

## Career profiles: Career entrenchment or adaptation to change?

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The rapid development of societies and the transformation of labour markets and organizations requires more dynamic careers nowadays. Thus, based on the career profiles described by Carson, Carson, Phillips and Roe (1996) and the association of career entrenchment and career satisfaction, we identified in this study, which career profiles currently exist. The cross-reference of data, with organizational commitment, career commitment and turnover intention, allowed to characterize each profile and the factors that weigh on the decision to stay or change career, keeping or not a positive attitude. We perform a cluster analysis using the K-means method, in a sample of 386 subjects. The results came across a new career profile, called transactional career, which might reflect that careers are currently more active and less stable. In the end, the results and the theoretical and practical implications are being discussed.

**Key words:** Career entrenchment, Career satisfaction, Organizational commitment, Career commitment, Turnover intention.

### Introduction

Careers have changed, the connection defined in the beginning of the professional life and maintained in a single organization, has become more of a temporary attachment than a marriage (Baruch, 2004). The detachment between career and organization does not favour the immobilization and the career entrenchment. Work is carried out in organizations of a permanent or temporary nature (Nuhn & Wald, 2016) and the change in the link with work and organization creates the need to adjust careers to a new reality (Hirschi, 2018). But accommodation and the inability to take risks associated with the lack of investment and career alternatives, can prevent change (Carson, Carson, & Bedeian, 1995). The difficulty of adaptation forces the individual to be trapped and dissatisfied in a career that he does not want (Carson, Carson, Phillips, & Roe, 1996). It can be a problem for the individual and the organization (Zacher, Ambiel, & Noronha, 2015).

The growing autonomy in careers seems evident in the literature, not only due to the increase of the mobility as it happens in boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), but also, in the

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career decisions that exclude the organization as it happens in protean career (Hall, 1996). The theoretical and poorly supported definition of the new career orientations brings some inaccuracies that can make some concepts, confusing and even obsolete as e.g., boundaryless career (Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh, & Roper, 2012). However, there are some attempts at systematization. Briscoe and Hall (2006) due to the proximity of characteristics, combined boundaryless career and protean career and identified eight likely career profiles. Of these eight career profiles, Kuron, Schweitzer, Lyons and Ng (2016) managed to confirm three. Carson et al. (1996) also defined career profiles but considered different levels of immobilization and career entrenchment.

The relationship between the individual and the organization is brief (Baruch, 2004) and may even be only indirect, but it still exists. Organizations depend on the human factor for their activity, career autonomy and independence, should not be generalized. Although some individuals remain in organizations as they are not autonomous, many remain immobilized in their careers and are satisfied with their entrenchment (Carson et al., 1996). The excess or lack of career mobility is equally worrying (Carson & Carson, 1997) and the implications of both must be known and addressed in the theme of careers.

The analysis of each of the four career entrenchment profiles of Carson et al. (1996) is quite comprehensive and allow to identify traditional and dynamic careers. This also permits to know the degree of career satisfaction and turnover intention and even the linking established with career and organization. It makes it possible to determine the effects of a career permanence too long or too short on the individual and on the organization. However, the study by Carson et al. (1996) has an important limitation since the matrix has four quadrants. It imposed the definition of exactly four career profiles which we do not know if they will be the ones that really exist.

The theoretical contribution and the argument on different career orientations, given for some authors (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Baruch, 2004; Hall, 1996), are very important for literature. But this effort may be insufficient and sometimes even contradictory, due to the lack of empirical support (Inkson et al., 2012) the essential theoretical and practical contribution, is the scientific evidence. With this in mind, we propose in this current study to identify career profiles, interconnecting the different factors used by Carson et al. (1996). Overcoming the limitation of the four matrix quadrants that has not yet been surpassed. Which allow us to answer our research question: What are the career profiles that currently exist and how are they characterized? The description of the profiles and the analysis of the levels of career entrenchment, high or low, will allow us to answer another question: What are the effects of greater or lesser career entrenchment? The identification of the link established with the career, organization and turnover intention will let us know if there are more autonomy and signs of changing in the careers. Answering one last question: Do career profiles reveal signs of adaptation to change?

The purpose of the present study is to identify career profiles. The analysis of the high and low career entrenchment and career satisfaction levels is doubly effective. For making it possible to recognize, the consequences of the decision to stay or change career, in the individual and in the link with the organization. The profiles characterization will determine which factors weigh in the decision to leave or remain in the career and if the careers will be today as Baruch (2006) says, a conditional attachment.

To generate career profiles, we will use cluster analysis, using the K means method. Cluster analysis, as a method oriented to the analysis of the person, has shown to be very promising, for application in investigations in the social and human sciences (Verleysen & Weeren, 2016). The association of different variables and the analysis of how they work together, acknowledges an integrated view of how the individual positions himself in his career and that is one of the theoretical and practical contributions. For organizations and individuals, it is important to know the consequences of remaining entrenched, especially for those who are entrenched and dissatisfied. Another important contribution will be to provide empirical evidence on whether

careers will be more independent and reveal signs of greater adaptability, allowing the development of human resources management (HRM) policies appropriate to this new reality.

Next, in the theoretical framework, we define the main concepts and identify the state of the art, methodological options and procedures. At the end, we present the results and end with the discussion, summarize the main conclusions, point out limitations and suggestions for future studies.

## **Theoretical framework**

New career orientations were announced in the literature and defined career as more flexible and independent from organizations, which contrasts with more traditional careers (Baruch, 2004). Arthur and Rousseau (1996) described boundaryless career, as a career that goes beyond the organization's borders, due to its great mobility it can be developed inside and outside the organization. The protean career is driven by the individual and his values and not by the organization (Hall, 1996), which does not necessarily mean that there is more career mobility. These concepts about modern careers and as referred by Inkson et al. (2012) are sometimes loose and very imprecise definitions. Career entrenchment is a very inclusive concept and can give a comprehensive view of the different ways in which the individual positions himself in the career. When the entrenchment is high, the individual is very dependent of the permanence in the career, the opposite happens when he is not entrenched and reveals mobility and career independence (Carson et al., 1996).

According to Carson et al. (1995) the career entrenchment, is composed of three dimensions. The first dimension is based on a possible loss of career investments, monetary costs, career time and knowledge accumulated through time. The second dimension refers to the emotional costs, the psychological costs of change, giving up of consolidated relationships and the fear of starting new ones. The third dimension is called, limitedness of career alternatives and is based on the lack of alternatives that prevent career change. Carson et al. (1996) defined career entrenchment as immobility resulting from substantial investments made in the career, both economic and psychological, that make change difficult. This limits the definition of Carson et al. (1995) since it excludes the lack of alternatives.

Career entrenchment can take place willingly when the individuals are satisfied and reconciled with their position, or for obligation when they are not satisfied, but stay, since they cannot change or are afraid of the negative consequences that may come with the change (Carson et al., 1996). Greater career satisfaction has a negative influence on entrenchment, this is so, as individuals remain stagnant in the career since they want to and not because they have no options (Carson et al., 1996). The influence of career satisfaction relates negatively only with the lack of alternatives as it contributes to its decrease and it relates positively with emotional costs and career investments increasing both of them (Carson et al., 1995).

To better understand how satisfaction and entrenchment are related and what results they produce, Carson et al. (1996) created the career entrenchment/career satisfaction matrix. In that matrix, four positions were identified in relation to career: (1) contented immobile, in which the career time and the educational level is high, the individual is satisfied and committed, revealing a low turnover intention; (2) entrapped, in which despite not being satisfied, as the career time is long and is very instrumentally committed, turnover intention is very low; (3) voluntary careerist, when individual is very satisfied and committed affectively with the organization, but is not entrenched; (4) lastly, career changer, the individual is not entrenched, nor committed or satisfied, but as the career time is short, the accumulated costs are low and the turnover intention is higher.

The most damaging form of career entrenchment, both for the organizations and individuals, seems to be the entrapped profile. In that case, entrenchment and instrumental commitment are high and the individual, even if dissatisfied, reveals a low turnover intention and may even have an attitude of resentment towards the organization, doing the necessary minimum (Carson et al., 1996).

Leaving or staying immobilized in the career depends on career satisfaction, but also on other factors; the matrix of Carson et al. (1996) explores how different degrees of satisfaction and entrenchment have different effects on turnover intention and organizational and career commitment. But it also relates the quadrants to sociodemographic variables, which may interfere with the decision to leave or stay in the career or organization, e.g., a longer career accumulates costs and investments that make it difficult to leave the entrenchment (Carson et al., 1995).

Career commitment is the psychological connection that exists between the individual and one's career, the motivation and affective relationship established with it (Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000). Organizational commitment is a construct, composed of three dimensions; affective, normative and calculative, these three dimensions justify why the individual stays linked to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The affective dimension refers to the emotional connection with the organization and the degree of involvement and identification, which leads the individual to want to be part of the organization and have the desire to stay. The second dimension is the normative a moral duty to remain, in this case the individual has a sense of loyalty, which forces the remaining in the organization. The calculative component, also called instrumental or continuation, refers to the possible costs and sacrifices associated with the act of leaving, in this case the individual remains in the organization for financial reasons or for lack of alternatives (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Although commitment is a very much studied construct, there is still a need for greater knowledge and updating (Rossenberg et al., 2018).

Commitments to career and organization play a key role in the way individual remains in the organization and they also contribute to greater career satisfaction (Carson et al., 1996). Career commitment causes a greater attachment to work and the organization, which makes the exit more unlikely (Lin, 2017), especially since the decision to leave the organization is a definitive answer, for those who do not feel connected to the organization.

Turnover intention is a desire and willingness to leave the organization or change career, which consists of a deliberate attitude to seek alternatives that make change possible (Auerbach, Schudrich, Lawrence, Claiborne, & McGowan, 2014). In each quadrant of the matrix of Carson et al. (1996), turnover intention changes according to the degree of career entrenchment and satisfaction, but turnover intention is also influenced by organizations, which do not always allow career entrenchment. The perspective of staying and advancing in the career is not the same for those who work in a permanent or temporary work organization, as the change in the definition of work accelerates the fluidity within the organizations, which affects not only career satisfaction, but also intention to leave (Nuhn & Wald, 2016). The increased complexity of organizations and the number of roles in the same career may require additional effort and expand turnover intention (Nuhn & Wald, 2016).

Career entrenchment can occur in all types of professions and be bidirectional. However, although the organization affects individual's entrenchment, career entrenchment may affect overall the organization and its value in the market (Chang & Zhang, 2015). Particularly in senior positions, when managers are members of the founder's family and are automatically promoted, the fact that they are not recruited in the external labour market hinders their resignation or voluntary departure (Cao, Pan, Qian, & Tian, 2016). The same happens with entrenched and politically well-connected managers, who remain in the position, even if they are not very competent and even at a cost to the organization (Cao et al., 2016).

The organization's ability to adapt policies and practices that meet the individual's career needs strengthens their commitment to the organization and their identification with it (Odunayo,

Ayodeji, & Olaniyi, 2014). Although there is an enormous variety of results and theoretical frameworks that explain the complexities of the commitments, there is still a difficulty in identifying possible conflicts and proximities (Rossenberg et al., 2018). The identification of the relationship with other variables is also important to strengthen this knowledge of what connects the individual to a career and organization.

Conflicts and proximities may occur between commitments and are difficult to reveal (Rossenberg et al., 2018). The analysis of career profiles proposed by Carson et al. (1996) enables to assess various relationships. One of them, is to determine conflicts and similarities in the effects between organizational and career commitment, in the way they encourage career attachment or influence the change. Career satisfaction and turnover intention are essential to define career profiles, as they recognize when entrenchment is beneficial or harmful both for the organization and individual. The analysis of the interdependence of the variables under study is also important to determine if careers have greater mobility and autonomy (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996) and if traditional careers continue to exist.

## Method

### *Participants*

A convenience sample of  $N=386$  participants, over 18 years of age, who were working at the time of the response, answered the questionnaire. The respondents were aged between 18 and 67 years, the average age was 38 years. Of the total sample, 240 respondents were female. The academic qualifications were quite comprehensive, of all the 12<sup>th</sup> grade obtained the highest percentage, 36.8%, a percentage close to the bachelor's degree that obtained 34.7%, the 9<sup>th</sup> grade had a percentage of 16.3%, the master's and doctorate were, as expected, the least represented, 9.8% and 2.3%.

The sample was composed of groups with the most varied professional characteristics. The operational area represented 46.4% of the respondents, the technical specialist area obtained 23.3%, followed by the supervisor with 15.3%, with less expression the function of manager with 8.8% and the position of administrator with 6.2%.

### *Measures*

The instrument used was the questionnaire survey, consisting of 5 scales from different authors, in a total of 46 items. We opted for a 7-point Likert scale, from (1) "I totally disagree" to (7) "I totally agree". The career entrenchment scale was the same as that used in the study by Carson et al. (1996), all the other scales are from different authors. The scale of organizational commitment used in this study is three-dimensional, the scale used by Carson et al. (1996) only measured the calculative and affective commitment.

*Career Entrenchment.* We used the scale validated by Carson et al. (1995) the Cronbach's alpha value obtained by the authors was 0.88. In the present study, we obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.81. The total scale has 12 items, some reversed that measure 3 dimensions: career investments, emotional costs and lack of alternatives. Each dimension has a total of 4 items, e.g., "It would be very costly for me to switch my line of work/career field".

*Career Satisfaction.* To measure career satisfaction, we used the one-dimensional scale of Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990). The authors' original scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, a value very close to the value obtained in this present study 0.89. The scale was composed by 5 items e.g., "I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career".

*Organizational Commitment.* We used the three-dimensional scale of Meyer and Allen (1997). In the original study, the affective dimension obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, the normative 0.73 and the calculative 0.79. In our study we obtained the following Cronbach's alpha values: affective dimension 0.87, normative 0.87 and calculative 0.75. The scale has 19 items e.g., the affective component "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization".

*Career Commitment.* To measure career commitment, we used the scale one-dimensional validated by Blau (1988). In the author study the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.84, in the present study the Cronbach's alpha, was very similar 0.86. The scale consisted of 7 items e.g., "I definitely want a career for myself in this field".

*Turnover Intention.* We used the scale validated by Mobley, Griffeth, Hand and Meglino (1979) with a Cronbach's alpha quotient of 0.90. In the present study the alpha value was 0.88. The scale has a total of 3 items e.g., "I think a lot about leaving the organization".

## Results

### *Descriptive statistics and correlations*

Data analysis was performed using SPSS v.25. The mean (M) and standard deviation (SD), as well the reliability of the scales was calculated and are show on Table 1. The Likert scale had 7 points and the average point was 3.5, Table 1 shows that all values were above the average point and the standard deviation values were low, indicating a low variance of responses. Regarding internal consistency of the scales, the emotional costs and the lack of alternatives for career entrenchment, as well for the calculative component of organizational commitment the reliability of the scales was acceptable. For all other variables, the Cronbach's alpha was good.

Table 1

*Means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas and relationships between all variables*

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. CS Career Satisfaction	4.49	1.29	(.89)'								
2. Career Entrenchment CI Career Investments	3.90	1.49	.484** (.82)'								
3. Career Entrenchment EC Emotional Costs	4.15	1.35	.307** .605** (.69)'								
4. Career Entrenchment LCA Limitedness Career Alternatives	4.21	1.29	-.227** .175** .222** (.76)'								
5. AOC Affective Commitment	4.41	1.43	.506** .497** .635** .049 (.87)'								
6. COC Calculative Commitment	4.40	1.08	.329** .589** .442** .450** .448** (.75)'								
7. NOC Normative Commitment	3.79	1.45	.489** .541** .551** .063 .728** .511** (.87)'								
8. CC Career Commitment	4.12	1.31	.534** .576** .596** -.045 .700** .377** .593** (.86)'								
9. TI Turnover Intention	3.82	1.85	-.381** -.400** -.458** -.221** -.644** -.479** -.647** -.594** (.88)'								

Note. 'Alpha Cronbach; \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 1 shows that there was a statistically significant relationship between most of the variables. The exception was the non-significant relationship between the lack of alternatives of career entrenchment with career commitment and with the affective and normative components of organizational commitment. The lack of alternatives was the only variable that was negatively and statistically related to career satisfaction, showing that higher career satisfaction, lower the perceived lack of alternatives. The other two career entrenchment variables also had a positive significant relationship with career satisfaction. Turnover intention was negatively and significantly related to all variables.

As can be seen in Table 1, the strongest and most statistically significant correlations were between affective and normative dimensions of organizational commitment ( $r=.728$ ) and the affective dimension of organizational commitment and career commitment ( $r=.700$ ).

### *Cluster analysis*

As a greater number of cluster variables generates a greater number of solutions, the cluster variables were defined according to their relevance for the study, the most important being career satisfaction and career entrenchment. The initial clusters were then generated based on the variables of the matrix of Carson et al. (1996); the matrix was composed of 4 quadrants, so theoretically for being more interpretable, the ideal number of clusters would be four, which would justify the use of the *K*-means method. However, the goal of the present study was not to replicate the investigation of Carson et al. (1996) but rather and based on the characterization of their 4 profiles, find out how the career profiles we get are characterized. This analysis allowed to determine if the career profiles identified in the present study revealed the same characteristics as the career profiles of Carson et al. (1996) or if they expose new characteristics that reflect changes in the careers.

To identify the optimal number of clusters, we performed a fusion coefficients analysis the data suggested as a better result a five clusters solution. In addition to fusion criterion, we use the Ward method and Anova oneway to assess the validity of the solution and a solution of five clusters represented 72% of the total variance explained.

Cluster analysis was performed using *k*-means, which is based on standardized variables, in which ( $M=0$  and  $SD=1$ ). The study variables were initially transformed into *z*-scores, the standardization of the variables allowed eliminating differences between them, which simplifies their subsequent interpretation.

### *Further analysis*

For the basic variables we run an ANOVA and confirmed that there were significant differences between the groups. Career satisfaction obtained a value of *F* ratio 225.301 sig .000 and career entrenchment of *F* ratio 338.662 sig .000. Subsequently, a post hoc analysis was carried out, where it was found that in the case of career satisfaction, all the groups are statistically different, sig .000. However, in career entrenchment, clusters 1 and 4 are not statistically significant in terms of average, sig. value of .060>0.05.

The results made it possible to identify five clusters, four of which correspond to the profiles identified by Carson et al. (1996), voluntary careerist cluster 2, contented immobile cluster 3, career changer cluster 4 and entrapped cluster 5. However, the profile of cluster 1, consisting of the largest number of subjects, does not fit into any previously defined profile, and may be interpreted as a transactional career. The number of individuals is well distributed for each one of the five clusters, so the size of the clusters is representative, as can be seen in Figure 1.

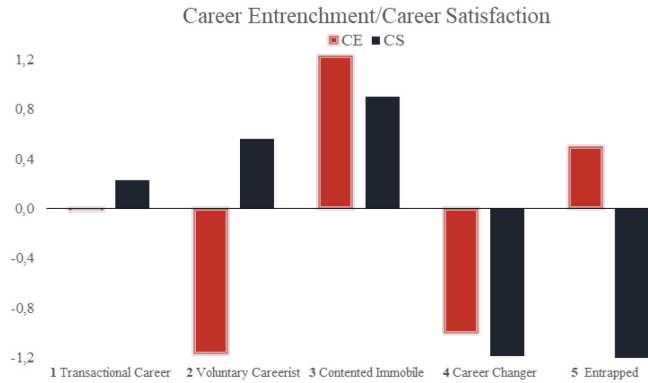


Figure 1. Cluster profiles for the five clusters solution. Career entrenchment (CE)/Career satisfaction (CS)

After performing an initial cluster analysis relating the variables career entrenchment and career satisfaction and naming each one of the five clusters. To complement the information about the five clusters and characterize them through other variables, we generate custom tables in order to relate all the dimensions of the constructs. That analysis allowed to make a cross reference of data, identifying how organizational commitment, career commitment, turnover intention and the sociodemographic variables behave in each one of the five cluster profiles.

The five clusters identified different career patterns and differs in the relation to most relevant dimensions. Cluster 1 is composed of the largest number of 112 subjects (Table 2) and corresponds to 29% of the total sample and is the only cluster that does not fit any of the career profiles identified by Carson et al. (1996). We chose to designate cluster 1 as transactional career, for the reason that, as we can see in Figure 2, all variables are very close to zero, no factor stands out in order to drive or prevent change. However, career satisfaction is the variable with the highest average in this cluster (0.227). Subjects are not entrenched and have some career investments and alternatives, are not committed to the career, nor affectively with the organization. The commitment to the organization is essentially calculative and normative and the turnover intention is positive, but low. Therefore, it can be concluded that the option of change is a possibility and, if necessary, it is facilitated since there is no strong connection to the career or organization.

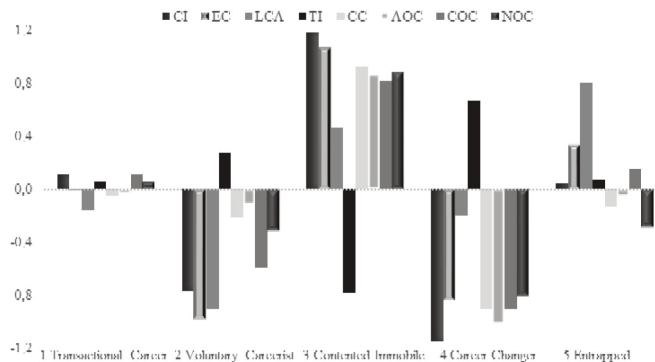


Figure 2. Cluster profiles for the five clusters solution: Relation with all variables

Note. CI=Career Investments EC=Emotional Costs LCA=Limitedness Career Alternatives T=Turnover Intention CC=Career Commitment AOC=Affective Organizational Commitment COC=Calculative Organizational Commitment NOC=Normative Organizational Commitment.



Table 2

*Five cluster career entrenchment/career satisfaction sociodemographic variables*

Variables	Transactional Career (a)		Voluntary Careerist (b)		Contented Immobile (c)		Career Changer (d)		Entrapped (e)		ANOVA/ $\chi^2$
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Age	38 <sup>c</sup>	11	37 <sup>c</sup>	11	43	13	34 <sup>e</sup>	10	41	12	$F=6,409$ sig. .000
Years of work	17 <sup>c</sup>	11	15 <sup>c</sup>	11	22	14	14 <sup>e</sup>	10	20	12	$F=6,294$ sig. .000
Years of work in the organization	9	9	7 <sup>c</sup>	8	12	11	8	9	10	7	$F=3,374$ sig. .010
Sex											$\chi^2=3,021$ sig. .554
Gender (Female %)	57%		64%		60%		66%		70%		
Education											$\chi^2=38,640$ sig. .001
9 <sup>th</sup> year schooling	13%		8%		21%		17%		25%		
12 <sup>th</sup> year schooling	44%		43%		26%		50%		18%		
College	39%		33%		40%		27%		48%		
MD	14%		11%		9%		6%		5%		
Ph.D	0%		5%		4%		0%		4%		
Types of organization											$\chi^2=3,707$ sig. .447
Private organization %	81%		75%		80%		77%		88%		
<i>n</i> =386	112		63		91		64		56		

Note. Tested ANOVA and  $\chi^2$  significance level  $p < 0,05$ . Post-hoc Tukey's HSD.

Cluster 2 corresponds to the voluntary careerist profile in the matrix of Carson et al. (1996). The subjects are satisfied and are not entrenched, career investments and emotional costs are very low and there is no lack of alternatives, moreover, they are not committed either to the organization or to the career, which facilitates a possible change. The turnover intention is above average, which may mean that leaving will always be a possibility.

Cluster 3 is the group in which the subjects are most entrenched and fully committed to the organization and career, corresponding to the contented immobile profile (Carson et al., 1996) and a more traditional career. The tenure is long and turnover intention is very low, apparently there are no reasons to leave, given that, career satisfaction is high.

Cluster 4 is consistent with the career changer profile (Carson et al., 1996). All variables indicate an expressed willingness to change, these individuals are dissatisfied and totally uncommitted with the career and organization. In addition, turnover intention is also high. They are also not entrenched and there are no career investments or emotional costs, the lack of alternatives is below average and that may be the only reason to not change.

In Cluster 5 individuals showed to be entrapped, the most damaging form of entrenchment (Carson et al., 1996). Since subjects are dissatisfied and unable to change, as the lack of alternatives is very high, there are also few career investments and only a few emotional costs. The subjects are not committed, neither normatively or affectively with the organization and as such, the attachment to the organization is low. However, in this cluster, the calculative component of the organizational commitment is above average, which may indicate that the permanence in the career is by necessity. The turnover intention is positive, but close to zero and the career commitment is low.

In Table 2 we can access some descriptive statistics regarding the main sociodemographic characteristics as well the results of difference tests between the clusters. One-way Anova test was employed for continuous variables and chi-square tests for categorical ones. Post hoc t-tests were performed for numerical using Tukey's HSD.

There were significant differences in age ( $F=6.409$ , sig. .000), as Carson et al. (1996) pointed out, that age is important for the change and we can see that in clusters 3 and 4. The highest mean

of age was in the cluster contented immobile 43-year-old, and the lowest was in the career changer cluster, 34. Clusters were also, significantly different in years of work ( $F=6.294$ , sig. .000) and years of work in the organization ( $F=3.374$ , sig. .010). Not only the age difficult the change the years of work and a longer permanence in the organization can hinder the change as it happens in the clusters contented immobile and entrapped.

No significant differences were found in sex ( $\chi^2=3.021$ , sig. .554). Female gender was represented with 62% and the better distribution between male and female, was in the transactional career as we can see in Table 2. The private sector was much better represented with 80% and the public sector with 20% and there were no differences in types of organization ( $\chi^2=3.707$ , sig. .447).

## Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to identify which career profiles currently exist and characterize them. Recognizing the effects of higher and lower career entrenchment, and also, if the career profiles reflected the recent career changes and signs of adaptation to those changes. The analysis was based on the variables and career profiles defined in the matrix of Carson et al. (1996). Through K-means method and the combination of the variables career satisfaction and career entrenchment, we found five clusters. Analysing their key characteristics, we found that four of the clusters, correspond to the career positions identified in the 4 quadrants of the matrix of Carson et al. (1996). However, cluster 1 did not fit any previously defined profile.

The results showed that in four clusters, there are several factors that are above or below the average. That was not the case for cluster 1, which is consistent with a transactional career. In this group, no variable had a strong weight to encourage or block change, individuals seem to have more adaptation characteristics, since there are no strong reasons to leave or stay. In the transactional career, nothing seems to prevent a possible career change given that no strong links have been established with the organization or career, but despite this the subjects are satisfied. This profile seems to reflect a transactional psychological contract, based on a short-time exchange relationship, as mentioned by Baruch (2004). In more temporary work environments, there is a higher probability of developing transactional types of workplace attachment, where commitment is not developed or is very low (Rossenberg et al., 2018). It is this type of releasing that seems to occur in cluster 1, transactional career.

In the voluntary careerist group, cluster 2, all factors seemed to contribute to leave open the option of change. The subjects are more satisfied and less entrenched and committed than in the transactional career, the turnover intention is higher than the average, which may suggest that when there is no strong connection to the organization or career, being satisfied with the career by itself does not prevent the turnover intention. This profile may present some of the characteristics of the protean career, as the definition of goals and objectives is a personal choice with the ability to change and adjust the career (Hall, 1996).

Cluster 3, contented immobile, is consistent with a more traditional career and confirms that currently a long-term link between the individual and the organization still exists and being entrenched does not mean being dissatisfied. Contented immobile profile, confirms that entrenchment can be positive for the individual and organization, since the individuals are completely entrenched and committed, and turnover intention is very low. The economic or psychological investments and the career satisfaction seems to have an important influence to mitigate what could be a negative effect of other variables, such as a strong calculative commitment and the lack of alternatives. However, as Carson et al. (1996) stated, contented immobile subjects in their careers comply with the organization, but this does not mean that they

have great dynamism and enthusiasm for work, which can be limiting and a disadvantage. Moreover, when career entrenchment is very high the turnover intention tends to be low, as the accumulation of career investments is self-perpetuating, which hinders the change (Cao et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2015).

A greater attachment and commitment to career decreases turnover intention (Lin, 2017). In career changer group, this trend is effectively verified, but in the opposite direction. The individuals are neither entrenched nor committed and it is probably this complete disengagement which contributes to increase the turnover intention. A very low career satisfaction, combined with a total lack of investments that block the change, allow for greater mobility. The absence of investments also facilitates the process of change as investing in the career and maintaining social and psychological stability diverts the search for other alternatives and even the perception of their existence (Carson et al., 1996). In cluster 4, turnover intention is high, since the commitments to career and organization are low, the entrenchment and the lack of alternatives are also low. In this group, mobility is high and none of the factors seems to contribute to prevent career change.

In the career changer profile, the detachment of the organization is superior to cluster 2, voluntary careerist and although the individuals are dissatisfied, this profile may present some of the mobility of the boundaryless career. Since this career orientation is characterized by great mobility and autonomy (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and in the profile career changer the disconnection is total.

In cluster 5, the subjects are entrapped in the career. Apparently, the decision to stay in the career is not for the right reasons, but for absence of options. The subjects are entrenched, mainly for lack of alternatives, this variable was omitted in the definition of career entrenchment of Carson et al. (1996). Although, lack of alternatives can be very important to unlock change (Carson et al., 1995). Career commitment is below average and there is no affective or normative connection to the organization and the commitment is essentially based on the calculative dimension. Remained immobilized in the career is not motivated by the desire to stay but by the necessity to stay. As the calculative basis of the commitment is characterized by the need to remain if the costs associated with leaving are high (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The entrenchment in the entrapped cluster, is difficult not only for the individual, but also for the organization. For example, at the level of governance, some CEOs who create little value for organizations, can entrench themselves in order to not lose power and benefits inherent to function (Chang et al., 2015).

Autonomy and mobility are characteristics of the protean and boundaryless careers. Briscoe and Hall (2006) named one of their career profiles trapped/lost, as individuals have low autonomy in career decisions and low mobility. This profile was confirmed by Kuron et al. (2016). The characteristics of trapped/lost profile could fit in the entrapped profile of Carson et al. (1996) in which the mobility and autonomy are low but could also apply to content immobile profile, where career satisfaction is very high. This leads us to reflect that autonomy in the career decisions, mobility and not being committed, may not be decisive for the individual to be career satisfied.

Having no turnover intention and remaining entrenched and dissatisfied, may have a negative effect on the individual (Carson et al., 1995). It may also have a practical impact on organizations. This impact may be important and depending on the business, have short or long-term effects (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013). Concerning the clusters, career changer and voluntary careerist, where the turnover intention is higher (see Figure 2), the impact of the exit in the organization can be different. In the career changer cluster, the individuals are dissatisfied, so the exit from the organization will probably not be as harmful as in the voluntary careerist. For voluntary careerist, in which career satisfaction is high, it would be important to understand, why these individuals think about leaving and whether an effective exit, would be useful or detrimental to the organization.

The attitude towards the career may be different depending on the individual's personal objectives, that may be aligned within the organization, or through a more extreme adjustment, considering a change in career or leaving the organization. However, a greater commitment to the career implies a greater commitment to the organization (Odunayo et al., 2014) and effectively in the present study, the commitments behave in a very similar way (Figure 2). Nevertheless, the total harmony is only observed between career commitment and the affective component of the organizational commitment. Among the commitments, slight differences were found in transactional cluster, in the calculative and normative dimensions, and in the cluster entrapped in the calculative dimension, in which the behaviour is reversed.

Relative to sociodemographic characteristics, whether or not be entrenched or have the ability to change, does not fit very well into a particular stereotype. Despite slight differences in age and education, there are no major differences (see Table 2). However, we can see that the desire for change decreases as career investments accumulate, such as in the contented immobile cluster where the average age, years of work and tenure are higher. In addition, as Carson et al. (1996) concluded, the most entrenched groups show higher levels of commitment, namely the calculative, which creates greater resistance and inhibits change. The opposite happens in the career changer cluster, individuals have the shortest tenure and a small average of age, turnover intention is high and have only a few career investments that simplify a possible change.

Although the representation of the sample in the public and private sector, requires caution in extrapolating data. It's interesting that voluntary careerist has more subjects in the public sector than in the private sector and that the private sector has more entrapped than the public sector. This itself may suggest a change in career vision, but also a greater adaptation not only in the private sector, but also in the public sector.

## Conclusions

The 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution and the emergence of new professions changed the bond with the organization and careers must now be more adaptable (Hirschi, 2018). The analysis of the five career profiles and the characteristics of each, permitted us to verify more flexibility and autonomy in the way individuals currently position themselves in their career. As it happens in transactional career where adaptation to change seems to be easy. We have also identified signs of resistance to change and lack of adaptation skills as we can see in clusters entrapped and contented immobile. The resistance and difficulty of changing is problematic in the entrapped profile, the lack of alternatives forces the individual to stay, but in the contented immobile profile, the permanence in the career is by will and option. The signs of adaptation to change had already begun to be drawn in the profiles obtained by Carson et al. (1996) through voluntary careerist and career changer. But now it seems to be even more evident in the transactional career profile. This short-term relationship between the individual and the organization, had already been brought up by (Baruch, 2004; Rossenberg et al., 2018) but the transactional career profile had not yet been characterized.

Cluster 1, is coherent with an easily adaptable transactional career, given that there is a disengagement with the organization and career, facilitating a possible change. Therefore, it is not the attachment to the organization or career, that contributes to above-average career satisfaction, nor is it evident to identify through the variables, which contributes to individual's satisfaction. Possibly one of the contributions may be the detachment from the career and the organization, which facilitates change in case of the need for career adjustment. In this profile, if individuals work in permanent work organizations, it is more difficult to predict when and if they will leave

or stay, but in temporary work organizations, due to the nature of the relationship, there is an enormous probability of change. Voluntary careerist cluster 2, is also a good example that subjects do not need to be bound to the organization or career, to be quite satisfied. But untying possibly facilitates exit, given that the turnover intention is above average. That explains why individuals in this career profile can adapt to a possible change. There is a very close relationship between the variables of organizational commitment and career commitment (Odunayo et al., 2014), but also with the entrenchment. The three variables always move in the same direction, in the voluntary careerist cluster, contented immobile and career changer. Turnover intention in these three clusters presents an inverse behaviour, as for transactional and entrapped career clusters the behaviour of the variables is not so synchronized. Those who are entrenched are more calculatively linked to the organization (Carson et al., 1996). In the present study, the calculative component of the commitment is effectively the one which moves more in the direction of the entrenchment variables.

When the individual is entrapped in the career the career entrenchment has a more corrosive effect on the individual and organization. Since individuals remain linked only due to calculative issues, namely by extrinsic remuneration (Carson et al., 1996) as we see in Figure 2. In this group, career satisfaction is very low and the emotional costs of dealing with change are high, there are also no perceived alternatives available, which means that the individual remains as a result of a necessity. Rossenberg et al. (2018) questioned whether affective commitment would be more compatible with normative commitment. In this cluster, there were compatibility between them as the connection to the organization is only calculative.

Career commitment increases organizational commitment (Odunayo et al., 2014). However, too committed individuals may not always be the ideal for the organization. In the present study, we found that when career and organizational commitment are higher than average, individuals may become too attached to the organization, due to a lack of alternatives and a high calculative commitment. Those who are very satisfied and totally committed to the organization and career are less likely to change since they are convinced that the best option is to stay (Carson et al., 1996). The inability to adapt to change is not adequate for the current career needs (Hirschi, 2018) and this career profile does not reveal many adaptability characteristics.

We can also conclude that being satisfied with one's career is not enough to stay or be committed to the organization or career. In the cluster career changer individuals are not entrenched and those who are dissatisfied probably will make active movements to exit (Carson et al., 1996). But the same hardly happens, in the entrapped cluster despite the level of dissatisfaction is the same turnover intention is lower.

## **Contributions**

There were several theoretical contributions from the present study. The first one was to contribute to effectively identify which career profiles exist, given that the profiles characterized by Carson et al. (1996), were defined according to the four quadrants of a matrix. The present study contributes to provide evidence of the four career profiles of Carson et al. (1996) and identify one more: the transactional career, which is a profile fitted to the actual dynamic careers. We also helped to improve career research by analysing how each variable contributes to leaving or remaining entrenched.

Regarding the various constructs, given that there are few attempts to explain how commitments to multiple focuses are combined (Becker, Kernan, Clark, & Klein, 2018) we contributed to better identify their relationship. In the present study, we helped to perceive how organizational and

career commitment are related between them and with the career entrenchment. It also was important to analyse all variables together and identify their influence on entrenchment and turnover intention.

The costs associated with leaving and the recruitment process differ between organizations and countries; however, they tend to be potentially less expensive, as they bring new perspectives to the organization and prevent stagnation (Hancock et al., 2013). The higher turnover intention in the study seems to be positive, as the subjects are neither satisfied nor committed to the organization or career, so that their exit has allowed the entry of new subjects, more aligned with the organization's objectives. However, for voluntary careerists in which the subjects are satisfied and their career profile suggest that they are valid elements, the high turnover intention indicate that the recruitment may be expensive. These issues should be of concern to HRM, since it is important to know what the causes are and what motivates the change and the exit, especially of those who contribute to the organization (Hancock et al., 2013).

In the present study one of the core contributions was to identify more dynamic and autonomous careers, with signs of adaptation to recent career changes, as it happens with transactional career, voluntary careerist and career changer. We also found that traditional careers still exist like in contented immobile and entrapped.

## **Limitations and future studies**

Of the present study is important to mention some limitations. An effort has been made to include respondents from the most diverse professions, hierarchical levels and organizations. Although, the representativeness of the sample may be limited, with possible differences between the total population and the sample, which could make generalization difficult. On the other hand, a too diversified sample in cluster analysis could also be an important limitation. As social nature, demographic characteristics and too diverse careers produce different profiles (Gillet, Vallerand, & Paty, 2013) and different career motivations. The attempt to obtain a greater representativeness of the sample, making it more homogeneous, does not allow to get certain specificities. So, for a better definition of career profiles and narrow to the analysis, for future studies we suggest the cluster analysis be applied to explain career entrenchment in specific professions and in different hierarchical levels. The entrenchment of governance may decrease the value of the organization in the market (Chang & Zhang, 2015). Which may suggest that those who are at the top of the hierarchical pyramid have a greater impact on the organization.

The governance and leaders, due to their position of influence within the organization and in the daily lives of subordinates (Thoroughgood, Tate, Sawyer, & Jacobs, 2012), may interfere in the way they remain linked to the organization and in the decision to stay entrenched. Considering that influence, it would be important to perform a cluster analysis, which would help define the role and the influence of leaders in each career profile.

Another limitation of cluster analysis is that despite it allowing to view how the different variables are interconnected, it does not permit to establish causality. A study that anticipates and identifies what contributes to the definition of a given career profile, would enrich the knowledge about each one of them. On the other hand, it would help minimize the detrimental effects of career entrenchment in both individual and organization.

The cluster analysis allows us to know how each career profile is constituted and their main characteristics only at a given moment. However, it doesn't allow us to understand their dynamic over time. A longitudinal study could be of great importance and answer several questions. One of them is how the passage from one career profile to another is made, e.g., who is contented

immobile or entrapped has probably already been part of another career profile, transactional career, voluntary careerist, or career changer. It would therefore be important to identify what is the mechanism of change, how it passes from one career profile to another and what determines the choice of a given profile.

The effect of the exit of each individual from the organization is not always the same, if the one who leaves has high performance, the impact will be more negative than if the exit is from the one who has low performance (Hancock et al., 2013). In the cluster career changer, the subjects are not satisfied, but are also not entrenched in the career, so they will possibly leave the organization. In the study, apparently only when the individual is entrapped is the entrenchment for the organization more negative, so an eventual exit may be advantageous. However, future studies should understand why the turnover intention is above average, with those who are career satisfied as happens with the voluntary careerist group and what effects the effective leaving may have on the organization. Considering the difficulty of generalizing results, the use of other samples is suggested, or even the use of other variables that help identify other behaviours and characteristics of career adaptation, which were not captured in this study.

The method used for cluster analysis may also be a limitation as different methods may produce different results. Those results may be complemented with additional qualitative analysis based on the technique of content analysis. That would help to better define each career profile and allow to understand why individuals stayed entrenched or change career.

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### **Perfis de carreira: Entrincheiramento na carreira ou adaptação à mudança?**

O rápido desenvolvimento das sociedades, a transformação dos mercados de trabalho e das organizações, exige hoje carreiras mais dinâmicas. Assim, e tendo por base, os perfis de carreira identificados por Carson, Carson, Phillips e Roe (1996) e da associação do entrincheiramento na carreira e da satisfação com a carreira, identificamos no estudo, que perfis de carreira existem atualmente. A referência cruzada de dados, do comprometimento organizacional, comprometimento com a carreira e da intenção de saída, permitiu caracterizar cada perfil e os fatores pesam na decisão de ficar ou mudar de carreira, mantendo ou não uma atitude contributiva. A uma amostra de 386 sujeitos, foi efetuada uma análise de clusters, através do método K-means, os resultados identificaram um novo perfil de carreira, chamado de transacional, que indicia que efetivamente as carreiras são atualmente mais fluídas e menos estáveis. No final serão discutidos os resultados e as implicações teóricas e práticas.

**Palavras-chave:** Entrincheiramento na carreira, Satisfação com a carreira, Comprometimento com a carreira, Comprometimento com a organização, Intenção de saída.

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