

**JOB SATISFACTION AND CAREER CHOICES: A STUDY USING SCHEIN'S CAREER ANCHOR MODEL**

***SATISFAÇÃO NO TRABALHO E ESCOLHAS DE CARREIRA: UM ESTUDO UTILIZANDO O MODELO DE ANCORA DE CARREIRA DE SCHEIN***

***SATISFACIÓN EM EL TRABAJO Y ELECCIÓN DE CARRERA: UN ESTUDIO UTILIZANDO EL MODELO DE ANCLA DE CARRERA DE SCHEIN***

**Rosana Silvina Codaro**

Mestra em Administração de Empresas pela Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio)

Endereço: R. Marquês de São Vicente, n. 225, Gávea, CEP: 22451-900, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

Telefone: (21) 3527-1001

E-mail: [rosana@codaro.org](mailto:rosana@codaro.org)

**Patricia Amelia Tomei**

Doutora em Administração pela Universidade de São Paulo (USP)

Professora associada na Escola Integrada de Negócios (IAG) da Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio)

Endereço: R. Marquês de São Vicente, n. 225, Gávea, CEP: 22451-900, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

Telefone: (21) 31141414

E-mail: [patomei@iag.puc-rio.br](mailto:patomei@iag.puc-rio.br)

**Bernardo Paraiso de Campos Serra**

Doutorando em Administração pelo IAG PUC-Rio

Endereço: R. Marquês de São Vicente, n. 225, Gávea, CEP: 22451-900, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

Telefone: (21) 31141414

E-mail: [bernardoserra@outlook.com](mailto:bernardoserra@outlook.com)

Artigo recebido em 15/02/2017. Revisado por pares em 20/03/2017. Reformulado em 25/03/2017. Recomendado para publicação em 10/04/2017. Publicado em 30/05/2017. Avaliado pelo Sistema *double blind review*.



## ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between job satisfaction and alignment between the individual's current occupation and his/her talents, needs and values, namely as *career anchors*. A quantitative survey using Schein e Van Maanen's Career Anchor model (2013) and Siqueira's Job Satisfaction survey (2008) was performed for a non-probabilistic sample students at the Business School of a private University in Rio de Janeiro. The most frequent career anchor found for both genders was *Lifestyle*, showing a trend towards finding a career that allows some balance between professional and personal life. Finally, we identified that autonomous individuals are more satisfied than those who receive salary, male ones are more satisfied with the job than the female ones, and there is a positive association with years of experience and satisfaction in the job.

**Keywords:** Career anchors; Job satisfaction; Schein's career anchor model.

## RESUMO

No presente estudo visa-se a analisar a relação entre satisfação no trabalho e o alinhamento do emprego do indivíduo com suas habilidades, necessidade e valores, denominadas *âncoras de carreira*. Realizou-se uma pesquisa quantitativa definida como *survey*, baseada no Modelo de Âncoras de Carreira de Schein e Van Maanen (2013) e na Escala de Satisfação do trabalho de Siqueira (2008), para amostra não probabilística de alunos de uma escola de Administração de uma universidade privada de Rio de Janeiro. A âncora que apresentou maior frequência, independente do gênero do entrevistado, foi *Estilo de Vida*, indicando a tendência em buscar uma carreira que permita equilibrar a vida profissional e a vida pessoal. Por fim, identificou-se que os indivíduos autônomos são mais satisfeitos que os assalariados, os de sexo masculino estão mais satisfeitos no trabalho do que os de sexo feminino, e que existe uma associação positiva entre anos de experiência e satisfação no trabalho.

**Palavras-chave:** Âncora de carreira; Satisfação no trabalho; Modelo de âncoras de carreira de Schein.

## RESUMEN

En este estudio se tiene el objetivo de analizar la relación entre satisfacción en el trabajo y el alineamiento del empleo del individuo con sus habilidades, necesidades y valores, llamadas *anclas de carrera*. Se realizó una investigación cuantitativa definida como *survey*, basada en el Modelo de Anclas de Carrera de Schein y Van Maanen (2013), y en la Escala de Satisfacción del trabajo de Siqueira (2008), para amuestra no probabilística de alumnos de una escuela de Administración de una universidad privada de Rio de Janeiro. El ancla que presentó mayor frecuencia, independiente del género do entrevistado fue *Estilo de Vida*, indicando la tendencia de buscar una carrera que permita equilibrar la vida profesional y la vida personal. Al fin se identificó que los individuos autónomos son más satisfechos que los asalariados, los del sexo masculino están más satisfechos en el trabajo que los del sexo femenino, y que existe una asociación positiva entre años de experiencia y satisfacción en el trabajo.

**Palabras clave:** Ancla de carrera; Satisfacción en el trabajo; Modelo de anclas de carrera de Schein.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

There are numerous studies and definitions for job satisfaction. Most of these theories assume that job satisfaction is an emotional state that depends on the degree to which what an individual seeks in his work coincides with what he really gets from it (LOCKE, 1969; LOCKE 1970; LOCKE, 1976).

In this context, the causes of job satisfaction lie not only at the characteristics of the work itself, and at the individual's aspirations, but also at the relationship between them. We can find causal factors of satisfaction in three independent "environments": (1) the job itself (2) the social interaction with the rest of the organization, and (3) the organizational policies (HACKMAN, OLDFHAM, 1975; HALL, 2002; HALL, 2004; HALL, FOSTER, 1977; HALL, MOSS, 1998; HALL, CHANDLER, 2005; HUNDLEY, 2002; KARAEVLI, HALL, 2006; KATZ, VAN MAANEN, 1974).

In an increasingly complex labor market, career management poses a constant challenge: individuals need to face difficult choices in an attempt to balance their professional and personal lives. As a result, the traditional career is giving way to new forms of employee-organization interaction (SCHEIN, VAN MAANEN, 2013) and consequently, a new type of career is emerging where the individual proactively seeks an occupation that provides, in addition to means of subsistence, a sense of self-realization and self-expression (HALL, 2002, HALL, 2004, HALL, 1977).

Schein (1978, 2003, 2006) in his career development studies defines sources for career anchors (CA) as: (a) talents, skills, motives and needs, which result from work experience and (b) values and attitudes that result from the individual's reaction to the social and employment contexts he interacts. According to the author, each individual has a unique and true CA that emerges once he has accumulated significant experience in life and at work. This CA is the single element the individual will not give up. The CA expresses itself as a set of forces and constraints influencing his choices, which tend to become more stable and relevant as his professional life develops. Thus, the author states that the alignment of career choices with CA results in improved performance and higher levels of satisfaction at work.

The main objective of this article is to analyze the relationship between job satisfaction and alignment with CAs using Schein's and Van Maanen's Career Anchor Model (SCHEIN, VAN MAANEN, 2013).

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 CAREER AND JOB SATISFACTION**

The initial research on careers were conceived in the 70's by a group of researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) composed of Lotte Baylin, Douglas Hall, John Van Maanen and Edgar Schein. They consider career as the "individual perception of the sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with the experiences and work activities over the life of the individual" (HALL, 2002).

After the 80's, we identify the transition between two career models: a traditional, characterized by linear and vertical progressions, stability and durability of the employee-employer relations, and a modern one with skills-based competency system and individual career development responsibility (CHANLAT, 1995; CHANLAT, 1996). This second model sees the career as a "life journey" (BARUCH, HALL, 2004) and includes a sense of purpose, a challenge, greater instability and a non-linear progression based to the individual's talents and personality that result in a radical change to the psychological contract that exists between the employer and the employee (BALASSIANO, VENTURA, FONTES FILHO, 2004).

We identify in all new emerging career model, the need for the individual to be proactive regarding the role work plays in a broader life project (SCHEIN, 1973; ARTHUR, ROUSSEAU, 1996; HALL, MOSS, 1998; DUTRA, 1996; BARUCH, 2004) and an attitude characterized by freedom, self-management, and choices based on personal values (BRISCOE, HALL, 2006; HALL, MOSS, 1998). There is consensus that the myth of stability and security gives way to flexibility and adaptability. These new competencies are a set of behavioral, cognitive and socio-emotional skills resulting from the wide variety of career experiences (KARAEVLI, HALL, 2006). The role of the organization in this new contract is providing challenges and opportunities for continuous learning, stimulating the development of employability, resilience and knowledge (BARUCH, HALL, 2004).

Studies regarding the impact of this new career model in performance and job

satisfaction have identified that individuals with “self-managed” attitudes demonstrate greater satisfaction, commitment, and clarity in the definition and direction of their own careers (DE VOS, SOENS, 2008). A greater understanding of work as part of the individual's life project stimulates not only personal and organizational development (DUTRA, 1996), but also reinforces the individual's responsibility for managing his own career, and as well as balancing his personal and professional life (MARTINS, 2001).

According to Vanneste, (2005), a choice of career based on true interest has a dramatic impact on career satisfaction. Today, more than ever, it is preferable for the organization's and the employee's interest to map out the optimal position fit, based not only on selection batteries (e.g., ability, personality, and intelligence), but also based on one's internal world (e.g., needs, values, and talents).

Bester and Mouton (2006) in order to contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction, a fit should be established between the dominant career anchor associated with a specific occupation and that of the employee, sent questionnaires measuring career orientations and job satisfaction to a sample of American psychologists with and without service as dominant career orientation. Both groups experienced a high degree of job satisfaction and a higher level of intrinsic job satisfaction occurred compared to extrinsic job satisfaction. No significant differences regarding job satisfaction and job involvement among psychologists with different career orientations could be found.

Levi (2006) using an online survey, gathered data from American employees at several organizations and explored the effect of five moderator variables (personal life constraints (PLC), perceived availability of alternative jobs (PAAJ), person-organizational fit (POF), gender, and self-efficacy (SE) on the zero-order correlation between congruence of career anchors (CCA), and career outcomes. The results indicated that PLC, PAAJ, and POF variables failed to significantly moderate the relationship between congruence of career anchors and career outcomes such as job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. However, self-efficacy and gender significantly moderated the relationship between congruence of career anchors and job satisfaction.

Tremblay, Dahan and Gianecchini (2014) evaluated how perceived career channels

and career anchors are related to objective internal career success, and how subjective career success mediates the effects of objective success on employer satisfaction. Data were collected using questionnaires, and hypotheses were tested on a sample of 800 engineers and managers. The findings showed that respondents with a strong management anchor report greater objective career success and those with a strong life style anchor report lesser objective career success, but greater success in life outside work. Finally, the findings indicated that job success is associated with greater satisfied employer, whereas life success is related to lesser satisfaction.

## 2.2 CAREER ANCHORS

According to Schein (1973, p.21) "a career consists of several significant units or stages, recognized by the person and society". As the career develops, the individual will find answers to questions regarding his talents, skills and areas of expertise, his strengths and weaknesses as well as his motives, needs and objectives in life and his values, and in order to answer these questions, they build a concept of themselves - a true guide or as an "anchor," guiding their career choices. The author studied the professional choices made by a group of forty-four students from Sloan School of Management at MIT during the period 1961-73 and observed that the group in the early years, was looking for jobs that offered them challenges, higher wages and greater responsibilities. After a few years of experience, however, these students moved on to seek specific types of work or responsibilities. Schein (1973) grouped the motives and reasons observed during his study into categories for students' choices to understand the factors that affect the career choices made by the individuals. He called these groupings "career anchors." Based on these conclusions he developed an instrument called Career Orientation Inventory (COI) with forty questions, resulting in eight groups of five, each group corresponding to one anchor. The questionnaire was tested and validated by several scholars over the last thirty years and remains current and widely used in the field of Human Resources Management (FELDMAN, BOLINO, 1996; DANZIGER, VALENCY, 2006; DANZIGER, RACHMAN-MOORE, VALENCY, 2008).

Initially, he identified five categories of reasons and patterns of choices throughout the career development. Subsequently, Schein (1973) identified three additional anchors. In 2013, Schein along with Van Maanen reissued the COI with eight CAs described on Table 1.

During the last three decades, the Career Anchor Model (Schein, Van Maanen, 2013) has gone through a series of validations and revisions by different authors with no significant impact to the original assumptions, with the only exception being the singularity of CA: research prove the existence of more than one CA in individuals.

Feldman and Bolino (1996) noted that in Schein's (1978) study, almost one third of the respondents had a multiple career profile, suggesting the possibility of simultaneous existence of primary and secondary anchors.

Wils, Wils, Tremblay, (2010) proposed an original career anchor structure that captures multiple dominant anchors on their study from a sample of 880 Quebec engineers. The new dynamics of career anchors showed that several anchors are complementary (e.g., creativity and challenge) while others are conflictive (e.g., challenge and security).

Finally, Jared & Bruce (2014) study examined career anchor plurality and career anchor relationships from 1361 employees of a large multinational oil and gas company. Contrary to Schein's assertion, they found multiple career anchors could typify evidence for more than 40 percent individuals. They suggested that understanding an individual's exclusive or oppositional career anchors may be just as important as understanding their complementary career anchors in career counseling. In addition, contrary to Feldman and Bolino's expectation that some career anchors are "mutually" exclusive, the non- reflexive nature of career anchors demonstrated in this study suggested that many career anchors are more exclusive in one direction than the other.

Table 1 – Schein and Van Maanen's career anchor model (2013)

Career Anchor	Description
	Individuals with this anchor:
Technical / Functional Competence (TEC)	Dedicate themselves to the acquisition and improvement of knowledge related to a specific area; they seek jobs that represent challenges to test their specialist skills.
General Management Competence (GER)	Tend to identify himself or herself strongly with the organization and with its success or failure and demonstrate ambition to climb the hierarchy, to integrate the efforts of others across functions and to be responsible for the output of a particular unit of the organization.
Autonomy / Independence (AUT)	Have a strong need to do things at their own pace and in their own way. They value jobs that offer more flexibility and autonomy, promotions that mean more freedom to carry out the tasks and independence rather than interdependence.
Security and Stability (SEC)	Prefer solid and reliable companies, stable jobs that predictable salary increases based, preferably, on years of service. They prioritize security and stability,

trading loyalty for some promise of job tenure.	
Entrepreneurial Creativity (CRI)	Constantly show interest in setting up their own businesses, develop new products or services, either through the construction of new firms or taking established businesses to reshape them according to their interests.
Service/ Dedication to a Cause (SER)	Want to improve the world in some way and are attracted to jobs that give them the ability to influence people and attract them to their cause. They prioritize working with people, serving humanity and improving the country where they live.
Pure Challenge (CHA)	Are competitive, eager to overcome obstacles considered impossible and in solving problems. They are people loyal to organizations that present constant challenges to them.
Lifestyle (LST)	Pursue the integration of personal and professional needs, value flexibility, are often resistant to geographical moves, even if their refusal undermines their careers. Lifestyle individuals see and measure success in a broader social life context.

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<sup>a</sup>Gaussian units are the same as: Mx = Maxwell, G = gauss, Oe = oersted; Wb = Weber, V = volt, s = second, T = Tesla, m = meter, A = ampere, J = joule, kg = kilogram, H = Henry.

Source: Schein & Van Maanen (2013).

### 3 METHODOLOGY

In order to correlate the relationship between CA, the characteristics of the current job and the level of job satisfaction, a quantitative survey was performed on a non-probabilistic sample gathered by convenience and accessibility with 96 undergraduate and graduate business school students at Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio).

The survey consisted of: (a) individual profile questions, (b) questions regarding the characteristics of their current job (Danziger, Valency, 2006), (c) 40 questions from the Career Orientation Inventory (COI) and (d) 25 questions from Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) by Siqueira (1978). The author explores satisfaction in five dimensions: with colleagues, with salary, with superiors, with the nature of the work done and with career advancement. Four groups of individuals were identified after the results were tabulated: (1) individuals whose current job is aligned with their CA and satisfied with their job, (2) individuals aligned and not satisfied, (3) individuals not aligned and satisfied, (4) individuals not aligned and not satisfied with their job.

Finally, based on the theoretical reference regarding the relationship between CA and job satisfaction were defined the hypotheses described on Table 2.

Table 2 – Hypotheses



Hypothesis	Description
Primary (PH)	Job satisfaction is higher for those individuals whose current job is aligned with their CA.
Secondary 1 (SH1)	There is a positive relationship between years of experience and alignment of current job with CA.
Secondary 2 (SH2)	Alignment is more often observed in individuals that are self-employed than in salaried individuals.
Secondary 3 (SH3)	For salaried individuals, alignment is more frequently found among those that work for a public sector enterprise than amongst those that work for private companies.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

#### 4 FINDINGS

In order to describe the sample profile, descriptive statistical methods were applied to the data collected. The sample consisted of 57% female, 46% between the ages of 25-34 years old, 75% of salaried employees and 41% with more than 15 years of work experience. Among the salaried employees, 21% work in the public sector.

The most frequently found CA was LST: 24% of the respondents belong to this category, in line with Schein's forecast of 1996 where he anticipated that LST would present the fastest growth rate in the 21st Century and coincides with the result of the research with Brazilian samples from Rodrigues, Bouzada and Kilimnik (2007).

These results are also consistent to those obtained in a large and heterogeneous sample of more than 1800 individuals studied by Danziger and Valency (2006) where LST represented 30.8% of the population and TEC 19.2%. However, this distribution is very different than the one observed by Schein in his study in 1978 among his MIT MBA students where GER and TEC anchors represented together more than 50% of the population.

The fact that individuals selected more than one anchor is consistent with the conclusions postulated by various researchers that questioned the singularity of CA presented by Schein (FELDMAN, BOLINO, 1996; FELDMAN, BOLINO, 2000; DANZIGER, VALENCY, 2006; CHAPMAN, 2009; MARSHALL, BONNER, 2003).

On the other hand, the low frequency of the CHA anchor (10%) contradicts what Schein forecasted in his 1996 study in which he stated that this anchor would be one of present due to the demands of the market place. Considering that, the sample consist of a group of students of business management, it is noteworthy to see that the GER being the

lowest in the sample (7%). This CA distribution shows a tendency for alignment of individuals with their career choices, this being probably a result of increasing awareness and self-knowledge of their career preferences. With regard to results by gender, the study showed that the most frequent anchors among men were LST (20%) and AUT (18%) and the least frequently found anchors were SEG and SER both with 7%. Among females, the most frequent anchors were LST (26%) and TEC (18%), with the least frequent being GER (2%), AUT e CHA both with 8%.

These results are partially in-line with those observed by Igbaria et al (1991) where TEC is the most frequent anchor among men (24.7%) versus women with 14.3%. In addition, LST was more common among women (20.8%) versus men with 8.1%. Orozco-Atienza (2005) reported that GER was the most frequent anchor among men while women preferred LST. Gomes et al (2014) concluded that GER and CRI were the most frequent anchors for men and LST the one chosen by women. These results reinforce the research conducted by Lemos et al (2014) that show that even the new generation females - highly educated and ambitious - prefer LST, showing their desire to keep a balanced professional - personal life.

Analyses of the results indicate that only 36% of respondents were currently aligned with their CA. This can be a result of the limitations of job opportunities in Rio de Janeiro market or due to particular family or personal constraints (FELDMAN, BOLINO, 1996). Similar studies with heterogeneous samples of more than 1800 individuals by Danziger and Valency (2006) reported 43.5% alignment.

The relationship between alignment and job satisfaction was not statistically relevant. The primary hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that job satisfaction is not higher among individuals aligned with their CAs than among those not aligned. This result is similar to other researches by Bester and Mouton (2006) and Alberto (2008), and contradicts the international theory that states that aligned individuals are more satisfied at work (FELDMAN, BOLINO, 1996; IGBARIA, GREENHAUS, PARASURAMAN, 1991; SCHEIN, 1973; DANZIGER, VALENCY, 2006).

The study tried to better understand the characteristics of those individuals that disprove the primary hypothesis and therefore fall into the (a) aligned and not satisfied

individuals (16% of the sample); and (b) not aligned and satisfied individuals (26% of the sample) categories.

The characteristics of the "aligned and not satisfied" group (N= 15) were tested against the rest of the sample (N=71) with the Chi Square test for independence. Results showed that there is a statistically significant association (p-value = 0,0342) with years of work experience. The individuals "aligned and not satisfied" tend to have less work experience. In fact, 60% of this group is between 25-34 years old and 53% has between 5 and 10 years of work experience.

This group is composed of relatively young people with few years of work experience. The causes of no satisfaction can be a result of limited work experience. The lack of exposure to a variety of work environments in different contexts may result in some sort of in definition regarding CA as concluded by Schein (1973). According to Schein (1973), it is expected that self-realization will increase with years of work experience and improve the understanding of CA, and therefore increase the alignment with CA and jobs leading to higher levels of work satisfaction.

The low satisfaction level of this group of people can also be a result of conflicting expectations of this generation. On the one hand, they look for promotions, security, rewards while at the same time autonomy, flexible working hours, pleasant working environment and a good relationship with other people in the organization (CAVAZOTTE, LEMOS, VIANA, 2012).

The characteristics of the "not aligned and satisfied" group (N= 25) were tested against the rest of the sample (N=71) with the Chi Square test for independence. Results showed that there is a statistically significant association (p-value = 0,0381) with age. These individuals "not aligned and satisfied" tend to be older. In fact, 52 % of this group is between 35-44 years old and 52% of the group has more than 15 years of work experience. According to Siqueira (1978), job satisfaction among not aligned individuals can be rooted in issues other than the characteristics of the work itself, such as salary and benefits, company reputation, status of the position.

Individuals not aligned may also be satisfied by other "outcomes" such as balance

between job demands and personal and professional life, stability, autonomy of lifestyle needs, low levels of stress, etc. (FELDMAN, BOLINO, 1996; TREMBLAY, DAHAN, GIANECCHINI, 2014).

Another theory put forward by Drummond and Chell (2001) could support this group: that of the "entrapment": situations where people become "locked into" decisions through the passage of time, even if a career fails to meet expectations. Entrapment occurs because people fail to see the long-term implication of their decisions and, in the end, leads to sub-optimal choices.

The unmet expectation of an idealized work environment with challenges and autonomy, a flexible work schedule and an appropriate work-life balance can be another source of "non-satisfaction" in this age group as concluded by Lemos et al. (2014).

Regarding satisfaction, among the satisfied individuals it was observed that there is a higher number of individuals satisfied and not aligned (26%) than the ones satisfied and aligned (21%). This result leads to suggest that there are other sources of job satisfaction that are not related to alignment with CA and may be related to more extrinsic elements of the job itself.

A statistically significant association was detected between satisfaction and sex (p-value = 0.0294) and between satisfaction and type of job (p-value= 0.0009), therefore it can be stated that: a) men overall are more satisfied than women at work; b) self-employed individuals are more satisfied than salaried individuals are. This conclusion is in line with the studies performed by Benz and Frey (2008) and Hundley (2002).

Finally, the Chi-square test for independence between the individual's profile and the alignment with CAs showed that there is a statistically significant association of alignment and type of job (p-value= 0.033) whereas self-employed individuals tend to be more aligned with their CA than salaried ones, proving therefore the SH 2. The same Chi-square test for independence between years of experience and alignment with CA resulted in a p-value = 0.05446, therefore generating an unacceptable level of confidence for the results of the study. In order to prove the SH 1 and being able to state that alignment has a relationship with years of experience, we would have to repeat the survey on a larger sample. Secondary

SH 3 could not be confirmed. Alignment of public sector employees did not prove to be more frequent than that of private sector employees.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

The objective of the present study was to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and alignment of the individuals with their CA. The study showed that the most frequent anchor was LST (24%) more present among self-employed individuals (33%) than among salaried individuals (20%). Among public sector employees, SEG anchor showed to be the most frequent (26%).

The primary hypothesis of this work was rejected. The results showed that not all aligned individuals are satisfied with their job and at the same time, the lack of alignment did not negatively affect their job satisfaction. For a confidence level of 5% it was possible to prove the SH 2, but in order to prove SH 1 and SH3 with a confidence level of 5% it will be necessary to repeat the survey on a larger sample.

Tests for association and independence revealed four statistically relevant results:

- a) Men tend to be more satisfied at work than women are.
- b) Self-employed individuals tend to be more satisfied with their work and most frequently aligned with their CA.
- c) Individuals aligned and not satisfied tend to be the ones who have fewer years of work experience.
- d) Individuals not aligned and satisfied tend to be older.

This study also showed that the Career Anchor Model developed by Schein in 1973 and validated systematically throughout the last forty years remains current and applicable in today's business world. The model continues to be a very useful tool not only for individual career management but also for Human Resources management in organizations.

On the other hand, the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) proposed by Siqueira (1978) aided partially in the mapping and characterization of sources of job satisfaction. In order to better

understand the complexity of job satisfaction, JSS tool would have to be complemented with other dimensions and tools that integrate the individual's needs on a broader life spectrum (OLIVEIRA, CAVAZOTTE, PACIELLO, 2013).

Because of the present study, some issues arise that could be explored in future research such as:

- a) Do the same survey in other regions of the country.
- b) Supplementing the current survey with in-depth interviews aimed at better understanding the dimensions and sources of job satisfaction.
- c) Complementing the results of the current survey with the research on Meaning of Work (MOW) adapted to the Brazilian culture.
- d) Exploring rationality behind the low frequency of GER career anchor among Business Management Students

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