



## The impact of protean career orientation on career planning

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### Abstract

The career orientation of the people is one of the decisive determinants of work-related outcomes. The career orientation of Sri Lankan is significantly changing forever due to the vicissitudes take place in the world of work. The present study aims to examine the effect of protean career orientation on the career planning of individuals. Conveniently selected 154 academic and non-academic staff from public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) participated in the study. A self-administrated questionnaire was issued among the respondents. Two hypotheses were developed. Partial Least Squares (PLS) method and independent-sample t-test were used to test the hypotheses. The study found that protean career orientation has a significant direct impact on career planning and there is no statistically significant mean difference between men and women in terms of their career orientation; however, they are significantly different in planning their careers.

*Keywords: academic and non-academic staff, career planning, gender, higher education institutions and protean career orientation*

### Introduction

People's career orientation has been shifting from traditional loyalty to new as the radical changes take place in the business environment. According to the literature on career, people seek the opportunity to fulfill their career aspirations and cross the organization or nation's boundaries. Due to the attributes of the generations, employees exhibit specific work-related behavior. Generally, it is noted that generations X and Y are native to technology, give priority to family and like more autonomy at work. These two generations are the majority in the workplaces. Therefore, they give importance to their values in selecting their jobs and organizations. Employees all over the world have many similarities in terms of their career dispositions. Dissanayake (2011, 2012) pointed out that Sri Lankan employees' career orientation has been changing and employees prioritize their priorities, even in the public sector organizations (Shanthakumary, 2019a & 2019b). Especially, it was found that people prefer more autonomy in decision making and give importance to their work and life-related values.



Employees in Sri Lankan organizations show a steady move toward their career destination as they are rich in information regarding their present and future jobs. According to De Vos and Sones (2008) and DiRenzo (2010), people who have strong protean career orientation tend to plan their careers i.e., they anticipate future changes and proactively take initiatives to achieve career goals.

Sri Lankan employees show their responses to new career orientation in their career-related behavior. Employees who work in HEIs paid a handsome remuneration than other public sector educational institutes. They directly supply knowledge of human resources to the labour market, though most of them were criticized for the mismatch with industry. The working attitude of employees in HEIs in Jaffna district shows a significant shift from traditional to protean careers (Shanthakumary, 2019). They are reasonably knowledgeable in their career path. On the other hand, female participation in the workforce of HEIs is steadily increasing and the female employees have comparable competencies to the male employees. However, women in Jaffna district generally value their family as they sacrifice many career-related matters for their families. The present study tries to portray how the new career orientation of the employees in HEIs influences their career planning-related activities.

The employees' career planning brings many benefits to them and the organizations as people in the organization are considered the capital of them. It was identified that career orientation of Sri Lankan employees has been changing forever. A smaller number of studies were carried out by Sri Lankan researchers on protean career orientation and its outcomes and no web source available in connecting protean career orientation and career planning of the employees. Therefore, the present study will support to increase the current stock of literature. Therefore, the following research question is formulated: Does protean career orientation (PCO) affect career planning (CP) of the employees in HEIs? The following objectives set out for the study:

- to examine the impact of protean career orientation on career planning
- to analyze the gender differences in terms of the test variables

## Literature Review

Protean career orientation is one of the careerists' new career orientations of the careerists and it was first introduced by Hall (1976) in his book on 'careers in organizations.' The term 'protean' derived from Greek work 'proteus' which is the name of the sea god who can change his shape at his will. Career



decision making behind the protean careerists reflect two different predispositions such as self-directedness and value-driven. Self-directedness means the degree to which people accept responsibility for their career decision and action whereas value-driven means one's internal value gives individual guidance to take career-related decisions (Briscoe et al., 2006) and both of the aspects lead to psychological career success. Researchers like De Vos and Sones (2008) and DiRenzo (2010) considered career planning as the components of proactive career management behaviors and they found a positive association between protean career orientation and career planning. Rahim (2015) found that components of protean career orientation have a positive impact on career goal development. Likewise, Herrmann, Hirschi and Baruch (2015) also found a significant positive association between protean career orientation and career planning.

## **Methodology**

### **Instruments and Sample**

A self-administrated five-point Likert scale questionnaire was issued among the respondents to collect the required data consisting of statements related to demographical profile, protean career orientation and career planning. Fourteen statements were given to measure self-directed career orientation and eight statements given for value-driven career orientation and the statements developed by Briscoe et al. 2006, Gubler, 2011 and the researcher. The scale for career planning was developed by Gould in 1979 and the researcher. The response ranges from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree.' Conveniently selected 154 academics in HEIs gave their responses. It was identified that the total mid and early-career employees in HEIs is 1001. Two hundred questionnaires were issued among them and 159 were returned among the questionnaires issued, 154 responses were found usable.

### **Hypothesis of the study**

The relationship between PCO and CP was studied by many researchers and the results revealed a significant relationship between both of the constructs.

- H<sub>1</sub>: Protean career orientation has a direct impact on the career planning of the employees.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Male and female employees are different in terms of their career orientation and career planning.

### **Analytical survey and statistical methods**

The collected data were analyzed using SMART PLS, version 3, suitable for a small sample size. Among the items taken for analysis, seven PCO items and three items of CP were removed due to the lower than the criterion of



0.5(Hair et al., 2014). The following figure clearly explains the impact of protean career orientation (PCO) on career planning (CP).

## Results and Discussions

Table 1 Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
CP	0.939	0.963	0.955	0.811
PCO	0.935	0.944	0.943	0.526

The table given above depicts the model has sufficient reliability and validity. According to Hair et al. (2014), the value of Cronbach's Alpha should be greater than 0.6, which means the measure has internal consistency. However, composite reliability (CR>0.6) and average variance extracted (AVE>0.5) is above the criterion values. Both of the variables have satisfactory composite reliability and average variance extracted.

Table 2 Discriminant Validity

	CP	PCO
CP	<b>0.900</b>	
PCO	0.481	<b>0.725</b>

According to the above table, the measure has discriminant validity as the inner value is lower than the diagonal.

## Hypothesis Testing

The below measurement model shows that PCO has a significant direct impact on the CP of individuals. The path coefficient value is 0.481,  $p < 0.01$  and the  $r^2 = 0.232$  shows 23% of the variation in career planning is explained by protean career orientation. However, Bootstrapping was performed to examine the significance of the path. 5000 sample was set to generate the results.

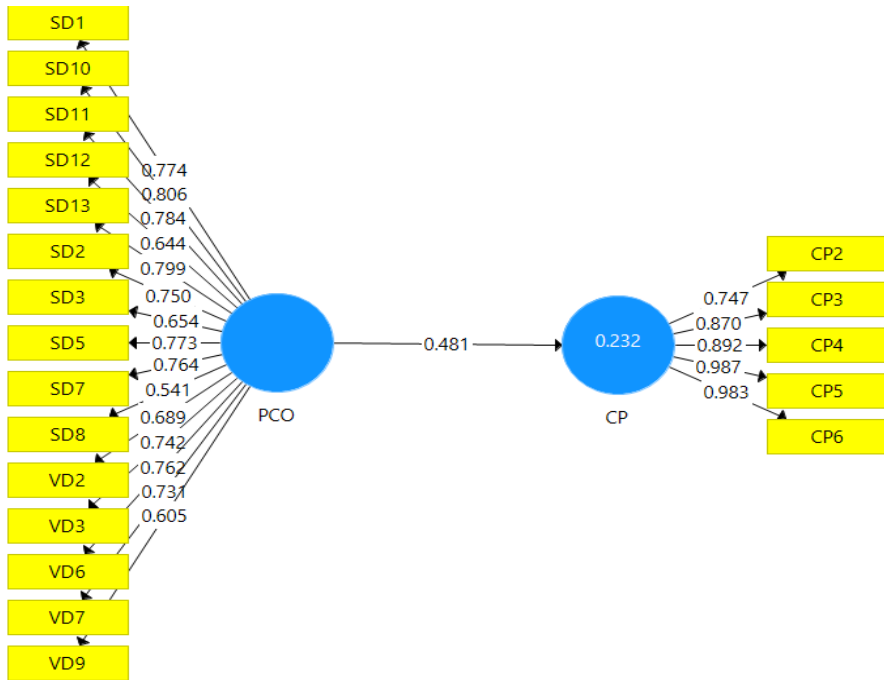


Fig 1. The measurement model

Table 3. Results of Bootstrapping

Path	(O)	(M)	STDEV	T Statistic	P	Bias	2.5%	97.5%
PCO->CP	0.481	0.492	0.070	6.920	0.000	0.010	0.336	0.605

O- Original Sample  
M- Sample Mean  
STDEV-Standard Deviation

Table 4. Gender and the test variables  
Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tail)	Mean Difference	SE Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Ave.P	Equal variances assumed	4.486	.036	2.016	152	.046	.1866	.09255	.0037	.3694
CO										



	Equal variances not assumed		2.003	139.49	.047	.1866	.09316	.0024	.37078	
	Equal variances assumed	4.031	.046	3.045	152	.003	.3702	.12159	.12996	.61042
Ave.c p	Equal variances not assumed		3.021	135.19	.003	.3702	.12256	.12781	.61257	

An Independent sample T-test was performed to determine mean differences between the gender of the respondents to PCO and CP. As per the given table 4, F and T statistics are significant as the values are less than 0.05. However, the decision was confirmed via Man -Whitney U test.

Table 5. Hypothesis test summary

Null Hypothesis	Test	Significance	Decision
The distribution of avePCOnew is the same across categories of Gender		0.078	Retain the Null Hypothesis
The distribution of aveCP is the same across categories of Gender	Independent samples Mann-Whitney U test	0.011	Reject the Null Hypothesis

Significance level is 0.05.

According to the above test, the null hypothesis of equality of variance is accepted for PCO and it is rejected for CP. Therefore, it is concluded that men and women are equal in terms of protean career orientation and men and women are different in career planning. The mean value of the men (4.31) is greater than the women (3.94). Men have a greater tendency to plan their careers than women.

### Conclusions

The study identified that protean career orientation directly impacts career planning and the male and female employees are similar in protean career orientation and showed significant difference in career planning. Male staff in Higher Education Institutes tend to plan their career than female staff.

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