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Career satisfaction of expatriates in humanitarian inter-governmental organizations

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Career Satisfaction of Expatriates in Humanitarian Inter-governmental Organizations

Abstract

We examine the careers of expatriates in an inter-governmental organization (IGO) who undertake a mix of hardship and non-hardship assignments. Considering the individual, organizational, and broader environmental domains, and using conservation of resources theory, we examine what contributes to such expatriates' career satisfaction. Based on survey data, we find that career satisfaction is influenced by views of how their assignments fit their overall career and the procedural justice of their organization's career management system. Since their careers – unlike careers in most multinational corporations (MNC) – are likely to include one or more hardship postings, we also look at whether these hardship postings are associated with lower career satisfaction. Our results provide support for such negative relationships only when IGO expatriates' career motivations of dedication to cause and challenge-seeking are low. We contribute to a greater understanding of career success and expatriation outside the MNC 'norm' and to research on expatriation in extreme contexts.

Keywords:

expatriation, career success, career management, inter-governmental organizations, hardship postings

Introduction

Inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) are set up, managed, and mostly funded by national governments (Brewster, Boselie, & Purpura, 2018). Most IGOs are created to address 'grand societal challenges' (George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi, & Tihanyi, 2016). Carrying out IGOs' missions is only possible with the help of dedicated employees. Careers in IGOs can be exciting and rewarding but are not necessarily easy, especially in the case of IGOs operating in the aid and emergency relief sector that conduct fieldwork in hardship settings posing a myriad of work and personal challenges. Further, given the complex multilateral arrangements through which IGOs are funded and managed, their employees must navigate career management systems subject to extensive and stringent bureaucratic controls and administrative procedures.

Employees are critical stakeholders in IGOs, since organizational success in the humanitarian sector is only possible when they view themselves as successful and remain committed to the organization's mission and goals. Although there are IGO postings in cities like New York and Vienna, a career in a humanitarian IGO is more likely to involve expatriation to less glamourous, and indeed risky, locations that may expose expatriates to discomfort or even life-threatening situations. Such circumstances are not conducive to feelings of sustained career success.

In this paper we examine what contributes to the career satisfaction of internationally mobile workers in one such IGO, a humanitarian United Nations (UN) agency that frequently deploys staff to hardship locations, including disasters and warzones. As with the rest of the UN, the agency has two types of employees: locally hired 'general service staff' and more senior 'international professional staff' (i.e., internationally recruited professionals whose contracts include a requirement to accept postings to various duty stations globally throughout their career;

United Nations, n.d.). It is the latter group (henceforth referred to as *IGO expatriates*) that we study here. Typically, their careers involve a series of international assignments, at least some of which are in challenging environments. Whereas employees exercise a certain degree of leverage and have some choice in the location of their assignment, ultimately decisions on where they are deployed rest with the IGO's management, who consider not only employees' qualifications and preferences but also the IGO's requirements and mobility policies.

Despite the importance of humanitarian IGO expatriates, we know surprisingly little about what contributes to their career success (Dickmann & Cerdin, 2018). Scholars have accumulated much knowledge about global mobility in private sector multinational corporations (MNCs) (Kraimer, Bolino, & Mead, 2016). But, the IGO context is quite distinct (Giauque, Anderfuhren-Biget, & Varone, 2019; Toomey & Brewster, 2008), and IGOs have different human resource management (HRM) policies (Brewster et al., 2018), including global mobility management policies (Dickmann & Cerdin, 2018). This limits the applicability to IGOs of much research about MNCs. Given the world's many humanitarian crises, the demand for IGO workers is unlikely to subside. IGOs are dependent on their human resources – the skill and effort of their staff is at the core of what they offer. Hence, the study of antecedents of career satisfaction of IGO employees may provide useful lessons contributing, in at least a small way, to tackling the world's grand challenges.

Adopting Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we examine what influences career satisfaction of expatriates in humanitarian IGOs. We investigate the role of the perceived procedural justice of the IGO's career management system and the fit of current assignments to employees' overall career plans (which we propose act as resource signals), and the impact of hardship postings (acting as resource threats), on IGO expatriates' overall career

satisfaction. We also examine the moderating influence of values-based career anchors (personal resources) that capture normative career motivation.

Our central contribution is to the contextual understanding of global careers. We examine antecedents of career satisfaction in an important, sizable, but largely ignored context. Given the importance of IGOs for handling grand societal challenges, it is paramount that we understand what helps IGO employees thrive. Second, by specifically examining factors that can lessen the challenges associated with assignments in hardship locations, we contribute to research on expatriation to hostile environments (Bader, Schuster, & Dickmann, 2019). Our findings will be of interest to all organizations that expatriate employees to hardship locations, where maintaining staff morale and involvement are crucial to achieving the individual's and the organization's success (Brewster et al., 2018). Third, our focus on procedural justice of the career management system provides insights for the broader career management literature. Justice - and sensitivity to injustice - are important in all human affairs and the role of justice as a guiding organizational value in times of turbulent change is only likely to grow. We emphasize the need to incorporate procedural justice in studies of career management, especially in settings where not all tasks, projects and assignments are equally desirable. Finally, our work can be useful to those working on extensions of COR theory, especially in terms of the role of resource signals and personal resources.

International HRM and Expatriation in IGOs

Our knowledge of managing people across borders comes almost entirely from studies of private sector MNCs. But despite some similarities, there are at least three crucial differences between HRM in IGOs and in private sector MNCs. First, IGOs' objectives are complex and heavily influenced by ideology and values rather than by commitment to the 'bottom line'. Since their

missions are often vast ('end hunger', 'prevent war'), questions about how limited resources should be deployed become intensely political (Brewster et al., 2018; Vaubel, 2006). Second, for most IGOs, people are the largest element of their operating costs. Although this is also true for many MNCs, given how IGOs are funded, personnel costs in IGOs are continuously scrutinized by representatives from different governments. As a result, and a third critical difference from MNCs, IGOs' HRM systems are painfully negotiated to ensure 'fairness' and transparency, making them highly formalized, rigid and hard to change.

Expatriation is also different. Professional staff are internationally recruited. They join the organization as 'expatriates': The 'head office' of the IGO is most likely not their home country, as they are either seconded to the IGO from their own governments or move internationally on their own specifically to take up employment with the IGO. They are then expected to continue to move throughout their careers, being sent from one country that is not their home, to another country that is also not their home.

Further, in order to become 'international professional staff' in the UN, one must meet rigorous requirements in terms of educational qualifications, experience and language fluency. Thus, many join the organization at the peak of their careers, after they have already accumulated relevant experience and expertise. IGO expatriates are internationally minded and "... [for] some at least it is the possibility of 'doing good', 'making a difference', 'helping those who most need it' which directs their contribution" (Brewster & Lee, 2006: 138). In other words, these are expatriates with outstanding human capital and exceptional motivation, working for intensely political organizations and often in unpleasant or dangerous circumstances.

The IGO that we study is headquartered in a European capital and has field emergency and humanitarian aid operations which may be far from even the nearest city in poverty-stricken

countries. Staff rotate from assignment to assignment, so that at some point in their careers most will be allocated to a 'hardship location.' In some of these postings, even meeting basic needs may not be guaranteed and their lives may be under threat. Some staff experience a string of such assignments (Emmerik & Euwema, 2009). Over the years many employees of this IGO have lost their lives, others have been injured or have become seriously ill. Such work almost invariably involves witnessing and dealing with people in severe distress. It can be extremely demanding, and bears significant psychological costs for the employees (Connorton, Perry, Hemenway, & Miller, 2012). Highly qualified people who can cope in such circumstances, and people prepared to repeat the experience, or to go on to use their hard-won capabilities in other similar roles, are rare. It is thus important that such people are satisfied with their careers so that they remain motivated to give their best to their organization.

Theoretical Model and Hypotheses Development

Career Satisfaction as a Measure of Career Success

We start our theoretical arguments by briefly elaborating on our choice of career satisfaction as our focal dependent variable capturing IGO career success. Defined as "the positive psychological and work-related outcomes accumulated as a result of one's work experiences" (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001: 2), career success involves related but distinct objective and subjective dimensions (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005; Spurk, Hirschi, & Dries, 2019). The former comprises of attainments that can be assessed objectively (e.g., number of promotions, salary increases), and the latter is intrinsic, a personal judgement about one's career accomplishments (e.g., career satisfaction) (Ng et al., 2005).

The last two decades have seen increased attention to subjective career success (Ng & Feldman, 2014b), with the recognition that success involves more than a series of objective

milestones - rather, it is socially constructed, context-dependent and reflects complex and continuously changing dynamics (Dries, Pepermans, & Carlier, 2008). Careers are an integral part of life trajectories (Savickas et al., 2009) and are influenced by one's agency, values, and personal life circumstances. The expatriation literature, too, emphasizes the role of intrinsic success (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012).

Career satisfaction, the subjective appraisal of one's own career progress and achievements (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990), is often posited as the most immediate consequence of the work environment. Research has established that career satisfaction is related to increased indicators of well-being and decreased withdrawal cognitions and behaviors (Spurk et al., 2019), hence its relevance in the study of IGO expatriates.

Factors Influencing Career Satisfaction of IGO Expatriates

It has been suggested that global careers exist at "an intersection of three domains: an individual, an organizational and a global environment domain" (Cappellen & Janssens, 2005: 348). This perspective captures the core components of the careers of humanitarian IGO expatriates. Expatriation in a humanitarian IGO has the following characteristic features: First, it is people with unique motivation who are most suited to working for humanitarian organizations (Giauque et al., 2019). Second, expatriate careers in IGOs develop within boundaries drawn by complex, and sometimes rigid, career management rules (Brewster et al., 2018). Third, expatriation in a humanitarian IGO typically involves multiple assignments across varied locations, some of which may involve considerable hardship (Dickmann & Cerdin, 2018). So, we examine the role of value-based career anchors (individual domain), IGO career management (organizational domain), and assignment location (environmental domain). For the organizational and environmental domain, we examine variables referring to both individual's current assignment

and their entire IGO career. Figure 1 presents our overall research model.

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Insert Figure 1 here

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Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework of our study is COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Originally proposed in research on stress, COR centers on how resources function, change and are used and managed so that favorable outcomes are achieved (Spurk et al., 2019). Resources can be anything (e.g., objects, personal traits and skills, energy) that individuals perceive as helpful in achieving their goals (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014). COR has become one of the most widely used theories in management research (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018), including in studies on careers and career success (Ng & Feldman, 2014a; Spurk et al., 2019). Recently, in a review of the literature on career success, Spurk and colleagues (2019) suggested that due to its versatility, COR can be used as an overall organizing framework in careers research as it "offers a highly useful framework for understanding career success, including its processes, predictors, conditions, and outcomes" (p. 39). The relevance of COR to the careers' literature is unsurprising, given that building and sustaining a career requires considerable investment of time, energy, and other resources.

COR theory rests on the idea that people are "motivated to protect their current resources and acquire new resources" (Halbesleben et al., 2014: 1335). Resources are only invested as means to obtain additional resources or to protect oneself from resource loss (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll et al., 2018). In light of this, anything that contributes valuable resources facilitating career success, or that signals that such resources are available for the individual to acquire or use, will enhance career satisfaction. Conversely, anything that causes or threatens to cause resource loss will detract from career satisfaction. In this study we examine factors

pertaining to organizational career management as resource signals (enhancing career satisfaction) and factors pertaining to assignment hardship location as resource threats (hindering career satisfaction). Recent developments in COR also posit that individuals vary in how resilient they are in the face of potential resource loss (Halbesleben et al., 2014). We examine the role of two career anchors as personal resources buffering the negative relationship between resource threats and career satisfaction.

Assignment-Career Fit and Procedural Justice of the IGO Career Management System as Organizational Resource Signals

The principle of resource investment (investing resources only to obtain new resources or to prevent resource loss) is linked to a recent extension of COR theory – the notion of 'resource signals' (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Resource investment is risky as it may result in resource loss rather than resource-gain, making people invest only in what can maximize returns (Halbesleben et al., 2014). But resource signals play an important role. They are not themselves resources, but are sent by others to encourage individuals to invest their resources, signaling that this investment can lead to achieving desired outcomes (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Ren & Chadee, 2017). Resource signals are reflected in organizational practices that can send meaningful signals to employees that their time and effort are worthwhile and will pay off (Campbell et al., 2013; Ren & Chadee, 2017).

International assignments can be viewed as resource investments (e.g., of time, expertise, efforts) that can bring other desired resources (e.g., new skills, recognition), which can help a person achieve a goal. Indeed, assignments carry inherent risks and employees invest in them in anticipation that the organization will be supportive and will reward them for what they have invested (Guzzo, Noonan, & Elron, 1994). Hence, using COR, we contend that the way an IGO

manages careers provides resource signals to IGO expatriates. That is, if the IGO manages careers well (for example, by consistently applying promotion criteria free of bias and considering employees' long-term career goals in career development decisions), it signals to its expatriates that their resource investments are appreciated and will result in beneficial outcomes in the long run. We examine two factors related to how expatriate IGO careers are managed.

Current Assignment-Career Fit

First, we look at current assignment career fit, or the extent to which individuals believe that their current assignment fits into their overall career plan (Feldman & Thomas, 1992). Since a series of assignments are a condition for career advancement within the IGO, expatriates will be more satisfied if their assignments are not chance postings in reaction to a particular crisis but rather are part of a structured career plan. To that end, Feldman and Thomas (1992: 290) point out that "in terms of organizational career development programs, the whole notion of building logical chains of international and domestic assignment seems to be the most critical variable" (see also Feldman & Tompson, 1993). If IGO expatriates perceive that their assignment fits with their projected career trajectory, they are likely to interpret that as a signal from the organization that their investment in the assignment can lead to future gains such as career success (Halbesleben et al., 2014), and thus will be more satisfied with their careers:

Hypothesis 1. Current assignment career fit is positively related to career satisfaction.

Procedural Justice of the IGO Career Management System

The overall way in which careers are managed can also be a key resource signal. Employees will compare their inputs and outcomes to those of their colleagues, a point recognized by the literature on organizational justice. There is compelling evidence that organizational justice has pervasive consequences, with positive outcomes when employees perceive fair treatment and

negative responses when they perceive injustice (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 2020). Procedural justice, which reflects employee perceptions of how decisions are made and how resources are allocated, is the one that is most closely associated with organizational procedures, and, specifically, with human resource management practices (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Konovsky, 2000). Procedural justice exists only when organizational procedures consistently embody normatively accepted principles (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). When employees perceive procedurally fair treatment, they exhibit a wide range of positive outcomes (Konovsky, 2000). Importantly, procedural justice has been shown to have strong effects on general attitudes that require a long-term perspective, such as organizational commitment and satisfaction (Colquitt et al., 2001; Flint, Haley, & McNally, 2013).

A typical concern with expatriation in MNCs is that very few organizations have adequate policies dealing with expatriate career development - which is why studies of MNCs tend to examine *whether* expatriates are supported by organizational policies (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). IGOs are different in that there *are* policies about virtually everything, including career management. It is thus not the presence of formal policy that matters but the perception of whether the policy is consistently and fairly applied.

Furthermore, since the professional staff of IGOs 'sign up' for jobs that include expatriation, they accept that they may sometimes have to live and work in less-than-ideal circumstances. The key to accepting such circumstances is some assurance that the procedure used to arrive at the decision was fair and that, in the long run, things will balance out (Ngo & Li, 2015; Poon, 2012). It is that perceived fairness of career management procedures that allows IGO expatriates to feel confident that their resource investment will pay off (Campbell, Perry,

Maertz, Allen, & Griffeth, 2013). Without that, any such investment would be imprudent. Hence, we suggest that expatriates who perceive the process of career management as fair will report higher career satisfaction:

> Hypothesis 2. Procedural justice of the career management system is positively related to career satisfaction.

Assignments at Hardship Locations as Resource Threats

We now turn to the context in which humanitarian IGO expatriates do their work, with attention to those being posted in hardship locations. COR suggests that such postings result in resource loss as individuals invest their finite resources to cope with the threat of further resource loss (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Indeed, the careers literature has identified working in unfavorable conditions as a potential career hurdle, or "obstacle[s] individuals face in the attainments of their career goals" (Ng & Feldman, 2014b: 170). In line with COR, Ng and Feldman (2014b) argue that career hurdles lower subjective career success since they generate hindrance stress, place individuals in circumstances where they deplete their resources (e.g., time, energy) for conquering obstacles and reduce the ability to gain additional resources, which ultimately makes them feel worse about their careers.

Location determines general living and working conditions, including safety and security (Posthuma, Ramsey, Flores, Maertz, & Ahmed, 2019). Expatriates in high-risk locations are subject to situational stressors such as terrorist activity, unhealthy or unsafe living conditions, and family conflict stemming from safety-related concerns, providing serious threats to their resources. COR theory would predict that an environment that makes an individual expect a potential or actual resource loss will induce stress and other related negative outcomes (Andresen, Goldmann, & Volodina, 2018). Furthermore, while hardship assignments are integral

aspects of IGO expatriates' careers, they are not necessarily associated with career advancement. In fact, postings to more 'pleasant' locations can provide potential career benefits, such as access to key decision-makers, and opportunities to develop transferable career skills (e.g., networking, fundraising) (Dickmann & Cerdin, 2018). In this context, we discuss the relevance of hardship location as a resource threat both in terms of current assignment and one's IGO career.

Current Hardship Assignment

The negative consequences of being posted to high-risk or dangerous locations have been well documented for MNC expatriates (Gannon & Paraskevas, 2019; Posthuma et al., 2019), journalists (Feinstein, Owen, & Blair, 2002), peacekeepers (Emmerik & Euwema, 2009), and aid workers (Fee, 2017). In addition to living in hardship conditions, such workers may witness severe human distress. They may experience elevated trauma rates and are more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety (Connorton et al., 2012). In IGOs, expatriates in hardship locations will experience family separation, and may experience boredom, and limited social support. For aid workers, in particular, location hardships can be amplified by the urgent and people-centric objectives of their work (Fee, 2017). In short, research strongly suggests that being posted to hostile contexts involves exposure to many environmental stressors. The challenges associated with living and working in such environment are quite likely to pose a threat to IGO expatriates' existing resources and present a hurdle to achieving career success. Accordingly, we propose:

> Hypothesis 3. Being posted to a hardship assignment is negatively related to career satisfaction.

Hardship Assignment Prevalence

These arguments can be extended for careers that span multiple hardship assignments and

subject expatriates to a prolonged threat of resource loss. Sustained exposure to harsh environments can take a toll as it limits expatriates' ability to recover from environmental stressors, which can be detrimental to well-being. It can wear down physiological and restorative systems (Rydstedt, Cropley, Devereux, & Michalianou, 2008) and is associated with burnout (Alarcon, 2011; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001) involving emotional exhaustion, distancing from one's work, and reduced personal accomplishment. According to COR theory, being placed in demanding situations causes resource losses and makes individuals more prone to negative states, which then further deplete resources – triggering a downward 'loss-spiral' (Hobfoll, 1989; Jensen & Knudsen, 2017). Taken collectively, these arguments suggest that being posted to predominantly hardship locations over the course of one's IGO career is likely to be associated with reduced career satisfaction:

Hypothesis 4. Hardship assignment prevalence is negatively related to career satisfaction.

Career Anchors as Personal Resources

No matter how dire extreme challenges may seem, individuals are not defenseless. COR theory emphasizes that people can use available resources to cope with difficult circumstances (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Especially relevant for the individual context in our model, are 'personal resources' (i.e., resources, such as self-esteem or optimism, that help individuals cope with threats and the physiological and psychological costs associated with them; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Taris & Shaufeli, 2016; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007b). Personal resources may also enable individuals to allocate other resources to achieve optimal fit with their environment (Halbesleben & Whitman, 2014), and can moderate the relationship between job characteristics and employee outcomes, mitigating the adverse effects of demands on well-being and work outcomes (Taris & Shaufeli, 2016; Van den Broeck, Van Ruysseveldt, Smulders, & De Witte, 2011).

There is a growing body of evidence that people who choose to work in humanitarian and aid organizations have distinct values-based motivations (Emmerik & Euwema, 2009; Oberholster, Clarke, Bendixen, & Dastoor, 2013; Wechtler, Koveshnikov, & Dejoux, 2017). In a study of IGO employees, Anderfuhren-Biget et al (n.d.) suggest that these workers hold unique values and motivations, such as wanting to further the wellbeing of others, and are propelled to action by pro-social motivation and altruism. They join the humanitarian sector driven by the desire to make a difference, to alleviate suffering, and by the personal challenge involved.

But even among IGO expatriates, there is variability in the extent to which they hold such values and motivations. We examine the effect of two career anchors, dedication to a cause and pure challenge, which, we posit, act as personal resources (Van den Broeck et al., 2011). Career anchors (Schein, 1990; Schein & Van Maanen, 2016) are self-concepts reflecting self-perceived talent and abilities, motives and needs, and attitudes and values. They are "that one element in a person's self-concept, which he or she will not give up, even in the face of difficult choices" (Schein, 1990: 18). Hence, unlike many other resources which are finite and can be depleted (social support, money, etc.), career anchors represent relatively stable personal resources.

Career anchors have been classified as primarily talent-based, need-based and value-based (Feldman & Bolino, 1996). Value-based career anchors focus on people's identification with their occupations, with their own judgment about their actions and their feelings about their work. Given the emphasis on values as key motivators of IGO expatriates, we focus on the two value-based anchors: (a) dedication to a cause – reflecting motivation to improve the world, to help society, and to find a job aligned with those values rather than one's skills; and (b) pure challenge – reflecting motivation to overcome major obstacles, solve difficult problems, or overcome tough circumstances (Schein, 1990; Schein & Van Maanen, 2016).

Cerdin and Le Pargneux, (2009: 11) note that "when individuals achieve congruence between their career anchors and their international work environment, the international assignment is more likely to be a success from both the individual and the organization perspective". Similarly, Wechtler et al (2017) maintain that the presence of a particular career anchor can equip expatriates with psychological resources that can be directed to accomplishing congruence with the attributes of one's environment. Hence, the adverse relationships of, respectively, current hardship assignment and hardship assignment prevalence with career satisfaction will be weakened by the presence of value-based career anchors, with the anchors acting as personal resources that help individuals to overcome the various hardships that accompany life and work in such locations.

Hypotheses 5a-b. (a) Dedication to a cause/ (b) pure challenge moderate the negative relationship between hardship assignment and career satisfaction so that the relationship is weaker when (a) dedication to a cause or (b) pure challenge is high.

Hypotheses 6a-b. (a) Dedication to a cause/ (b) pure challenge moderate the negative relationship between hardship assignment prevalence and career satisfaction so that the relationship is weaker when (a) dedication to a cause or (b) pure challenge is high.

Methodology

Research Site and Sample

The case organization is an IGO with over 10,000 employees, operating in over 80 countries. 1,200 emails were sent to all 'international professional staff' who were working or had worked internationally. The HRM department and employee representatives publicly endorsed the research. We received 519 responses. The response rate of 43.2% compares favorably to average response rates in international survey research (e.g., Brock, Shenkar, Shoham, & Siscovick,

2009) and, given the constraints under which many staff were operating at the time, indicates high interest in the subject. We excluded respondents who did not provide sufficient information on their previous and current assignments (n = 113) or who at the time of the survey were on their first assignment (n = 49)[1]. We also excluded respondents for whom the assignment hardship category could not be accurately determined based on the information provided (n = 9). Finally, we excluded 15 respondents who reported an organizational tenure duration of less than the minimum possible cumulative duration of their previous assignments (survey questions specified that an assignment is for a minimum of six months). Thus, the final sample size was 333[2].

On average, participants were 45 years old (average age of the full sample of 1,200 expatriates was 45.3) and 65% were men (60% men in the whole sample). In terms of nationality, the sample is 27% African, 20% Asian-Pacific, 34% Europeans, 14% North American and 5% Latin American and Caribbean. Participants have been with the organization for 11 years on average and represent various functional areas, predominantly assistance programming, logistics, information systems, finance, security, and procurement. The majority (71%) have worked (for more than six months) in two to five different countries while with the IGO. At the time of data collection, 37% were working in hardship postings (overall, approximately 72% of the respondents reported having been on at least one hardship posting in the past).

Measures

We measured *career satisfaction* with Greenhaus et al's (1990) five-item scale (anchors: 1 –

[1] We re-ran our hypotheses tests including these 49 respondents. Hardship assignment prevalence was not included in the analysis, as it cannot be accurately assessed in this case because the additional respondents have no prior assignments. Results remain unchanged and are available upon request.
[2] Missing data (less than 1%) was mean substituted.

strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree). A sample item is "I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals."

Current assignment career fit was assessed with items from Feldman and Thomas's (1992) long-term career plans scale. We used eight items, which reflected employees' assessment of how well their current assignment fits in their career path. The scale was measured from 1 – strongly disagree, to 5 – strongly agree, and a sample item is "All in all, this current assignment will be good for my career in terms of promotion opportunity."

Procedural justice of the career management system was adapted from Colquitt's (2001) procedural justice scale. The seven items from this scale were adapted to refer to career management procedures in the organization; each was assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – to a small extent to 5 – to a large extent). One item was deleted following the results of our confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The retained six items ask respondents to rate to what extent they are able to express views and feelings about the career procedures/practices, appeal decisions, as well as the extent to which procedures are applied consistently, are free of bias, are based on accurate information, and are based on good ethical and moral standards.

To create the *hardship assignment* variable, we asked respondents to indicate the city and country of their posting. They also indicated the organizationally assigned category of hardship for that location. The UN classifies locations ('duty stations') into categories (A through E, and H), taking into account issues such as safety and security, health care, housing, climate, isolation and level of amenities. H locations are either at headquarters or other similarly designated locations where the UN has no development/ humanitarian assistance programs, or in member countries of the European Union. The A (e.g., Dubai, UAE) to E (e.g., Kadugli, Sudan) categories reflect locations with increasing additional contractual conditions and entitlements. D

and E classifications (e.g., Afghanistan, Chad, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo) are considered to be 'hardship locations.' The majority (approximately 90%) of these latter locations are also designated as "non-family duty stations" (NFDS) where the presence of all family members is severely restricted for reasons of safety and security (International Civil Service Commission, n.d.). Focusing on these 'hardship locations', we used the UN classification to create a binary variable, 1 – hardship assignment (postings designated as D or E) or 0 – non-hardship assignment (all other).

Using the same categories and comparing the number of respondents' previous hardship assignments to the number of non-hardship assignments in their career with the organization, we created the *hardship assignment prevalence* variable (1 – for respondents that had the majority of their assignments in hardship locations, and 0 – for cases of equal or lower number of hardship assignments).

The *dedication to a cause* and *pure challenge* anchors were measured using Schein's (1990) career anchor scales. Each scale consisted of five items, assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree). Sample items are "I will feel successful in my career only if I have a feeling of having made a real contribution to the welfare of society" (for dedication to a cause) and "I dream of a career in which I can solve problems or win out in situations that are extremely challenging" (for pure challenge). We controlled for gender, marital status, children under 21 years old, number of previous assignments, and age.

Analyses and Results

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, correlations, and measurement properties of the variables. To assess the measurement structure of the latent variables, we performed a CFA with robust maximum likelihood (MLR) estimation in Mplus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). The

fit of this 5-factor model was adequate (N = 333; χ^2 = 724.22, p < 0.001; df = 395; CFI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.05; SRMR = 0.06). However, one item from the procedural justice scale was cross-loading on the career satisfaction factor. We removed this item to ensure that our measures are distinct from each other. Thereafter, the model fit improved (N = 333; χ^2 = 618.55, p < 0.001; df = 367; CFI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.05; SRMR = 0.06) and the fit was significantly better than for the previous model (adj. $\Delta\chi^2$ = 112.88; Δdf = 28; p < 0.001).[3]

We performed a latent common methods factor test to assess the possible threat of common method bias since we collected data from a single source (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Jeong-Yeon, & Podsakoff, 2003). All scale items were loaded on a common method factor and on their respective theoretical scales. The common method factor was set to have no covariance with the other scale factors. All item loadings remained significant and correlations among the scales remained largely unchanged in the presence of the common method factor. Thus, common method bias is likely not a serious threat to the validity of our results.

We tested our hypotheses using ordinary least squares regression in SAS 9.4. Continuous independent variables were mean-centered (Aiken & West, 1991). The results are presented in Table 2. Hypothesis 1 proposed that current assignment career fit is positively related to career

[3] We also calculated the constructs' composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity to provide further information about construct reliability and validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The CR for all constructs was at or above 0.76, which is larger than the recommended 0.60 threshold (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Constructs had AVE values above the 0.50 recommended threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) except for the career anchors (i.e., dedication to a cause and pure challenge) and procedural justice. We note that one item from procedural justice and one item from pure challenge had item loadings slightly below the 0.40 threshold recommended by Hinkin (1998): 0.37 and 0.39, respectively. Removing those items would improve AVE values (to 0.47 for pure challenge and 0.56 for procedural justice). But since the loadings of these two items are significant and very close to the 0.40 threshold, we decided to keep them in order to retain as many items from the original scales as possible. We note here that AVE represents the most conservative construct reliability test (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Voorhees, Brady, Calantone, & Ramirez, 2016) and it is not uncommon for studies to report measures with AVE below 0.50 (e.g., Ambos, Kunisch, Leicht-Deobald, & Schulte Steinberg, 2019; Gonzalez-Mulé & Cockburn, 2017). We also assessed discriminant validity by comparing the squared intercorrelation within latent construct pairs to the AVE of each construct in the pair. In all cases, the AVE was larger than the squared intercorrelation, therefore furnishing additional evidence for the validity of our constructs.

satisfaction. As can be seen in Table 2 (Model 2), this relationship was significant and positive (b = 0.18, SE = 0.04, $p < 0.001$): Hypothesis 1 is supported. Providing support for Hypothesis 2, there is a significant and positive relationship between procedural justice of the career management system and career satisfaction (b = 0.39, SE = 0.05, $p < 0.001$). However, Hypotheses 3, which stated that there is a negative relationship between hardship assignment and career satisfaction was not supported (b = –0.12, SE = 0.08, p = 0.123). The relationship between hardship assignment prevalence and career satisfaction was also not significant (b = –0.05, SE = 0.08, p = 0.546), providing no support for Hypothesis 4. Taken together, the main independent variables explained 26% of the variance in career satisfaction beyond the control variables.

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

Hypotheses 5a-b proposed that the career anchors of dedication to a cause or pure challenge moderate the relationship between hardship assignment and career satisfaction. Hypothesis 5a was not supported, but Hypothesis 5b was. As can be seen in Table 2 (Models 4 and 5) the interaction effect was significant for pure challenge (b = 0.24, SE = 0.12, p = 0.037) but was not for dedication to a cause (b = 0.05, SE = 0.13, p = 0.712). To provide a complete picture of the nature of the significant interaction effect, we plotted the simple slopes (see Figure 2). As hypothesized, for people scoring low on pure challenge the relationship between hardship assignment and career satisfaction is negative and significant (–1 SD) (b = –0.30, p = 0.008), and for those scoring high, it was non-significant (+1 SD) (b = 0.02, p = 0.868). The addition of this interaction explained an additional 1% of the variance in career satisfaction.

Hypotheses 6a-b proposed that dedication to a cause or pure challenge moderate the relationship between hardship assignment prevalence and career satisfaction. Hypothesis 6a was

supported, but Hypothesis 6b was not. As presented in Table 2 (Models 6 and 7) the interaction effect was significant for dedication to a cause (b = 0.26, SE = 0.12, p = 0.029) but was not significant for pure challenge (b = 0.19, SE = 0.12, p = 0.095). The significant interaction effect is graphically presented in Figure 3. As hypothesized, for people low on dedication to a cause the relationship between hardship assignment prevalence and career satisfaction is negative and significant (–1 *SD*) (b = –0.19, p = 0.049) and non-significant (+1 *SD*) (b = 0.12, p = 0.287) when dedication to a cause is high. This interaction explained 1% of the variance in career satisfaction.

Assessing the explained variance by our interactions, we note that, seemingly small, interactions with similar explained variance are common in studies on expatriates (e.g., Koveshnikov, Wechtler, & Dejoux, 2014; Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001) and career satisfaction (e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2005; Guan, Zhou, Ye, Jiang, & Zhou, 2015). Indeed, it is well known that interaction effects tend to have very small effect sizes in the social sciences due to difficulties in detecting them (Aguinis, Beaty, Boik, & Pierce, 2005; Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Cortina and Landis (2009) stress that even small effect sizes can be meaningful and that various study design issues must be considered when interpreting these effects. In our case, the pure challenge and dedication to a cause anchors have somewhat high mean levels and relatively low variability (*SD* = 0.60 for dedication to a cause and *SD* = 0.65 for pure challenge) which suggests that had there been a wider range of moderator values, we may have detected a larger effect (Aguinis & Stone-Romero, 1997), so that the fact that we detected any effect is meaningful. Furthermore, despite its low effect size, the interaction is practically important, given that had we not considered the moderating role of career anchors, we would have concluded that there was no relationship between, respectively, hardship assignment and

hardship assignment prevalence and career satisfaction.

Finally, as a robustness check, we added all four interactions in one regression model (Model 8). Results remained substantially the same, though the moderating effect of dedication to a cause on the relationship between hardship assignment prevalence and career satisfaction slipped slightly over the 0.05 significance level (b = 0.26, SE = 0.14, p = 0.057). However, the difference between the regression coefficients for this interaction term in Model 6 and 8 is minimal and not significant (Δb = 0.001, ΔSE = 0.18, p= 0.995). Since the parameter coefficients are substantially unchanged, the small drop in significance level is unlikely to be meaningful and could be a result of reduced power to detect the interaction effect (Cohen et al., 2003).

Discussion

Amid increasing calls for scholars to engage in research that can produce "actionable insights to frame and tackle some of the biggest challenges that we face in our global community" (George et al., 2016: 1880), we focused on the careers of the expatriate staff of an aid and emergency IGO whose mission is to help alleviate one of the grand societal challenges. Hundreds of thousands of employees work in such organizations and millions of people rely on them to relieve their suffering. This is an internationally significant, and substantially under-researched, group of organizations. Their importance is only poised to grow: Data suggest that there is mounting displacement (across and within countries), intensified armed conflict, and an ever-rising number of sudden onset disasters that have resulted in increased appeals for humanitarian aid. Meanwhile, job postings in the relief sector more than doubled between 2009 and 2019 (The New Humanitarian, 2020). Nearly 2/3rd of humanitarian funding is channeled through UN agencies (Parker, 2018) such as the one we studied. Finding out what makes these employees 'tick' and what keeps them satisfied in demanding careers in critical but bureaucratic

organizations is imperative.

Different as they may be from MNCs, IGOs are not the only ones with employees in hardship locations and studies like ours are relevant to a wider range of organizations. More organizations across sectors and industries have operations in settings that pose risks such as drug-related crime, civil unrest, ethnopolitical conflicts, and terrorism (Bader et al., 2019). Not only are postings in hostile environments increasing but international mobility generally is more likely to involve elements of risk and hardship, even in traditionally 'safe' countries, as the COVID19 pandemic has shown. Yet despite its obvious importance, research on expatriation in such circumstances is still limited – and much needed. There have been calls for research specifically on employees that deploy during time of crisis, even when 'normal' global mobility is restricted (Bader, Faeth, Fee, & Shaffer, 2020). In the context of all this, we believe that our study offers a contribution to the growing literature on managing expatriates in challenging circumstances.

Theoretical Implications

The Role of Organizational Resource Signals

Our findings suggest that IGO expatriates are mindful of the resource signals their organizations send. Whereas previous studies of MNC expatriates have identified organizational support (Guzzo et al., 1994), particularly in relation to careers (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004), as important for expatriation outcomes, issues of procedural justice have rarely been considered. Our study highlights the important role of fairness and transparency of career management. Ensuring that assignment decisions (are made after considering career planning, and in an equitable manner, can make a significant difference to how expatriates feel about their careers. This is especially salient when their jobs are in tough settings, require personal sacrifices and demand a

considerable degree of personal commitment.

Our survey included an open-ended question offering the opportunity to share additional comments related to IGO expatriation. Roughly half of the respondents included comments, and the most common theme we identified was perceived opaqueness and unfairness of the career management system, including assignment allocations. Our study was not designed as a qualitative exploration of career issues in IGOs, so we do not wish to fall into the fallacy of overinterpreting such data. But we cautiously suggest that they are consistent with the idea that issues of fairness and perceived justice are salient to IGO expatriates. While there is plenty of evidence that IGO employees tend to be intrinsically motivated and driven by societal goals, such evidence should not be taken to mean that they are oblivious to – or unaffected by – how fairly their careers are being managed. We suspect that the procedural justice of the career management system will also matter in the case of MNC expatriates. Future research should explore this and compare whether being an MNC vs IGO expatriate changes the relationship between the procedural justice of the career management system and career satisfaction.

Our work also has implications for careers research. We encourage scholars to explore the role of procedural justice in career management beyond the expatriation context. The world of work is constantly changing. Some changes are gradual and expected but some are sudden and turbulent, such as the changes resulting from the COVID19 pandemic that the world is experiencing as we write this. Career shocks (Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020) frequently punctuate professional lives as they evolve in times of rapid transformation, short term contracts, and increased stress. There is little that organizations can guarantee but ensuring that they are thoughtful and fair when supporting employee careers can go a long way towards enhancing employee well-being and making sustainable careers possible.

The Role of Hardship Assignments as Resource Threats

We find that being posted to (a) hardship location(s) is negatively related to career satisfaction only for some people, rather than for everyone, as we had hypothesized. Our hypotheses are consistent with viewing hardship assignments and prevalence of hardship assignments as career hurdles (Ng & Feldman, 2014b) associated with loss of resources, precluding individuals from experiencing their careers as successful. What we find in our sample, however, is that hardship assignments are not universally seen as something associated with decreased career satisfaction.

We believe that our theoretical reasoning holds under scrutiny in that career hurdles have been shown to relate negatively to career success and that, for most people, living and working in challenging environments is likely to detract from feeling successful. But perhaps such career hurdles are not universal – what is perceived as a hurdle by some may not affect others. Consistent with our theorizing that anchors act as buffers, we find that the hardship variables make little difference to the career satisfaction of those scoring high on the anchors. Hardship locations are where the 'cause' will be most immediately served and where the 'challenge' is most apparent. We encourage future research to explore such ideas in diverse samples of expatriates and examine moderators such as experiencing one's career as a 'calling' (Dobrow Riza, Weisman, Heller, & Tosti-Kharas, 2019) that may buffer – or intensify – the impact of career hurdles on career success.

General Research Implications

Our research provides a contextual application of COR theory to expatriate careers and can guide future studies that examine unique influences on expatriation career success. Our results also complement research that relies on the job demands and resources (JD-R) model, which has been frequently deployed in the studies of expatriates. COR and JD-R have many points of contact and often overlap. The development of JD-R model has been influenced by COR theory (Hobfoll

et al., 2018), several of JD-R's central propositions stem from COR theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014) and COR theory has been regularly tapped into to extend the JD-R model through the years (e.g., Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007; van Woerkom, Bakker, & Nishii, 2016). Similarly, later developments in COR theory have also built on findings and insights from studies on JD-R (see Hobfoll et al., 2018), leading to cross-fertilization between the two theories. An important distinction relevant to our study was that the JD-R model maintains "that all types of job characteristics can be classified in one of two categories: job demands and job resources" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017: 274), whereas COR takes a different view and distinguishes between resources and resource signals. Some aspects of the job are under the control of others and are not afforded in the form of resources. Rather than a resource, COR views such aspects as resource signals, or "signal[s] that investment of resources will help the individual realize his or her goal of achieving more resources" (Halbesleben et al., 2014: 1347). We believe that the career management variables we study are best conceptualized as resource signals rather than resources. Considering the two theoretical frameworks in parallel and broader theoretical extensions, we believe it is worthwhile expanding JD-R to include the distinction between resources and resource signals.

Our findings indicate that having the right personal resources can buffer the potentially detrimental effects of working in difficult environments and we argue that career anchors can act as personal resources, since they "hold value to the extent that they increase fit between a person and his or her environment" (Halbesleben et al., 2014: 1343). Future research should uncover what other factors can be used as personal resources. One notable candidate here is career resilience, a core dimension of career motivation that enables individuals to cope more effectively with a negative work or career situation (London, 1983). Research on career

resilience can also enhance the emerging positive organizational behavior approach, which highlights resilience as an important psychological resource capability (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Future studies might examine the role of career resilience as a boundary condition for established relationships between resource threats and career outcomes. It would also be interesting to examine whether career resilience is a more salient personal resource for IGO expatriates or whether it is equally important to other types of expatriates.

Another direction for extending our model is to consider additional outcome variables, such as stress and strain. Research on calling suggests (with inconclusive empirical findings) that there may be a dark side to viewing one's work as a calling since it may expose one to more stressful work conditions leading to greater strain (Dobrow Riza et al., 2019). Physiological and psychological health outcomes (e.g., cardiovascular health, PTSD) should also be examined, in the face of evidence that being employed in 'hazardous' occupations (e.g., international war journalist) may have negative health implications (Feinstein et al., 2002). Finally, IGO expatriation is a complex phenomenon. We are still at a stage where many 'pieces of the puzzle' of the IGO expatriate experience are missing and the field will benefit from doing more in-depth and multi-stakeholder qualitative research that also accounts for developments over time.

Limitations

Like all studies, ours is not without limitations. We used a cross-sectional, single-source research design. Although our results are consistent with our theoretical reasoning and provide relevant insights useful for future theoretical development, a longitudinal design is needed to assess change in career satisfaction in response to resource signals and resource threats.

Also, we cannot empirically rule out some reverse relationships: For example, it is plausible that IGO expatriates with high career satisfaction perceive their assignment fit as greater and their IGO career management system as fairer. We note here that our hypotheses are

consistent with years of research that has posited employee perceptions of organizational career management practices as antecedents to career satisfaction (Ng & Feldman, 2014b) and with expatriation research that has advanced similar arguments, both in theoretical (e.g., Bolino, 2007) and empirical work (e.g., Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). Even so, the possibility of a reverse relationship cannot be excluded. Our reading of the literature suggests that, if such reverse relationship exists, this would likely be through a feedback loop. A feedback loop does not imply that our proposed directionality is not valid; rather, it suggests that both directions would be possible. To gain more definitive answers, scholars should seek long-term access (that was unfortunately not feasible in our case) so that they can remedy this limitation through collecting data at multiple points of time. A repeated-measures design may be particularly informative when exploring these issues. Another approach would be conducting longitudinal qualitative research where researchers trace how perceptions affect change over time.

Common method bias is also a risk with research designs like ours (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The statistical test we performed to check for a possible common method bias provided evidence that this is likely not an issue in our study. In addition, we had objective measures among our variables (hardship assignment and hardship assignment prevalence were both based on hardship categories set by the UN) which are less susceptible to common method bias issues. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to also collect subjective ratings of hardship location, compare them to objective ratings/categorizations and explore their relationship with career satisfaction. The remainder of our variables concerned personal attitudes, and as such the respondents were the best informants. Future studies should consider outcome variables that can be measured by someone close to the focal respondent (supervisor, colleague).

Finally, while the scales for the career anchors of dedication to a cause and pure

challenge demonstrated good overall reliability and validity, the more conservative test of reliability – i.e., AVE – indicated that these scales have some shortcomings. Since we used the original career anchor scales developed by Schein (1990) without any modifications, it is likely that others using these scales could face the same issue. Career anchors have sparked the interest of expatriation scholars (e.g., Cerdin & Le Pargneux, 2010; Wechtler et al., 2017), and we encourage future research to take a closer look at these scales.

Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, our paper contributes to understanding the myriad of factors that are associated with career satisfaction of humanitarian IGO expatriates – and, we would argue, employees in other humanitarian organizations, including other UN agencies and programs and non-governmental organizations such as *World Vision* or *Médecins sans Frontiéres.* Beyond humanitarian IGOs, our findings have important implications for all organizations that send employees to hardship locations (e.g., in the international security, oil and gas industries).

There are clear indications here that careful employee selection will be beneficial in such cases. Since individuals will cope with assignments to challenging locations differently depending on their career anchors, information on these can aid individual self-assessment and enhance organizational recruitment and career planning (Feldman & Bolino, 1996). Awareness of career anchors would benefit individuals considering their next career move and organizations as they evaluate expatriate candidates and design support and development programs, especially for assignments where living conditions are sub-optimal or unsafe (Wechtler et al., 2017).

Our final implication concerns organizational career management. Even employees who are driven by the desire to ‘do good’ and are ready to work in hardship locations are influenced by career related issues. The IGO expatriates we surveyed reported higher career satisfaction when they perceived the career management system as fair and saw their assignment as

contributing to their own career progress. This suggests that organizations must invest in the careful design and implementation of fair and reliable career management systems.

Conclusions

Studies of non-MNC expatriates have largely been relegated to the fringe of the literature. With this study we push the scope of research beyond traditional expatriation settings. Our study is one of the first to address careers in IGOs and particularly in an IGO where professional international staff rotates across hardship and non-hardship postings. We contribute to the growing body of literature examining expatriation issues outside MNC settings, where there is considerable global mobility. Our focus on careers enables us to show the value of COR theory in this research field. We also highlight the relevance of the career anchors framework and suggest procedural justice as a lens for examining career management. There is a clear need for further research in each of these areas and scope for additional theoretical development and we hope that our study can inspire such new work.

TABLE 1

Means, standard deviations, measurement properties, and correlations for study variables. [a]

Variable	Mean	*SD*	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Career satisfaction	3.36	0.74	0.83	0.51	(0.82)[b]										
2. Hardship assignment	0.37	0.48	–	–	–0.06	–									
3. Current assignment career fit	3.63	0.85	0.92	0.51	0.32	0.05	(0.92)								
4. Hardship assignment prevalence	0.35	0.48	–	–	–0.08	0.29	–0.06	–							
5. Procedural justice of the career management system	2.30	0.77	0.84	0.49	0.46	–0.01	0.27	–0.05	(0.82)						
6. Dedication to a cause	3.96	0.60	0.76	0.39	0.15	0.08	0.21	–0.02	0.07	(0.74)					
7. Pure challenge	3.63	0.65	0.77	0.41	0.01	0.14	0.07	0.13	0.01	0.44	(0.76)				
8. Gender [c]	0.35	0.48	–	–	0.01	–0.23	0.04	–0.19	–0.04	0.04	–0.13	–			
9. Marital status [d]	0.81	0.40	–	–	0.04	0.03	0.08	0.05	0.09	–0.05	0.07	–0.29	–		
10. Children [e]	0.68	0.47	–	–	0.02	0.01	0.07	0.05	0.04	–0.07	–0.07	–0.16	0.29	–	
11. Age [f]	45.09	7.66	–	–	–0.02	0.10	–0.13	0.17	0.06	0.03	0.06	–0.18	0.09	0.04	–
12. Number of previous assignments	3.36	2.14	–	–	0.11	0.13	–0.01	0.11	–0.02	0.06	0.02	–0.09	0.01	0.02	0.36

Notes. $N = 333$; Composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE).

[a] All correlations larger than 0.11 are significant at $p < 0.05$ and all correlations larger than 0.13 are significant at $p < 0.01$.

[b] Cronbach's alphas are in parentheses on the diagonal.

[c] Gender (1–female, 0-male); [d] Marital status (1–spouse/partner, 0–no spouse/partner); [e] Children under 21 yrs old (1–yes, 0–no), [f] age (in yrs)

TABLE 2

Ordinary Least Squares Regression

Predictor	Career Satisfaction							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	b(SE)	*p*	*b(SE)*	*p*	*b(SE)*	*p*	*b(SE)*	*p*
Intercept	3.29(0.12)	< .001	3.47(0.11)	< .001	3.46(0.11)	< .001	3.46 (0.11)	< .001
Controls								
Gender [a]	0.02(0.09)	0.842	–0.03(0.08)	0.682	–0.04(0.08)	0.602	–0.04(0.08)	0.842
Marital status [b]	0.08(0.11)	0.482	–0.02(0.10)	0.832	–0.01(0.10)	0.936	–0.01(0.10)	0.941
Children [c]	0.01(0.09)	0.943	–0.02(0.08)	0.765	–0.02(0.08)	0.801	–0.02(0.08)	0.798
Age [d]	–0.01(0.01)	0.235	–0.01(0.01)	0.239	–0.01(0.01)	0.216	–0.01(0.01)	0.226
Number of previous assignments	0.05(0.02)	0.026	0.05(0.02)	0.004	0.05(0.02)	0.005	0.05(0.02)	0.005
Main Effects								
Current assignment career fit			0.18(0.04)	< .001	0.17(0.04)	< .001	0.17(0.04)	< .001
Procedural justice of the career management system			0.39(0.05)	< .001	0.39(0.05)	< .001	0.39(0.05)	< .001
Hardship assignment			–0.12(0.08)	0.123	–0.13(0.08)	0.105	–0.13(0.08)	0.103
Hardship assignment prevalence			–0.05(0.08)	0.546	–0.04(0.08)	0.634	–0.04(0.08)	0.635
Dedication to a cause					0.12(0.07)	0.084	0.10(0.08)	0.195
Pure challenge					–0.04(0.06)	0.510	–0.04(0.06)	0.508
Two-way Interaction Effects								
Hardship assignment × Dedication to a cause							0.05(0.13)	0.712
Hardship assignment × Pure challenge								

Hardship assignment prevalence × Dedication to a cause				
Hardship assignment prevalence × Pure challenge				
F	1.12 (p = 0.347)	13.94 (p < .001)	11.72 (p <.001)	10.72 (p < .001)
R^2	0.02	0.28	0.29	0.29
Adj. R^2	0.01	0.26	0.26	0.26
ΔR^2		0.26 (p < .001)	0.01 (p = 0.221)	0.00 (p = 0.712)

Note. N = 333. Table presents unstandardized estimates (b) with their respective standard errors (*SE*) in parentheses and p-values (p).
[a] Gender (1–female, 0-male); [b] Marital status (1–spouse/partner, 0–no spouse/partner); [c] Children under 21 yrs old (1–yes, 0–no), [d] age (in yrs)

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

Ordinary Least Squares Regression

Predictor	Career Satisfaction							
	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	b(SE)	*p*	*b(SE)*	*p*	*b(SE)*	*p*	*b(SE)*	*p*
Intercept	3.46(0.11)	< .001	3.47(0.11)	< .001	3.46(0.11)	< .001	3.47(0.11)	< .001
Controls								
Gender [a]	–0.06(0.08)	0.479	–0.04(0.08)	0.592	–0.05(0.08)	0.578	–0.07(0.08)	0.420
Marital status [b]	–0.01(0.10)	0.989	–0.01(0.10)	0.987	–0.01(0.10)	0.970	0.01(0.10)	0.942
Children [c]	–0.03(0.08)	0.703	–0.03(0.08)	0.665	–0.03(0.08)	0.698	–0.05(0.08)	0.567
Age [d]	–0.01(0.01)	0.185	–0.01(0.01)	0.245	–0.01(0.01)	0.201	–0.01(0.01)	0.182
Number of previous assignments	0.05(0.02)	0.004	0.05(0.02)	0.006	0.05(0.02)	0.004	0.05(0.02)	0.005
Main Effects								
Current assignment career fit	0.16(0.04)	< .001	0.17(0.04)	< .001	0.16(0.04)	< .001	0.16(0.04)	< .001
Procedural justice of the career management system	0.38(0.05)	< .001	0.39(0.05)	< .001	0.38(0.05)	< .001	0.38(0.05)	< .001
Hardship assignment	–0.14(0.08)	0.075	–0.13(0.08)	0.096	–0.13(0.08)	0.089	–0.14(0.08)	0.071
Hardship assignment prevalence	–0.05(0.08)	0.557	–0.04(0.08)	0.645	–0.05(0.08)	0.548	–0.05(0.08)	0.553
Dedication to a cause	0.12(0.07)	0.065	0.01(0.08)	0.860	0.12(0.07)	0.078	0.07(0.09)	0.429
Pure challenge	–0.13(0.08)	0.084	–0.04(0.06)	0.552	–0.11(0.07)	0.143	–0.14(0.08)	0.092
Two-way Interaction Effects								
Hardship assignment × Dedication to a cause							–0.15(0.14)	0.285

Hardship assignment × Pure challenge	0.24(0.12) 0.037			0.27(0.14) 0.045
Hardship assignment prevalence × Dedication to a cause		0.26(0.12) 0.029		0.26(0.14) 0.057
Hardship assignment prevalence × Pure challenge			0.19(0.12) 0.095	0.01(0.14) 0.920
F	11.22 ($p < .001$)	11.27 ($p < .001$)	11.04 ($p < .001$)	9.38 ($p < .001$)
R^2	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.31
Adj. R^2	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.28
ΔR^2	0.01 ($p = 0.037$)	0.01 ($p = 0.029$)	0.01 ($p = 0.095$)	0.02 ($p = 0.050$)

Note. $N = 333$. Table presents unstandardized estimates (*b*) with their respective standard errors (*SE*) in parentheses and *p*-values (*p*).
[a] Gender (1–female, 0-male); [b] Marital status (1–spouse/partner, 0–no spouse/partner); [c] Children under 21 yrs old (1–yes, 0–no), [d] age (in yrs)

FIGURE 1

Hypothesized Model

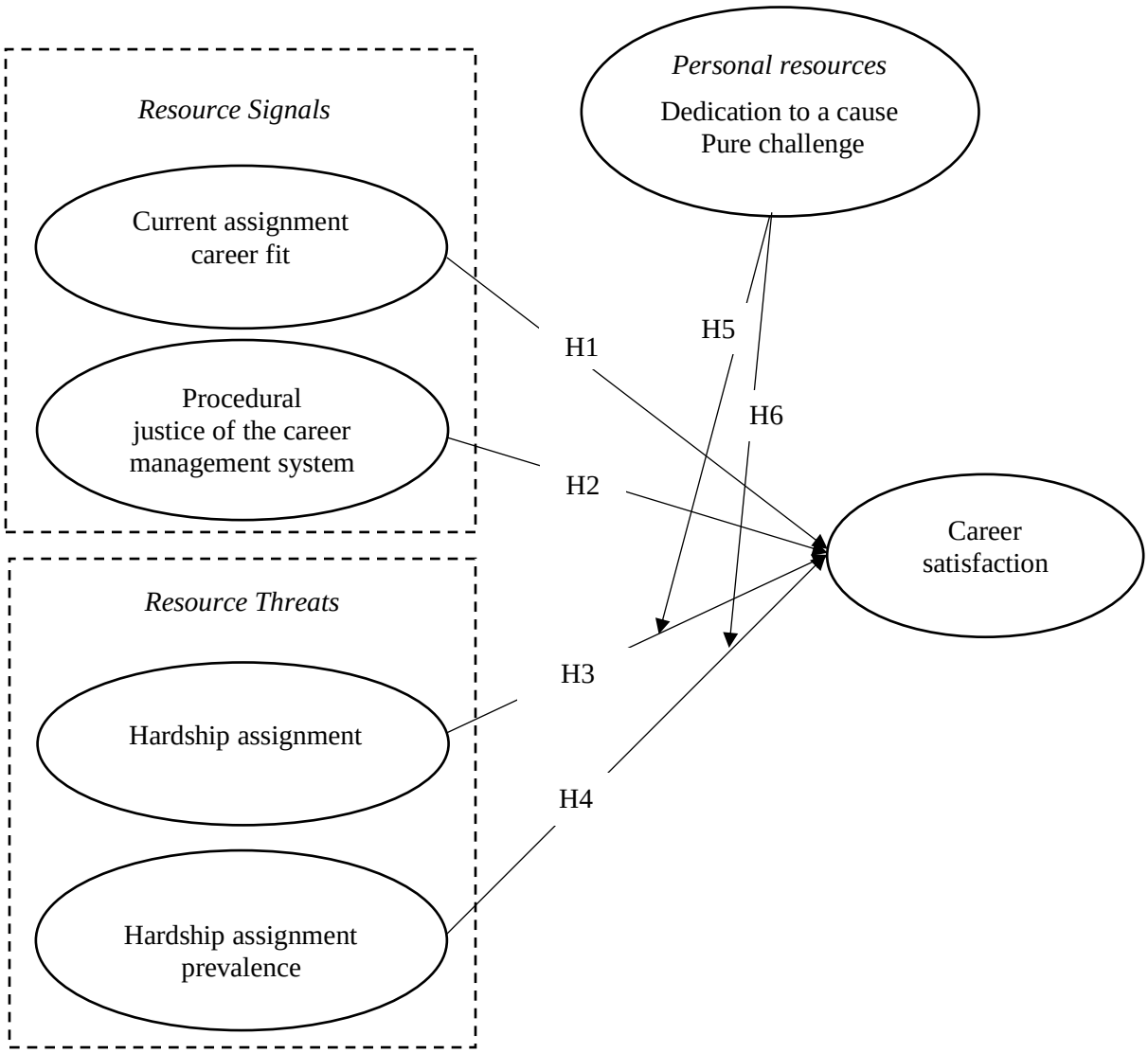
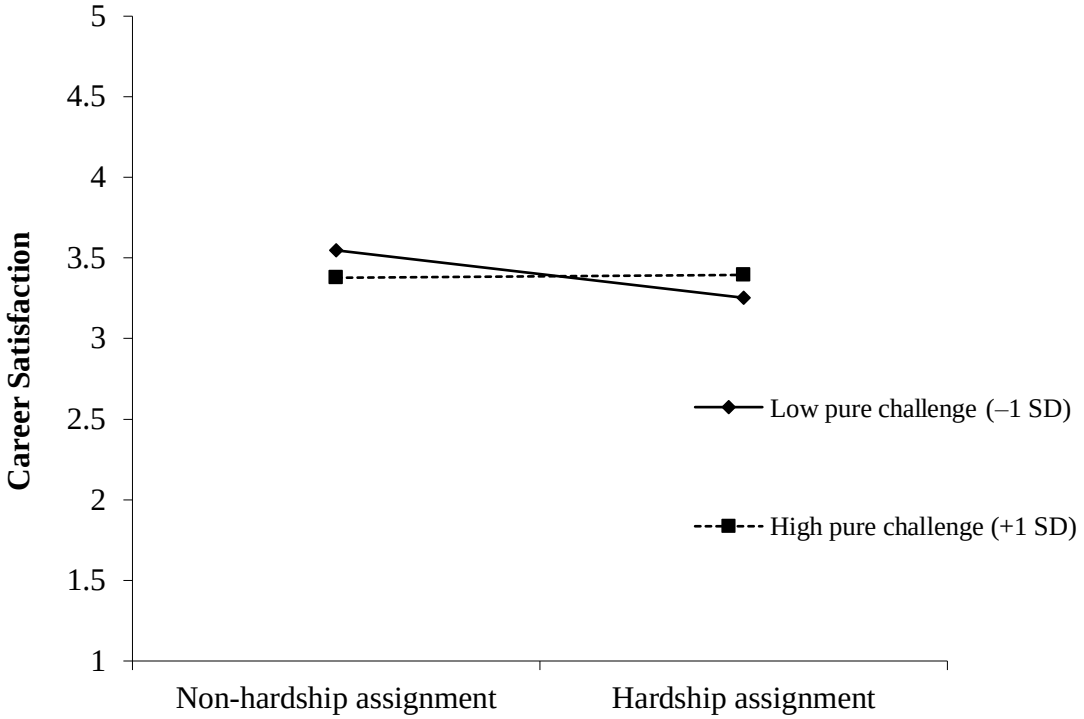


FIGURE 2

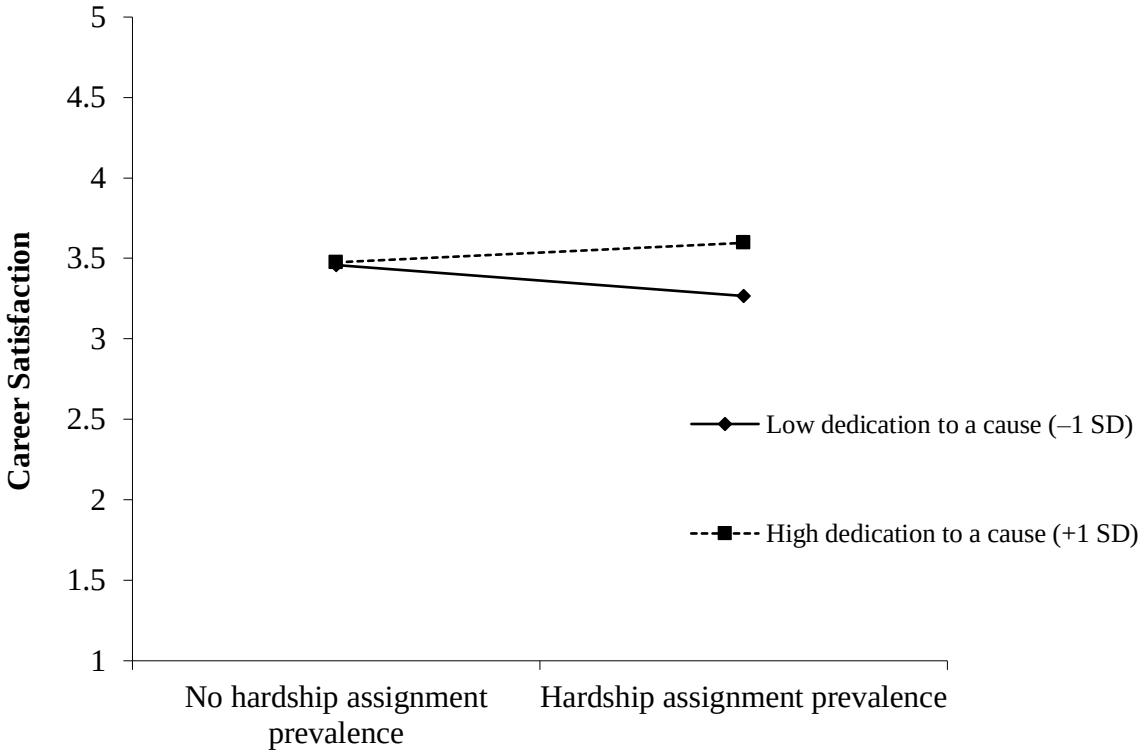
Moderating Effect of Pure Challenge on the Relationship between Hardship Assignment and Career Satisfaction



Note. The simple slope is significant for low (–1 *SD*) pure challenge and not significant for high (+1 *SD*) pure challenge.

FIGURE 3

Moderating Effect of Dedication to a Cause on the Relationship between Hardship Assignment Prevalence and Career Satisfaction



Note. The simple slope is significant for low (–1 *SD*) dedication to a cause and not significant for high (+1 *SD*) dedication to a cause.

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