - 5C Career Success Scale ("Importance"):
    7 sub-scales (Financial Security, Financial Success, Entrepreneurship, Learning/ Development, Work-Life Balance, Positive Impact, Positive Work Relationships);
    Likert scale (1 "not important", 5 "very important")
  - Controls: age, gender

- Analysis: General linear model (GLM)

Results (1): Descriptives

Dimension	α	Mean values (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*)		
		Teachers (n=240)	Health-care professionals (n=185)	IT professionals (n=125)
Financial Success	.73	3.19 (.73)	3.37 (.70)	3.52 (.84)
Entrepreneurship	.76	2.62 (.82)	2.97 (1.03)	2.90 (1.02)
Positive Work Relationships	.69	4.24 (.50)	4.11 (.51)	4.03 (.48)
Positive Impact	.68	4.19 (.58)	3.96 (.60)	3.55 (.67)
Learning/ Development	.75	4.17 (.57)	4.14 (.49)	4.19 (.50)
Work-Life Balance	.75	4.55 (.52)	4.54 (.52)	4.43 (.60)
Financial Security	.55	4.38 (.60)	4.32 (.63)	4.35 (.60)

Results (1): Descriptives



Results (2): ANOVA and GLM parameter estimates

	ANOVA (F)	part. η^2	T – H	T – IT	H – IT	GLM[b]	T	
			Post hoc differences[a]					
Financial Success	10.54**	.04	- .18	- .30*	- .12	[it]	3.87**	✓
Entrepreneurship	11.19**	.04	- .43*	- .27*	.16	[it]	.79	~
Positive Work Relationships	4.06*	.02	.14*	.08	- .05	[it]	-.68	✗
Positive Impact	35.84**	.12	.24*	.55*	.31*	[it]	-7.32**	✓
Learning/ Development	.91	.00	.03	- .06	- .09	[h]	-.99	✗
Work-Life Balance	1.00	.00	.03	.04	.01	[h]	-.01	✗
Financial Security	.81	.00	.07	.03	- .04	*(no hypothesis)*		

[a] ANOVA multiple comparisons based on Bonferroni post hoc test;
[b] [it]: IT professionals are compared to T and H pooled into one group;
[h]: H are compared to T and IT pooled into one group;
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Discussion

- Some differences, some similarities:
  - **Financial Success** less important for T and H than for IT
    (cf. Bellé, 2015; Lindqvist et al., 2014)
  - Largest differences regarding importance of **Positive Impact**:
    T highest, IT lowest → in line with Holland's (1997) model
    (T and H have „social" vocational interests)
  - Teachers vs. healthcare professionals: T are least **entrepreneurial**, H most; **Positive Work Relationships** more valued by T than by H
  - No occupational differences regarding **Work-Life Balance** and **Financial Security** (ranked highest and second-highest in all three occupations) as well as **Learning/Development**
- The P-E fit approach is helpful, but patterns are too nuanced (cf. differences T – H) to be adequately captured by a single explanatory approach (e.g., vocational personalities).
- Similarities among groups evidence generally prioritized career-related values: ***balance, security, development***

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