Career success conception among generation Y executives

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Abstract— over the last two decades, the concept of career success has attracted increasing interest within organizations as well as within the scientific community. Indeed, due to economic and organizational changes, career development has undergone profound changes. Progression through promotion and vertical evolution is no longer the norm and the individual plays a more prominent role in his professional career. In this context, the concept of career success itself has evolved. Although the objective dimension was given more attention at first, there has recently been a renewed interest in the subjective aspect, notably because of the greater role given to the employee in management and the evaluation of his career. The aim of this research is to understand the conception of career success for the executives of the Moroccan Y generation.

Keywords— career, career success, generation Y, objective aspect, subjective aspect.

I.   GENERAL CONTEXT

For more than half a century, the concept of career success sparked off a growing interest within organisations as well as the scientific community. The careers' continuity has known profound change in the wake of economic modifications that humanity experienced. The economic environment of our current conditions has become even harder and more complex, the organisational structures have been largely reworked, shrinkage of hierarchy and the apparition of new work forms. The ascendant intra-organisational evolution in its classic sens isn't suitable anymore; new career forms came to existence in particular "Boundary-less career" and "Protean career". The executives' expectations regarding their enterprise have evolved. If back then salary increase was the main motivation to amplify their productivity and performance, today isn't the case, there exist other variables that should be considered. Personal success often contributes to the company's success (Judge et al., 1999), the necessity of improving the professional success perceived by the employees has become an essential thing (Brousseau and al., 1996) and (Gaertner and Nollen, 1989). The concept of career success has itself evolved. If the objective scope was initially the center of attention, then recently the subjective aspect has regained attention primarily due to the ever-growing importance accorded to the employee by the career evolution management. Companies have gained a lot from a better comprehension of career success particularly compared to this generation that since its first appearance has created confusion in the minds of researchers. We aren't in the "living to work" perspective any longer, but we're "working to live". It's for this reason that this generation "Generation Y" is different than the ones before. If companies want to increase their productivity or performance by any means, they need to care more about this generation's expectations along with its conception of career success. The concepts of career and career success have been largely debated in western countries, namely Europe and America. Yet, these principles were rarely studied in Moroccan circumstances, especially from the point of view of Generation Y. the interest of this theme is to identify where the generation Y executives should be placed compared to theoretical input developed by career authors.

II.   CONCEPTUAL SURROUNDINGS

A.   Career and Career Success

For Peretti (2000), a career could be the ensemble of past, present and future experiences. It was noted that « *the notion*

of career is even harder to define, that its contours are often vague. When certain people limit it to the professional evolution in any given organization, others have an even larger vision that includes a set of divers life-long experiences not only in accordance with the economic and cultural context but also with the type of contracts or the employee's profession. The conceptions of what represents a career are different» (Igalens, Roger; 2007, P.189).

According to Gunz (1989), there exists an ontological duality to the career, it can be considered as an organizational phenomenon and a process for individual development at the same time. Which makes it that we should consider three main approaches for this research. The first of which was developed in the 1960 by neo-institutional economists, who consider the career as a result of social and organizational contexts. The second approach, developed by psychologists in the 1950 which is the premise of the new career movement, and considers it essentially the individual's business, it therefore focuses on the study of motivation and career identity development. And lastly, the third approach initiated by the Chicago university sociologists in the 1930, who consider the career as a process that results from the interaction between the individual and his professional environment. This authorized sociologists to establish a distinction between an objective career (external) and a subjective career (internal), Along with organizational career and individual career. Research has separated the career into two separate categories: objective approaches, essentially economic and sociologic, which observe the professional journey, and there are the subjective approaches, essentially psychological and psycho-sociological, that give a central place to the vision and the perception of individuals in the construction of their own path.

B. Operationalization and Measurement of Career Success

If we get back to Arthur and al' definition (2005), « *Career success is the result of experiences related to an individual's career. Career success can be defined as the attainment of desirable outcomes related to an individual's career at some point in his or her professional life throughout the career.* »

By this definition, the authors make an allusion of the career success concept's duality (objective/subjective). Thus, we find that the objective career which refers to the different positions occupied by an individual, easily observed by a third party is evaluated by the "objective career success" And the subjective career, perception and judgment of the individual from his or her own career, which is measured by "subjective career success". In empirical research, much of the research

has been devoted to objective career success, operationalized through objective criteria such as salary, hierarchical level, and so on.

According to Bastid (2007), Arthur and Rousseau in 1996, 75% of the empirical studies published between 1980 and 1995 dealing with careers focused their approach on the objective aspect of the career. Tharnou (1997), summarizes the different ways to operationalize objective career success according to: the number or pace of promotions within the hierarchical levels of the organization and the evolution of remuneration. (Rosenbaum, 1984, Gattickeret Larwood, 1990, Schneer and Reitman, 1990, Miner and al., 1991, Brett and al., 1992, Reskin and Ross, 1992, Bretz and Judge, 1994, Judge and al). However, research has shown that some executives, who have a high level of objective career success, may be dissatisfied with their careers (Kormanandal., 1981). This has led to an even greater interest in the study of subjective career success, particularly in view of the impact it has on the psychological well-being of the employee and hence his performance within the organization . Gatticker and Larwood (1986) are pioneers in their research into the conceptualization and operationalization of subjective career success. Through their studies, they were able to demonstrate the need to situate research on career success in the wider context of life in general and to study in particular the possible impact of non-professional aspects and roles on subjective Career success.

Judge and Al in 1995 were also pioneers in empirical research dealing with career success, including their study combining objective and subjective career success. These authors emphasized the evolutionary aspect of this concept and therefore the importance of "who" makes the judgment. They therefore retained a definition of objective career success as "*the relatively objective criteria observable by others (salary, promotion ...)*". And then subjective career achievement as "*a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction with the career*" measured by the scale of Greenhaus and Al (1990). Unlike the authors cited above, Judge and al included "satisfaction with work" as an additional dimension of subjective career success.

Arthur and al (2005), in a special issue of the journal of organizational behavior, synthesized 68 articles published between 1992 and 2002 in major social science journals. The latter shows that the majority of the empirical studies carried out in this period focused on the objective aspect of career success. Despite the advances in career theory that emphasize the integration of subjective aspects with objective aspects, many empirical studies continue to study only one of these two aspects (Arthur and Al, 2005). Bourdeau and Al. In 2001

following their study of European and American contexts, the operationalization of objective career success in relation to their initial model was revised (Judge and al., 1995), integrating a new element: Employability, synonymous with potential attractiveness to other employers.

Another study conducted by Freidman and Greenhaus in 2000 among 800 business professionals, focuses on five main dimensions: status, time available for oneself, challenge, safety and social relations.

The measurement of objective career success can be improved in future research by taking into account the specificities of the career context and the type of employment, also by taking into account the subjective aspects of career success simultaneously and next to objective aspects is also one of the ways in which research can meet these limits. In terms of subjective career success, it can be defined as the totality of the individual's reactions to past and present career experiences (Heslin 2005). It is the judgment that an individual takes on his own success based on personal standards or by comparing himself to people around him (reference group). Some indicators were taken into account for a better measure of subjective career success, in particular the balance between work and personal life and satisfaction with life in general. It therefore seems appropriate to question the completeness of the main criteria used so far by researchers for the study of subjective career success. Heslin in 2005 highlights the question of the referent in the process of evaluating subjective career success. Through studying full-time MBA students, he was able to demonstrate the importance of using an external referent for assessing career success. This theoretical framework proposed by Heslin seems very interesting to us, it covers important elements specific to the Moroccan population and specifically those who belong to the generation Y.

C. Generation Y

Generation Y is comprised of young adults and emerging adults, described as over-educated and often underemployed (Allain, 2009). Without reference to the past and without projection in the future, they live in the present, act in the immediacy with a strong reactivity and develop multiple links, sometimes fleeting, via social networks greatly favored by digital technologies and the internet. It is possible that these young people will shape the world of tomorrow. Indeed, there is a considerable gap in the generational transmission: they are the ones who by mastering the new information technologies provided by their elders, will shape the structure of exchanges and social ties in depth and even revolutionize their learning, to a large extent, their socialization is no longer with their fathers but with their peers. This generation destabilizes their elders and society through unexpected behaviors, whether in the context of work, family or social life (Allain, 2009). On the basis of similar findings, Olivier and Tanguy (2008) propose a manual to integrate this generation into the company. As the literature on Generation Y is exploratory and descriptive, it is possible to find an array of characteristics associated with this generation (Harvey, 2004). First, generation Y is recognized as highly educated (Allain, 2005, Howe and Strauss, 2000, Paré, 2002, Simard, 2007, Tulgan and Martin, 2001, Zemke and al., 2000). Some even say that it is the most educated generation of all (Eisner, 2005; Solomon, 2000). According to Foot (1999), the increase in enrollment is explained by the few opportunities offered by the labor market for people with low levels of education. In addition to their high level of schooling, young people in this generation are very knowledgeable (Paré, 2002; Solomon, 2000). This feature is largely explained by the widespread use of the Internet and ICTs, which allows almost unlimited access to information. It is therefore a very educated generation, which helps to give them a certain power. Another characteristic resulting from the generalization of the Internet and ICTs is the relationship to the particular time of generation Y (Paré, 2002; Tulgan and Martin, 2001). With new technologies, information processing and access to information and people are almost instantaneous. Young people of this generation have not learned to be patient and expect everything to move quickly. Their concept of time is characterized by instantaneousness or immediacy (Paré, 2002). Tel Allain (2005) asserts, "*A period of six months is an eternity*" for them. It is also interesting to note that this new relationship to time, combined with their excellent technological abilities, means that young people are accustomed to performing several tasks at the same time (Audet, 2004, Eisner, 2005, Simard, 2007; Zemke et al., 2000). Moreover, Generation Y's youth are recognized as independent and seek to realize things themselves (Audet, 2004; Paré, 2002). Paré (2002) explains these characteristics by the fact that they are active researchers of information and not passive sensors, which enables them to acquire by themselves the knowledge necessary to verify information that appears inaccurate to them. Furthermore they are constantly exposed and aware of important social issues (eg, drugs, suicide, violence, the environment etc.), which gives them a certain maturity (Zemke et al, 2000). Also their access to information and their fairly open education enable generation Y's youth to develop opinions from a young age.

	Objective Domain	Subjective Domain
Self-referent Domain	1. Objective/self-referent Examples: Examples: - My financial and promotion aspirations Potential correlate - A market culture	2. Subjective/self-referent Examples: - My goals for work-life balance and fulfillment Potential correlates: - A calling orientation - A non-linear career
Other-referent Domain	3. Objective/other-referent Examples: Examples: - My colleagues pay and my social standing Potential correlates: - A winner-take-all market - A job or career orientation	4. Subjective/other-referent Examples: - My stimulation and fun, relative to my peers Potential correlate: - A clan culture

Heslin (2005, p121)

Another characteristic of Generation Y often identified in scripts is the spirit for change and innovation (Allain, 2005, Eisner, 2005, Paré, 2002, Simard, 2007), Due to their special relationship to time and the speed with which their lives unfolds. Not only, generation Y youth adapts well to change and value innovation but they also value challenges and are creative (Eisner, 2005; Paré, 2002). However, research on intergenerational differences in core values shows that Generation Y does not differ significantly from traditionalists and baby boomers when it comes to values of openness to change (Lyons et al., 2007). Thus, this characteristic may not be as distinctive of generation Y as is believed. Moreover, since the school system favors group projects under the direction of a central authority, Generation Y youths tend to respect authority (Eisner, 2005, Pekala, 2001, Zemke et al., 2000). However, this statement needs to be qualified. Generation Y youth are not aware of the hierarchy and do not want to be under the authority of an angry and intimidating boss (Allain, 2005; Simard, 2007). They want to be supervised by competent people (Allain, 2005Arsenault, 2003). Thus for Generation Y, authority passes much more by competence than by status. Finally, two criteria are often issued with respect to Generation Y youth. The first is their lack of loyalty and their tendency to always be on the lookout for better employment or better working conditions (Allain, 2005, Simard, 2007, Vandenberghe, 2004). It is interesting to note that this criticism is also expressed with regard to Generation X. The second concerns them being demanding and needy when it comes to immediate gratification (Allain, 2005, Simar, 2007, Solomon, 2000, Zemke and al., 2000). Because of their relationship to instantaneous times, if their aspirations and needs are not met quickly, they are likely to be unhappy and will not hesitate to verbalize it and go elsewhere. Moreover, since they have been the center of attention of their parents, they expect the employer to do the same, which makes them a demanding workforce.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework we have chosen for this empirical study is Heslin (2005), which incorporates both the objective and the subjective dimension of career success. According to Heslin, any individual refers to personal standards and aspirations as well as the achievements and expectations of his entourage to evaluate his career success. The following table summarizes the four types of career success criteria developed by Him in the table above:

For our research process, given the fertile aspect of the field studied and the rarity of studies that have dealt with career success in particular from the point of view of the younger executives belonging to the Y generation, we have opted for an exploration process. Due to the specificities of our context and the predominance of the criterion "the other-referent" or more precisely the external referent. We have chosen to take up the conceptual framework of Heslin (2005) to better envelop the conception of career success Of Generation Y executives. In order to understand the concept of career success among Moroccan generation Y executives, a maintenance guide was prepared and administered to a sample of 16 Moroccan generation Y executives. This sample of young managers (women and men), belonging to different companies, SMEs and multinational, in the cities of Marrakech and Casablanca. The interviews lasted generally between 45 minutes and one hour and were recorded on a tape recorder. The recordings have been the subject of a complete transcription on word processing. To handle all the interviews conducted, a thematic content analysis was performed. The combination of vertical analysis (interview by interview) and horizontal analysis (theme by theme) allowed us to highlight a number of results.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

A. Results Analysis

1). Objective criteria linked to internal referent:

These criteria include the extrinsic elements that can be evaluated by the individual himself. These are exactly the same criteria widely studied in the classical theories of career. In terms of our Moroccan context, and precisely on the basis of our sample, we find that the majority of interviewers attach great importance to salary, promotion and status. Generation Y executives in our sample see wages as a financial source worthy of meeting all of their needs. Therefore their main objective is to increase their income to the maximum and in a very short time. They claim still be satisfied with their current salaries. The status however, counts for the executives of the Moroccan Generation Y, because of the importance of appearances in our society and therefore the need of this generation to assert itself and show that it's important and show its weight in society. The importance attached to both wages and professional status differs among individuals. It was revealed that for half of the interviewed women, the status goes well before the salary, "... *although the salary is important, but I am ready to make concessions for a better status, Responsibilities* ... "(management Controller). What we can retain from this answer is this important need for women to assert themselves and take responsibility. This explains why they often opt for positions of responsibility even at the expense of wages.

Based on this sample, Generation Y has its unique view of promotion and wage increases. For the latter and mainly new executives, a promotion or increase that does not follow after six to twelve months of work can be perceived as a valid reason for abundant business. Expectations of executives in terms of promotions and salaries may differ from one city to another. In our sample, Generation Y executives from the city of Casablanca are much more demanding when it comes to salary and promotion compared to their peers in Marrakech. *"... I do not expect a big increase given the conditions offered by the labor market in Marrakech ...*" (salesman from Marrakech)

2). Subjective criteria linked to the internal referent:

As for the subjective aspect of success conception for the executives of our sample. The first thing that has been found and was deemed useful to analyze, is what they think of the career and more precisely of career success. It has been found that many of the executives interviewed link career success with the financial aspect of *"... providing for oneself, buying what you want when you want ...*" (bank executive), others have spoken Personal accomplishment and achievement of objectives.

What particularly attracted our attention was the large number of women interviewed who emphasized other aspects in their definition of career success. The first of which is the responsibility, these women mostly want to have a position of responsibility and to be influential in their companies. The second is to have free time for their private lives (flexible schedule). Among the important aspects that characterize Generation Y is the importance of personal and professional life balance. After analyzing the answers of the interviewees, we can say that most, if not all male executives, assert the importance of both professional and personal spheres but admit to give more interest to their professional live . «...*I prefer to be brilliant in my professional life to be comfortable in my private life ...*» (salesman from Marrakech).

As for female executives, they give great importance to the personal sphere, even more so when they are married, "*My husband and my child are above all ...*" (bank manager). For some, the evolution of their careers depends closely on the events of their private lives "*although professional success improves privacy, but I only want to sacrifice it for a few years, until I have children.*"

We must not deny that there are women (two in the sample) who give more importance to their professional life than to their private life, whatever the change that may affect their private lives, it will not change Their goals and projects in terms of career success. "*My job is my life and I hope to find a husband who will understand ...*"

3). Objective criteria linked to the external referent:

The reference group and value judgment are also crucial in the definition and the sense of career success of an individual. The first situation in which we can touch this influence that the majority of individuals have been confronted with is the question of the choice of their academic curriculum. Much of the interviewees reported that they followed the parents' choice. That manifests through the pressure exerted by the latter, in particular through the financing of studies, or through the model set by their parents that they see as an example to follow in their career. Others claim to give more importance to the opinion of people close to the family as well as to friends in their choice of school and university courses.

The Generation Y executives interviewed stated that they often referred to people in their entourage in their conception

of salary, promotion, and status. A large proportion of the interviewees said that they constantly compare themselves to their successful family members in defining the expected salary and promotional level. What has attracted our attention is their judgment of people who have succeeded in life. Their judgment is based essentially on the financial aspect. Another part of the interviewees chose to be placed on the salary and promotion side and be compared to their old classmates. This choice results from the fact that the profiles of the latter closely resemble those of the individuals in question. This can facilitate their positioning and influence their sense of satisfaction with these extrinsic elements.

In our analysis, we have been able to identify another aspect that often occurs to executives working in multinationals. More than half of the executives in this category say that they are constantly comparing themselves with the hierarchical superiors. They try to see their situation compared to that of their superior in the same stage of the journey. It therefore allows them to situate themselves when it comes to salary, frequency of promotion and professional status. This analysis is far from implying that any respondent automatically refers to a single category to conceive his career success but can refer to several, seeing all of these categories at the same time.

4). Subjective criteria related to the external referent:

As we mentioned above, Generation Y executives in our sample continuously compare themselves to their entourage. This comparison is not only concerned with the extrinsic elements but also with intrinsic elements. According to our sample, in the assessment of their work / life balance, Generation Y executives often compare themselves to those around them. *"... Matter of work life/private life balance, I must feel happy, my colleague who has children struggles enormously ...".* From this comparison, arise the feeling of having a balanced professional and personal life or the opposite. Many of the interviewees who told us they were on the right track in their professional career justified their remarks by making a comparison with their colleagues. *"...I am very satisfied with my current situation in the company, as I am much more respected and considered than my colleagues who have been recruited several years before me ...".* All these answers not only allowed us to see the importance of the individual's personal judgment but also the value judgment of others in the definition and conception of career success.

B. Synthesis and Results Discussion

The responses of the Generation Y executives interviewed reveal a multitude of aspects. It is necessary to reconcile the latter with the theoretical contributions relating to the notion of career success presented in the theoretical part. What we can point out above all is that the executives of the Moroccan Y generation according to our sample continue to give much importance to the career in its traditional sense as defined by the theoreticians of the classical current. In studying the background of the interviewees, we observed that they often had a particular interest in the accumulation and development of knowledge and know-how. This important interest in knowledge can be explained by the desire to occupy a significant position within the company. Still according to our sample, we were able to identify two key behaviours in the career path of Moroccan generation Y executives. The first concerns young executives with a butterfly profile (volatile), the behaviour of the latter relates to the new form of career, as it was developed in the "boundary-less career" and the "nomadic career". But the peculiarity of Moroccan generation Y executives is that at a given moment of their careers they tend towards stability. This change in behaviour can be explained either by undermining career aspirations, according to each person's priorities, or by interacting with new private life elements such as marriage and children. The second behaviour relates to Generation Y executives opting for continuity in the same company, this reaction usually concerns executives working in multinationals. With their career management policies, they meet the expectations of their employees in terms of learning and acquisition of know-how through coaching and training. They also maintain a relationship of trust with their executives, offering them a work environment based on equity, recognition and prospects for the people who deserve it. For all the above reasons, executives in this category see their careers as ascending progress in the same company. In our empirical study, we found that the concept of career success to women differs from that of men. Both sexes attach enormous importance to the financial aspect and status and both agree on the importance of work-life balance. Except that male executives privilege the professional sphere, being convinced that the success of the latter will have a positive impact on their private life. Unlike a woman who gives more importance to the private sphere because of her traditional education which makes her privileges her role with regard to her family and home.

In 2005 Heslin highlighted the referent issue in the process of assessing subjective career success. Through a study he conducted on full-time MBA, he was able to demonstrate the importance of the use of an external reference for evaluating the feeling of career success. This theoretical framework proposed by Heslin applies perfectly to the Moroccan context. Moroccan society gives great importance to the notion of

family, hence the impact it can have on the individual's behaviour and the orientation of his choices. It also attaches great importance to appearances and external aspects, including the judgment of the other's value.

IV. GENERAL CONCLUSION

The empirical study that we have carried out comes as an attempt to explore the different factors and elements that influence the conception of career success among Moroccan generation Y executives. Thanks to the theoretical framework of Heslin it was possible to demonstrate that the individual tries constantly to compare himself to a reference group, it can be his family, his friends, his colleagues or even his former classmates, anyone who can inspire him to build a vision and a conception of career success. The executives of the Moroccan Generation Y continue to receive career as an ascending evolution within the same organization, the pay rise and promotion are still the main way to motivate and thus increase their performance. They also give enough interest to their private life, but continue to believe that it is the success in the professional life that will offer them a comfortable private life.

It should be noted, however, that Generation Y women executives define career success differently from men, especially when it comes to family work balance. It is therefore desirable to carry out in-depth studies on the on this matter in order to better understand their visions and expectations. During our development and analysis of the theoretical contributions and empirical results of our research, we found it expedient to open the way to future contributions that can complement the current state of research: Given the weight of the family in Moroccan society, it's interesting to turn to research that studies the influence of the family on the individual's sense of career success. Another interesting line of research is the exploration of the career and the career success of individuals operating in SMEs, given the importance of the latter in the Moroccan economic fabric. It would also be fruitful to study the career success of Moroccan executives from the point of view of women and men in a separate way in order to highlight the specificities of each genre.

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