Howdo organizational career management activities influence employees' career outcomes? The mediating role of career capital

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Abstract

Purpose – This study addresses a critical research gap by examining the pivotal role of organizational career management (OCM) in shaping employees' career outcomes while also investigating the mediating influence of career capital in this relationship. This study aims to shed light on the importance of OCM as a strategic approach for enhancing employees' career trajectories, filling a significant gap in the existing literature.

Design/methodology/approach – Using a cross-sectional research design, primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to a diverse sample of 426 Turkish working adults representing various organizations. The study uses structural equation modelling with AMOS to analyse the direct and indirect relationships within the proposed research model.

Findings – The study findings underscore the essential connection between OCM and employees' career outcomes, revealing its positive influence on subjective career success, employability and innovative work behaviour. Moreover, career capital emerges as a critical intermediary mechanism that mediates the impact of OCM on these career outcomes, further highlighting the strategic significance of OCM practices.

Research limitations/implications – It is important to note that this study relies on self-report surveys to gauge employees' perceptions about their career outcomes and OCM. Additionally, the study data are confined to the Turkish context, which may influence the generalizability of the findings to other contexts.

Practical implications – Organizations can bolster career outcomes through strategic investment in OCM. Industries can customize approaches, leveraging insights to optimize workforce potential. Policymakers should integrate career development principles, cultivating a culture of perpetual learning, thus fortifying organizational resilience and fostering sustainable success.

Originality/value – This study adds substantial value to the current body of knowledge by investigating the mediating role of career capital in the relationship between OCM and individual career outcomes, particularly within the context of emerging economies like Turkey. The study's comprehensive approach to

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understanding careers from both individual and organizational perspectives contributes to a more nuanced and holistic understanding of career dynamics.

Keywords Organizational career management, Employability, Career capital, Subjective career success, Innovative work behaviour, Resource-based view, Turkey

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Organizational career management (OCM) stands as a beacon of growth and challenge within the realm of organizational behaviour (OB) and human resource management (HRM), rapidly gaining prominence over the past few decades (Koch *et al.*, 2017; Weer and Greenhaus, 2020). As organizations seek to gain a competitive edge, the strategic management of human capital emerges as a pivotal factor, driving uniqueness and excellence (Narayanan *et al.*, 2019). Within this landscape, OCM assumes a pivotal HRM function, encompassing an array of policies and practices (Orpen, 1994). By nurturing employee skills and knowledge, OCM becomes a linchpin in achieving organizational objectives (Bagdadli and Gianecchini, 2019), ultimately empowering talent and preserving a distinctive competitive advantage (Fleisher *et al.*, 2014).

At its core, a career represents a transformative journey for employees, involving experiences and roles across one or multiple organizations (Baruch and Rosenstein, 1992, p. 478). Embracing the principles of social exchange theory (SET), which posits that individuals reciprocate favourable treatment with positive behaviours (Blau, 1964), organizations that prioritize employee well-being and development witness reciprocation in the form of positive attitudes and exceptional performance, resulting in prolonged employee tenure (Holtschlag *et al.*, 2020; Narayanan *et al.*, 2019). In the face of technological advancements and the advent of artificial intelligence and automation, upskilling and reskilling become imperatives for every employee (Jain and Chhabra, 2023). The intersection of SET and the technological context lies in the proactive role that organizations take to invest in employees' skill development. Just as SET predicts that individuals respond positively when they perceive that they are valued and supported, organizations that prioritize upskilling and reskilling initiatives are effectively demonstrating their commitment to their employees' growth and well-being. In return for these investments, employees are more likely to reciprocate by exhibiting greater commitment, loyalty and enhanced performance. A survey undertaken by Deloitte (2020) reaffirms that organizations shoulder the primary responsibility for employee development, aligning with the tenets of SET. As technological advancements reshape industries and redefine job requirements, organizations are not only acknowledging their role in fostering employee growth but also responding to the changing landscape with a strategic focus on building employees' skills and capabilities. This commitment to fostering mutual value aligns with the core principles of SET, creating a symbiotic relationship between employee development efforts and organizational success. As talented employees form the bedrock of competitive advantage and growth strategies, their careers merit comprehensive analysis. This analysis should encompass both the application of SET in fostering positive employee–employer relationships and the adaptation of these principles to the dynamic technological environment that demands continuous skill development.

Central to this study are the profound implications of OCM activities on a multitude of career outcomes. We delve into the realms of subjective career success (SCS), employability (EMP) and innovative work behaviour (IWB), as they directly influence employee performance. SCS encapsulates personal feelings and evaluations of career achievements

(Eby *et al.*, 2003), while EMP emphasizes the prowess to acquire jobs and adapt skills in a dynamic business landscape (Baruch, 2001). IWB, on the other hand, embodies the essence of idea generation, development and implementation by individuals (Scott and Bruce, 1994). Through a tapestry of OCM activities, employees flourish in innovation, SCS and EMP, all of which intricately shape their careers (Baruch, 2001; Martini and Cavenago, 2017; Scott and Bruce, 1994). While the career concept garners widespread attention, empirical research exploring the interplay between organizational careers and individual career outcomes remains scarce (De Vos and Cambré, 2017). In the pursuit of competitive advantage through technology adoption, organizations must critically explore the impact of OCM activities from both organizational and individual perspectives (Soares and Mosquera, 2021). The research gaps in understanding the mechanisms through which OCM activities influence individual career outcomes are particularly striking within the evolving technological landscape. Addressing these gaps is not only pivotal for academic advancement but also for guiding organizations in effectively shaping employee career trajectories amidst technological advancements.

Furthermore, this study is uniquely positioned to contribute to the literature by examining OCM activities in the context of Turkey, which has been relatively under-researched in the topics of career management, outcomes and career capital (CCAP). While the literature has explored these constructs in various contexts, the specific socio-cultural and economic nuances of Turkey warrant separate investigation. Turkey's unique organizational landscape, characterized by a blend of traditional values and contemporary business practices, adds a distinctive dimension to the study of OCM and its impact on employee career outcomes. By focusing on Turkey, this study aims to bridge the gap in research on OCM activities within an emerging economy, offering insights that are relevant not only for academics but also for practitioners seeking to navigate the complex terrain of talent management.

Amidst the existing literature, individual career roles have been extensively discussed and scrutinized, yet the impact of OCM activities on career outcomes remains an uncharted domain, particularly in emerging countries (De Oliveira *et al.*, 2019; Soares and Mosquera, 2021). Our study recognizes the imperative for more research, shedding light on the impact of OCM activities in shaping the careers of employees (Baruch and Sullivan, 2022). By illuminating the role of OCM in emerging country companies, we seek to propel overall firm performance (Vlachos, 2009). Furthermore, we probe the viability of OCM activities for current employees in the era of contemporary careers. While millennials are notorious for frequent job changes, those fortunate enough to work in organizations that prioritize their career development exhibit greater loyalty, feeling valued by their employers (Holtschlag *et al.*, 2020). The study also emphasizes unravelling the intricate relationship between OCM and individual career outcomes, acknowledging that the impact may not be direct. Unveiling the mechanisms influencing this association is paramount to grasping its true essence. Consequently, we postulate CCAP as a mediator between OCM and career outcomes, considering individual competencies encompassing skills, knowledge and attitudes used for organizational success. Extensive prior research has showcased the positive influence of CCAP on career outcomes (DiRenzo, 2010; Harris and Ramos, 2013). Thus, we posit that OCM activities become truly valuable to employees when they bolster the accumulation of CCAP.

Theoretical background and hypotheses

In the fast-evolving landscape of OB and HRM, the effective management of resources has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational competitiveness. Among these

invaluable resources, employees stand as the lifeblood of an organization, making the implementation of OCM activities paramount (Haridas *et al.*, 2022). By focusing on the needs of both employees and employers, OCM not only serves as a social responsibility but also becomes a strategic tool to harness the full potential of this unique resource (Baruch and Sullivan, 2022).

Rooted in the resource-based view (RBV), which is widely recognized as a fundamental theoretical perspective in OCM research, the significance of resources and competencies for organizational success cannot be understated. The RBV posits that employees become invaluable assets when they possess characteristics such as uniqueness, inimitability and rarity. In this regard, organizations are seen as a composite of distinct resource bundles (Barney, 1991), emphasizing the need to focus on core competencies that differentiate them from competitors. Converting intellectual resources into customer-valued products and services is a key strategic imperative for organizations to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Quinn, 1992). To ensure this advantage is long-lasting, resources must meet specific criteria, being rare, valuable, non-substitutable and difficult to imitate (Barney, 1991).

Given the increasing complexity of the business environment, career management has evolved significantly, with a shift towards emphasizing the individual's role in shaping their career. However, this should not overshadow the role of HRM departments in providing career support and guidance (Baruch, 2006; Gutteridge *et al.*, 1993; Singh, 2018). As the concept of careers has transformed, organizations are now tasked with supporting their employees in effectively managing their career paths. While many employees acknowledge the importance of career management, they often require targeted support and guidance to navigate their professional journeys successfully (Baruch and Sullivan, 2022).

Attracting and retaining talented employees has become a major challenge in today's labour market (Narayanan *et al.*, 2019). Consequently, OCM activities play a vital role in demonstrating an organization's commitment to its employees. When organizations invest in the development and growth of their workforce, employees respond with increased performance, longer tenure and attitudes that bolster the organization's competitive edge (Ambrosius, 2018; Holtschlag *et al.*, 2020). By enhancing employees' knowledge and skills, OCM activities provide organizations with the resilience necessary for sustainable competitive advantage, strengthening their core competencies (Baruch, 2006; Narayanan *et al.*, 2019) and elevating overall performance (Fleisher *et al.*, 2014).

In this context, organizations can proactively offer a range of OCM activities, including talent management, mentoring, assessment, job design, international assignments, coaching and succession planning (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). The primary objective of these activities is to empower employees with the necessary knowledge, skills and motivation, resulting in improved performance and productivity (Bagdadli and Gianecchini, 2019). Skilful and knowledgeable employees become instrumental in bolstering an organization's market value (Quinn, 1992) and positively impacting its overall performance (De Vos *et al.*, 2009).

Beyond the tangible benefits, OCM activities have a profound impact on various career-related outcomes. Empirical evidence indicates that such activities positively influence work attitudes, career satisfaction, career development, future career expectations (Schooreel *et al.*, 2017), creativity (Mumford, 2000) and career progress (De Vos *et al.*, 2009). In today's hyper-competitive landscape, human capital plays a pivotal role in driving competitive advantage and ensuring an organization's sustainability (Luna-Arocas *et al.*, 2020). Thus, OCM activities are instrumental in retaining and developing this invaluable resource.

The current study is founded upon the foundational principles of two well-established theoretical frameworks: the RBV and SET. By integrating RBV and SET, our hypotheses provide a comprehensive understanding of how OCM practices influence employees' career outcomes. RBV emphasizes the resource-based advantages gained through OCM, while SET explains the social exchange dynamics underlying the relationship. This combined theoretical framework enriches our hypotheses by considering both the unique resources provided by organizations and the reciprocal interactions that shape employees' responses to OCM activities. Overall, the integration of RBV and SET enhances the robustness of our hypotheses and offers a holistic view of the mechanisms at play in the relationship between OCM and career outcomes (Haridas *et al.*, 2022). This endeavour takes particular note of its distinct placement within the context of Turkey and other emerging economies. The deliberate choice to investigate the interplay between OCM and career outcomes within these evolving and diverse contexts is driven by the realization that they present a unique blend of challenges and opportunities.

These emerging economies, exemplified by Turkey and other comparable nations, offer a dynamic and intricate landscape that demands a nuanced approach to OCM strategies (Ambrosius, 2018; Kundi *et al.*, 2022; Moon and Choi, 2017; De Oliveira *et al.*, 2019; Soares and Mosquera, 2021; Taşkıran, 2017; Torlak *et al.*, 2018; Wickramasinghe and Premachandra, 2021). The literature in this domain not only unveils the intricacies of career management, development and work behaviour in developed economies but also uncovers invaluable insights from these burgeoning markets. These economies, characterized by their rapid growth trajectory, cultural diversity and swiftly evolving business landscapes, impel us to engage in a more profound exploration of how OCM practices resonate within such vibrant and dynamic settings.

Moving forward, the subsequent subsections will delve into the specific effects of OCM activities on career outcomes and formulate hypotheses that will guide this study. By delving into the intricate relationship between OCM and employees' career choices and outcomes and by meticulously considering the unique nuances of Turkey and other emerging economies, this study aspires to make a significant contribution to the broader field of OCM and HRM. This approach, which extends beyond the conventional scope of developed economies, will enable us to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application. Ultimately, it will shed light on previously uncharted facets of OCM and HRM in the context of emerging global markets, adding depth and insight to this dynamic field.

Innovative work behaviour

The concept of IWB holds paramount significance within the realm of competitive advantage, emphasizing the successful implementation of inventive concepts generated by employees (Janssen, 2000; Scott and Bruce, 1994). Notably, innovation exhibits a multifaceted nature (Wang *et al.*, 2015), encompassing three pivotal sub-behaviours: the origination of ideas, their promotion and eventual realization (Janssen, 2000; Scott and Bruce, 1994). This behaviour, given its non-linear nature, provides employees with the flexibility to deploy these behaviours in diverse combinations (Coetzer *et al.*, 2018).

It is unconventional yet insightful to view IWB as a career outcome, a perspective chosen for this study. In contemporary research, IWB increasingly serves as a primary performance criterion (Wang *et al.*, 2015), a noteworthy shift from its historical characterization as discretionary conduct (Janssen, 2000). Pertinently, a promising avenue for career advancement aligns with career outcomes and contributes to career satisfaction (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990). Within organizations, innovative individuals, marked by their distinctiveness,

become indispensable, as their unique contributions are challenging to replicate. Engaging in IWB becomes essential for employees, constituting a pivotal avenue for enhancing performance and yielding distinctive job outcomes that significantly influence career progression. The innovativeness of employees emerges as a pivotal facet in driving organizational innovation and competitive advantage (Janssen, 2000; Scott and Bruce, 1994), thereby buttressing organizational success. The manifestation of employees' innovativeness necessitates both motivation and capability (Hussain *et al.*, 2019). Leveraging resources efficiently and effectively for competitive gains aligns seamlessly with IWB, thereby underscoring the significance of comprehending the determinants that catalyse IWB.

The fostering of individuals' innovativeness can be effectively facilitated through various OCM activities. As aforementioned, these activities are geared towards nurturing employees' careers and serve as a cornerstone for organizational development and innovation (Fleisher *et al.*, 2014). By enriching employee knowledge and skills, these activities inherently foster an environment conducive to innovative behaviour. Notably, mentoring, coaching, performance management, comprehensive evaluation of employees' progress and final outcomes, skill-based recruitment and the provision of flexible work schedules (Mumford, 2000) collectively contribute to shaping employees' propensity for innovativeness. While prior research partially illuminates the role of certain career activities in stimulating IWB, it is imperative to embrace a holistic perspective that comprehensively examines the intricate interplay between OCM and IWB (Haridas *et al.*, 2022). In this context, we advance the following hypothesis:

H1. There exists a positive relationship between the proactive implementation of OCM activities and the employees' IWB.

Subjective career success

In the landscape of transformed careers, SCS has emerged as a fundamental criterion that underscores the changing dynamics of career evaluation and fulfilment (De Vos and Soens, 2008). SCS has evolved to become a central gauge of career accomplishments for employees, reflecting an intrinsic assessment of their career journeys (Kundi *et al.*, 2022; Ng *et al.*, 2005). Unlike traditional notions of success, SCS is deeply personal, rooted in how individuals perceive and judge their own career paths (Eby *et al.*, 2003). This unique dimension of success is particularly resonant within boundaryless and protean career paradigms.

Within boundaryless careers, employees perceive their work as an integral aspect of their identities, prompting them to take ownership of evaluating their own successes (Defillippi and Arthur, 1994). Similarly, in protean careers, individuals prioritize meaningful objectives over tangible rewards, placing emphasis on autonomy, work-life balance and inner satisfaction rather than linear progression (DiRenzo *et al.*, 2015; Baruch, 2006). Consequently, SCS has evolved into a multifaceted measure that transcends conventional definitions of success.

OCM activities wield a transformative potential in enhancing employees' SCS. These activities, when geared towards promoting SCS, resonate profoundly with employees, often surpassing the allure of pay raises and promotions (Orpen, 1994). A pivotal driver of SCS is the sense of being valued by the organization. Studies indicate that when employees perceive appreciation and investment from their employers, their SCS is elevated (Kundi *et al.*, 2022; Ng *et al.*, 2005). Organizations that institutionalize formal career management systems tend to evoke feelings of accomplishment and commitment among employees (Orpen, 1994).

Moreover, OCM initiatives such as international assignments, coaching, job rotation, job enrichment and workplace innovation not only enhance skill development but also bolster SCS by providing employees with varied growth avenues (Martini and Cavenago, 2017; Wipulanusat *et al.*, 2018). As OCM activities align with the nuanced dimensions of SCS within transformed career contexts, it is hypothesized that:

H2. There exists a positive relationship between the proactive implementation of OCM activities and the employees' SCS.

Employability

In the dynamic landscape of modern careers, EMP skills have emerged as a linchpin for individuals seeking not only fulfilling employment but also sustained work continuity (Martini and Cavenago, 2017). These skills are a critical underpinning not just for employees' personal growth but also for organizational success and competitive edge. The imperative to cultivate EMP skills is rooted in the essential need for organizations to foster adaptable and versatile workforces to navigate the ever-evolving business environment (Heijde and Van Der Heijden, 2006).

The significance of EMP is underscored by the delicate balance organizations face in investing in these skills. On the one hand, a competitive edge necessitates organizations to cultivate the EMP skillset within their workforce; on the other, the shifting landscape of work dynamics calls for a workforce that can embrace flexibility and adaptability (Tempest and Coupland, 2017). Furthermore, as the landscape of employment moves away from guaranteed lifetime positions, the cultivation of EMP assumes a new dimension, acting as a buffer against job insecurity while simultaneously future-proofing employees against the potential disruption caused by automation and technological advancements (Deloitte, 2020).

Past research has notably demonstrated the affirmative impact of OCM activities on enhancing EMP skills. Specific facets of OCM, such as training and development initiatives, resonate with building EMP skills. Notably, on-the-job training has been associated with strengthening EMP skills (Martini and Cavenago, 2017). Additionally, initiatives like international assignments and flexible working arrangements have been identified as positive contributors to the augmentation of EMP skills, further attesting to the holistic scope of OCM's influence (DiRenzo *et al.*, 2015). Consequently, the hypothesis posits:

H3. There exists a positive relationship between the proactive implementation of OCM activities and the employees' EMP skills.

The mediating role of career capital

CCAP focuses on individuals' inner resources (Inkson and Arthur, 2001), which includes knowledge, attitudes, skills, experience and networks (Fleisher *et al.*, 2014). It is an individualistic perspective on how individuals pursue their careers and can be used in different settings (Harris and Ramos, 2013). It enhances a career and supports success and flexibility (DiRenzo, 2010). CCAP is also referred to in the plural as career competencies. Although various models have hitherto been used to explain CCAP, Defillippi and Arthur's (1994) three ways of knowing is the most widely discussed model. This model suggests that a career comprises three learning modes: *knowing-how*, *knowing-whom* and *knowing-why*. Skills, expertise and tacit and explicit knowledge involve the knowing-how dimension; networks, reputation and relationships encompass the knowing-whom; motivation, a sense of purpose, identity and energy constitute the knowing-why (Defillippi and Arthur, 1994;

Inkson and Arthur, 2001). The dimensions of CCAP – knowledge, networks, skills and experiences – can be used in organizations to become organizational capital (Fleisher *et al.*, 2014).

CCAP may play a mediating role between OCM and employees' career outcomes. OCM and CCAP can be antecedents of career outcomes. Employees can give their organizations a competitive edge if they are rare, valuable, non-substitutable and non-imitable (Barney, 1991). OCM activities may positively affect CCAP and career outcomes. Constructs such as knowledge, networks, competencies, innovativeness, skills and experience help create rare, valuable, non-substitutable and non-inimitable employees. CCAP can be increased in a bounded environment with the inputs of OCM activities and can later be successfully exploited by the organization. Researchers have proposed a positive relationship between OCM activities and CCAP. It is suggested herein that CCAP may play an essential role in the relationship between OCM activities and career outcomes. The pertinent literature reveals that several OCM activities affect the development of CCAP. Performance appraisals, training and development activities, job design techniques and international job assignments can leverage CCAP (Defillippi and Arthur, 1994; Harris and Ramos, 2013). Team building, socialization and development activities can improve knowing-why CCAP (Defillippi and Arthur, 1994). Classroom teaching, on-the-job training, job designs and project teams effectively generate knowing-how because these activities support the development of knowledge and skills. International assignments (Valk *et al.*, 2014), job rotation (Defillippi and Arthur, 1994) and mentoring (Eby *et al.*, 2003) can enhance knowing-whom CCAP. OCM activities can be considered as antecedents of CCAP, which can be useful in understanding how people manage their careers differently.

The development of CCAP can also be necessary to facilitate organizational role transitions and may explain the relationship between OCM and career outcomes (Brown *et al.*, 2020). Outputs of OCM activities should turn into employees' career competencies and inner resources to have an impact on employees' careers. When development activities have become inner resources, employees can improve their career outcomes. CCAP affects several career outcomes and can be regarded as an antecedent of EMP, IWB and SCS. Employees may benefit from their CCAP as a tool to improve their career outcomes. CCAP's importance for these career outcomes has been reported previously. The accumulation of CCAP is a way to develop EMP skills (Harris and Ramos, 2013) since CCAP instigates employees to cope with changes (Martini and Cavenago, 2017). Networks provided by knowing-whom, skills and knowledge gained by knowing-how and motivation and self-knowledge provided by knowing-why are effective in developing EMP skills (DiRenzo *et al.*, 2015). SCS is also positively affected by CCAP (DiRenzo, 2010; Järlström *et al.*, 2020). The knowing-how dimension via knowledge and abilities (Valk *et al.*, 2014), knowing-whom via networks (Ngoma and Dithan Ntale, 2016) and the knowing-why via self-identity, proactivity and self-motivation (Eby *et al.*, 2003) influence SCS positively. CCAP also has an impact on IWB. The CCAP components of competence and expertise (Amabile, 1988), networking skills and self-motivation (Wang *et al.*, 2015) affect IWB. In summary, an accumulation of CCAP affects IWB (Amabile, 1988), SCS (DiRenzo, 2010) and EMP (Harris and Ramos, 2013).

In this study, we argue that OCM activities have a positive impact on CCAP and that the latter has a positive effect on career outcomes. Consequently, effective OCM activities can support the accumulation of CCAP and raise the likelihood of successful career outcomes. In other words, OCM activities may have a greater positive effect on employees' careers if they enable employees to improve their self- and general knowledge, motivation, networking and general skills. Based on the above discussion, we argue that the relationship between OCM activities and career outcomes in an organization cannot be fully understood without

considering CCAP, as this can be a linking pin between these factors. We, therefore, propose the following three-part hypothesis:

H4a. CCAP mediates the relationship between OCM activities and employees' IWB.

H4b. CCAP mediates the relationship between OCM activities and employees' SCS.

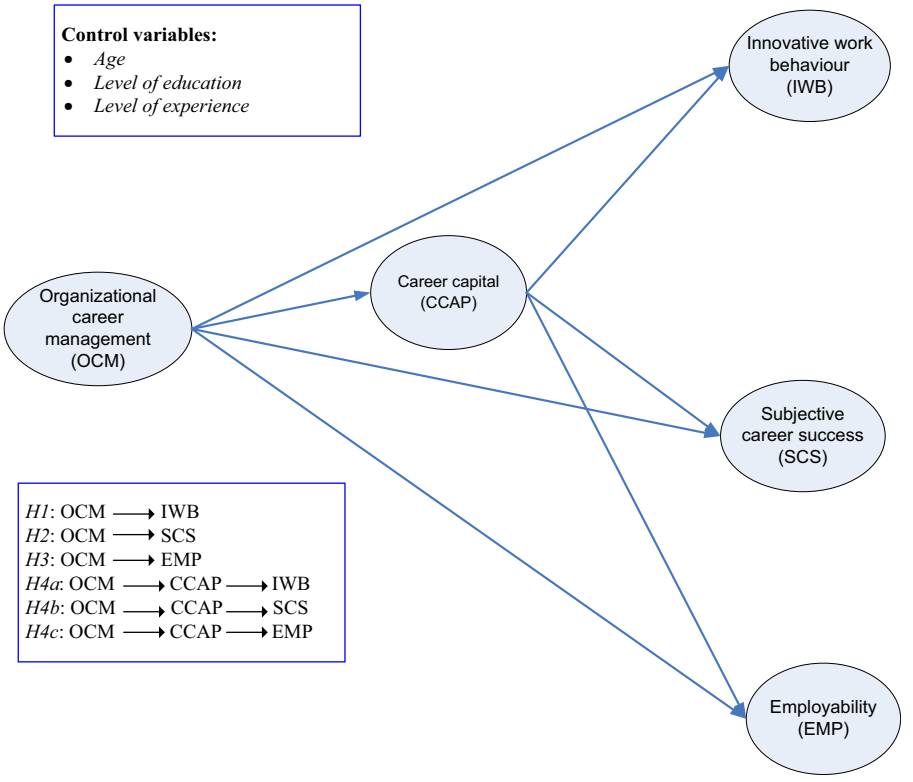
H4c. CCAP mediates the relationship between OCM activities and employees' EMP skills.

The research model, including the hypothesized paths, is shown in Figure 1.

Methods

Sample and procedure

A cross-sectional research design was used, using a self-administered questionnaire as the survey instrument. The purpose was to understand the effects of OCM activities on employees' career outcomes and examine the mediating role of CCAP in this relationship. As noted earlier, the selection of Turkey as the context for this study is underpinned by its dynamic and rapidly evolving business landscape, as well as its growing significance on the global economic stage. As an emerging economy, Turkey presents a distinctive blend of



Source: Authors' own creation

Figure 1.
Research framework

challenges and opportunities for organizations stemming from its diverse cultural dynamics, swift economic growth and evolving business practices. This environment is particularly conducive to investigating the impact of OCM activities on employees' career outcomes. Turkey's unique position as an emerging market exemplifies the complexities that organizations face in today's global business landscape, making it an ideal setting to explore the interplay between OCM and employees' career trajectories.

In terms of the sampling technique, we adopted a purposive sampling approach by selecting alumni and graduates from an Istanbul university. The survey's sampling frame included an alumni database of approximately 10,000 graduates from the same university. The sample was diverse; participants worked in different industries and occupied various positions. They had different demographic characteristics and levels of experience. While the choice of alumni samples may raise concerns due to potential limitations related to generalizability (Ashraf and Merunka, 2017), it is essential to acknowledge that our study's focus is grounded in the specific context of Turkey's emerging economy. By emphasizing the distinctive characteristics of Turkey's business landscape, our selection of this population segment aligns with the research objectives. While broader generalizability remains a consideration, the choice of alumni and graduates allows us to capture insights into the initial career stages and transition experiences (Bello *et al.*, 2009), which are pivotal within the context of an emerging market like Turkey. Furthermore, our efforts to ensure diversity within the sample help address potential concerns of convenience sampling, enhancing the reliability and relevance of our findings within the Turkish business environment. Two thousand alumni were randomly selected. The questionnaires were distributed via email. After sending two reminders, a total of 426 usable questionnaires were collected during the January–February 2021 period, resulting in an effective response rate of 21.3%.

To examine non-response bias, a comparison was made between the first wave and the last wave of survey responses using the method outlined by Armstrong and Overton (1977). Roughly half of the surveys were randomly allocated to each wave of questionnaires received. T-test results indicated no significant differences in responses between early and late respondents ($p > 0.1$) for the key constructs of the study. Additionally, both chi-square and *t*-tests were used to assess any distinctions in characteristics between respondents and non-respondents. These tests also yielded non-significant differences between the two groups ($p > 0.1$). Consequently, there was no evidence of response bias.

Measures

The following subsections outline how the study's primary constructs, mediator and control variables were measured.

Primary constructs. The OCM construct in this study is a newly designed measure tailored to its objectives. To develop the OCM measurement items, we drew upon existing literature, including works by Baruch and Peiperl (2000) and Gutteridge *et al.* (1993). The questionnaire was initially crafted in English and later translated into Turkish. For content validity, we followed the procedure recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010). To ensure its accuracy and relevance, we initiated the process with in-depth interviews involving five HR specialists who possessed intricate knowledge of OCM activities, their impact on employees' career outcomes and the role of CCAP within this relationship. These interviews, lasting 1–2 h, were conducted in the specialists' offices. Post-interviews, OCM activities not widely applicable in Turkey were removed, leading to adjustments in the questionnaire. Subsequently, the initial questionnaire version was refined through discussions with several expert academics. Finally, a pilot test was administered to a sample of 50 MBA students,

each with a minimum of two years of work experience. This pilot phase enabled meticulous refinement, culminating in an informative, precise and well-structured survey questionnaire. At this juncture, the OCM scale encompassed 18 items. Respondents were asked to evaluate the presence of diverse formal and developmental OCM activities within their organizations, using five-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

SCS included eight items drawn from earlier studies (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990) and was measured by asking respondents to evaluate their career success using five-point Likert scales (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree").

EMP was assessed through 16 items based on previous research (De Vos and Soens, 2008; Eby *et al.*, 2003; Heijde and Van Der Heijden, 2006). Again, relying on five-point Likert scales (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"), respondents were asked to evaluate their level of EMP.

IWB was measured through a total of nine items that were based on Janssen's (2000) study using five-point Likert scales (1 = "never" and 5 = "always"). The three main dimensions (i.e. idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization) were covered.

Mediator variable. CCAP is composed of 27 items drawn from earlier studies (Eby *et al.*, 2003; Jokinen *et al.*, 2008). It consists of three main dimensions (i.e. knowing-how, knowing-why and knowing-whom) based on the career competencies model of Defillippi and Arthur (1994). All the items were measured on five-point Likert-type scales (i.e. 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree").

Control variables. The following three control variables were used to test potential extraneous effects on the variables. The *age* of respondents was measured by an ordinal variable, including four categories. The *level of education* was measured by a dichotomous variable, which included undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The *level of experience* was measured by an ordinal variable comprising five categories.

Table 1 shows the features of the respondents along with the measurement of control variables.

Results

The data analysis was undertaken in four stages:

(1) reliability and validity analysis, including invariance analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA);

(2) common method bias (CMB);

(3) the direct relationships in the research model via structural equation modelling using AMOS; and

(4) analysis to test the mediation effect.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and the correlations between the variables. There was no severe multicollinearity problem, as none of the correlations were higher than 0.80.

Reliability and validity of constructs

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability tests were performed for each scale. EFA using varimax rotation was conducted to produce a parsimonious set of distinct and non-overlapping variables from the full set of 18 OCM activities. After removing two items that had meanings inconsistent with the factor or had low factor loadings, two factors were produced with good conceptual sense. They explained a total of 59.9% of the variance (Table 3) and were labelled *developmental activities* and *formal and basic activities*. They had

Characteristics	*N*	%
Gender		
Female	216	50.7
Male	210	49.3
Age (years)		
25 or less	34	8.0
26–34	241	56.6
35–44	125	29.3
45 and over	26	6.1
Level of education		
Undergraduate degree	258	60.5
Postgraduate degree	168	39.5
Level of experience (years)		
Less than two	16	3.8
2–3	45	10.6
4–5	63	14.8
6–10	135	31.7
11 and more	167	39.2
Organization size (employee number)		
Less than 50	95	22.3
50–249	103	24.2
250 and more	228	53.5
Position		
Non-managerial	209	49.1
Lower and middle-level managers	172	40.4
Senior-level managers	45	10.6
Total	426	100

Source: Authors' own creation

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Organizational career management	2.53	0.94	1.00							
2. Career capital	4.05	0.53	0.21*	1.00						
3. Employability	3.93	0.56	0.39*	0.74*	1.00					
4. Subjective career success	3.53	0.83	0.42*	0.53*	0.65*	1.00				
5. Innovative work behaviour	3.96	0.67	0.18*	0.57*	0.69*	0.40*	1.00			
6. Age	2.34	0.71	−0.06	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.01	1.00		
7. Level of education	1.42	0.56	0.05	0.03	0.06	0.07	−0.01	0.07	1.00	
8. Level of experience	3.92	1.14	−0.09	0.03	−0.01	0.01	−0.05	0.68*	0.04	1.00

Notes: *$p < 0.01$; SD = standard deviation; $N = 426$
Source: Authors' own creation

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

a satisfactory level of reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2010), with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.92 and 0.87, respectively.

EFA was undertaken for the CCAP scale using varimax rotation. Following the purification process, four factors were identified. They were labelled as *knowing-why*,

Organizational career management (OCM)	Factor loadings	Eigen-value	Variance explained (%)	Cumulative (%)	Cronbach's alpha
OCMF1: Developmental activities		8.33	52.1	52.1	0.92
OCM8: I can get coaching (supervisor observing employee during the job and giving necessary feedback) support from my organization when I need it	0.82				
OCM7: I can get mentoring (transferring knowledge, experience and skills from an experienced and expert employee to another) support from my organization when I need it	0.80				
OCM5: My organization encourages me to set my career goals	0.79				
OCM4: My organization does counselling to me to set my career goals	0.78				
OCM3: My organization sends me abroad for training programmes when necessary	0.66				
OCM6: In my organization, there are talent management programmes (preparation for next positions, personal development programmes, career planning, etc.) that I can use	0.62				
OCM2: My organization supports me to do a master's degree or PhD	0.61				
OCM1: Training is organized to support my development and performance in my organization	0.60				
OCM12: In my organization, I can attend job enrichment (providing employees to make own plans and decision-making on his/her job, etc.) practices	0.60				
OCMF2: Formal and basic activities		1.26	7.8	59.9	0.87
OCM15: I can access career maps that show lateral and upward movement options in my organization	0.77				
OCM14: I can apply for job advertisements for current employees for vacant positions	0.75				
OCM10: I can attend career workshops (goal-setting, career management skills, self-awareness, skill development, etc.) that are organized to support my career development in my organization	0.69				
OCM9: In my organization, there are assessment centre practices (e.g. skill assessment and competency assessment) that I can use	0.66				
OCM13: I can access books and brochures about career development in my organization	0.63				
OCM18: My organization sends me to international assignments (one year or over) where the job description is clear, when necessary	0.63				
OCM11: In my organization, I can attend job rotation (assigned to work in different departments temporarily) practices	0.60				

Notes: Principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation; K-M-O measure of sampling adequacy = 0.984; Barlett test of sphericity = 4407.116; $p < 0.01$
Source: Authors' own creation

Table 3.
Factor analysis of organizational career management activities

knowing-how, *knowing-whom general network* and *knowing-whom professional life*. They explained 59.7% of the observed variance; their Cronbach's alphas ranged between 0.91 and 0.86 (Table 4).

Subsequent factor analyses for the remaining three constructs revealed one-factor solutions for SCS and IWB and two factors for EMP. The EFA results are displayed in Tables 5 to 7, respectively. The Cronbach's alpha values of the underlying constructs ranged from 0.93 to 0.87, so they exhibited a satisfactory level of internal consistency.

Invariance analysis was performed for each scale to test whether the observed factor structures were equivalent across the different values of a multi-group moderator. The sample was divided into two gender groups for moderation analysis. Invariance analysis (configural and metric) indicates that the same construct is being measured across specified groups (Byrne, 2010). Firstly, configural invariance was used for each scale through a multi-group model, and goodness-of-fit thresholds were checked. Only in the CCAP and SCS constructs were some items excluded to achieve a model fit (Table 8). A metric invariance test was then applied, and a chi-square difference test was performed with fully constrained and unconstrained models. The results revealed that the indicators for each scale across the two gender groups were not significantly different, and the constructs satisfied the conditions of metric invariance.

Following the invariance analysis, CFA was carried out on each scale to determine whether the constructs in the study provided a satisfactory fit with the data. CFA allows researchers to investigate the relationship between observed and unobserved variables and minimize the difference between observed and estimated variables (Schreiber *et al.*, 2006). The constructs used in the present study were tested separately using first-order CFA, and only one item was discarded from the EMP scale (because of low factor loadings and high-collinearity problems). Table 9 demonstrates that the goodness-of-fit indices were within generally acceptable ranges (Schermelleh-Engel *et al.*, 2003) and fit well with the data. The value of the CMIN/df ratio varied from 1.52 to 2.86; that is, it was within the range of 0–5, where lower values indicate a better fit. GFI and CFI values for the constructs were also satisfactory; they were close to a value of 1.0, which indicated a perfect fit.

Following CFA, convergent and discriminant validity were examined for each scale. The former was examined by the average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE values ranged from 0.51 to 0.71, which attested to the convergent validity of the constructs, as the values were above the threshold level of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Another indicator of convergent validity is the existence of highly significant standardized regression weights of the variables. All were significant ($p < 0.01$), which affirmed the constructs' convergent validity.

The OCM, CCAP and EMP constructs were examined for discriminant validity. The chi-square test showed that the constructs were significantly different from each other ($p < 0.001$), confirming their discriminant validity.

The constructs' internal consistencies were measured via Cronbach's alpha test; all had values well above 0.70, exhibiting a satisfactory level of reliability.

Common method bias

Prior to testing the direct relationships and proceeding with the mediation analysis, it was crucial to examine the potential presence of CMB as it can distort study outcomes (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). CMB may arise from factors such as vague wording, scale length or social desirability (Malhotra *et al.*, 2006).

To mitigate this concern, several measures were taken. Firstly, respondents were thoroughly informed about the research to ensure their understanding of the context. Additionally, they were assured of the anonymity of their responses. Harman's single-factor

Career capital (CCAP)	Factor loadings	Eigen-value	Variance explained (%)	Cumulative (%)	Cronbach's alpha
CCAPF1: Knowing-why		9.58	24.4	24.4	0.91
CCAP8: I know exactly what I want from my career	0.73				
CCAP6: I have a good idea about my career-related skills and abilities	0.71				
CCAP4: I know what is really important to me in my career	0.70				
CCAP13: I know my career goals	0.70				
CCAP9: I know what is really important to me in my life	0.69				
CCAP7: I know exactly what kinds of tasks or projects motivate me	0.69				
CCAP1: I have a good understanding of my special strengths	0.67				
CCAP10: I know very well what my aspirations are	0.67				
CCAP3: I am quite clear on what my shortcomings and limitations are	0.62				
CCAP2: I know what would be a nice balance between my career, my family life and my personal life	0.62				
CCAP12: I know the effect of my culture and background on my career behaviours and decisions	0.58				
CCAP5: I know very well the kinds of tasks or projects I find boring	0.55				
CCAPF2: Knowing-how		2.37	13.2	37.6	0.86
CCAP16: I seek out training and development opportunities	0.83				
CCAP19: I seek out opportunities for continuous learning in my career	0.80				
CCAP17: I constantly update my job-related skills	0.76				
CCAP15: I remain current on the trends and developments in my profession	0.64				
CCAP20: I have job-related knowledge and skills to apply easily or transfer to other employment settings	0.53				
CCAPF3: Knowing-whom general network		1.62	12.4	50.0	0.82
CCAP27: I have a wide network of relationships with individuals from different civic and social groups, clubs and organizations	0.79				
CCAP28: I am well-connected in my community	0.75				
CCAP25: I am well-connected with individuals outside of my current industry	0.71				
CCAP24: I regularly interact with individuals outside my organization	0.66				
CCAP26: I have close ties with my extended family and friends	0.62				
CCAPF4: Knowing-whom professional life		1.34	9.6	59.7	0.78
CCAP21: I am well-connected within my organization	0.81				
CCAP22: I have many contacts within my organization	0.77				
CCAP23: I have extensive contacts within the industry in which I work	0.64				

Notes: Principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation; K-M-O measure of sampling adequacy = 0.924; Barlett test of sphericity = 5674.898; $p < 0.01$
Source: Authors' own creation

Table 4.
Factor analysis of career capital

Subjective career success (SCS)	Factor loadings	Eigen-value	Variance explained (%)	Cumulative (%)	Cronbach's alpha
SCS: Subjective career success		5.29	66.2	66.2	0.93
SCS8: Overall, I am pleased with the state of my career	0.86				
SCS6: I am satisfied with the status that I have achieved during my career	0.85				
SCS2: I am satisfied with my progress towards meeting my overall career goals	0.85				
SCS4: I am satisfied with my progress towards meeting my goals for advancement	0.83				
SCS1: I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career	0.83				
SCS7: Overall, I would say that my personal needs have been met with my current career	0.79				
SCS3: I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my goals for income	0.77				
SCS5: I am satisfied with my progress towards meeting my goals for developing new skills	0.70				

Notes: K-M-O measure of sampling adequacy = 0.885; Barlett test of sphericity = 2577.382; $p < 0.01$
Source: Authors' own creation

Table 5.
Factor analysis of subjective career success

test, which is incorporated within the CFA method, was used to control for CMB. This test involves connecting all observed variables to a single latent factor, with fixed connections to a constant, thereby identifying common variance among variables (Malhotra *et al.*, 2006).

The key indicator for the absence of CMB is the squared value of non-standardized regression weights, and values lower than 0.50 indicate the absence of significant CMB (Mat Roni, 2014). In our study, the calculated values for the five constructs – OCM, CCAP, IWB, SCS and EMP – ranged from 0.19 to 0.40. These values comfortably remained below the threshold of 0.5, indicating the absence of substantial CMB concerns. By following these rigorous steps, we have ensured that the potential influence of CMB was adequately addressed and controlled for in our analysis.

Analyses for testing path relationships

The structural paths in the research framework (Figure 1) were tested using AMOS. A second-order analysis was used to test the path relationships between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Figure 2 and Table 10 show the results of the path analysis. The indices showed a good fit [CMIN/DF = 2.45; GFI = 0.83; CFI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.05]. The direct relationship in the proposed model, which examines the linkage between OCM and IWB, is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.205$, $p < 0.01$), providing full support for *H1*. In a similar vein, strong support was found for *H2*, as the direct relationship between OCM and SCS is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.431$, $p < 0.01$). Finally, the direct relationship underlying *H3* (OCM → EMP) is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.374$, $p < 0.01$), confirming *H3*.

Analysis to test mediation effect

Mediation analysis was performed to clarify why and how the independent variables influenced the dependent variables (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The mediator variable establishes a

Employability (EMP)	Factor loadings	Eigen-value	Variance explained (%)	Cumulative %	Cronbach's alpha
EMPF1: Self-development focus and proactivity		5.66	30.1	30.1	0.87
EMP8: I am focused on continuously developing myself	0.81				
EMP7: I approach the development of correcting my weaknesses in a systematic manner	0.80				
EMP9: I consciously devote attention to applying my newly acquired knowledge and skills	0.70				
EMP11: During the past year, I associated myself with the latest developments in my job domain	0.69				
EMP10: In formulating my career goals, I consider external market demand	0.67				
EMP6: I take responsibility for maintaining my labour market value	0.63				
EMP13: I adapt to developments within my organization	0.57				
EMP14: During the past year, I was, in general, competent to perform my work accurately and with few mistakes	0.48				
EMPF2: Self-confidence/efficacy		1.68	19.2	19.2	0.87
EMP2: I believe I could easily obtain another job that is in line with my level of education and experience	0.89				
EMP1: I believe I could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer	0.87				
EMP3: I believe I could easily obtain another job that would give me a high level of satisfaction	0.78				

Notes: K-M-O measure of sampling adequacy = 0.888; Barlett test of sphericity = 2584.917; $p < 0.01$
Source: Authors' own creation

Table 6.
Factor analysis of employability

Innovative work behaviour (IWB)	Factor loadings	Eigen-value	Variance explained (%)	Cumulative (%)	Cronbach's alpha
IWB: Innovative work behaviour		5.76	64.0	64.0	0.93
IWB4: I mobilize support for innovative ideas	0.86				
IWB7: I transform innovative ideas into useful applications	0.85				
IWB1: I create new ideas for improvements	0.82				
IWB8: I introduce innovative ideas in a systematic way	0.81				
IWB2: I search for new working methods, techniques or instruments	0.80				
IWB6: I make important organizational members enthusiastic about innovative ideas	0.79				
IWB3: I generate original solutions to problems	0.76				
IWB10: I thoroughly evaluate the application of innovative ideas	0.76				
IWB5: I acquire approval for innovative ideas	0.74				

Notes: K-M-O measure of sampling adequacy = 0.931; Barlett test of sphericity = 2609.138; $p < 0.01$
Source: Authors' own creation

Table 7.
Factor analysis of innovative work behaviour

link between dependent and independent variables. There are some requirements for mediation analysis. Firstly, the relationship between the dependent and independent variables should be significant. When a mediator variable is added to a model, the significant relationship between dependent and independent variables should no longer be significant.

Several statistical methods can be used to test the direct and indirect effects of an independent variable on a dependent one. In the present study, the bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval method was used to test the mediation effect of CCAP on the relationships between OCM → IWB, OCM → SCS and OCM → EMP. Bootstrapping has more statistical power than other methods; it provides more accurate confidence limits (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2004). The bootstrap sample was set to 2,000, and 95% was chosen as the bias-corrected confidence interval. After the bootstrap was set, the model was tested without the mediator to control the direct relationships. The results showed a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables. As noted earlier, the direct relationships between OCM → IWB, OCM → SCS and OCM → EMP were all significant ($p < 0.001$). The mediator variable was then added to test for direct and indirect effects. All indirect relationships were found to be significant. The indirect effects of OCM → IWB, OCM → SCS and OCM → EMP through CCAP were calculated as 0.199 ($p < 0.01$), 0.150 ($p < 0.01$) and 0.292 ($p < 0.01$), respectively. Table 10 shows that CCAP mediated the relationships between OCM and EMP, IWB and SCS. *H4a*, *H4b* and *H4c* were confirmed. It should also be noted that none of the control variables were found to be significant in the model.

Discussion

OCM is a strategic approach aimed at leveraging employees' skills and knowledge to enhance their career progress and job performance (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). This concept recognizes that proficient and high-performing employees play a pivotal role in achieving organizational objectives (Bagdadli and Gianecchini, 2019). The study's findings provide unequivocal evidence of the positive influence that OCM has on SCS, EMP and IWB,

Table 8. Invariance test results

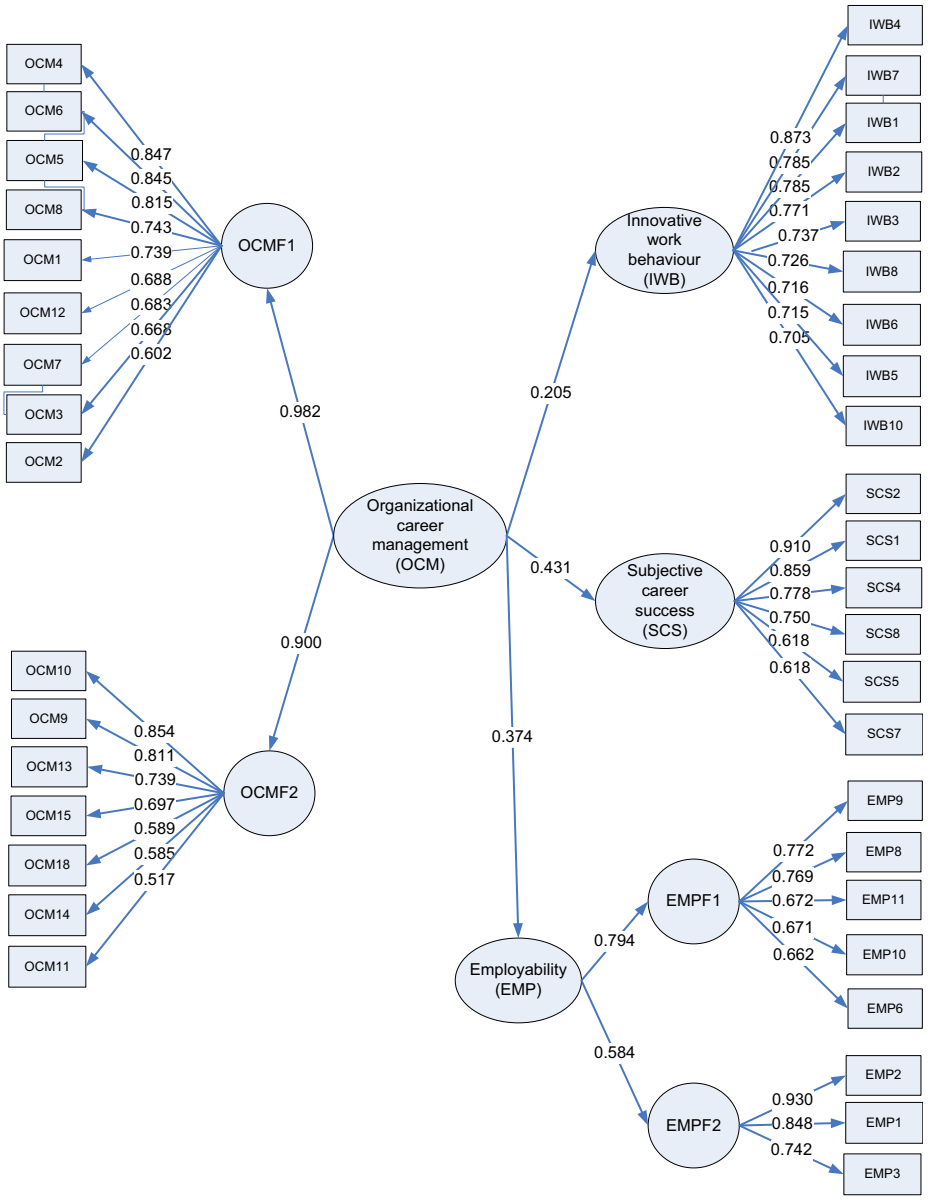
Scales	CMIN/DF	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
Organizational career management	1.973	0.902	0.958	0.048
Career capital	2.112	0.870	0.922	0.051
Employability	2.022	0.921	0.951	0.049
Subjective career success	1.575	0.998	0.997	0.037
Innovative work behaviour	1.865	0.960	0.986	0.045

Source: Authors' own creation

Table 9. Confirmatory factor analysis

Scales	CMIN/DF	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
Organizational career management	2.369	0.941	0.971	0.057
Career capital	2.337	0.929	0.954	0.056
Employability	2.022	0.965	0.980	0.049
Subjective career success	1.521	0.994	0.999	0.035
Innovative work behaviour	2.859	0.968	0.985	0.066

Source: Authors' own creation



Note: *All standardized regression weights are significant at $p < 0.01$
Source: Authors' own creation

Figure 2.
Testing direct relationships*

underscoring the effectiveness of OCM initiatives. This aligns with previous research that emphasizes the significance of OCM (De Vos *et al.*, 2009; Martini and Cavenago, 2017; Scott and Bruce, 1994). Notably, the study identifies three mediation pathways, with CCAP emerging as a critical mediator for OCM's relationship with all three career outcomes. This insight into mediation mechanisms enriches our understanding of how OCM exerts its impact on individual career outcomes.

Furthermore, this study goes beyond confirming the individual-level benefits of OCM. It contributes substantially to the discourse on career management by illuminating its broader implications for organizational performance. While individual career outcomes are indeed of paramount importance, their ripple effects on the overall organizational performance are equally significant. The study elucidates that enhanced individual competence, motivation, innovation and skillfulness collectively contribute to an organization's competitive edge. This aligns with the principles of RBV, which underscores the strategic importance of distinctive resources (Barney, 1991), and SET, which emphasizes reciprocity in social exchange (Blau, 1964).

One of the most significant contributions of this study lies in addressing a research gap concerning the mechanisms through which OCM links to individual career outcomes. The intricate nature of individual career trajectories demands a deeper understanding of the interrelationships involved. The identification of CCAP as a central mediator is a pivotal step towards comprehending the complex dynamics of career management. This highlights the evolving nature of career management practices, necessitating a holistic view that encompasses both individual development and organizational effectiveness.

Theoretical implications

The findings of this study hold profound theoretical implications, particularly within the realms of the RBV and SET. These implications extend our understanding of these theories, specifically concerning their application in the context of emerging economies (Jokinen *et al.*, 2008).

From an RBV perspective, this study reaffirms and enriches the core principles of the RBV by explicitly demonstrating how OCM activities can be conceptualized as critical resources within organizations (Barney, 1991). OCM serves as a dynamic catalyst for augmenting employees' skills, competencies and motivation, aligning harmoniously with the fundamental RBV notion that organizations can achieve and sustain competitive advantages through the strategic leveraging of distinctive resources and capabilities.

Table 10.
Hypotheses testing results

Hypotheses tested	Standardized regression weight		Level of support
H1: OCM → IWB	0.205*		Supported
H2: OCM → SCS	0.431*		Supported
H3: OCM → EMP	0.374*		Supported
	Direct effects	Indirect effects	
H4a: OCM → CCAP → IWB	−0.016	0.199*	Supported (full mediation)
H4b: OCM → CCAP → SCS	0.254*	0.150*	Supported (partial mediation)
H4c: OCM → CCAP → EMP	0.023	0.292*	Supported (full mediation)

Note: *$p < 0.01$
Source: Authors' own creation

What is particularly notable in the context of emerging economies is that OCM acquires a heightened significance (Ambrosius, 2018). With inherent resource constraints and the fast-evolving dynamics of these economies, OCM emerges as a strategic linchpin that empowers organizations to nurture and harness the full potential of their human capital. By channelling OCM activities towards the development of employee skills and competencies, organizations operating in these environments can build a formidable resource base that equips them to navigate the complexities and challenges presented by rapidly changing business landscapes. As such, this study not only reinforces the foundational RBV principles but also emphasizes their critical relevance and application in the distinctive context of emerging economies (De Oliveira *et al.*, 2019; Kundi *et al.*, 2022; Wang *et al.*, 2015).

From a SET standpoint, this study is aligned with the core concept of reciprocal relationships between employees and organizations (Blau, 1964; Holtschlag *et al.*, 2020). OCM practices, when viewed through the lens of SET, can be understood as tangible manifestations of organizations' investments in the career development of their employees. This investment, both in terms of resources and commitment, sets the stage for the establishment of a reciprocal environment characterized by trust, mutual commitment and ongoing social exchange (Narayanan *et al.*, 2019).

In the context of emerging economies, where the employment relationship is often influenced by unique cultural, economic and societal factors, the role of OCM in shaping these reciprocal relationships takes on a distinctive significance (Forstenlechner *et al.*, 2014). The commitment demonstrated by organizations towards the career development of their employees fosters a sense of trust and commitment among employees, thereby nurturing their motivation and overall performance. In essence, the study not only confirms the applicability of SET in emerging economies but also accentuates the pivotal role of OCM in driving these constructive reciprocal dynamics within these unique settings.

These theoretical implications underscore the enduring relevance of both RBV and SET in the context of emerging economies, reinforcing the foundations of these theories while illuminating their novel applications in these diverse and dynamic settings.

Practical implications

The findings of this study have far-reaching practical implications that resonate with various stakeholders, including management, policymakers and different industries. The insights gained from this research can guide decision-making and strategic actions, fostering effective career management practices that benefit both individuals and organizations (Harris and Ramos, 2013).

One key takeaway is the understanding that career management is not solely an individual endeavour but rather a collaborative effort between employees and organizations. The study highlights the importance of establishing partnerships where organizations actively engage in career management policies. By working together, organizations can create an environment conducive to employee development and career growth, enhancing individual career outcomes and contributing to the overall success of the organization (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000).

Recognizing that employees expect support in enhancing their CCAP, EMP and SCS, organizations can align their strategies to invest in OCM. This investment becomes pivotal in leveraging employees' career outcomes. For career-oriented employees, understanding the concepts of CCAP, EMP and SCS becomes crucial. Simultaneously, organizations aiming to retain their talented workforce must integrate OCM practices to ensure long-term success and competitive advantage (Inkson and Arthur, 2001; Wipulanusat *et al.*, 2018).

The study also unveils a significant link between OCM and IWB, shedding light on a critical aspect of organizational performance. Acknowledging the significant impact of employees' IWB on enhancing creative performance, organizations can focus on emphasizing OCM practices to strengthen their innovative initiatives. Recognizing that employees' IWB plays a pivotal role in driving creative performance, organizations can prioritize OCM practices as a means to bolster innovative endeavours. By providing employees with avenues to enhance their career outcomes, organizations indirectly foster a culture of innovation, positively impacting overall organizational performance (Mumford, 2000; Scott and Bruce, 1994).

In a dynamic business world, organizations cannot predict every future challenge, but they can equip themselves and their employees with the tools to navigate the uncertainties that lie ahead. By actively supporting employees' career outcomes through OCM initiatives, organizations ensure that their workforce is well-prepared and resilient in the face of change.

The significance of this study's implications extends well beyond the boundaries of individual organizations. The findings hold valuable insights that can be harnessed by a wide array of industries, each with its distinct characteristics and challenges. By delving into the study's outcomes, industries can extract relevant insights to customize their career management strategies in accordance with the specific requirements of their sector (Fang *et al.*, 2009; Wipulanusat *et al.*, 2018).

Industries characterized by rapid technological advancements or evolving market dynamics can leverage the study's insights to refine their career management practices. For instance, in the technology sector, where innovation and skill adaptation are paramount, integrating OCM principles can aid in nurturing a workforce that remains agile and equipped to tackle emerging challenges. Similarly, sectors that rely on specialized skills, such as health care or finance, can tailor their career development initiatives to align with the unique demands of their profession.

Moreover, the study's implications extend to the realm of policymaking. Policymakers at various levels can consider integrating OCM principles into broader workforce development policies. By doing so, they can foster a culture of continuous learning and career growth across industries. Encouraging organizations to prioritize OCM practices aligns with the goal of equipping the workforce with adaptable skills that are essential in a rapidly changing job landscape (Fang *et al.*, 2009). The integration of OCM principles into workforce development policies has the potential to stimulate economic growth and enhance the nation's human capital. Policymakers can collaborate with educational institutions, industry leaders and professional organizations to create a cohesive ecosystem that supports employees' career aspirations. Such an approach not only benefits individual workers but also contributes to the overall competitiveness of the nation on a global scale (Narayanan *et al.*, 2019).

In essence, this study's implications offer a roadmap for industries to optimize their career management strategies and for policymakers to cultivate a workforce that thrives on continuous learning and adaptability. By embracing OCM principles and aligning them with sector-specific needs, industries and policymakers alike can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of work, fostering skill development and ensuring sustainable economic growth.

Limitations and future research

The limitations of this study provide valuable insights into areas for future research, enhancing the understanding of the relationships explored. One notable limitation pertains to the reliance on self-report surveys as the sole source of data for testing the proposed model (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). To advance the field, future studies should adopt a more comprehensive approach by incorporating the perceptions of multiple informants, including managers at various organizational levels. This multi-perspective approach can yield a more

nuanced understanding of how OCM activities influence career outcomes, offering a more holistic view of the organizational dynamics.

Additionally, supplementing self-report data with secondary sources such as employee profiles, performance metrics and assessment centre outcomes could enrich the analysis. This integration of diverse data streams can provide a more robust foundation for evaluating the relationships between OCM activities and career outcomes, ensuring the findings are grounded in both subjective perceptions and objective performance measures.

The question of generalizability also deserves attention. Given that the data collected were exclusive to the Turkish context, caution is warranted when extrapolating the findings to other emerging country contexts. To enhance the external validity of the study, future research could explore the relationship between OCM and career outcomes in different emerging markets. By comparing and contrasting findings across diverse contexts, researchers can identify commonalities and differences, shedding light on the contextual factors that influence these relationships.

The study is also constrained by the reliance on an alumni database for participant selection. While the use of an alumni database provided a diverse sample of professionals with varying backgrounds, industries and positions, it does introduce certain limitations (Ashraf and Merunka, 2017). The alumni database may not fully capture the current dynamics of the workforce, as participants might have graduated at different points in time, potentially affecting the applicability of the findings to the current employment landscape. Moreover, the alumni sample might not include individuals who have taken alternative career paths or left the workforce altogether, limiting the generalizability of the results to a broader range of career trajectories. Addressing this limitation in future research by incorporating more real-time data collection methods, such as longitudinal studies or cross-sectional sampling from various sources, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between OCM activities and career outcomes across different career stages and paths.

In the realm of organizational factors, there is a rich avenue for further investigation. Exploring how variables such as organizational structure, size and leadership style moderate the relationship between OCM and career outcomes can yield insights into the nuanced interplay of factors shaping employees' professional trajectories. Similarly, investigating the impact of OCM on broader organizational dimensions, such as organizational citizenship behaviour, organizational commitment and employees' engagement, can provide a comprehensive view of the ripple effects of OCM activities within the organizational ecosystem.

Conclusion

The study's analysis reveals distinct pathways through which OCM influences individual career outcomes. IWB emerges as a promoter of distinctiveness, while EMP and CCAP equip employees with essential skills. Simultaneously, SCS instils the motivation and attachment necessary for sustained career progress. This intricate interplay underscores the multifaceted nature of OCM's influence, resonating with the multi-dimensional constructs of both RBV and SET.

A crucial aspect emphasized by this study is the enduring relevance of OCM in the context of contemporary career dynamics. Modern career theories underline the individual's responsibility for career management, spanning EMP enhancement, continuous development and informed decision-making. However, navigating these responsibilities can be daunting, leading employees to seek organizational support (Baruch and Sullivan, 2022). This resonates particularly with the needs of present-day employees, especially millennials,

who prioritize career growth and alignment with personal values (Holtschlag *et al.*, 2020; Narayanan *et al.*, 2019).

In a departure from earlier generations, the study reveals that contemporary employees are more inclined to prioritize their careers over organizational loyalty. OCM activities are positioned as critical tools for retaining and developing the workforce, making them indispensable for organizational success (Ambrosius, 2018; Holtschlag *et al.*, 2020). By reaffirming OCM's effectiveness in shaping individual career outcomes, this study advocates for strategic investments in OCM as a means of fostering employee retention and development.

The study's findings align with the contemporary emphasis on organizational resilience, which rests upon employees' skills and competencies. In a rapidly evolving landscape, organizational survival hinges on its adaptability, which, in turn, relies on the capabilities of its workforce (Narayanan *et al.*, 2019). OCM's core objective of augmenting employees' skills and competencies makes investing in career activities a strategic imperative for organizations seeking not only success but also long-term resilience and social responsibility.

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Further reading

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