

**A time-lagged investigation of nexus between
proactive personality and career plateau:
Testing career stage-wise multiple mediation
model in the higher educational institutions of
Pakistan**



Thesis submitted to
The Superior College, Lahore

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration

By

Sobia Shabeer

Roll No. PHBA-S16-018

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Abstract

The changing working environment (the economic conditions of Pakistan and due to COVID-19 pandemic) and an ageing workforce indicates that employees will inevitably experience a career plateau, a phase in their career where the individual is faced with no future job promotions neither no longer have feelings of challenging tasks at work. Experiencing a career plateau is found to be caused by 80% of personal factors so it can be managed by personal resources such as proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability and person-environment fit in the workplace. However, existing researches have been mainly cross-sectional in design and few of them examine the mediating mechanisms that influence the career plateau across career establishment, maintenance and decline stages with the help of conservation of resources and work adjustment theories. This study follows a time-lag research design to overcome the common method bias of cross-sectional studies and to enhance the understanding of the relation of proactive personality and career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. The research was set out to answer the four research questions. The first research question was to examine the emotional intelligence as a mechanism that explained the association among PP and CA in career establishment, maintenance and decline stage. The second research question was to test the effect of PEF in the relationship between career adaptability and career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stage. The third research question was to investigate the impact of CA as a mediator among PP and career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stage. The final research question was to jointly examine the role of emotional intelligence, PEF and CA as mediators between PP and career plateau. Three-time lags were used to gather the data of study variables on different times, time 1– proactive personality and emotionality intelligence, time 2- career adaptability and time 3-person-environment fit and career plateau) in higher educational institutions of Pakistan over six months. A survey method was applied

and data collection was made through online questionnaire from 497 employees of universities in Pakistan at career establishment, maintenance and decline stage. The SEM and PROCESS MACRO techniques were used with the help of SPSS and AMOS software, for hypotheses testing. Majority of the respondents were working in public and private universities of Lahore. Results reported that emotional intelligence, career adaptability partially explain the mediation among proactive personality-career adaptability and career adaptability-career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages while person-environment fit only acts as mediator among proactive personality-career plateau in career establishment stage but this mediation is not approved for career maintenance and decline stages. Furthermore, emotional intelligence, person-environment fit and career adaptability together act as mediators among proactive personality and career plateau in an integrated model. The significance of this research is three-fold. First, it provides a mediating mechanism by three different models in three career stages. Second, this research signals that career plateau can be managed at any age, as old and young employees were reported to be influenced equally by career plateau. Finally, this is the first research in the area that tested the integrated model to manage the career plateau. From a practical implication perspective, this study recommends that organizations should use different HRM practices with respect to older and younger employees for managing the CP. The theoretical contributions, future research directions along with limitations are also mentioned.

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Dedication

Words cannot express the gratitude and respect I have for Allah, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Allama Iqbal and my parents. I have values of Islam, hard works, persistence, diligence, honesty, bravery and self-belief because of them. Without their boundless love, guidance, wisdom, friendliness and devotion this accomplishment would have been possible. Allah Almighty blessed me with best Prophet, poet and parents anyone would be lucky to have. I dedicate this dissertation entirely to them.

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List of Abbreviations

HEIs	Higher education institutions
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
T&D	Training and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
HDI	Human Development Index
HEC	Higher Education Commission
HE	Higher Education
R&D	Research and Development
HR	Human Resource
RPII	Rapid Research & Innovation Initiative
ICRG	Innovative & Collaborative Research Grants
VC	Vice-Chancellor
BPS	Basic Pay Structure
PP	Proactive Personality
EI	Emotional Intelligence
CA	Career Adaptability
CCT	Career Construction Theory
PEF	Person-Environment Fit
PE	Person-Environment
PVF	Person-Vocation Fit
PJF	Person–Job Fit
POF	Person–Organization Fit
PGF	Person–Group Fit
PSF	Person–Supervisor Fit
CP	Career Plateau
COR	Conservation of resources
TWA	Theory of Work Adjustment
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
SEP	Self-Emotional Appraisal and Emotional Expression of the Own Self
OEA	Other’s Emotional Appraisal and Other’s Emotional Recognition

RE	Regulation of Emotion
UE	Use of Emotion
JCP	Job Content Plateau
HP	Hierarchal Plateau
CN	Career Concern
CT	Career Control
CR	Career Curiosity
CF	Career Confidence
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
VIF	Variance Inflation Factors
CMB	Common Method Bias
CMV	Common Method Variance
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
CFI	Comparative-Fit Index
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CR	Composite Reliability
EAPs	Employee Assistance Programs

Chapter 1

Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are the foundation of all professions in society. It is a key industry that trains the workforce of other industries (Clark, 1986). The sustainability and quality of HEIs are not actually prioritized thus increasingly ignored (Koen, 2003). An increased level of competition and globalization has also changed the landscape of higher education (Bessette & Burton, 2014). Since 1994, HEIs have been transformed in terms of structural design, student population composition, and the medium of instruction, result oriented institution and the number of students. A handful of studies highlighted the changes in higher education worldwide (Fourie & Fourie, 2000; Pienaar, 2005; Strydom & Strydom, 2004; Abbas, 2020; Mazon, *et al.*, 2020). However, recently the lives of human beings are also threatened by a pandemic of the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) globally. At the end of March 2020, COVID-19 was impacted 184 countries which have more than 267 thousand individuals and it was known as a global pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). Education has been affected greatly in terms of hampered educational activity, increasing unemployment due to low recruitment activities, unprepared online education, minimal global job opportunities, increase in the responsibility for parents, no internet access, and delay in salaries and fees (Jena, 2020). These changes are unabated and impacting on all aspects of HEI's working environments. Other than the pandemic, in the past, HEIs have faced other career obstacles such as role conflict (Miller, 2003), work overload (Monnapula-Mapesela, 2002), poor remuneration (Anderson, Richard, & Saha, 2002; Koen, 2003), poor communication (Ball, 2004), poor performance management (Miller, 2003; Fairbrother & Warn, 2003), lack of transparency, discrimination in gender and race (Barkhuizen, Rothman, & Tytherleigh, 2004), and inadequate support for research and teaching (Nelson & Burke, 2000). So, the pandemic and other issues of HEIs have together increased the career problems

of employees. More specifically, many studies have indicated that not getting job promotions is caused the career dilemma in HEIs (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001; Oshagbemi, 1996; Pienaar, & Bester, 2009) because promotion is the indicator of development and growth (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003; Olivier, Venter, & De Lange, 2004; Nelson & Burke, 2000). Another career dilemma is doing the same unchallenging job activities or inadequate training and development for HEI's staff (McInnis, 2000; Michailidis & Asimenos, 2002; Pienaar & Bester, 2009; Richardson & McKenna, 2003) because T&D motivates the employees to learn new skills for performing their current jobs with latest techniques and developing their career (Nicholls, 2001). Therefore, in this decade, the employees of higher education institutions are experiencing increased stress in their career (Wang, *et al.*, 2020; Jerg-Bretzke, *et al.*, 2020; Ribando, Slade & Fortner, 2020; Newberry & Allsop, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015; Masuku, & Muchemwa, 2015; Kang & Sidhu, 2015). The purpose of this research is to test the antecedents for managing the most significant career dilemma faced by HEIs.

1.1. Research Background

Higher education institutions are the backbone of nations. However, the HEIs of Pakistan are badly configured at present. The report of Global Human capital index (2020) shows that Pakistan is yet struggling to get leading position with respect to education and skills development, it ranked 144th out of 173 countries. The report highlights, one of the reasons of the low Global Human capital index (2020) is unskilled graduate students. One more foreign ranking agency, Quacquarelli Symonds (2021) indicates that only one Pakistani university ranked among the first five hundred universities in the world, although the Pakistani government has invested billions of rupees in HEIs still no university in Pakistan has been included in the top 100 universities of the world. Thus, Pakistani HEI sector has a severe problem in the quality of teaching and education. Additionally, there are many reasons of having employee's low performance in an organization or sector. Career management literature

indicated that organizations which do not resolve the employee's career management and development issue are faced lower job performance and organizational performance (Ahmed & Ke, 2016; Saleem & Amin, 2013). From the past decades, career plateau has detrimental effects on satisfaction and performance (FERENCE, Stoner, & Warren, 1977; Yang, Johnson, & Niven, 2018). Thus, the organizational and job performance of employees is very much linked with the career plateau (Chen & Li, 2011; Nachbagauer, Andreas & Riedl, 2002; Yang *et al.*, 2018). Due to an increasing number of employees, environmental and organizational change, employees can face the issue of mobility in their career (Chay, Aryee, & Chew, 1995; Jong-Chul & Hyeon-Suk, 2018; Tremblay & Roger, 1993).

A physical plateau is known as a flat expanse linked with the land that has been extended for a long distance. In terms of human, a plateau shows a period of stability which is the goal of most individuals. For some individuals, it may give continuous satisfaction however, as noted after some time; the stability of an individual begins to have more feelings of stagnation and sameness. The literature of career development named this career dilemma as "*career plateau*". Although, career plateau is not discussed as a new term in the literature; hence, in many organizations, this issue is widely spreading (Bown-Wilson & Parry, 2013; Ongori, & Agolla, 2009; Yang *et al.*, 2018; Yang, Niven & Johnson, 2019). Several scholars believed that career plateau is needed to be addressed properly to eliminate the discontent because it has been also shown as a critical organizational and managerial issue (Yang *et al.*, 2019; Bucke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Yang *et al.*, 2018). In the next decade, career plateauing will become the key issue because of the changing nature of business environment in terms of employment equity, downsizing, and restructuring (Bown-Wilson & Parry, 2013; Yang *et al.*, 2018). Nowadays, career advancement due to vertical promotion is difficult and competitive (Jung & Tak, 2008; Wehmeyer *et al.*, 2019). Correspondingly, the majority of the employees without fulfilling their career goals reached a career plateau. So, career plateaued employees showed undesirable work

outcomes such as low satisfaction, increase turnover intention and organizational commitment, withdrawal attitudes and high levels of stress (Heilmann, Holt, & Rilovick, 2008; Near, 1980). Plateaued employees experienced negative psychological states such as job stress, burnout, and low work efficacy because they can't get their desired promotions (Jiang, Hu, & Wang, 2018; McCleese, Eby, Scharlau, & Hoffman, 2007; Wang, Hu, Hurst, & Yang, 2014). The plateaued employee considered themselves less marketable and they cope through withdrawing behaviors such as minimizing working hours and absenteeism (Elsass & Ralston, 1989; Veiga, 1981).

Hence, career plateau occurs in a person's career when they can't move vertically inside and outside of the organization (Veiga, 1981). Career plateau happens due to organizational, cultural and individual causes (Appelbaum Steven & Finestone, 1994; Choudary, Ramzan, & Riaz, 2013; Devi & Basariya, 2017; Godshalk & Fender, 2015; Milliman, 1992; Near, 1980; Ongori & Agolla, 2009). Ference *et al.* (1977) highlighted many reasons of plateau. Reasons of plateau are categorized as: external (organizational and cultural) and internal (personal) (Ference *et al.*, 1977; Godshalk & Fender, 2015). The reasons of research a career plateau is continuously receiving attention which can be described by many recent trends in HEIs in Pakistan that indicates individuals may reach career plateau inevitably in their working life. Table 1 shows the summary of career plateau causes in Pakistani HEIs.

Table 1

<i>Causes of career plateau in HEI's of Pakistan</i>	
External causes/Organizational and cultural	Covid-19, Pyramid universities structure, Tenure track system, referral and favoritism, increasing no. of graduates, unemployment, pandemic and competition, aging society

Internal causes/Individual	Low job satisfaction and motivation, aging, low job involvement, permanent job, lack of knowledge and skills, Work life balance issue/dual career,
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It is broadly recognized that career plateau is negatively effect on the organizations as well as individuals (Jiang, 2016; Nachbagauer, Andreas & Riedl, 2002), knowledge of predictors that affect the plateau as well as their mechanism through which these predictors are affecting the plateau is not discussed in the literature. About 80% of career plateau can be managed by personal factors (Near, 1980; Tremblay & Roger, 1993) because recently individuals are also moving towards protean and boundaryless career in which an employee and an organization also shared the responsibility of career development (Hofstetter & Rosenblatt, 2017; Volmer & Spurk, 2011). The most important factor is personality. Individuals revealed various work behaviors based on the reasons of suffering from the effects of plateau (Chao, 1990). However, individuals who have a proactive personality are stabilized in taking actions to impact their environment (Crant, 2000). A proactive person recognizes opportunities, takes actions, and identifies techniques to enhance their lives and environments (Bateman & Crant, 1993). PP takes initiatives in a broader range of activities and persists until adjustment occurs. On the other hand, non-proactive individuals are reactive and passive. They have the tendency to adapt themselves according to circumstances instead of attempting to change them (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Proactive personalities are applied a method to handle the stressor, by using other resources that are not linked with stressors directly. For instance, a proactive personality has feelings of personal control (Crant, 2000). A personality who follows the personal control process can affect the outcomes ultimately that are driven through environmental forces (Bell & Staw, 1989). Proactive individuals perform more searches for attaining a work environment which matches their professional values and needs. Furthermore, according to the conservation

of resource theory, the proactive personality has higher personal resources through which they can reduce emotional exhaustion caused by career plateau (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2014). In this regard, proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability, and person environment fit are the most important constructs through which various scholars have developed the framework to resolve the issue of plateau. Therefore, on the basis of conservation resource theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) and work adjustment theory (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), this research has proposed a theoretical framework which stated that greater resource gains invite more resource gains that minimize the effect of resource loss and make adjustment in the working environment. In the literature, PP and CA are the personal resource gains of an individual. These gains attract more resources such as emotional intelligence and make a person adjustable with their working environment that together become a resource gain caravan (PEF) which minimizes the negative individual and organizational effects of career plateau. Therefore, the key study objective is to test the antecedents of managing the CP issue with the help of personal resources.

1.2. Research Problem

Although, few researches directly reported that career plateau is present in higher educational institutions of Pakistan (De Clercq *et al.*, 2019; Farooq & Tufail, 2017; Malik & Fatimah, 2016) while other studies indirectly discussed this issue (Nas, 2016; Vaseer & Shahzad, 2016). Following trends are causing career plateau in the HEIs context of Pakistan.

The first trend is the impact of the pandemic or covid-19 on the educational sector. The pandemic has adverse effects that are not limited to health issues rather it has spread across all societal echelons; political, social, education, economic and human security (Abodunrin, Oloye, & Adesola, 2020). Literature has highlighted that instable environmental factors such as economic instability or recession periods forced employees to retain their current job

position for a longer time period thus perceive a plateau (Salami, 2010; McCleese & Eby, 2006). COVID-19 or pandemic is known as instable environment because it is increasing the economic crisis due to mass layoffs, and temporary lockdowns, jobless individuals, health insecurity and high unemployment rate (Mushtaque, Waqas & Awais-E-Yazdan, 2022; Imran & Ahmed, 2020; Lin, *et al.*, 2021; Jung, Jung & Yoon, 2021). In this situation, some of the employees are not familiar with techno-savvy techniques which become a problem for them (Sahu, 2020). The case of Pakistan is more complex because of less trained employees (Zaidi & Salah, 2020). So, lack of technical skill, fear of job loss, job/health insecurity, due to COVID-19 is encouraged the employees to stay in their homes and performed the duties of existing job level therefore doing the same list of responsibilities every day and in the same home environment, generated the phenomenon of career plateau.

The second trend is an ageing society. Career plateau is not escapable from aging due to factors such as the ageing, rapid health technology advancement, and declining birth rates (Kulik, Ryan, Harper, & George, 2014; Westley, Choe, & Retherford, 2010). The older population is increasing in Pakistan. Recent estimates reveal that 60.83% of Pakistani population falls within the 15-64 age group (O'Neill, 2022). In response to this aging trend, several countries have increased the retirement age (Whitehouse, 2007; Pakistan Bureau of Statistic, 2020) and countries such as Pakistan have eradicated the retirement age at universities. These changes recommend that individuals, who are presently working, willingly or not, are predicted to do a work for a longer job and will also face unavoidably a career plateau.

The third trend is permanent job. As one of the main of reason to increase the job satisfaction in universities is the intention to stay "*Permanent job*" (Hussain & Saira, 2017). Permanent employees have career ladder for getting job promotion and also do non-academic and non-academic job responsibilities as per their job rank. However, literature of career plateau stated that an employee started experiencing the feeling of sameness after three years of working

experience in the current job and organization (Bardwick, 1986), according the job promotion policy of government of Pakistan permanent employees are usually promoted to next level within 3-5 years (University of Gujrat service statues), but teachers who are hired on the bases of tenure track system are not promoted because they have to compete over advertised job for moving forward (Faculty appointment criteria; Tenure track system). Permanent employees spend their whole life in the same organization and department and job, doing tasks of same nature over and over like teaching same courses and doing same non-academic tasks according to their job ranks, unless they completed the requirements of next job rank, thus it produces a career plateau in permanent employees.

The fourth trend is work life balance. Many employees in HEI's in Pakistan are facing the work-life balance issue, husband and wife are both working which is considered as a dual career (Arif & Ilyas, 2013; Kamran, Zafar, & Ali, 2014; Umar & Zia-ur-Rehman, 2013). Couples do not want to increase their job responsibilities in order to perform their family responsibilities so; they self-generate the conditions of CP.

The fifth trend is the tenure track system. Khan (2016) reported that teachers of universities received less promotion opportunities due to the tenure track system. In the case of a teacher who wants to improve his or her rank such as assistant professor, they have to compete against advertised jobs and promotions are not received on basis of performance (Faculty appointment criteria; Tenure track system). If they are hired for new job opening then they will be promoted to next level like lecturer to assistant professor. Lack of job promotion on the basis of performance is producing the CP.

The sixth trend is hierarchy structure It showed that the public sector faculty have different organization structure (e.g. bureaucratic structure) as compared to the private sector on the other hand, job involvement level decreased with respect to the rank of teachers in these

universities (Kiyani *et al.*, 2011). Less job involvement produces less motivation of employees working in a high job rank because they know they will not get promotion easily and feel bored with repetitive job tasks. Thus, this situation creates the CP in HEIs of Pakistan.

The seventh trend is competition. The study by Azam (2014) also highlights that people are becoming more skilled on a daily basis and it has increased the competition among employees due to having the high unemployment rate in Pakistan (2019-20) and favoritism (Ahmad, 2014; Ishaq & Zuilfqar, 2014) they could not find job opportunities and promotions opening inside and outside the organization. It also develops CP.

The eighth trend is other issues of HEIs. Poor management or governance describes the performance of the university's administration. In the Task Force Report (2000) by the ministry of education, Pakistan has faced the issues in higher educational institutions such as poor management, lack of available resources, research culture and funding, lack of quality faculty and professional development, organizational behavior change and politics among academic and non-academic staff due to which employees (e.g., administrators and teachers) are not working well. Poor management or performance problems in the education sector is the reason of plateau.

1.3. Proposed Research Framework

In this study, the proposed research model is based on two theories: conservation of resource theory (COR) and theory of work adjustment (TWA) to get the holistic understanding of protective personality leads to reducing the career plateau in employees of HEIs. After a critical literature review, three mediating variables were selected to be added into the model. These mediating variables are expected to act as a mechanism among proactive personality and career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. For this study, the mediating mechanism is divided into four models with respect to career stages. The first model

includes proactive personality, emotional intelligence and career adaptability. The second model involves career adaptability, person environment fit and career plateau. The third model embraces proactive personality, career adaptability and career plateau. Lastly, in model four, regardless of career stages, three mediators are tested jointly to check the effect of proactive personality on career plateau. The models are framed within the perspectives of COR and TWA to know the underlying mechanism of the proactive personality and career plateau in the higher educational setting of Pakistan.

Build on the argument of COR, the first model proposed that proactive personality enhances the competency of employees to increase their career adaptability in employees of career establishment, maintenance and decline stages that fulfill their formal job requirements more efficiently and respond environmental challenges (e.g. economic conditions in Pakistan and COVID-19), getting sustainable competitive advantage. Moreover, it is claimed that proactive personalities have a high emotional intelligence skill which help them to control their own, peer, supervisor and subordinate positive and negative emotions and improve their career adaptability skill. Based on TWA, the second model proposed that career adaptability used their self-regulatory resources (concern, confidence, control and curiosity) and try to adjust in their working environment that have supervisor, group, career, job and organization, these kinds of matching will help them in dealing with their career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. In other words, it is argued that person-environment fit is acting like a mediator among career adaptability and career plateau which motivates individuals to reduce the limited job promotion opportunities and lack of challenging tasks. Again, the theoretical lenses of TWA are applied on model three to claim that proactive personalities have high career adaptability skills that assist them in minimizing the career plateau among employees of career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. Furthermore, it has been proposed that career adaptability is a mediator among proactive

personality and career plateau. Lastly, with the help of COR and TWA theories together, this study claims in model four that emotional intelligence, career adaptability, person-environment fit act as mediators in the relationship of proactive personality and career plateau. In other words, it has been suggested that proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability and person-environment fit participate in managing the career plateau.

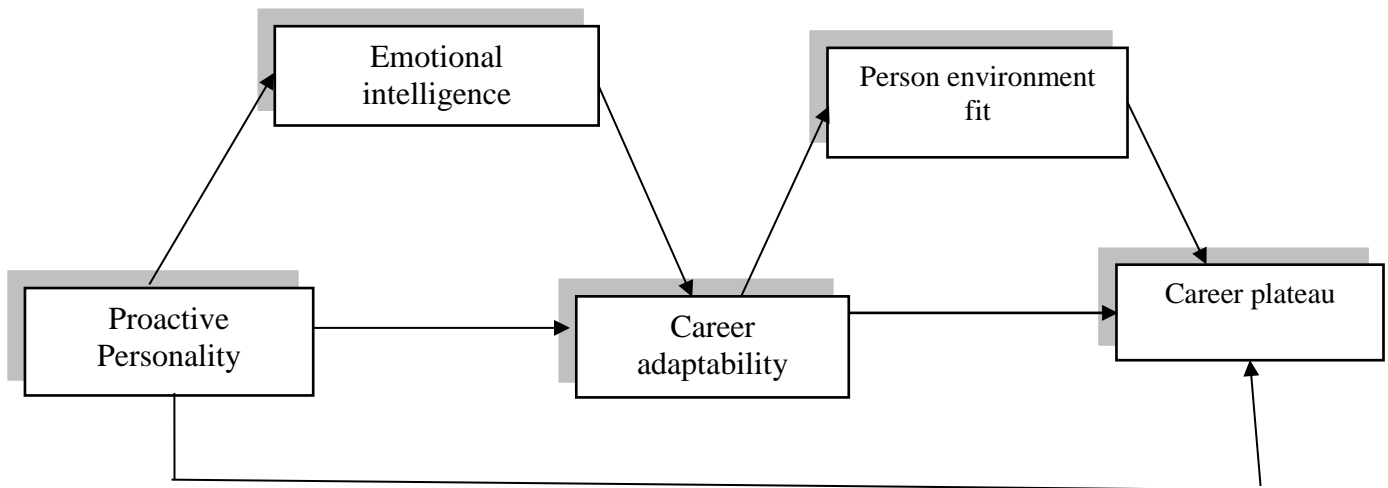


Figure 1: Research framework

1.4. Research Gaps

From past decades, career patterns are increasingly becoming global, fragmented, boundaryless, and diverse, it is claimed that successful career development needs employees to adapt, introduce and find ways of self-development under an occupational and work context (Hirschi, 2009; Zacher, 2015). In the last decade, studies have been performed to gain a comprehensive knowledge of CA (Chong & Leong, 2017; Potgieter, 2013; Zacher, 2014) and it's role in minimizing the career plateaus (Jiang, 2016; Jiang, Hu, & Wang, 2018; Shabeer, Mohammed, Jawahar, & Bilal, 2018) and the proactive personality in shaping career adaptive behavior (Jiang, 2017). This research seeks to provide a remedy for many unaddressed issues. First, little attention is given to the relationship mechanisms among proactive personality and career plateau. Understanding the process through which CP can be managed would help to identify the coping methods. To date, few studies have tried to test the mediating effect for

career plateau. After conducting literature review analysis, the following six major research gaps have been identified on PP-CA- CP relationships.

- In determining the underlying relationships, scholars have worked on many models that show various mediating types and moderating impacts on the relationships of personality- career plateau (Jiang *et al.*, 2018; Jiang, 2016; Shabeer *et al.*, 2018) but there is still little awareness about the association process. The models presented on these relationships are criticized for many reasons such as the dimensions of variables (Kristof Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005), lack of theoretical reasoning or ignoring the key mediator variables; emotional intelligence, P-E fit and career adaptability (Jiang, 2016; Coetzee & Harry, 2014). Several researches have proposed the coping mechanism of career plateaus (Rotondo & Perrewé, 2000; Wang *et al.*, 2014; McCleese *et al.*, 2007) but individual factors (proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability) and organizational factor (person environment fit) are regarded as the most essential for career plateau (Porath, *et al.*, 2012; Jiang, 2016; Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Rotondo & Perrewé, 2000; Shabeer *et al.*, 2018) therefore, there is a need to propose and test the three models that treat individual factors and organizational factors (person environment fit) as mediators among PP and CA, CA and CP, and PP and CP separately.
- Another area that can be taken for the thesis is a notion of PE fit (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005) with the view that fit perceptions have the potential to mediate the association between CA and CP. Past studies have just considered two dimensions PO fit and PJ fit in this association (Jiang, 2016; Shabeer *et al.*, 2018). Despite several researches, it is still difficult to make general conclusions about the different types of person environment fit due to several reasons such as nature and types of fits (Cable & Judge,

1996; Jansen, & Kristof-Brown, 2006; Kristof, 1996). However, to get a comprehensive view, we can take PE fit as a single variable (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006).

- Most of the literature on proactive personality-career plateau relationships is devoted to China on different occupations: university students, legal services, administration and support, training and education, sales, engineering, financial services, research and development and others (Jiang, 2016; Jiang, 2017; Jiang *et al.*, 2018). There is a shortage of studies in the education sector of developing countries; limited studies have indicated the influence of PP on career plateaus through CA, emotional intelligence and fit perceptions in HEIs of Pakistan. So, there is a need to determine how proactive personality, emotional intelligence, person-environment fit and career adaptability act together in minimizing the career plateau in the education sector, particularly in Pakistan where education plays a critical role in the economic and financial development of Pakistan (Kiani, 2013).
- A fourth gap is the career development stages (e.g. establishment, maintenance and decline). Age is a control variable in the CP literature that can be a relevant element. Nevertheless, there is little discussion on the impact of career stages on the plateaued employees. Earlier researchers restricted the data collection to middle-aged respondents (Ettington, 1998; Lemire Saba, & Gagnon, 1999; Tremblay & Roger, 2007; Zaremba, 1994). With time, scholars have recommended that CP between young employees needs further examination because the changing working environment has forced individuals to experience plateau at a younger age (Ettington, 1998; Greenhaus, 2002; Milliman, 1992). Moreover, in comparison with late career stages, individuals respond negatively to CP (Elsass & Ralston, 1989). Indeed, employees who are younger is inclined to be stimulated by growth factors in the form of challenge and promotion as compared to older employees (Ng & Feldman, 2010; Kooij *et al.*, 2011). These

differences indicate that younger individuals have higher expectations of achieving challenging tasks and promotions as compared to older individuals. These propositions suggest that individuals of different career stages have different responses towards career plateau.

- A fifth important gap that is neglected in the CP literature is the removal of common method bias. Cross-sectional studies (Jiang *et al.*, 2018; Jiang, 2016; Shabeer *et al.*, 2018) failed to deal with the bias. This bias is important to be managed, as scholars are called for it. Therefore, three-time lags research (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) is required to test the proposed theoretical framework.
- Lastly, this study used the western theories COR (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) and TWA (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) and explained the mediation mechanisms for reducing the career plateau issue in HEIs in Pakistan.

1.5. Research Questions

The key research question is as follows;

- Does a proactive personality develop career stage wise mediating mechanisms to deal the career plateau among individuals?

The key research question leads to following sub research questions:

- Does emotional intelligence mediate the association among PP and CA in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages?
- Does PE fit mediate the association among CA and CP in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages?
- Does career adaptability mediate association among PP and career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages?
- Do EI, CA and PEF jointly effect the PP and CP relationship?

1.6.Purpose Statement

Career plateau has become an essential topic because of the changing working environment of HEIs in Pakistan and it has possible detrimental effect on the organization and the individual. As the HEIs have employees of diverse age or career stages (e.g. establishment, maintenance and decline), it is essential to know how plateaued employees of various career stages differ in managing the CP. It is also vital to do time lags study to deal the common method bias, which increase the knowledge of the topic. Therefore, the aim of this dissertation is to perform an empirical study to fill the identified research gaps. The detail of research aims is given below.

1.7.Research Objectives

The key objective is as follows:

- To develop a conceptual model that describes the career stage wise mediating mechanisms between a proactive personality and career plateau among individuals and to test these models in the employees of HEI in Pakistan

The sub-objectives are:

- To determine the effect of proactive personality on mediator EI and that impact on CA among employees of career establishment, maintenance and decline stages separately, in HEI's of Pakistan
- To investigate the effect of CA on mediator person environment fit that impact on career plateau between employees of career establishment, maintenance and decline stages separately, in HEI's of Pakistan
- To test the mediating association (CA) among proactive personality and career plateau among employees of career establishment, maintenance and decline stages separately, in HEI of Pakistan.

- To examine the role of mediators (EI, PEF and CA) jointly in association with a proactive personality and career plateau among employees regardless of career stages in HEI of Pakistan.

1.8. Significance

The proposed research is original in six areas. First, recently higher education institutions of developing countries, especially Pakistan has a serious problem of quality education and teachers' performance (Peril & Promise, 2000). This study describes the causes of this situation by discussing new issue in the form of "*Career plateau*" that will be resolved with the help of mediation models. Since, an individual and organization are responsible for the career development (Handy, 1994; Johnson, 1996) this research has focused more on the individual perspective. The objective of the research is to uncover the mechanism by which career plateau can be minimized among employees of universities career stage wise. This research is contributed to the career management literature by testing the EI, PEF and CA as a mediator in the relation of PP and CP. Researches (Jiang, 2016; Jiang, 2016a; Bimrose & Hearne, 2012;) suggested that the impact of PP on CA through the potential mediator like emotional intelligence should be tested because proactive personality is unconstrained from the situational forces, use proactive coping, get social support, reappraisal and distraction strategies to experience fewer negative emotions (Hambrick & McCord, 2010) which bring the positive change (Locke & Latham, 1990; Parker *et al.*, 2010). Studies (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Guan *et al.*, 2013; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001) mentioned that comprehensive study of person environment fit (PEF) by adding various types fit can give the clear mechanism of relation among CA and CP. According to Guan *et al.* (2013), career adaptability has psychological resources which play role in developing the match among personal, job and organizational characteristics. Further, career adaptability can also help in effective decision making of career and dealing the career hurdles (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012;

Schutte *et al.*, 2009; Brown *et al.*, 2003). The findings of the research are important for higher educational institutions, human resource personnel, policy makers and career counsellors. Organizations can come to know the importance of a proactive personality (Jiang, 2016), emotional intelligence (Schutte *et al.*, 2008), career adaptability (Johnston *et al.*, 2013) and person environment fit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Guan *et al.*, 2013), thus hire, train and develop their existing and potential employees with these traits for handling the career plateau. These constructs are self-regulatory cognitive–affective meta-capacities which can be learnt through coaching, training and counselling interventions (Savickas, 2005; Potgieter, 2012; Johnston *et al.*, 2013).

The literature on PP and CP is mainly centered on various professionals regardless of a specific sector such as university students, legal services, administration and support, training and education, sales, engineering, financial services, research and development and others (Jiang, 2016; Jiang, 2017; Jiang *et al.*, 2018). Few studies have been conducted in Pakistan in the banking sector which explained the effects of CA on JCP and HP through PJ fit perception (Shabeer *et al.*, 2018). So, this research will examine the mediating mechanism of PP-EI- CA, career adaptability- person environment fit-career plateau, and proactive personality-career adaptability-career plateau among employee of higher educational institutions of Pakistan.

This research contributes to the literature by including the career development stages (Super & Knasel, 1981). Based on the research framework, it was anticipated that young employees will more effectively deal with the CP than older employees. Examining career stages will have a great importance to organizations through which they can implement important actions to reduce the CP in the first phase, or make several management decisions to minimize negative job attitudes. For instance, if younger employees have more CP than older employees, an organization can develop interventions for changing the expectations of younger employees in

reality. Management implications are significant if the results present that employees of all career stages are bearing CP equally. Further, this research can recommend that individuals of all career stages would be negatively influenced by CP to the same extent. This message reveals that the organization must not ignore any career stages when dealing with the CP and should have equal attention across all career stages.

Albert Einstein said; *“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”* This quote described the importance of the congruence of a person with their environment. In Pakistan, an employee is usually selected and ranked upon the basis of referrals and favoritism (Ahmad, 2014; Ishaq & Zuilqar, 2014). Moreover, management of universities does not care about person-environment at the time of hiring and selection. By knowing the significance of PE fit in solving the employee’s career issues. Individuals and universities will be able to include PE fit at the time of hiring and selection and take corrective actions for existing and future employees who can face any kind of misfit (PS fit, PV fit, PO fit, PJ fit and PG fit).

By using the theoretical lens of COR (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) and TWA (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) in an eastern context like HEIs of Pakistan, this research investigates the complex mediation mechanism of proactive personality and career plateau among employees in HEI’s of Pakistan. These theories are widely used in the literature of psychology, organizational behavior, and career management. The findings of the study will provide an empirical evidence of COR (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) that whether resource gain variables reduce the resource loss cause by career plateau or not. On the other hand, by using TWA theory (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), this study will prove the significance of P-E fit and CA in developing the ideal environment for employers and employees facing CP.

If the outcomes will be free from common method bias by three-time lags. The results of this research will be more beneficial for the researchers and career counselors too; they can keep in mind the importance of personality type, person-environment fit, career adaptability, emotional intelligence while dealing with cases of career plateau.

In summary, this dissertation will broaden the knowledge of CP by investigating the mechanisms among proactive personality and career plateau via emotional intelligence, person environment fit and career adaptability in career establishment, maintenance and decline stage of employees who work in HEIs of Pakistan. With the help of this thesis, the management of Pakistani universities will be able to know the antecedents to reduce the career plateau among employees. At the end, by reducing career plateau, universities and policy makers in Pakistan will be capable of fulfilling the performance and quality expectation of their stakeholders.

1.9.Hypotheses

H1: PP and CA have a positive relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

H2: PP and EI have a positive relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

H3: EI and CA have a positive relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

H4: EI acts as mediator among PP and CA in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

H5: CA and CP have a negative relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

H6: CA and PEF have a positive relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

H7: PEF and CP have a negative relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

H8: PEF acts as mediator among CA and CP in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

H9: PP and CP have a negative relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

H10: CA acts as mediator among PP and CP in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

H11: EI, CA, and PEF sequentially mediate the association among PP and CP.

1.10. Operational Definitions of Variables

1.10.1. Proactive Personality

Proactive personality is defined as “*an individual who is unconstrained relatively by situational forces and has the ability to influence the environment change* (Bateman & Crant, 1993)”.

1.10.2. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is defined as the capability of an individual to accurately perceive, express and appraise emotion; the skill to produce or access feelings along with facilitating thought; the capability to recognize their emotions and have knowledge of emotion, the ability to have emotional regulation in order to improve intellectual and emotional growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). It has four dimensions such as (1) self-emotional appraisal and emotional expression is an individual’s ability that is related with deeper understanding of their emotions and also expression of those emotions naturally. Individuals, who have a greater level of this ability, can acknowledge and sense their emotions before others, (2) others emotional appraisal and others emotional recognition as it is an ability that is linked with the understanding of others’ emotions.

Individuals, who have a higher level of this ability, are more sensitive towards others' emotions, feelings and reading minds, (3) regulation of emotion is the ability that individuals can regulate emotions and recover from any psychological distress and (4) use of emotion is the ability that individuals can apply their emotions in personal performance and constructive activities

1.10.3. Career Adaptability

Career adaptability is a competence that answers the uncertainty occurred by changing thoughts, emotion and behavior of an individual according to the situation, even in the period of unpredictable changes (Johnston, 2018; Savicks, 2005). It has four dimensions as: (1) career concern is referred by Savickas (2005) as personal purposeful consideration about the future in a career-related decision-making context, (2) control is explained as an individual's belief regarding, how she or he is positioned appropriately and responsible for their own career construction, (3) curiosity develops control whereby a person is willing to search for their vocational identity in their working context and (4) confidence is defined as a perceived personal efficacy in introducing, executing and evaluating a vocational plan.

1.10.4. Person Environment Fit

The term PE fit is referred to as "*so pervasive as to be one of, if not the dominant conceptual forces in the field*" (Schneider, 2001, p. 142). It has five types as (1) person-vocation (PV) fit involves theories of vocational choice that recommend matching individuals with their career interests (Holland, 1997), (2) person job (PJ) fit is defined as the association among an individual's characteristics and tasks or jobs which are done at the workplace (Kristof, 1996), (3) person-organization (PO) fit is referred to the compatibility among employees and organizations, (4) person-group (PG) fit

encourages the compatibility interpersonal relations among employees and work groups in which they are performing their jobs (Kristof, 1996) and (5) person supervisor (PS) fit is the congruence among subordinates and supervisors (Van Vianen, 2000).

1.10.5. Career Plateau

Career plateau is defined as an individual who believed that she/he thinks that the chance of future promotion has become low. It has two dimensions as (1) job content plateau (JCP) is referred as lateral stagnation through which individuals are not receiving additional job duties or they feel that their job is not challenging and (2) hierarchical plateau is referred to a limited promotion within an organization (Bardwick, 1986; Feldman & Weitz, 1988b; Veiga, 1981).

1.11. Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of six chapters and it is arranged in the following ways. The current chapter (Chapter 1) includes the research background, problem statement, and research objectives of the study. A brief description of career plateau is given, followed by an explanation of the research gaps and significance in the research.

Chapter 2, the literature review, provides the detailed literature review related to this research. First, the career plateau in the higher educational setting of Pakistan provides more detailed information of the country profile, the role of HEC in Pakistan, issues in higher educational institutions, the economic condition of the country, career plateau in the education sector and career plateau in HEIs of Pakistan. Second, it introduces the existing definitions of the proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability, person-environment fit and career plateau. Further, career stages and study variables are explained as well as supporting theories like COR and TWA are added. Based on this at the end, hypotheses are proposed with respect to four models such as model 1(proactive personality-emotional intelligence-career

adaptability), model 2 (career adaptability-person environment fit-career plateau), model 3 (proactive personality-career adaptability-career plateau) and integrated model.

Chapter 3 starts with the methodology of the research. The chapter focuses on the introduction of research world views and its assumptions. Following this, the data collection methods are presented along with the appropriateness of those methods. For each time lag, data collection procedures and ethical considerations are discussed. Subsequently, a description of scales, statistical techniques to be applied in the data analysis is indicated. The pilot study starts by describing the needs of the pilot study and outlines the study objectives. After that, it is explained that how certain items of the questionnaires were adapted based on the literature. Following this, explanation of the data collection and analysis procedures are outlined and results are interpreted and presented. The results of the pilot study are justified to carry out the full research. At the end, the feedback of the participants is included.

Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and results of the study. Initially data screening is reported, followed by confirmatory factor analysis of each variable and overall model are reported. Before proceeding further to hypothesis testing, reliability analysis, correlation and discriminant validity are shown. Next, the chapter moves on to indicate the results of each career stage (e.g. establishment, maintenance and decline). This section has four subsections: (1)demographic information of respondents and the results of model 1 (proactive personality-emotional intelligence-career adaptability), model 2 (career adaptability-person environment fit-career plateau) and model 3 (proactive personality-career adaptability-career plateau) for career establishment stage(2) demographic information of respondents and the results of model 1 (proactive personality-emotional intelligence-career adaptability), model 2 (career adaptability-person environment fit-career plateau)and model 3 (proactive personality-career adaptability-career plateau)for career maintenance stage, (3) demographic information of

respondents and the results of model 1 (proactive personality-emotional intelligence-career adaptability), model 2 (career adaptability-person environment fit-career plateau) and model 3 (proactive personality-career adaptability-career plateau) for career decline stage and (4) integrated mediation model.

Chapter 5 starts with comprehensive discussion of findings which are reported in the previous chapter. The contrary results of the hypotheses are described by drawing on the literature.

Lastly, Chapter 6 is the conclusion that talks about the theoretical and practical implications of the research. Next, the limitations and future research directions are suggested. Finally, this chapter explains the short summary and contributions of the research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The career plateau has become a dominant area of research in the management field (Godshalk & Fender, 2015; Yang *et al.*, 2019). The academic interest in solving the problem of CP within the developing countries context has also increased because economic conditions (e.g. inflation, unemployment) and series of lockdown due to COVID-19 are badly impacting the service organizations in country like Pakistan. As more individuals will face job dissatisfaction, obsolescence, job insecurities, lack of job promotions and compensation inequities to maintain their life styles and in future more employees will be on plateau (Reid & Evans, 1983). Leaving the organization or layoff the employees are one of strategies for dealing the CP. However, before identification of any strategy, the CP must be documented (Reid & Evans, 1983). However, very few studies have included CP in their research on HEIs particularly, in developing country like Pakistan (De Clercq *et al.*, 2019; Farooq & Tufail, 2017; Malik & Fatimah, 2016). In the present study, the main research objective is to test the underlying association among PP and CP among employees in HEIs context of Pakistan. To this end, this study has applied the integrated theoretical lenses of COR and TWA to know the phenomena how CP can be reduced in the employees of HEIs. In doing so, this study explores the causes of CP in the areas of Pakistani HEIs because the performances of these institutions are indispensable to catch up the requirements of knowledge economy. Considering a critical way, this chapter is focused on: a country profile, overview of HEC, role of HEC, CP in HEIs of Pakistan, literature of proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability, person environment fit and career plateau that constitutes the basis for this study framework. It begins the definitions of proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability, person environment fit and career plateau. This is followed by career development stages and supporting theories like COR and TWA. After that, the mediating mechanisms are explained

into four sections. First three sections propose the model 1 (proactive personality-emotional intelligence-career adaptability), mode 2 (career adaptability-person environment fit-career plateau) and model 3 (proactive personality-career adaptability-career plateau) with respect to career establishment, maintenance and decline stage. The final section explains the integrated model which proposes the role of EI, CA, PEF like mediators among PP and CP.

2.1. Overview of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Pakistan

Pakistan came into existence as an independent state on the 14th August, 1947 with the official name of “*The Islamic Republic of Pakistan*”, in response to the demand for a separate Muslim nation in the subcontinent. Pakistan has a 796,095 km² long geographic area which is located at the junction of Central Asia, West Asia and South Asia. The borders of Pakistan are shared with “*The Arabian Sea (south), India (east), Iran (south west), China (north east) and Afghanistan (to the north and the west)*”. Pakistan is further divided into eight regions or administrative units: “*Islamabad Capital Territory, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*” (see figure 2). The geographic location of Pakistan makes it a resource-efficient country. Pakistan has a great strategic, political and economic location, in the last twenty years it has provided a gateway to Central Asia and also acts a frontline state dealing with terrorism in the region (Shaheen, 2011).



Figure 2: Google Map (2020)

At the time of independence in 1947, Pakistan had only one university (Punjab University, Lahore) which had a total of 644 enrolled students. HE is referred to an education above twelve grades, with an age group of between 17-23 years in Pakistan. The education sector is comprised of Degree Awarding Institutes (DAI)/university and affiliated college managed by HEC. In 2002, the HEC was established under an ordinance entitled as “*University Grants Commission*”. It distributes the funds received from federal government to DAIs, universities and other degree programs within the country (World Bank, 2006). HEC has facilitated the HEIs to act as an engine of economic growth in order to have socio-economic development inside Pakistan. HEC has considered the many measures such as like: HR development, expansion in HE, enhancing R&D practices and quality of education in the Pakistan. Pakistan has private (83) and public (128) universities (see table 2), having 17,975 faculty staff (see table 3) and 1.863 million student enrolment (see table 4) approximately (Pakistan economy survey, 2019-20).

Table 2

<i>Operating HEIs (universities) in Pakistan 2019-20</i>		
Public	Private	Total
128	83	211

Source: Pakistan economy survey (2019-20)

Table 3

<i>Number of Full-time faculty in Punjab (2018-19)</i>		
	PhD	Non-PhD
Private universities	1631	4744
Public universities	4505	7095
Total	17,975	

Source: HEC annual report (2019-20)

The managerial and infrastructure functions are laid under HEC and divided into these departments: HR development division, academic division, service division, learning and innovation division, finance division, and quality assurance division. All administrative tasks of HE are given to provincial governments along with administrative powers. In KP and Punjab, the departments of administration are separate, while in Sindh and Baluchistan, they are included within educational departments of the schools (HEC assessment report, 2016).

Table 4

Student Enrollment in HEIs 2018-19

Region	Public	Private	Total
Pakistan	1,539,559	323,205	1,862,764

Source: Pakistan economy survey (2019-20)

2.2. Role of HEC in Development of Higher Educational Sector

HEC has introduced five official councils in the disciplines of business, agriculture, computing, teacher and technology education for programs provided by HEIs to standardize the quality of education. HEC has also made and coordinated relations with nine professional councils. The aims of HEC are to enhance the education quality with the help of strong collaboration and coordination among councils and universities, and the key focus is to enhance the education system by a process of assessment and evaluation with coordination of certain councils. Recently, 1,800 programs were approved by councils and more than 200 programs were accredited in 2020-21. HEC has invested a huge amount of money, in order to reduce the financial gaps for recruiting high qualified individuals through recurring and development programs/projects of scholarships: Ehsaas undergraduate scholarships, overseas scholarships, need-based scholarships and indigenous scholarships. Further, to enhance and sustain the trend

of research activities within HEIs, HEC has approached those research activities which have impacted directly on the economy and community well-being of Pakistan. In this regard the following programs were initiated: rapid research & innovation initiative (RRII), national research program for universities innovative & collaborative research grants (ICRG), Pak-France and Pak-Turk research mobility program, twenty-five travel grants to Pakistani and UK scholars (Pakistan economy survey, 2019-20).

In 2020, the government released Rs 29.047 billion to HEC, to implement 138 development projects (10 new and 120 ongoing projects) for public universities. During the months of March-July 2020, 80% of total allocation funds (Rs22.738 billion) were authorized to HEC for fulfilling the expenses of ongoing projects: faculty development, improving ICT Infrastructure, laboratory equipment's procurement, new academic buildings construction and other approved programs (Pakistan economy survey, 2019-20).

2.2.1. Issues of HEIs

HE system of Pakistan has faced various challenges like funding, evaluation and monitoring, quality, management and governance, performance, pedagogic methodology, external and internal efficiency, and teaching staff (Waqas, Rehman & Rehman, 2019; Rafiq, 2022). The biggest concern area is quality improvement and assurance but the process of accreditation for HEIs was not present in the year 2003. In addition, the fast proliferation of universities includes changing several college degrees into universities, inadequate facilities and faculty members have decreased the HE quality. Other issues are linked with the quality of research produced, number of PhDs, minimal learning environment, lack of in-depth learning and knowledge, lack of external and internal evaluation mechanisms, and curriculum content (Higher education Policy Note Pakistan, 2006; Baloch, Siming, Abraha & Hong, 2021; Raza, Farooq, Ahmad & Anwar, 2019; Akhtar & Kalsoom, 2012; Waqas, Rehman & Rehman, 2019; Rafiq, 2022).

Focusing on the issues of planning and implementation mechanism, and curriculum that does not involve relevant technical representatives to the process of recruitment process, monetary allocations, examination/testing, international application, purchase of required equipment and other related processes (International Journal of Higher Education, 2011). Moreover, HEIs have been lack of availability of research-based programs, critical evaluation of subjects and implementation of syllabus requirements (HEC assessment report, 2016; Journal of Research Society of Pakistan, 2017). To sum up, the HE system in Pakistan is facing issues of teaching quality, governance and physical structures, and the student body (HEC assessment report, 2016; Habib, Khalil, Khan & Zahid, 2021; Nasreen & Afzal, 2020; Javed, Ahmad & Khahro, 2020).

Additionally, due to pandemic HEIs are closed and in many countries and in-person classes have also been suspended. Recently, HEC has directed all the registered HE institutions to start providing online classes and online exams. For this, the HEIs were ordered to acquire and apply technology and train staff urgently (HEC covid-19 Guidance No1, 2020; HEC Covid-19 Guidance No.6). Pakistan is ranked 76th among 100 countries and only 22% of the total population have internet access (The Inclusive Internet Index, 2020). Similar, ten percent population of the Pakistan can get the university level education (World Bank, 2018). So, all the above conditions have increased the troubles of HEIs (e.g. quality education), unskilled human resource and consequently increased the stress which impacted the mental health and welling being of individuals (Alradhawi, Shubber, Sheppard, & Ali, 2020). These external and internal situations of the country have become a source of CP because employees will get less job promotions and more repetitive tasks in HEIs.

2.3. Career Plateau in Education Sector

Different individuals experience their working environment differently; it is easy to say that better identification of problem, needs the points of view of affected individuals and their coping strategies. If jobs are replete with repetitive and routine tasks, or individuals are blocked from job promotions, in this case, they become skeptical and feel a sense of loss at their workplace. In other words, they will be plateaued. Administrators and teachers are susceptible to plateau in the same way as employees of other industries (Milstein, 1990a, 1990b). In fact, they are more susceptible. Many individuals select education as a profession because they believe that there will be more opportunities to receive professional status and growth. But, later on individuals realize that they have selected a “*front-loaded*” career (Lortie, 1975) in which an individual gets advantages and privileges of working conditions when he/she first comes into this profession, however these advantages and privileges are improved over time noticeably. Individuals may try to search various ways to deal CP as seeking promotions, changing institutions, channeling energies towards social relationships and family or leaving that profession, to delay the situation of being plateaued. However, plateaued employees usually start experiencing CP when they have:

- Well-defined job position for 3 to 5 years (Bardwick, 1986)
- Older employees with over aged over 40 years old (Near, 1980)
- Working in low-growth and mature organizations (Slocum *et al.*, 1987)

To know the impact of CP across age, this research has conducted a meta-analysis, for this secondary data was collected from research papers and theses on career plateau from years 2000 to 2020 (see appendix 1). Microsoft excel was used to show the relationship of career plateau and age graphically as see figure 3.

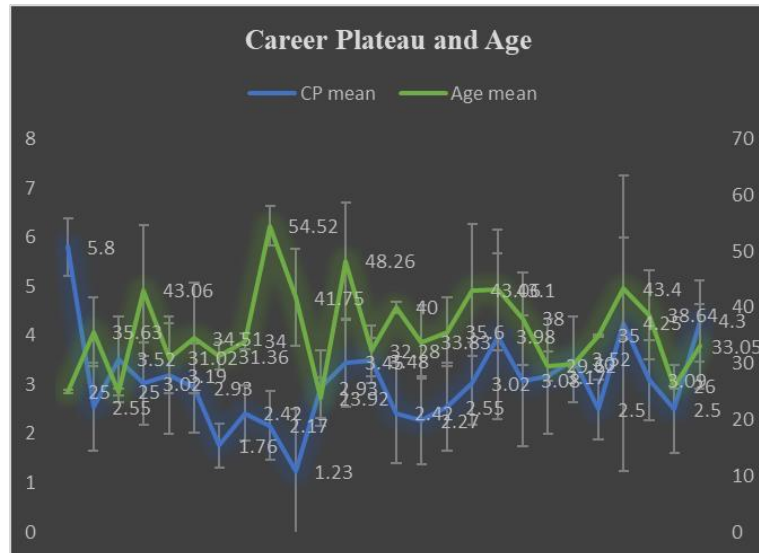


Figure 3: The relation between CP and age

Figure 3 represents those individuals who begin experiencing career plateau at the age of 25 and go through all spans of their lives which is confirmed by the study by Near (1980). Figure 3 shows the mixture of relationship intensity which few studies indicate that an older individual has less career plateau however majority of the studies reveal that experience of career plateau grow with age. There are several internal and external reasons behind it as explained in the next section.

Many administrators and teachers are fitted into these categories because they have well-defined positions, mature organizations and are older. In sum, this group within the profession is susceptible for career plateau. Plateaued individuals show a few characteristics according to the literature as follows:

- Individuals think poorer in health, show frequently absences, and feel themselves less important and work fewer hours in the organization (Near, 1984)
- Have a desire to leave their employment but also, they have less confidence regarding alternatives which are satisfactory (Ko & Kim, 2018; Orpen, 1983; Veiga, 1981)
- Consider their supervisors are less favorably inclined towards them (Near, 1984)

In short, CP has negative outcomes. Plateaued individuals may have less enthusiasm, declining self-worth or importance that ultimately negatively influences the organizations through lower productivity and poorer performance (Choy & Savery, 1998). Additionally, the hierarchical system of education sector offers few job promotion opportunities for administrators and teachers. For some faculty members, hierarchical plateau is a result of lack of opportunities as a teacher but may have more opportunities on the administration side (Milstein, 1990a, 1990b). On the other hand, many faculty members experience front-loaded career syndrome as a teacher because once they are in the teaching profession, there is usually no career ladder.

2.4. Career Plateau in HEIs of Pakistan

As described earlier, the education sector which experiences low growth, older employees, flat hierarchical structure and well-defined jobs has the probability to suffer CP (Bardwick, 1986; Near, 1980; Slocum *et al.*, 1985). HEIs of Pakistan have also all of these characteristics as follows:

2.4.1. Low growth: Education Quality Perspective

A university is the place of learning, liberty and light. Today, Pakistan has 211 universities, only a few of them have met the international criteria of academic activities and the rest are surviving marginally (Khalid, 2020; Tadesse & Khalid, 2022). The degree-awarding postgraduate colleges and universities get grants from federal government but they rarely follow the efficiency criteria. They are still functioning at sub-optimal efficiency level, without considering the accountability standards. The decline in HEIs was begun in 1970s when authoritative political culture became rooted in Pakistan. It has left an ugly mark on HEIs. The system of authoritarianism generated a cronyism culture. In universities, merit was violated openly and favoritism flourished which resulted in a degeneration of HEI's functions. In later years, this negative trend was strengthened. Now, in HE system, open violation of merit is happening

in promotions, selection, other research and teaching activities. As a result, universities are in state of low-quality and are disinterested in improving their standards. Generally, poor quality faculty is producing continuously low-quality graduates and the complete HE produces a vicious circle (Khalid, 2020; Ibad, & Sharjeel, 2021; Aslam, Hali, Zhang & Saleem 2021).

2.4.2. Age of Employees Working in HEIs of Pakistan

The age of individuals has impacted the CP. Older individuals are experienced it more frequently. The study of Near (1984) suggests that employees who are over 40 year's age are more influenced by CP. Recent studies on HEIs of Pakistan also indicated that most of employees in these HEIs have ages over 40 years (Asrar-ul-Haq *et al.*, 2017; Bibi & Ali, 2017; Rehman & Waheed, 2012; Zulfqar *et al.*, 2016), it means they are experiencing CP.

2.4.3. Hierarchical Structure

Provincial or national assembly approves the act to open and operate the universities in Pakistan and also gives an administration structure to the University for functioning (Naz, 2013). Pakistan's president in the context of a federal university and the provincial governor act as chancellors for provincial universities. He has greater authority and powers because the university's vice chancellor, pro-chancellor, deans and senate members are hired by him. The provincial or federal educational minister has the position of university pro-chancellor. He has a formal position and performs all the duties in the absence of the chancellor. The VC is hired and accountable to the university's chancellor. He acts as a chairman of academic council, syndicate and other bodies within the university. The VC is a principal administrative and academic officer of a university as the pro-chancellor and chancellor rarely participates in the syndicate meetings. The registrar is the actual executive authority of a university. He has responsibility for the enforcement and interpretation of academic and administrative policies. He also manages the promotion and hiring of faculty (Naz, 2013; The Task Force, 2002). For

example, in the case, when non-academic posts are vacant in the universities, 50% is filled through direct recruitment and 50% is filled through promotion (but few non-academic jobs are also filled by direct recruitment only). Academic posts are filled through direct recruitment as described by HEC's tenure track system. Teachers, who want to improve his or her rank, compete against advertised jobs and promotions which are not conducted on performance bases. All non-academic job positions with pay scale of 17 or equivalent are filled by promotion. The Registrar is the person who prepares the list of all eligible employees with their annual performance evaluation reports, character role, and punishments, inquires against them or pending inquiry and delivering it to the appointment committee or selection board. Promotion is made on the recommendations of the selection board or appointment committee. Moreover, the employees of BS-17 should have the following service length to be promoted in the next scale or job position (Faculty appointment criteria; Tenure track system; University of Gujrat service statues).

- Minimum service length should be 5 years to be promoted on BS-18
- Minimum service length should be 12 years to be promoted on BS-19
- Minimum service length should be 17 years to be promoted on BS-20

University academic, administrative and financial matters need competent bodies like the discipline committee, senate, syndicate, planning and finance committee, academic council, selection board, research board and faculty board. Universities have more authority parallel to these such as - examination controller, librarian, provost, deans and treasurers who help and supervise the heads of academic departments. These bodies give instructional leadership and manage daily university activities. The university governance and organizational structure are involved with executive and legislative authorities as showed in figure 4.

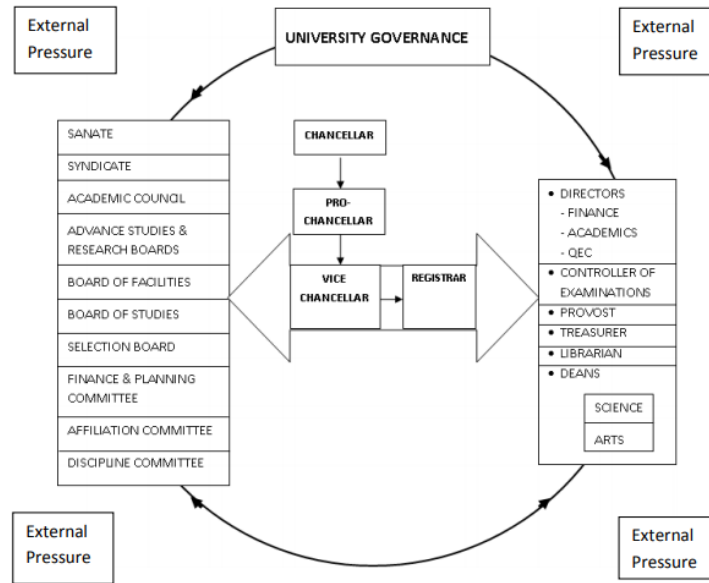


Figure 4: Organizational structure of university in Pakistan (Naz, 2013)

Academic freedom and university autonomy are the key assets and at the heart of university development and progress. University autonomy is a freedom which certifies research, appointments, salary, tenure and all decisions of academia that must be assigned to academics. Freedom of academia is considered as the scholar, teacher and student's privilege in order to perform their roles effectively (Homadi, 1989). The VC who is politically loyal will endeavor to work for the interest of his or her political power. In Pakistan, political influence and pressure was reported in the nomination and appointment of VC and hiring teachers (Isani & Virk, 2005; Siddiqui, 2007). A politically selected VC tries to take care of the interests of his political party at any cost. According to this action, universities in Pakistan have very little autonomy which is blurred and unclear (The Task Force, 2002). The VC is hired by the chancellor and performs his job on behalf of the chancellor. This generates feelings of insecurity in the VC. The VC attends the various important meetings and is involved in the process of decision-making regarding academic, administrative and financial matters which are made under political pressure which produces indiscipline from top management. In short, universities in Pakistan have a vertical organizational structure in which faculty are hired and promoted on the basis of

tenure track system and non-academic staff also follows certain government policies (e.g. BPS). Most of the universities are politically influenced and due to the vertical organizational structure, every employee is reached at the career point from where hierarchical advancement no longer occurs easily. Thus, both the vertical structure and political power in universities are causing CP.

An individual can cope with CP while staying in the same job or role through making it more rewarding and challenging. Firstly, individuals can engage in new methods, new activities, and trying to become more creative. Secondly, individuals can focus on personal activities like attitude modification, hobbies, and exercise. Thirdly, performance activities such as workshops, reading, and formal education can be performed to overcome CP (Milstein, 1990a). Changes in the rank of teaching jobs with respect to organizational level, classes and level has also a stronger impact. Organization level involvement includes administration jobs and most faculty are interested in extra -curricular activities and being a member of committees. These changes help educators to keep seeking ways of more challenging and interesting tasks and performing their responsibilities as well as gaining more skills and knowledge through applying different strategies of professional development. Even when educators are contemplating changing jobs, the change is always within the education sector. Individuals try to balance their professional and personal lives to compensate for plateauing in the jobs; however, few individuals are also concerned in extensive activities at organizational level (Milstein, 1990b).

Although HEC is trying to reduce the challenges of HEIs in Pakistan, there is a still need to search other factors that can help in reducing the CP. Based on the significance of CP; the next section discusses the potential constructs that can manage CP.

2.5. Career Plateau (CP)

The notion of CP is defined in the decade of the 1970s. Ference et al. (1977) referred to CP as “*the point in a career where the likelihood of additional promotion is very low*” (p.602). In the previous studies, it was accepted by researchers just like a career status which can be indicated by applying objective criteria; job tenure and age (Veiga, 1981). Later, this concept was reconceptualized and career plateau (CP) is defined as an individual who believe the chance of future promotion has become low; objectively this criterion includes length of time or hierarchical position in a certain role (Chao, 1990). CP is defined subjectively as more variance in the outcomes of work as compared to being objectively measured by CP (Chay *et al.*, 1995; Tremblay, Roger, & Toulouse, 1995; Chao, 1990) CP has various categories that have evolved with time but scholars have not given equal attention to all categories. Most of the studies have focused on two plateaus; JCP and HP. Job content plateau (JCP) is referred as lateral stagnation through which employees are not receiving additional job duties or they feel their jobs are not challenging. Hierarchical plateau (HP) shows the similar concept as explained earlier that is referred to as a limited promotion within the organization (Bardwick, 1986; Feldman & Weitz, 1988b; Veiga, 1981). Major categories of career plateau are developed within a single organizational context; however, other plateaus went further beyond the boundaries of an organization. For instance, employment and professional plateau are concerned with limited opportunities for professional development and employability skills at a job (Chang Boon Lee, 2003; Hurt, Butts, & Eby, 2011). This research has taken only job content and hierarchical plateau due to its scope. Later on, several career plateau definitions are synthesized by explaining CP as the chances of not getting future assignments followed by increasing responsibility, therefore hierarchical and job content plateau is integrated into a single construct (Feldman & Weitz, 1988a). Though CP has no single definition, the definition of Feldman and Weitz (1988a) is applied for this research.

In late 1970's various CP types have been conceptually argued and proposed. However, most of the researches have focused on job content and hierarchical plateaus. In the next session, the reasons of career plateau are described. Many scholars have given attention to the issue of "career plateau" and also tried to solve this phenomenon. The plateaued model has been explained theoretically by the causes. Later on, three factor causal models gained popularity (Tremblay & Roger 1993). The causes of CP are divided into organizational, familial, and individual factors. The first factors are related with certain individual situations.

2.5.1. Internal Reasons; Individual Factors

2.5.1.1. Lack of Individual Abilities and Skills

Individuals have abilities and skills to possess proficiency to do certain tasks and have stability in their capabilities (Noe *et al.*, 2008). These abilities and skills have developed individual characteristics that are not observed directly. They are observed, in cases, when individuals perform responsibilities, duties and tasks. If individuals are not having skills and abilities to do the assigned tasks, then they will not display a good performance. Thus, if they are assigned or positioned to several duties, they will not show interest because they are lacking in capability. This situation indicates employees with stagnant feelings will not receive promotion for the next job level (Wright & Pandey 2008).

2.5.1.2. Lack of Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation stimulates an employee to do a job to get achievement without pay or reward. The satisfaction of an individual is linked with performance and their career goal is considered as a personal accomplishment, accompanied with feelings of pride and psychological success. This is distinguished from the traditional career system in which vertical success is the only goal that includes making money and climbing the organizational pyramid.

So, this is the only strategy of gaining success but psychological success can be achieved from infinite ways (Allen, 2003).

2.5.2. Individual perception

An individual perception also influences the presence of CP. The way a person adapts to react, assess and perceive the work is based on the subjective measurement of career development rather than tenure only (Chao, 1990). On the other side, dead feelings are produced because of many factors such as long tenure, advancement in opportunities, personal commitment, organizational practices and supervision. Each individual perception is differentiated from another person and perception is dependent on income, gender, age and education. Individuals make negative perceptions regarding their job, in cases, when longer job experience is not participated in the career progression. Individuals will get unchallenging jobs and be bored when they do not find opportunities for advancement (Chao, 1990).

2.5.2.1. Locus of Control

Locus of control (LOC) is referred as the extent to which individuals control work reinforcement (Palenzuela, 1984). LOC has two types; external and internal. Individuals with internal LOC believed that they can control rewards while individuals with external LOC believed that luck or other factors control the rewards. Individual personality determines thus, if individuals believe in internal LOC, career growth is a continuous learning process and in return CP is not experienced just like external LOC.

2.5.2.2. Other Individual Terms Include Educational Level, Tenure and Age

An individual inside an organization can consider a job vacancy less attractive rather than a potential individual outside an organization. This is because of low training, education and old age (Lee, 2003). Older people have less qualifications sometime; they should coach or mentor the younger generation by using their experience so that young employees can minimize CP.

Other employees are not motivated for promotion and have no ambition and result in CP (Lee, 2003).

2.5.2.3. *Familial Factors*

Family factors have an impact on career mobility. It is related with certain situations of an individual's family. Family factors can become an obstacle and a constraint in the process of career mobility. The career and family context attempt to reveal the life outside of work and work life as an inseparable phenomenon. A satisfied family improves the individual's career advancement while an unsatisfied family increases stress and role conflict (Frone & Rice, 1987). It is observed that many people have refused opportunities of career growth because it impacted on their family. Further, women and men, juggling family and work issues are likely to experience the effects of plateau. The theory of preference emphasized that preference of individuals guides women and men's choices and recommends that these are reasons of CP instead of organizational constraints that influenced the work-life choices (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lyons, 2007). In this regard, individuals who intentionally develop personal choices have successful careers and lives (Hakim, 2006; Gallhofer *et al.*, 2011). So, familial factors are the producer of CP (Trembley & Roger, 1993).

2.5.3. Organizational Factors

2.5.3.1. *Career Orientation*

An organization which fails to have career orientation will produce CP. Career management strategies ensured the success of HRM (Lee, 2003). These strategies help an employee to take necessary steps and measures, for instance, learning ensures that employees have a successful career development therefore they can minimize CP.

2.5.3.2. Lack of Organizational Climate

Favorable organizational atmosphere must be fostered in order to achieve innovation (Scott & Bruce, 1994). This working environment includes; respect, mutual liking and trust where employees have freedom of decision making and autonomy. It will enable an employee to implement new ideas and products as a result they can reduce stagnant feelings at the workplace (Scott & Bruce, 1994).

2.5.3.3. Organizational Structure

The changes in the business environment and downsizing are encouraging the restructuring of organizations. These steps are taken to become competitive and cut costs for change in the tough economic conditions. Delaying of an organization is minimizing the employee's opportunities to get the promotion due to organizational structural changes thus; they stayed in the similar jobs for a longer period of time (FERENCE *et al.*, 1977; Gandolfi, 2013; Thibodeau, 2010).

2.5.4. Effective Vs Ineffective Plateaued Employees

The careers managerial model (FERENCE, *et al.*, 1977) classified the managerial career conditions on the basis of "*future promotion*"- an organization estimates the individual's opportunities to get a hierarchical promotion. The second classification is "*performance on current job*"- how the organization determines the individual as performing her or his job duties. By categorizing employees as "low" or "high" on two parameters, managerial career conditions or states are produced, as table 5 shows (FERENCE, *et al.*, 1977). The model classifies the following career states:

Table 5

<i>Managerial Career's Model</i>		
Current performance	Chances of future promotion	
	Low	High
Low	Deadwood (ineffective plateau)	Learner (comers)
High	Solid Citizens (effective plateau)	Stars

Source: Ference *et al.* (1977)

“Learners or “comers” employees have potential of high advancement but currently have below standard achievement. For example, trainees who are learning new jobs but they are trying to adjust within the culture of an organization. Long service managers who are promoted recently to new job positions which however, they have not mastered yet.

“Stars” these employees performed outstanding job performance and are viewed as high potential employees with continuous advancement abilities, or have “*fast track and high potential*” career paths. In most organizations, they are an identifiable group that mostly received attention in managerial discussions and development programs.

“Solid citizens” the performance of these employees is rated from satisfactory to outstanding, however, they have few opportunities for future promotion. In most organizations, these employees are a larger group and do organizational work in bulk. Research and management efforts seldom give attention on them.

“Deadwood” these employees have little opportunity of promotions and they have an unsatisfactory level of performance. These employees have problems of personal difficulty, ability and motivation. In most organizations, this small group are recipients who often take substantial attention for dismissal or rehabilitation.

The employees in the model; solid citizens and deadwood are known as plateaued managers. The deadwood managers are ineffective; and solid citizens are effective plateaued managers. The majority of the organizations which are categorized as deadwood as a source of recent problems. This model recommends three implications. First, management has a challenge to avoid solid citizens from becoming deadwood. Second, various managerial styles and approaches are required for individual effective management in each career state. Third, technology is required for handling the managers in these categories, few evaluations are available for solid citizens such as highly developed training programs and assessment for learners (Bray, Campbell, & Grant, 1974; Byham, 2016), development programs are needed for stars (Revens, 1971) and outplacement or rehabilitation programs (Connor & Fielden, 1973) for deadwood. Ironically, a large group of solid citizens improve themselves frequently (FERENCE *et al.*, 1977).

2.6. Proactive Personality (PP)

Life does not just happen. Rather, individuals can try to temper, affect, expand, shape and curtail what happens in their lives. Hence, our research and theories have historically focused on managers, management and their impact in the last twenty years but now research on proactive personality has blossomed in organizations. The term “*proactivity*” is defined from various perspectives, involving individual perspective (Bateman & Crant, 1993); as the scholar did in this thesis, behavioral perspective (Frese & Fay, 2001; Frese *et al.*, 1996; Parker, Williams & Turner, 2006) and the process of goal perspective (Bindl *et al.*, 2012; Grant & Ashford, 2008; Frese & Fay, 2001).

The orthodox behavioral principles have conceptualized work motivation. Employees are known as passive receivers of reinforced contingencies and certain behaviors, present in the environments which are usually controlled by managers (Locke & Latham, 2002). A series of

new aspects of cognition revolution were spawned in the 1960s that is referred to as the, “*golden age*” of motivation theories of work (Mitchell & Daniels 2003; Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004; Latham & Pinder, 2005; Donovan, 2001; Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). During this period, the equity and expectancy theories were dominant and emerging. These two theories have abandoned the statement that behavior is the function of environmental motivation and signified the presence of psychological processes in developing behavioral responses of employees. The expectancy theory encouraged the role of values and beliefs of employees in explaining and driving motivated behavior (Vroom, 1964). The main premise of the theory states that employees displayed various work behaviors on the bases of personal utility of selected behaviors in achieving desired outcomes that they thought meaningful (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). The equity theory has encouraged the role of fairness perceptions of employees in explaining and driving motivated behavior (Adams, 1963; Adams, 1965). The key premise of the theory states that employees expend their efforts on the bases of comparative judgments regarding fairness of the compensation and rewards that they received from supervisors or employers (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005; Ambrose, & Kulik, 1999). Hence, these theoretical perspectives have produced a flurry of new research and theory, but they forced into a backseat function of desires, motives, and conscious intentions because employees select and evaluate passively between the options provided by managers. The theories of need (Maslow, 1954; McClelland, 1961; McClelland, 1971) acknowledged the motives, however relegated them through unconscious, with little focus on more purposeful intentional, conscious desires that had the possibility to impact motivated behavior. The theory of goal setting had shifted the perspectives of motivational theories towards the employee’s conscious intentions and objectives in explaining and driving motivated behavior (Locke, 1968; Locke, 1981). A main premise of theory states that when employees are interested in specific and difficult goals, they

are more likely to expend their motivation and efforts (Locke & Latham,1990; Locke & Latham, 2002).

Regardless of advancement in the 1970s and 1980s, researchers are still working on different theoretical aspects of these motivational theories. In light of these four reactive perspectives, employees are conceptualized as relatively reactive and passive respondents within an organization but in recent years, scholars have introduced active conceptualizations of human behavior based on the role of agency. Scholars are exploring the phenomena under rubrics of work structures, social processes and processes of development and change as well as encouraged systematic reviews to find the creative procedures in which an employee can plan and act deliberately to impact, alter and change their environments.

2.6.1. Social Processes

Scholars are exploring the various social processes to determine the ways through which employees can shape actively their social interactions and interpersonal relationships. In the literature of influence, scholars have paid attention to those tactics which employees are creating and using actively to influence other groups and people (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Williams, Gray, & von Broembsen, 1976). In the literature of feedback, scholars have indicated that employees are not always waiting for feedback by annual performance reviews; they also actively seek feedback by various agency tactics (Ashford, Blatt, & VandeWalle, 2003; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford & Cummings, 1985). In the literature of citizenship, scholars have faced challenges to know the discretionary contributions of employees at work because of their reactive behaviors informing them of conforming to the norms and assisting their requests and developed a proactive focus on providing help (Rioux & Penner, 2001), breaking rules intentionally (Morrison, 2006) and taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). In the literature of socialization, scholars have highlighted that employees do

not react to the practices of organizational socialization; they are also involved in various proactive behaviors to speed up the process of socialization and enhance their experiences at work (Ashford & Black, 1996; Nicholson, 1984; Saks & Ashforth, 1996). In searching emotional labor, scholars have founded that employees do not passively react to demands of emotional expression, but also deploy actively a variety of creative tactics to manage their emotions (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). In order to understand the social networks, the traditional assumptions are criticized by scholars as employees react merely to environmental opportunities and started to search the methods in which employees are participating actively in developing, spreading and maintaining their social networks (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b;). Together, these developments in different literature have accentuated the employee's steps which shape their interpersonal relationships.

2.6.2. Work Structures

In the literature of work structures similar trends have appeared, as scholars researching goals, jobs, roles and tasks to observe how employees introduce, alter and shape the working context. In the literature of task performance, scholars have asserted that employees are not concerned only with completing the assigned tasks; they also actively improve and revise the tasks (Staw & Boettger, 1990) by applying problem solving skills and ideas (Parker *et al.*, 2006). In the literature of job design, scholars have recommended that employees do not react merely to the structured job given by supervisors; they alter actively the job relationship boundaries, tasks (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Black & Ashford, 1995) and also discuss the job changes with supervisors (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Likewise, in the literature of roles, scholars have accentuated how employees do not enact merely roles assigned from supervisors, however they also shape, change, use and actively shape, and use their roles as resources (Baker & Faulkner, 1991; Callero, 1994; Parker, Wall & Jackson, 1997). In describing the goal pursuit literature, scholars have mentioned that employees do not internalize merely the goals given by

supervisors, they also researched how employees set and achieve their personal goals (Roberson, 1989, 1990) and involve actively in goal setting with supervisors (Latham, Erez & Locke, 1988). Together, these perspectives of different literature indicated the active role of employees which influence their work structure and passively reacting to goals, tasks, roles and jobs assigned by supervisors.

2.6.3. Process of Development and Change

Similar trends have produced the process of development and change, as scholars are examining the learning, routines, organizational change, career trajectories and starting to emphasize that employees actively shape how change and development unfolds inside the organizations. In describing the career trajectories, scholars have claimed that employees are not sculptors merely of environments, but influence and exert control by behaving as environmental sculptors (Bell & Staw, 1989). In the literature of organizational change, scholars have questioned the construct in which an employee follows the changes delivered from their supervisor, and introduced a framework of how employees champion essential issues actively from a lower level of management (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton *et al.*, 2002). In studying the routines, scholars claimed that employees do not react merely to the routine schedules given by employers but are also involved in efforts to use, introduce, modify and maintain efforts actively as resources (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). In examining the learning process, scholars have argued that employees do not absorb skills and knowledge passively through formal training; they engage in a range of proactive behaviors and development opportunities in order to enhance their skills and knowledge (Edmondson, 1999; Sonnentag, 2003). Together, these research lines underlined that employees shape the process of change and development rather than reacting merely passively to development opportunities and changes that are offered and assigned in their organizations.

2.6.4. Integration of Proactive Conceptualization

Although, in separate literatures of work structures, social processes and processes of change and development, organizational scholars were developing the proactive conceptualization, two scholars came forward to advance the proactive views. Below, the scholar discussed these views briefly, which focus on individual, behavioral and goal setting perspectives.

2.6.4.1. Individual Difference Perspective

In 1960s, Swietlik (1968) integrated the diverse personality structure discussed by major theories under the umbrella of “*proactive personality*” or “*reacting personality*”. The seminal paper of Bateman and Crant (1993) proposed the construct of PP as “*the individual who is unconstrained relatively due to situational forces and influence in the environmental change*”. In other words, they explained the proactive personality (PP) in terms of people who take initiative, action, scan the opportunities and persevere until they bring about change. In this research, the scholar has used an individual perspective of PP. Although, the wealth of evidences in literature have ensured the proactive employee’s characteristics, but the dispositional view has provided little information relatively regarding what behavior should be categorized as proactive (Crant, 2000). Supporting the approach of individual difference, proactive personality (PP) is differentiated from big-five personality traits (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Major, Turner, & Fletcher, 2006) as it includes the dispositional tendency for proactivity. PP examined various proactive behaviors widely such as problem prevention, innovation, problem solving, idea implementation and job search behaviors (Brown *et al.*, 2006; Thompson, 2005; Parker *et al.*, 2006) and behaviors related to proactive strategy, involving issues selling, willingness and credibility, strategic scanning (Parker & Collins, 2010). Two studies of meta-analysis pointed out the significance of PP as a dispositional predictor of several proactive behaviors (Fuller, Marler, & Hester, 2006; Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010).

In the USA, Bateman and Crant (1993) studied and conceptualized the PP while in Europe, (Frese & Fay,2001) introduced the notion of personal initiative as work behavior which is characterized through its proactive approach, self-starting nature and being persistent in minimizing the difficulties, to pursue goals (Frese & Fay, 2001). Thus, Frese and his co-workers differentiated between personal initiative and traditional reactive, passive work performance conceptualizations. While absence of action builds inactivity and directly responding to situational cues which develops reactivity and personal initiative as a proactive notion, because it includes acting in advance (Frese, 2006; Frese & Fay, 2001; Rank, Pace, & Frese, 2004). Our understanding is advanced by these conceptualizations. First, personal initiative focused on proactive behaviors instead of personalities who behaved proactively in organization (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Bateman & Crant, 1993; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). Second, the concept of proactivity is expanded due to personal initiatives because Bateman and Crant (1993) have explained the behavior of proactivity as actions which influence the change while Frese and his colleagues contributed to the vital criterion as it is forward looking and anticipatory (Frese, 2006; Frese *et al.*, 1996). However, one noteworthy limitation of this conceptualization is faced due to its applicability towards proactive behavior. The reason is that Frese and Fay (2001) studied on pro-company employee behaviors in defining the personal initiative, but such actions that are performed to harm others or benefit the self or the organizations are neglected (Frese, 2001; Frese & Fay, 2001). This exclusion limits the importance of personal initiative for showing proactive behaviors. Often, employees are engaged in anticipatory actions or self-starting activities to benefit themselves only (Ashford *et al.*, 2003) or have constructive rather than destructive influence on the organizations where they are employed (Spector & Fox, 2002; Griffin & Lopez, 2005;), so personal initiative has not painted a clear picture of proactive behavior.

2.6.4.2. The Behavioral Perspective

Parker and his colleagues have combined the features of personal initiative and proactive personality constructs into proactive behavior (Parker *et al.*, 2006). Based on these conceptualizations, proactive behavior is explained as anticipatory actions taken by employees to influence their environments or themselves. This definition is distinguishing proactive behavior from passive, reactive and motivated behaviors through two ways. First, a distinctive feature of proactive behavior is advance action. However, social scholars have claimed that the individual overestimates their agency and most of the human behavior is managed by non-conscious processes of mental and unplanned scripts (Ashforth & Fried, 1988; Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Wegner & Wheatley, 1999), proactive behavior talks about such behavior in which employees are anticipatory and agents of their actions. Proactive behavior is mindful (Weick & Roberts, 1993; Langer, 1989; Sternberg, 2000;) and future oriented (Frese & Fay, 2001). Employees are acting, calculating, thinking, planning, and deliberating in advance to know future happenings before they actually occur (Gollwitzer, 1999; Bandura, 2006; Karniol & Ross, 1996; Klein, 1989; Little, Salmela-Aro & Phillips, 2006). Employees envision and anticipate a future result, modify and select situations to have desired outcomes (Gross, 1998a, 1998b; Buss, 1987; Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). The second feature of proactive behavior is intended impact. Proactive behavior has a change orientation (Crant, 2000; Bateman & Crant, 1993); employees are intending to achieve discernible effects explicitly on the environment and self. In other words, to create differences (Grant, 2007), employees select to proactively behave when they focus on a goal of alerting the contexts, others or self meaningfully in which they are located.

2.6.4.3. Goal Process Perspective

In an extension of proactive behavior, several domains and recent conceptualization call it a goal process (Bindl *et al.*, 2012; Frese & Fay, 2001; Grant & Ashford, 2008). When a person

wants to bring various meaningful changes in the future, they are usually involved in goal generation and striving processes (Chen & Kanfer, 2006). For example, goal generation includes envisioning and planning a different vision to bring a change while goal striving includes developing steps to get change and reflect this change through actions and outcomes (Parker, Bindl & Strauss, 2010). This perspective of proactivity is not considered as an observable behavior but it shows a broader domain that includes unobservable parts like reflection, planning, and envision. Recently studies have confirmed the process view. In this context, career self-management involves the collection of information and goal commitment for career planning which eventually leads to achieving career success (Raabe, Frese & Beehr, 2007). Career progress goals have career planning which increase networking and further it helps to get career success that supports the chain of planning, envision and performance in proactivity (De Vos, De Clippeleer, & Dewilde, 2009). Further, planning, envision, enacting and reflecting are four process that are shown in the elements of proactive career and work behaviors (Bindl *et al.*, 2012).

2.6.5. Conceptualizing Proactivity

To sum up, proactivity has been conceptualized on the basis of individual differences, the ways of behaving and goal processes. In this thesis, proactivity is acknowledged in the role of individual difference approach (e.g. personality) in shaping the proactive behavior. Early research on proactivity conceived that it is a dispositional and stable variable. From this perspective, PP is defined as an individual who is unconstrained relatively by situational forces as well as he/she influences the environment change (Bateman & Crant, 1993). The study of Bateman and Crant (1993) also call for more investigation to check the discriminant validity of proactive personality and PP is a worthy independent construct. In this line of research, PP is studied as a composite variable. This construct states that proactive personality is proactive among multiple contexts and with time, ignoring the situational contingencies. This personality

approach is valid and this thesis recognizes the personality that shaped the proactive behavior. Because the relationship among PP and proactive behavior can be explained from the perspective of individual difference (Bateman & Crant, 1993), as the individuals varied with respect to their dispositional tendencies to manipulate, master, and change their environments as well as individuals who are high in these tendencies and are interested to conduct concrete actions to show their proactiveness. Quantitative researches have reported the positive and direct relation among PP and proactive behavior (Fuller & Marler, 2009; Wu, Deng, & Li, 2018). The implication of this perspective is that an organization can improve the proactivity in the existing employees and also focus purely on hiring potential proactive employees.

2.7. Emotional Intelligence (EI)

The human brain has non-cognitive and cognitive neural systems that impact emotions (Izard, 1992; Fischer, Shaver, & Carnochan, 1990; Izard, 1993; Izard, 1977). The model of Gross emotion regulation is used to explain emotional intelligence (Gross, 1998a; Gross, 1998b). Emotions are referred to as *“adaptive behavioral and physiological response tendencies that are called forth directly by evolutionarily significant situations”* (Gross, 1998a, p.272). Emotions have tendencies of response that can be modulated, managed and regulated. As emotion regulation is referred to as *“the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions”* (Gross, 1998b, p.275). The individual can regulate emotions and also must have good emotional understanding. Several emotional responses are motivated through others’ emotions and our own emotional knowledge which can help us to understand the others’ emotions. The model of Gross emotion regulation states that an individual can modulate the experiences of their own emotions and their expressions. The tendencies of emotional response can be regulated through manipulating *“system inputs”* (antecedent-focused emotion regulation) or *“system outputs”* (response-focused emotion regulation) (Gross, 1998a, 1998b).

Antecedent-focused emotion regulation is achieved by four stages; situation selection, in this stage person avoids or approaches certain situations on the basis of emotional influence; situation modification, in the second stage the person modifies the surroundings to change the emotional influence; attention deployment, the person turns their focus towards or away from the impact of one's emotions and lastly the cognitive change stage, the person re-evaluates their individual capacity or situation to handle the situation so that their emotions can be altered. Similarly, response focused emotion regulation involves various steps. An individual can intensify, prolong, diminish or curtail continuous emotional experiences for certain purposes (Gross, 1998a, 1998b). Moreover, when the Gross emotion regulation model (Gross, 1998a, 1998b) is used in a working context, employees can have the ability to control their working environment perception. These perceptions can influence the emotions by antecedent-focused emotion regulation through being selective regarding the individuals to whom they have interaction, modify the working contexts, considering certain working aspects, or changing their working environment evaluation. Employees can also handle the influence of emotional stimuli in the working environment by response-focused emotion regulation; curtailing specific emotions, or prolonging, diminishing and intensifying (Gross, 1998a; 1998b).

EI has roots in the notion of intelligence which is known as "*social intelligence*" that was introduced by Thorndike (1920). According to Thorndike social intelligence is the ability to know and manage girls and boys, women and men—to behave wisely in their human relationships. In the theory of multiple intelligences, social intelligence is included in the top seven intelligences (Gardner, 1993). Social intelligence is the combination of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. Intrapersonal intelligence is referred to as an individual's intelligence in dealing with their self and it is the ability to differentiate and symbolize complex sets of feelings. In contrast, interpersonal intelligence is referred to as an individual's

intelligence that includes managing others, ability to make distinctions, highlights the intentions, motivations, moods and temperaments of others.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) were the earliest authors who named social intelligence as “*emotional intelligence*” and represented it like an individual’s ability to manage the emotions. They explained EI as; the element of social intelligence that includes the ability to understand one’s own and other’s emotions and feelings, to discriminate and apply this information to guide one’s actions and thinking. Now, Goleman (1995) selected the definition of Salovey and Mayer and suggested that EI has abilities that can be divided into empathy, self-awareness, motivating oneself, managing emotions and handling relationships. In this research, the scholar has considered the conceptualization of Mayer and Salovey (1997) as:

“The ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p. 10).

Mayer and Salovey(1997) and Salovey and Mayer (1990) categorized EI into four dimensions:

- **Self-emotional appraisal and emotional expression of the own self:** This is an individual’s ability that is related with deeper understanding of their emotions and also naturally expression of those emotions. Individuals, who have a greater level of this ability, can acknowledge and sense their emotions before others.
- **Other’s emotional appraisal and other’s emotional recognition:** This ability is linked with understanding of other’s emotions. Individuals, who have higher level of this ability, are more sensitive towards other’s emotions, feelings and reading minds.
- **Regulation of emotion:** With the help of this ability individuals can regulate emotions and recover from any psychological distress.

- **Use of emotion:** Through this ability individual can apply their emotions to personal performance and constructive activities.

Thus, the EI definitions have theoretical bases on the Gross emotional regulation model (Gross, 1998a; 1998b). In addition, on the call of Pekaar, *et al.*, (2017) this research has tested the combined dimensions of EI because it resembles the reality of most individuals. People who have high EI reduce their tendencies of negative responses and become more effective in the processes of emotional regulation. Also, they developed positive emotions that enhance intellectual and emotional growth. In contrast, people who have low EI level are not able to apply positive responses and antecedent emotion regulation and are slower in their emotional growth (Gross, 1998a, 1998b).

2.8. Career Adaptability (CA)

The economic environment is rapidly changing; the ability to adapt and respond to those changes is in the field of career development which becomes a most demanding skill set. In modern society people are required to reduce the stress level which is caused due to employment insecurity and high unemployment trends to show higher performance (Klehe, *et al.*, 2012). CA is a competence that answers the uncertainty occurred by changing thoughts, emotion and behavior of an individual according to the situation, even in the period of unpredictable changes (Johnston, 2018). The notion of CA was introduced by Super and Knasel (1981), Savickas (2013), Savickas (2005). Super and Knasel (1981) viewed career maturity similar to an individual's age development. They claim that adults perform various roles for their entire life and every person is different from one another, so the construct "*career maturity*" is not appropriate as a normative and predictable growth standard. Thus, CA is another term, proposed to explain the adult's career development.

According to Super's theory, career adaptability (CA) is important part in all stages of life such as childhood, adolescence and adulthood that are classified into growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement career stages (see table 6) (Nkambule, 2010; Brown *et al.*, 2012; Lent & Brown, 2013). Super upgraded the theoretical framework through including the decision making and learning as a possible integrative construct to describe life events (Savickas, 1997). These notions are the supporters of career adaptability in Super's theory (Aldrich, 2013; Savickas, 1997). Adaptability is involved in adults and adolescents through environmental and self-exploration, informed decisions and attitudes (Savickas, 1997). This theory proposes that individuals continuously make transitions and choices during their life, searching for opportunities and directions that develop and enhance themselves (Savickas, 1997). In order to know the degree of individual readiness, a person passes through the adaptability processes and development phases in the form of situation exploration, decision making skills and knowledge regarding situations and self (Savickas, 1997). Super's theory indicates that planning attitudes and future orientation sustain CA and readiness which are important for satisfaction and success in all roles of life (Savickas, 1997). Planning is the key aspect of adaptability that can enhance the decision making and exploration; these three aspects characterize the critical career adaptability dimensions (Savickas, 1997).

Table 6

Super's Career Development Stages

Growth (4-13)	Future awareness, develop expertise, skills and competencies to improve the control in life.
Exploration (14-24)	Career choices, crystallization, implementation, and specification
Establishment (25-44)	Career Consolidating, Stabilizing, and advancement
Maintenance (45-65)	Innovating, Upholding, and updating
Disengagement (over 65)	Decelerating, and retirement

Savickas (2013) illustrates that how an individual develops a career of their own through vocational experiences and meaningful career behaviors. As Savickas (2013) re-conceptualizes the key constructs of Super's theory of career development to fit into the modern era which has its basis on social constructionism (Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey, & Niles 2005). The theory of career construction (Savickas, 1997; Savickas, 2005; Savickas, 2013) states that development is dependent on an adaptation process within a career instead of maturity embedded in inner structure. The career development process is the source of satisfying social needs and responding to social tasks. Based on the above perspectives, an environment shapes an individual and in turn, an individual also shapes the environment. Savickas (2013) indicates the significance of elasticity in an individual's development and perception regarding improvement which is known as a key agent of development. A specific kind of career is subjectively constructed which is linked with biographical reflection of several career behaviors but, in the past career was constructed by the work experiences or objective perspective of person's environment fit. CA has a conceptual foundation on career construction theory (CCT) that is an individual's ability to fulfill the vocational needs with respect to their targeted career direction (Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch, 2017). It involves coping with the future or present for the sake of psychological problems, job or work change, and vocational developmental tasks (Ito & Brotheridge, 2005). In CCT, an individual focus on their self-concepts with the help of career adaptation processes and renew their career. Vocational aptitude or preference encourages the specific job selection; however, CA emphasizes on overcoming the challenges in order to build a career. To summarize, three components are linked with CCT namely: vocational personality, life themes, and career adaptability, 1) The elements of life theme that are linked with CCT, emerged from Super's model (Savickas, 2005) proposed that vocational preference is related with an individual's

occupational needs and wants (Gadassi, Gati & Dayan, 2012) vocational personality involves an individual's career interests, values, abilities, and needs (Gadassi *et al.*, 2012). This aspect is the part of CCT which encourages the usage of vocational self-concepts that provide ideographic, private and subjective perspective on understanding the careers (Savickas, 2005). The theory indicates that the construct of adaptability is conceptualized through applying the developmental dimensions of career maturity such as exploring, planning and deciding. An individual sees their career through the lens of CA and also fulfill their vocational roles. Savickas (2013) categorizes the CA into four components as explained below (see table 7):

Table 7

The components of CA

Dimensions of CA	Beliefs and attitudes	Competence
Concern	Planfulness	Planning
Control	Decisive	Decision making
Curiosity	Inquisitive	Exploring
Confidence	Efficacious	Problem solving

2.8.1. Concern

Concern is demonstrated as the leading adaptive strategy in cases when individuals experience a transition. Career concern is referred by Savickas (2013, 2005) as personal purposeful consideration about the future in a career-related decision-making context. It needs a person to be proactive by following a future-oriented path to vocational tasks and transitions. In showing career concern, an individual successfully merges her or his vocational stages. This kind of integration permits the individual to introduce plans and also be active in solving her or his career issues. Failure generates feelings of career indifference and apathy.

2.8.2. Control

Career control is an essential adaptive strategy. Control is explained as an individual's belief regarding, where they are positioned appropriately and responsible for their own career construction. Individuals who have career control are willful, disciplined and decisive. Few individuals seek help of others in making their career decisions. On the other side, individuals who are lacking in career control are not able to take career decisions and are frustrated through indecisiveness (Savickas, 2013).

2.8.3. Curiosity

Curiosity develops control whereby a person is willing to search for their vocational identity in their working context. Individuals who have followed this adaptive strategy explore more career options, seek information and take risks in their career decisions. On the other hand, individuals who are lacking in career curiosity moved towards a lower sense of vocational and personal identity (Savickas, 2013).

2.8.4. Confidence

In career construction theory the last adaptive strategy is career confidence. It is defined as a perceived personal efficacy in introducing, executing and evaluating a vocational plan. Poor career confidence results in inhibition, therefore influencing the vocational aspirations and goals (Savickas, 2013).

To sum up, CA is conceptualized on the basis of literature and it is clear that CA is an essential competency in all life span stages of an individual (Konstam *et al.*, 2015). In this research, CA is studied as a composite construct because the four CA dimensions (confidence, curiosity, control, and concern), are empirically and theoretically distinguishable and also have high correlations (Hirschi, Herrmann & Keller, 2015; Konstam *et al.*, 2015; Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017). In addition, composite correlation is more reliable than individual components

and has strong association with relevant criteria (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004). As mentioned above, in an unpredictable work environment, CA is a smooth adapting competence (Zacher, 2014). Career adaptability is a desirable skill in slow economic growth and unemployment situations such as in Pakistan and it can be learnt formally and informally (Duarte, da Silva, & Paxao, 2017; Pulakos *et al.*, 2000).

2.9. Person Environment Fit (PEF)

Fit is conceptualized as demand–ability and a need-satisfaction match (Oh *et al.*, 2014). It is operationalized on the basis of attitudes, skills, goals, needs, personality traits, values, and preferences. Fit is measured by following various strategies, asking directly from individuals to give reports about perceived fit or indirectly measuring the fit through having separate comparisons of characteristics of P and E. In an indirect evaluation, E is taken as a subjective environment which is assessed by an individual while objective environment is assessed through other sources (Edwards, Caplan, & Van Harrison, 1998). Furthermore, the environment is conceptualized like an aggregate of employee’s characteristics or as an entity that has unique characteristics. The researches on PE fit or the fit/congruence among a working environment and a person have been studied extensively during the last decade (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Saks & Ashforth, 2002; Lauer & Kristof-Brown, 2001; Judge & Cable, 1997). Schneider (2001) is one of the leaders in the phenomena of “*fit*” and identified the bases of fit from the theories of psychology (Walsh, Craik, & Price, 2000) such as social psychology (Aronoff, & Wilson, 1985), personality theory (Pervin, & Lewis, 1978), vocational psychology (Holland, 1997), and personnel selection (Schmitt, & Borman, 1993). Scholars within the fields of vocational psychology, organizational behavior, and organizational/industrial psychology have improved the examination of PE fit through considering a fit among various environmental and individual aspects (Kristof-Brown, Jansen, & Colbert, 2002).

The concept of PE fit is based on many theories such as Holland's vocational behavior theory (Holland, 1973, 1997), interaction theory (Lewin, 1951), the attraction-selection-attrition model (Schneider, 1987), work adjustment theory (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), and need-press theory (Murray, 1938). Interaction theory (Lewin, 1951) explains that the behavior (B) of an individual is the function of interaction among the P (the individual) and E (the environment) presented by an equation, $B=f(P, E)$ (Schneider, 2001; Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2002). For instance, theories of PE fit contained a basic tenet that positive experiences of individuals are linked with the working environment which is matched with an individual's personal characteristics (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2002). The theory of need-press is stated that environmental "*presses*" or block aid individuals for fulfilling their physical and psychological needs (Murray, 1938). Thus, fit is described by the extent to which needs of an individual are met with the help of the working environment (Kristof, 1996). The theory of work adjustment (Bretz & Judge, 1994) demonstrates that the needs of environments and individuals are imposed on each other through which successful work relationships result that develop the correspondent state among individual and environmental characteristics. Moreover, according to the third proposition of TWA, the fit (or correspondence) among environmental and individual characteristics improve the job satisfaction of an individual. According to the attraction-selection-attrition model (Schneider, 1987), "*rests on the fundamental assumption that people in any organization are unique in that they are the ones attracted to, chosen by, and who choose to remain with an organization*" (Schneider *et al.*, 1998, p. 463). Therefore, fit is achieved by the match between the individual personality and the organization. Lastly, vocational behavior theory postulates that vocational achievement, stability, and satisfaction of an individual are determined through the fit among interests of an individual and her or his vocational environment (Holland, 1973, 1997).

Additionally, the interaction of PE theories has been discussed in the literature of management for several decades (Ekehammar, 1974; Parsons, 1909; Lewin, 1951; Murray, 1938), and introducing it as one of the venerable lines of theorizing psychology (Dawis, 1992). It is opposite to these interactionist settings on which the notion of PE was developed. It is famous as a syndrome along with several manifestations (Schneider, 2001). PE is defined broadly as the compatibility among an individual and the working environment that happens in cases when they have similar characteristics. Perhaps or despite due to the simplicity of the PE definition, many fit types have gained attention. Much importance is given to the congruence among the individual's interests and their vocation (Holland, 1973). Although, other fit types such as compatibility of an individual with her or his job, work, supervisors, organization, and group are developed as a significant domain of research.

2.9.1. Person–Environment Fit Types

The traditional perspective of interactional psychology explains the concept of people as being compatible differently with vocations, jobs, organizations, and groups. The term of PE fit is referred as “*so pervasive as to be one of, if not the dominant conceptual forces in the field*” (Schneider, 2001, p. 142). Thus, it is not unusual that scholars of management have an interest in the notion of fit. Because of their interests, studies on fit continue to be a most eclectic management domain.

Many studies of interactional psychology assert that PE fit is assessed by statistical interaction among the PE. Personality is examined as a moderator in environmental forces and the situation is taken as moderators among the relationships of personality-outcome (Colbert *et al.*, 2004; Turban *et al.*, 2001) or in the context of growth need, it moderates the association of job characteristics and job satisfaction (Fried & Ferris, 1987). A few studies have conceptualized the appropriate dimensions of the P and E. The theory of PE fit states that standards should be

followed to make comparison between values of P and E (Edwards, Caplan, & Harrison, 1998). Therefore, commensurate P and E dimensions are introduced (Ambrose, Arnaud, & Schminke, 2008; Lauver, & Kristof-Brown, 2001).

2.9.1.1. Person-Vocation Fit

Generally, PE fit is characterized through having a congruence of individuals with many levels of the working environment (Kristof, 1996). The broadest level is known as occupation or vocation. Person-vocation (PV) fit involves theories of vocational choice that recommend matches among individuals with their career interests (Holland, 1977) and TWA (Lofquist, & Dawis, 1969; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) encourages that satisfaction and adjustment of an employee is dependent on needs being met through occupational environment.

2.9.1.2. Person–Job Fit

One more narrowly defined fit is the association among an individual's characteristics and tasks or jobs which are done in the workplace. This type of domain is known as person-job (PJ) fit (Kristof, 1996). PJ fit has two basic conceptualizations (Edwards, 1991), demands-abilities and needs–supplies fit. In demands-abilities fit, an employee's abilities, knowledge, and skills are matched with job requirements and needs-supplies fit occur when an employee's preferences, needs or desires are fulfilled through the jobs, they are based on the theories of satisfaction, well-being, and adjustment (Harrison, 1978; Caplan, 1983).

2.9.1.3. Person–Organization Fit

Person-organization (PO) fit is referred to as the compatibility among employees and organizations. According to Tom (1971), individuals become more successful in their working organizations when they shared personalities as well as a similarity of individual-organization which is a crux of this fit. Few studies have accepted the PO fit operationalization of (Tom, 1971) as a congruence of personality–climate (Christiansen, Villanova, & Mikulay, 1997);

however, seminal PO fit theory focused on values (Chatman, 1989). A values-based instrument, organizational culture profile (Charles *et al.*, 1991), value congruence has become an accepted way to operationalize the PO fit (Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003). Lesser scholars have applied it but consistently theorize the operationalization of PO is with goal congruence (Witt & Nye, 1992). In all of these cases, the importance is given to compatibility among an employee and organizational characteristics.

2.9.1.4. Person–Group Fit

The third type of fit is per-team fit or person-group (PG) fit that encourages the interpersonal compatibility among employees and work groups in which they are performing their jobs (Kristof, 1996). PG fit study is significantly nascent among other fit types. Despite higher interest levels the co-workers have similar demographical notions (Riordan, 2000), rare studies have highlighted the psychological compatibility among co-workers that impacts the outcomes of individuals in group settings. A handful of researches have investigated the fit with these characteristics; values (Adkins, Ravlin, & Meglino, 1996) or goals (Kristof-Brown, & Steven, 2001; Witt, 1998). However, many researchers have demonstrated the PG fit and personality traits (Hobman, Bordia, & Gallois, 2003; Barsade *et al.*, 2000).

Additionally, these researches are differentiated from studies on team homogeneity or similarity (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Barry & Stewart, 1997) and studies aggregated an individual fit on the unit level (Harrison, Shaffer, & Bhaskar, 2002). Studies on aggregate-level predict the outcomes on unit-level, instead of individual level analysis. Although, the relationships of fit-outcome differ when they are measured at higher analysis levels, it distinguished the aggregate fit level researches from others (Ostroff & Rothausen, 1997; Vancouver, Millsap, & Peters, 1994).

The demographic evaluates an individual's similarity with members of the group to predict the outcomes on an individual level, thus, importance is given to demographic variables exclusively such as gender, race, and age. Demographic variables are further categorized as observable attributes or surface-level that contrasted on another deeper level and exhibits characteristics as goals or values (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998). These characteristics have meaningful differences among similarity that fit on a deeper level over time which impact on results (Harrison *et al.*, 1998).

2.9.1.5. Person–Supervisor Fit

The last type of PE fit is linked with dyadic association among an employee and their other working environments. Hence, dyadic fit occurs between recruiters and applicants (Graves & Powell, 1995), co-workers (Antonioni & Park, 2001), protégés and mentors (Turban & Dougherty, 1994), and most researched dyadic is the congruence among subordinates and supervisors (Van Vianen, 2000). Most of the studies are focused on supervisor-subordinate associations and their work outputs (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000), manager–employee goal match (Witt, 1998), leader–follower value similarity (Colbert *et al.*, 2004), and supervisor–subordinate personality congruence (Schaubroeck & Lam, 2002) are involved in person-supervisor (PS) fit. In all of these cases, personal characteristics of supervisors affected the environment. Researches in which supervisors are indicated in organizational or work group characteristics are categorized as PO or PG fit respectively (Becker, 1992; Becker *et al.*, 1996). But PS fit research domain is related to perceptual similarity (Wexley & Pulakos, 1983) and leader member exchange (Graen, 1976).

To summarize, PEF are facing many challenges, involving multiple operationalizations, theoretical ambiguity and competing methodologies. But, the tradition to know the compatibility and congruence among working environments and individuals has generated a

unique approach to Lewin's maxim of $B = f(P, E)$ and PEF has great potential in taking an entire construct of fit. So, in this study the combined effects of PEF dimensions are examined because it develops broader construct and complex-scale criteria as well as PEF which is the strong predictor of attitudes and behaviors (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).

2.10. Study Variables and Career Stages

Career development is an evolving process through which individuals involved in work increase their capacity over their life span (Hoyt, 1977). Similarly, Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) also explained career development as an on-going process through which individuals passed through many stages and each stage has unique themes, tasks or issues. Change occurs in the lives of individuals when they are mature and many factors are responsible for this it includes opportunities, physical abilities, socio-economic positions, environmental, and psychological settings (Super *et al.*, 1957). Individuals select careers that permitted them to show self-concepts and work satisfaction (Zunker, 2001). According to Super, career development has five stages over life span (Super *et al.*, 1957);

Growth (age 14-15 years). At this phase of life, individuals started developing interests, self-concepts, attitudes, and capacities. These qualities assist them to shift from play orientation behavior to work orientation behavior. They understand the nature of work and also explore their dislikes and likes linked with their career choice.

Exploration (age 15-24 years). Individuals explore the world and themselves. They collected accurate and specific information about the world and themselves. They narrow down their choices; however, they do not make a final decision (Zunker, 2001). They crystallize their preferences that make certain vocational preferences.

Establishment (ages 25-44 years). Individuals are focused on various occupational interests and career choices. They started the settling down process and make changes which they find necessary for job compatibility.

Maintenance (ages 45-64 years). In this period, individuals focus on career choices that match with their self-concept and decide whether they should keep doing their current job or not. It's an adjustment phase in which he/she improves their working situation.

Decline (ages 65+ years). In the last career stage, individuals focus on self-concept and self-image until retirement because of age and health issues they find other satisfaction sources (Clawson, 2009).

These career stages have produced vocational behavior that introduced five tasks of vocational development. These tasks included: crystallization, specification, implementation, stabilization, and consolidation.

Crystallization, ages 14-18. In this stage, individual cognitive process introduced a vocational goal with the help of their values, abilities and interests.

Specification, ages 18-21. Individuals shifted from tentative to specific preference.

Implementation, ages 21-24. Individuals have finished their training and education. On this basis, they entered into the world of employment or work.

Stabilization, ages 25-34. This phase consists of confirming choices of career and taking career decisions that are linked with personality traits and work experiences.

Consolidation, ages 35+. After finalizing their career, individuals establish themselves with career advancement goals (Zunker, 2001).

Super introduced six dimensions of career development adolescents:

- Orientation for vocational choice and adolescent attitude regarding vocational choice.

- Information and planning involve competence with specific information and linked with skills of career decision making
- Vocational preferences consistency linked with knowledge of individuals and consistency of career resources and choices.
- Traits of crystallization involve awareness of individuals and created self-concepts.
- Independence of vocational choices through which individuals can define work and career independently.
- Vocational preferences consisting of individual's information regarding preferences, occupations, and realistic decisions that are linked with personal tasks (Zunker, 2001).

In short, individuals pass through five career stages in his/her life and perform different tasks according to the requirement of their age. This study has also included on the stage of career establishment because individuals confirmed their career choices that matched with their personality traits and made necessary adjustments for a job. In other words, individuals can start showing proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability, person-environment fit and career plateau relevant behaviors. Age can influence these constructs as follows:

- a) Career plateau is experienced in various occupations (e.g. supervisors, professionals, and technical staff), not just executives and managers and includes individuals of all age groups. Additionally, CP is a dynamic notion in which an individual can change organizations, or jobs or occupations and convert from being plateau from non-plateau and vice versa at many times in one's career. For instance, an employee who is facing plateau, gains more education and experiences an upward mobility subsequently (Milliman, 1992b) Both individuals of mid and late career stage have links with CP (Slocum *et*

al.,1985; Veiga,1981; Chao,1990; Rosen,1988). Older individuals have more chances to face plateau due to many reasons: (a) they have outdated technical and work skills (Rosen, 1988) (b) they are positioned in a higher organizational hierarchy and have less job openings for future promotions (Bardwick, 1986) and (c) organizations may be interested in promotion for younger employees who will be beneficial for the company (FERENCE *et al.*, 1977). Further, upward mobility and age norms (perceived and actual) have strong relations in several organizations: often individuals required advancement to a specific level in an organization at a certain age or face stereotyping of age and minimized upward mobility (Lawrence, 1988; Evans & Gilbert, 1984). So, CP is received by all age groups and it is more likely to be experienced by an individual who is in the career establishment stage.

- b) From a PP perspective, the changes in doing work is discernible that shifts from passive (Hanlon, 1986) to an active nature (Warr & Fay, 2001). Older individuals are lacking in change, innovativeness, and flexibility. Similarly, older individuals are believed to be less motivated and energetic regarding their job positions (Warr & Fay, 2001). These kinds of prejudices create problems as they move towards age discrimination (Boerlijst & Van der Heijden, 2003). Personal initiative varies among age groups, while initiative towards education (development) and learning decline with age (Warr & Fay, 2001).
- c) Young and older individuals differ in experiences of positive and negative emotions, actual experience and ways of coping. Younger individuals are not interested in managing their negative emotions (Riediger, *et al.*, 2009). Older individuals reveal more positive emotions and less negative emotions (Charles, Reynolds & Gatz 2001). Additionally, EI meets the criteria of development: it

increases with an individual's experience and age, from childhood to adulthood. Recently, EI extended the range of adult age such as middle and elderly adults. Many studies have reported that older individuals have higher EI scores than young individuals (Gardner & Qualter, 2011; Chapman & Hayslip, 2006; Mayer Caruso, & Salovey, 2000) and it is explained by their accumulated knowledge and lifelong learning (Kaufman, Johnson, & Liu, 2008). Several types of intelligence are enhanced with the help of practice (Hausknecht *et al.*, 2007) such as EI. Older individuals have more opportunities regarding EI throughout lives rather than young individuals. As a result, older individuals have better emotional understanding (Blanchard-Fields, 2007; Blanchard-Fields, Chen, & Norris, 1997) and use of emotional regulation strategies when compared to younger individuals (Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2004). Older individuals apply different coping strategies as compared to young and midlife individuals when they confront interpersonal or emotional stressors, older individuals were reported to show passive emotional coping strategies involving, escape, suppression, and avoidance and less active emotional coping involving obtaining social support or showing emotions (Blanchard-Fields Stein, & Watson, 2004). At the level of traits, older individuals have better emotional processing and subjective health (Stanton *et al.*, 1994). In the chronic stress context, the emotional process trait increased the depressive symptoms in older adults as well as also changing the responses of their approach towards emotions and active response effectiveness, when the negative emotions and stressors are resolved or can't be resolved (Silver Boon, & Stones, 1983; Charles 2010). Personality is stable restively during middle age; however older age is accompanied through normative development with changes in stable

traits (Roberts, Walton, & Viechtbauer, 2006). Older individuals experience changes in physiological and cognitive capabilities through which they modify preferred strategies for impulsive emotional responses and coping with their emotions (Charles, 2010). For instance, if older individuals are less able to recover or modify from negative emotions, they will adopt avoidance rather than an escape approach.

- d) The theory of career construction also proposes a relationship among CA and age. Older employees have more career experiences as compared to younger employees. As human capital (Becker, 1975) is the best predictor of CA (Zacher, 2014), older employees have greater CA than young employees. CA is likely to be increased in the beliefs of older individuals regarding their remaining time left at work, as it acts like a psychological resource for dealing with career-related transitions and tasks, providing a sense of control and confidence about their occupational future and stimulate the curiosity for future career options which are still offered (Fasbender, *et al.*, 2019). In contrast, individuals in the early career stage also tend to have higher CA (Rostami *et al.*, 2012). Adaptation to change within the work setting becomes difficult for older individuals (Peeters & van Emmerick, 2008). Age is linked with describing the sense of control with respect to self-discipline in responsible decision making and conscientious decisions (Ferreira, 2012). This relation exists because in the early career stage in which the life structure of an adult becomes stable and he/she is going to settle down along with it shows commitment to an individual or company or an occupation (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2009). In general, CA is also uninfluenced due to age (Rossier *et al.*, 2012). However, the model of vocational maturity development recommends that an increase in age also

increases the maturity and confirms the appropriateness of CA as a construct within changing work situations (Rossier, *et al.*, 2012).

- e) PEF may not change with the passage of time but individuals may. The ageing process also influences the PEF. Older individuals examine that they have poor fit with time because organizations and occupations dramatically change over 30 years as well as they may decline in physical abilities or cognitive processing that happens with aging. Changing PEF may become a challenge for older employees to re-orient the way of doing their job or to order their priorities (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). In a few cases, environment demands for more job responsibilities; in other cases, the environment forces older employees to marginalize them in less challenging jobs. By a similar token, older employees may consist of more staff of flexible schedules due to seniority or changing job responsibilities and leads to lower job status (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004).

The above discussion reveals that PP, EI, CA, PEF and CP are affected by age and they have mixed outcomes. Therefore, these constructs have association with age and it can be studied in the context of career stages (e.g. establishment, maintenance and decline). The next section describes how these constructs (e.g. PP, EI, CA, PEF and CP) are theoretically related with the help of theories.

2.11. Supporting Theories

Two widely applied theories to imply the link among PP and CP are: COR (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) and TWA. Although both theories emphasize the strong relation between PP and CP, the study to relate the two theoretical aspects together to expedite the association among PP and CP is in its infancy, particularly in the HEIs of Pakistan. Several studies on career plateau, person environment fit and career adaptability have applied the COR theory (Lin, Chen & Lai, 2018; Shabeer, *et al.*, 2021; Lee, Hsu & Kao, 2019; Hurst, Baranik & Clark, 2017; De Clercq,

2021; Sun & Li, 2021; Hu, Zhang, Chen & Griggs, 2022; Tremblay, 2021) and work adjustment theory (Kaur & Kaur, 2020; Swanson & Schneider, 2020; Jiang, 2016; Judge, 1994; Edwards, 2008; Guan, *et al.*, 2013; Shabeer, *et al.*, 2019; Jiang, 2016; Xie, Xin & Bai, 2016) in order to propose the hypotheses. This section provides the theoretical bases of my study's framework by integrating COR and TWA. These theoretical arguments give some insight into the PP and CP individually and give one possible way to describe how PP has an influence on the CP.

2.11.1. Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

Conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) begins with this view, people strive to protect, obtain, foster, and retain those things which they valued. The theory of COR is followed by a perception that usual cognitions are underweighted in the resource gain and overweighted in the resource loss. Thus, this theory postulates that the phenomenon of stress is produced (a) when key or central resources are afraid of loss, (b) when a person fails in getting key or central resources after exerting efforts or (c) when key or central resources are lost. Basically, COR theory is taken as a motivational theory which describes that the behaviors of human beings are linked with the evolutionary requirement of conserving and acquiring resources of life that are central to an individual's genetics. Unlike animals, humans acquire and protect their resources for social bonding and personal strengths. But humans have an ability of introducing complex techniques to confirm their existence and also use complex language in communication that aids in social bonding and survival. Therefore, individuals employ important resources to cope with stress and also sustaining their resources to fulfill their future needs. Moreover, the attainment and maintenance of material, social and personal resources are developed in organizations, families and people to enhance the sense of handling stressful challenges. One of the vital tenets of this COR theory is that the appraisal of the individual is secondary in determining what is universal and centrally valued between people.

The commonly important and valued resources improved meaning in life, health, sense of purpose, well-being, self-esteem and family (Hobfoll *et al.*,2018).

COR theory has considered stress as an important element in organizations and it is also against the theory of stress-appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The theory of stress-appraisal states that stress is linked with those events that are perceived to be stressful. By definition an individual is required to wait until an event happens that is recognized as a stressful event. Through this, theories of stress-appraisal have become either non-predictive or idiographic. Moreover, the theory of stress-appraisal indicates that stress is known as the perception of an individual, while COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) emphasizes the nature of stressful events. Furthermore, current COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) added social justices for decreasing the maltreatment and sexual harassment in the workplace; however, the theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) blames and forces an individual to bear the burden of stressful events, also to manage their appraisals. Hence, if mistreatment occurs in an appraisal in the workplace then it is termed as “*frivolous*” or “*without merit*”. Similarly, if conditions in the workplace are not creating stress but they are perceived as stressful then intervention will be conducted on appraisal and causes distorted cognitions. To overcome these stressors, an individual should change their mindset. To more clearly claim that which is taken as stressful is called stress are racist, sexist, and class discriminatory. Nowadays, organizational stress emphasizes those micro aggressions that implies sexist behavior and subtle racism which is real and also perceived by the victim and others (Sue, 2010). Indeed, several stressors are refined and misperceived whereas the theory of COR (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) emphasizes that major stressful series or life events such as firing or divorce, present in a culture and also influence at a basic level. So, for instance, when a person is fired from his/her work which is followed by feedback or warnings, it becomes the burnout period that may cause no more job responsibilities and loss of money; and the reaction is varied with respect to the age of an individual. Hence,

perceptions have a role and COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) states that it will impact on the behavioral outcomes.

The theory of COR (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) has theoretical foundations on the forwarded theory introduced by Baltes (1997) which talked about the span of life development. Likewise, the theory of COR, the theory of selective optimization with compensation (SOC) given by Baltes (1997), focused on loss and gain of resources and unavoidable resources loss which went along with aging that in return demands a rearrangement of present resources to handle the loss of resources. The cross conversation among Baltes's (1997) SOC theory and COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) was not supersized because Baltes and Hobfoll were cited in each other's works and in contact frequently, Hobfoll spent time with Baltes and Berlin and shared ideas and refined theories which they were testing. This collaboration revealed that theory has formed in more than one domain "*developmental aging*" which is used in organizational behavior.

COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) indicates that stressful events are inadequate units of analysis and it misunderstood the stressful conditions. Seldom are events recognized as stressful conditions; instead they complicate a series of situations that happen over time. For instance, when a person faces layoffs in the workplace, firstly it is anticipated that after the process of adjustments or searching for new work occurs. Additionally, objective factors; savings, handling unemployment, skill level, presence of new jobs and employability are key factors that contribute to the outcome. The appraisals of an individual are good predictors because individuals are catalogers of complicated objective factors, although, COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) focused that individuals followed an evolutionary centered built in and strong bias to undervalued resource gain and overvalued resource loss. This kind of bias is common in

people and in their culture, it is not like an idiographic; hence, past objective experience of life will comprehend these common appraisals.

2.11.1.1. Principles

The COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) has the first principle which states that resource loss is more saliently disproportionate than resource gains. Resources involve energy resources (e.g., money, knowledge, credit), object resources (e.g., work tools, car), personal resources (e.g., personal traits and key skills such as optimism and self-efficacy), and condition resources (e.g., seniority, tenure, employment). The disproportionate influence of resource loss is compared to the gain of resources that show a greater impact of resource loss, the time length and the speed of impact remains salient. Additionally, considering the magnitude of these impacts, the theory of COR is a stress theory that has an element of momentum. Especially, in COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) proposed that resource loss is not only powerful as compared to resource gain in its magnitude but it also impacted an individual at an increasing speed with time. In the human system, loss occurs primarily because individuals are taken as the evolution products and from an evolutionary perspective, small losses significantly lead to failure. The momentum's attribute is also based on an evolutionary perspective, because slow processes are not noticed easily and therefore may generate key or life-threatening damage over time.

COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) has a second principle which describes that individuals should invest in resources for protecting their resource loss, gaining resources, and recovering from losses. This involves direct resources replacement such as savings of salary for protecting from income loss, and indirect resources investment such as improving employee's skills for managing the complex business environments. Lastly, confidence and skills resources are improved in order to handle the possible income loss, when resource gain does not occur.

COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) has a third principle which is paradoxical. It explains that resource gain is increased in the resource loss condition. In the case, when an individual faces the circumstances of high resource loss then resource gain becomes more significant. This principle is related with the corollary one which states that more resources compensate for the resource loss and increased resource gain capability. Hence, a mixture of resources with few new resources creates a powerful influence in gaining strength and momentum. This kind of interaction is not present in any other theory.

COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) has a fourth principle is that when the resources of an individual are exhausted or overstretched, they selected a defensive mode to protect themselves as result of which he/she become irrational and aggressive. This principle is least researched but has an explanatory power in COR theory. Likewise, other perspectives of COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018), are based on evolutionary strategy that is exploratory (e.g. search adaptation or alternative survival strategies or experiences that are not adaptive) or defensive (e.g. to protect resources). Through this way, a withdrawal from defensive mode permits time to wait for assistance or to regroup or stressors to pass out. Irrational or aggressive responses can change the stressor or encourage to develop a new coping technique.

2.11.2. Career Plateau and Conservation of Resources Theory

Career plateau has a stress cycle, which starts with the recent career role because stress occurs when an individual has an awareness of subjective personal dysfunction (Elsass & Ralston, 1989). However, the stress cycle does not begin when an individual perceives a discrepancy among ideal career development and perception of career reality (see figure 5). In CP, the career role shows a constraint on targeted functioning of career which sets the cycle into motion and produces the first level symptoms of stress such as depression, anxiety or tension. The duration and magnitude of the discrepancy and ability of an individual to tolerate discrepancy

will reveal the path that an individual anticipates through the cycle of stress. Few individuals experience low career stress levels for longer periods without actively reducing the discrepancy. But, if the symptoms of stress reach an intensity level or duration which is not tolerable to an individual then behavioral and cognitive reactions would result because the individual is attempting to reduce this discomfort that is occurring due to stress (Elsass & Ralston, 1989).

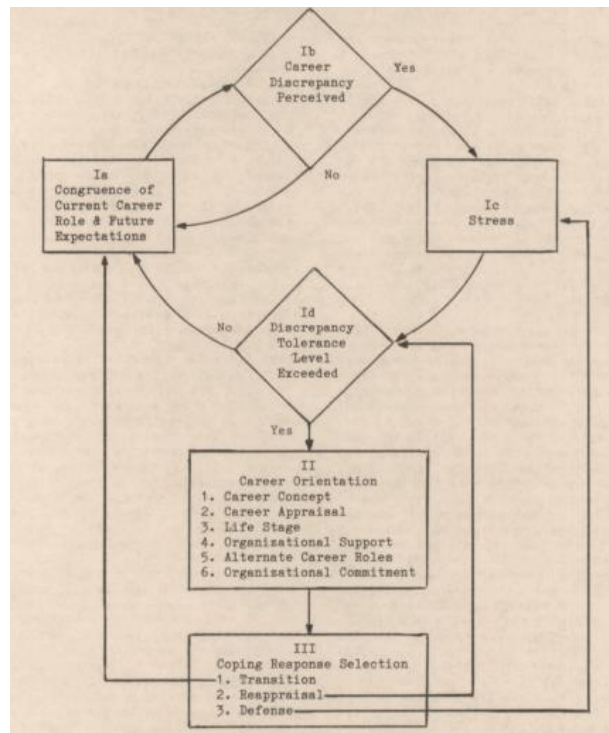


Figure 5: CP stress cycle (Elsass & Ralston, 1989)

Career plateau generates stress (Elsass & Ralston, 1989). Coping responses to deal with the stress are recognized, particularly through organizational and individual constructs. So, according to COR theory, stress causes resource loss and individuals try to recover it through protecting, gaining and sustaining new or existing resources (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). One of the resources that can reduce the impact of career plateau's stress is "personal resources". Since individuals who have personal resources tend to be more open to learn, sensitive to change, more flexible and inclined towards development of those resources permanently (Airila *et al.*, 2014) which involve feeling appreciated, having self-control, attitudes and skills linked with

such feelings (Mastenbroek *et al.*, 2014). Three personal resources are examined specifically in this study: PP, EI, and CA. Proactive personality refers to as an anticipatory autonomous behavior that is change oriented. The individual acts effectively, controls and perseveres instead of adjusting to situations, neutralizing effects, preventing consequences and anticipating possible stressors (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Bateman & Crant, 1999). Emotional intelligence refers the ability of an individual to express, appraise and perceive emotions accurately that enhance intellectual and emotional growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Lastly, CA is defined as the readiness to cope with unpredictable and predictable adjustments occurring due to changes in work conditions and work (Savickas, 1997). Therefore, in this study it is postulated with the help of COR that the personal resources of an individual are assisted in dealing with the resource losses such as lack of job promotions and unchallenging tasks because more resources compensate for the resource loss. Ultimately, personal resources travel in caravans (Hobfoll, 2011) and manage the career plateau phenomena.

2.11.3. Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA)

In 1964, TWA is introduced along with nine formal propositions and later on in 1984, eight more propositions were added as explained below (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1968; Dawis & Lofquist, 1964). The work adjustment theory is developed as a P-E fit theory, (Dawis, 2000) with the passage of time it is expanded and revised and transformed into interaction theory which shows the predictive (fit) model embedded in the process model that is described in the next section.

2.11.3.1. Basic Concepts

From a psychological theory perspective (Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1964), TWA focused on P's behavior and P. P (individual) does not behave or exist alone or in vacuum; instead of this P always behaves and exists in the E (working environment). TWA is based on these

assumptions; 1) P (individual) has a key set of skills that be able him/her to fulfill these requirements; 2) just like a living organism, P can meet most of his/her requirements through E; and (3) mostly P's behavior is dependent on E to accomplish these requirements. The most essential requirements of P's are needs such as biological needs are fulfilled for P's survival while psychological needs are met for P's well-being. Needs are introduced through the genetic material of P and also conditioned by the several Es in which P dealt, till few relative stabilities are confirmed in the adulthood stage of life. In adulthood, various P's needs are met in the workplace. A P gives importance to the working environment; in this contemporary world the work organization is known as E. Then, TWA takes E as work organization and work environment, P as employee and worker.

The operational principle of TWA is conceptualized with P and E as complementary and parallel (Dawis, 2000). Therefore, TWA claims that E (work organization) has requirements (parallel with P) that must be fulfilled and skills increased in their competencies for meeting the requirements. Complementarily, few of E's requirements can be achieved through P, similarly, few of P's requirements can be achieved through E. Therefore, P and E in the work place collaborate together because both have few requirements which the other can fulfill. When the requirements are fulfilled, satisfaction of E and P results. To have a difference among satisfaction of P and E, TWA has used the notions, satisfaction of E with P is termed as the P's satisfactoriness, and likewise, the notion of satisfaction is used for satisfaction of P with E. In contrast, two notions such as unsatisfactoriness and dissatisfaction are applied. Therefore, on the dichotomous level, P has four states: a) satisfied-satisfactory, b) satisfied instead of unsatisfactory, c) dissatisfied instead of satisfactory or e) dissatisfied and unsatisfactory. TWA indicates that first state maintained the interaction/collaboration of P and E and called as "*maintenance behavior*". But the remaining three states produce "*adjustment behavior*". On the extreme condition, the interaction or collaboration of P and E results (P's are fired or quit).

However, when P is satisfied and satisfactory at the same time tolerably, P is retained and remains in place by E. When P stayed in E for a longer period of time, it is known as “*tenure*”. TWA has three behavioral outcomes – the tenure, satisfactoriness, and satisfaction for P in the E situation (Dawis *et. al.*, 1964).

As described, P (workers or employees) have capabilities few of which can be applied to satisfy the requirements of E (Dawis *et. al.*, 1964). The capabilities of P that are used by E are known as the skills of P. Work skills are derived from basic skills of human behaviors: sensory-perceptual, cognitive, physical, motor, and affective. Like basic skills, needs are recognized to generate from P’s genetic make-up and it is shaped with the help of learning (training and experience) through exposure of various aspects of E. By using basic skills, P may gain a relative stability in their adulthood, after that P learns new work skills from their basic skills throughout his/her life. At work, the requirements of E and P are doing work in the job as well as improving or maintaining the organization. The requirements of E are explained with respect to requirements of E’s skill for P, the set of P skills are used to do job and improvement or maintenance of the organization (Dawis *et. al.*, 1964).

Likewise, E has such capabilities (or some) that encourage him/her to satisfy the needs (or few) of P (Dawis *et. al.*, 1964). P needs E’s capabilities for reinforcement, which is an ability of E to convey reinforcers (the construct is borrowed from behavioral psychology) to fulfill the needs of P. For example, E’s reinforcers are working conditions, prestige, and pay. The needs of Ps are described with respect to reinforcers which P needs in E. These needs can be viewed as the requirements of the reinforcer. Therefore, TWA applies two notions to explain P: skills (response capabilities) and needs (requirements for reinforcer). Two notions are applied to explain E: skills requirements (such as requirements for response) and reinforcers (such as capabilities for reinforcement). Thus, the E and P constructs are complementary and parallel. The key notion of TWA corresponds to P-E (Dawis, 2000). In TWA, the correspondence of P-

E has two meanings. The predictive model of TWA (Dawis *et. al.*, 1964), in which P's satisfactoriness and satisfaction is predicted with the perspective of P-E correspondence. The first meaning of the correspondence of P-E is to show the extent to which P and E fulfills each other's requirements. The second meaning of the correspondence of P-E is responsiveness which showed the mutual response of E to P, and P to E, that is the collaboration/interaction of P-E. This meaning is the part of the process model presented in TWA.

2.11.3.2. Predictive Model of TWA

In the predictive model of TWA (Dawis *et. al.*, 1964), P's satisfactoriness and satisfaction are dependent terms that are based on two variables of P-E correspondence:

- The P's satisfaction is dependent on the correspondence of P's needs (requirements of reinforcer) and E's reinforcers.
- The P's satisfactoriness is dependent on the match of E's skill requirements and P's skills.

In E, P's satisfactoriness and satisfaction (predicted or actual) determined the tenure of P. Additionally; predictive TWA model has incorporated four constructs such as ability requirements, reinforcer factors, values, and abilities. Therefore, P-E correspondence introduced new notions which are:

- The match of P's values and E's reinforcer
- The match of E's requirements for ability and P's abilities

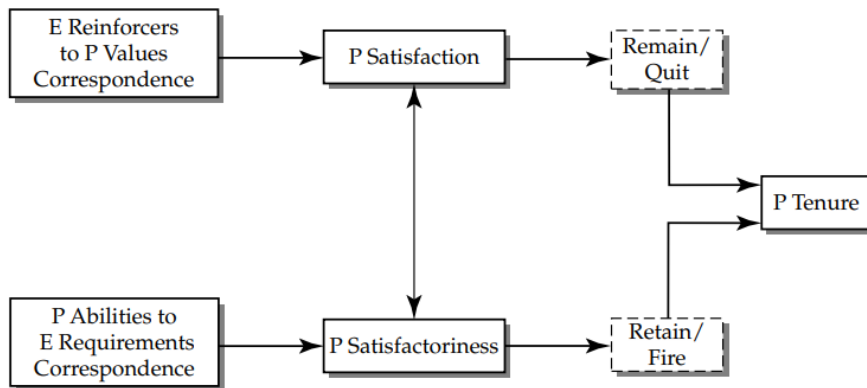


Figure 6: TWA predictive model (Dawis *et al.*, 1964)

Figure 6 reveals that P satisfaction is anticipated (solid line) from the correspondence among P-values and E-reinforcers (reinforcer factors are summarized to reinforce in order to have drawing convenience). P satisfactoriness is anticipated from the match of P abilities and E requirements (ability requirements is summarized into requirements in the figure 6. P satisfactoriness and P satisfaction are showed to determine the tenure of P through unobserved (boxed with dashes) terms of fire/retain for E and quit/remain for P (Dawis *et al.*, 1964).

2.11.3.3. Process Model of TWA

The process model of TWA is introduced to describe how the correspondence of P-E is accomplished, sustained, and re-achieved. Hence, TWA gives both adjustment and maintenance behavior, but the focus is given to adjustment behavior because people are looking for counseling in the workplace. The extended process model of TWA is introduced in Dawis and Lofquist (1984) and Dawis (1996) (see figure 7).

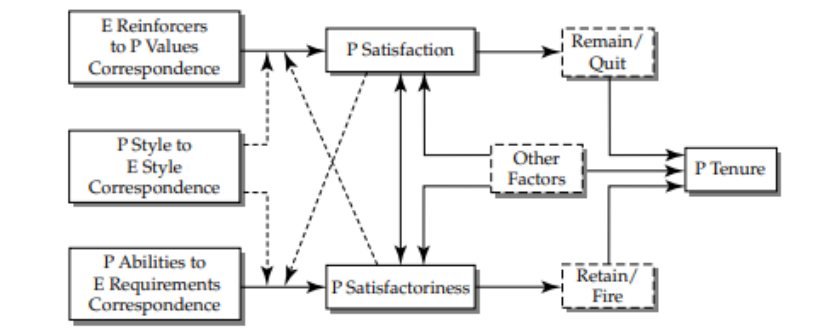


Figure 7: The TWA expanded predictive model (Dawis, 1996; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984)

The new notion of TWA in the process model is called “*adjustment style*”. This style includes four constructs: perseverance, flexibility, reactivity, and activeness. Each construct is referred to as a process model (Dawis, 1996; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). In this model, focus is given to P and the parallel process is explained for E. The process model of TWA stated adjustment is like a cycle. The cycle begins where P initiates the behavior of adjustment and is dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction results when P perceives a mismatch among P’s values and needs and reinforcers of E. Various Ps have endured different level of dissatisfaction and discordance before initiating a behavior of adjustment. The extent to which mismatch is allowed before dissatisfaction results shows engagement in behavior of adjustment which is known as P’s flexibility. The high flexibility level describes that P is not easily dissatisfied; in contrast, low flexibility level indicates P is dissatisfied easily (Dawis, 1996; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

When adjustment behavior begins, P adopts two adjustment modes (Dawis, 1996; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Firstly, P makes adjustment with E to minimize the mismatch, therefore, dissatisfaction is produced. P could apply E’s requirements for skill or E’s reinforcers or both. For instance, P could increase the demand if needs of compensation are not fulfilled adequately. This mode of adjustment is called as activeness in the model of TWA. Secondly, P would adjust their selves through working on their-self instead of E minimizing the mismatch. P could also attempt to change the P’s skills or needs or both. For instance, P could acquire the latest skills

or apply skills better to show good performance at the workplace to convince E to improve the compensation of P. This mode of adjustment is called as reactivity in the model of TWA. These modes of adjustment are uncorrelated; P could have four dichotomized combinations of reactivity and activeness (low-low, high-high, low-high, high-low). Lastly, people will try to minimize dissatisfaction and discordance before leaving and giving up E (leaving job). P's perseverance is reflected through P's attempt related to adjustment before leaving the job. In that way perseverance and flexibility have various levels between different Ps. P's less persevering would be likely to give up after making adjustments rather than P with more perseverance. Therefore, the cycle of adjustment is finished on P's again satisfaction or dissatisfaction from E. With time, P's choices for such adjustment style that tend to have stability. This occurs due to traits of perseverance, reactivity, activeness, and flexibility in P. The more behavioral tendencies a P have, he/she will try to make adjustments in the workplace (reachieve or achieving a match with E) (Dawis, & Lofquist, 1984; Dawis, 1996).

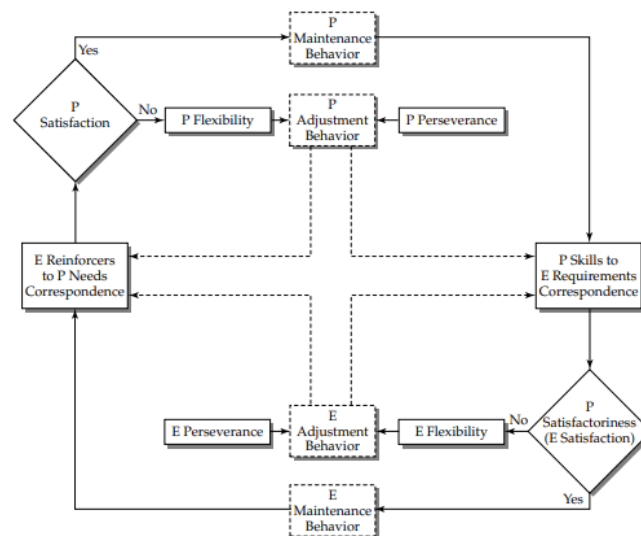


Figure 8: The TWA process model (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Dawis, 1996)

Figure 8 shows the process model of TWA. It reveals the adjustment cycle of work, when P's adjustment is started through satisfaction. A similar process occurs for E. Therefore, E and P could have adjustment behavior and maintenance behavior.

2.11.4. Person Environment Fit and Theory of Work Adjustment

TWA (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) has developed to help individuals in their career adjustment and career choice. Work is taken as an interaction among the working environment and the individual, with working adjustment reflecting mutual responsiveness of each other's requirements and needs (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969). Particularly, work environment needs specific tasks to be performed, while individuals come with capabilities such as abilities and skills to perform those tasks. In return, the individual has certain needs to be fulfilled that require certain working conditions and compensations. A good fit or match among the requirements of working environment and skills of an employee results in good job performance. Satisfaction comes from a good fit among environmental reinforcers and the employee's values/needs. Hence, TWA occurs at a time when working environments are relatively stable; it is applicable readily to a changing context. Change is mismatch among the individual and environment- it is likely to happen that when the environment no longer corresponds to the individual's needs. TWA provides an explanation of how the environment or individual adapts or adjusts to reduce any kind of deterioration in the fit notion. However, correspondence among an individual and her/his environment is achieved through various adjustment styles (Griffin & Hesketh, 2003). From an individual perspective, "*activeness*" is involved in changing the working environment by an individual to have a better fit, and "*reactiveness*" takes place when an individual change herself or himself to enhance the fit (Griffin & Hesketh, 2003). Additionally, career plateau phenomena are a misfit condition for an individual, in which he/she is not getting job promotions and challenging job tasks in order to satisfy growth needs and improve their quality of life. Using these adjustment styles, two broader constructs: (a) the proactive personality adopts an active adjustment style through which an individual initiates actions to change the environment and brings positive effects; (b) career adaptability encompasses reactive adjustment style through which an individual

modifies or changes themselves to become a better fit in their working environment and are considered to have PEF which reduces the negative impact of CP.

2.12. Integrating COR and TWA

Every business has a dream to improve organizational performance and decreasing turnover of employees. In other words, organizations want to increase organizational tenure of their existing employees. Past studies have provided the substantial evidence regarding organizational tenure and its job performance (Sturman, 2003; Ng & Feldman, 2010). Increase in organizational tenure is accompanied with an increase in chronological age and performance which an individual of long-tenure enjoys. Studies on aging and development recommends that socially oriented activities (e.g. constructive suggestions, helping others) become a high priority for older individuals and also a source of their emotional satisfaction (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999). As a result, they will endow their resources in such goals that suit their interests and motivations (Beier & Ackerman, 2001). Moreover, within the context of TWA, when P is satisfied and satisfactory, P is retained and remains with E. When P stays in E for a longer period of time, it is known as “*tenure*”. Career plateau is a phenomenon that an employee in any job position can face when he/she has at least three years on a current job that causes stress. Basically, career plateau develops misfit events in the job of an employee. According to COR theory, an individual who has lost their resources due to stress and is revealed through negative attitudes and behaviors. An individual can recover the loss of resource with the help of more resource gain that can be personal and environmental. In this situation, an organization can train or hire their existing and potential employees with proactive personality, emotional intelligence and career adaptability traits and improve their personal resources. Along with this, organizations can adopt CP strategies (environmental resources) such as cross moves in departments, dual ladders of career, job training and redesign, periodic rotation, project jobs, and voluntary schemes about separation (Appelbaun & Finestone, 1994;

Feldman & Weitz, 1988a, 1988b; Nachbagauer *et al.*, 2002). By doing this, personal resources and environmental resources together help the employees for sustaining, protecting and gaining new resources and they will show work adjustment behavior which will eventually develop PEF that will help in reducing career plateau.

Since previously studies show a weak understanding relatively of PP and CP association (Wang *et al.*, 2014), it is essential to determine the linkage of PP, emotional intelligence, career adaptability, person environment fit and career plateau to underline a strong theoretical stance. Thus, this research has postulated the integration of theoretical aspects of COR and TWA to receive a holistic understanding regarding PP and CP. In the subsection each of the selected intervening variables in linkage to the PP-CP are explained in detail.

2.13. Mediating Constructs Relating PP and CP

Although few researchers have examined the indirect impact of PP and CP (Wang *et al.*, 2014), further empirical examination is needed to get a precise understanding of mediating variables within a strong theoretical basis. In the presence of the key objectives of this research, which is to postulate and test the mediating mechanisms among the PP and CP in HEIs of Pakistan. The previous subsections 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, and 2.9 of this chapter have provided detailed reviews of PP, EI, CA, PEF and CP. The next subsection gives a detailed review of each mediating variable (emotional intelligence, career adaptability, and person environment fit) in the association between PP and CP, and provides the foundation for hypotheses development.

2.13.1. Model 1: Proactive Personality-Emotional Intelligence-Career Adaptability

Personality traits have habitual manners of thinking and behaviors in different situations. Theoretically, this perspective has indicated three main features of an individual's traits that (1) are personally differentiated due to "*universalistic variables*"; (2) have consistent, dispositional, long-lasting variables from their genetic predictors; and (3) represent dynamic

organization within their self that show actions, characteristic, feelings, habitual thoughts, and internal agency (Deci & Ryan, 2000) can be varied among people with respect to applicability or strength to comprehend behavior. These traits can “*provide the best estimate of what a person is most likely to do*” in a given situation (Fiske & Butler, 1963, p.258) as explained previously, PP has a stable tendency relatively that forces individuals to act on initiatives for impacting their environments. The proactivity can encourage the individual to adopt the changes to enhance their surroundings and also not to react passively towards environmental hurdles (Tolentino *et al.*, 2014; Crant, 2000). PP is action and change oriented normally and have more interest to deal actively with career changes, develops work environments, and search opportunities to fulfill their career needs (Tolentino *et al.*, 2014; Bateman & Crant, 1993). Due to these reasons, PPs are inclined to actively develop adaptive resources to enhance personal career development.

This study anticipates that PP has a relationship with CA. COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) outlined earlier has provided the theoretical framework for this prediction. There are several reasons to support this claim that PP will be linked with increased flow of resources in order to influence the surrounding environment. First, their individual resources are active through contingent action and enable the person to continue or expand according to his or her energy level (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Smillie *et al.*, 2006). In this regard, personality is one of the resources. PP tries to alter the surroundings to gain personal benefits and CA possesses elements of self-management or self-regulation strategies (King, 2004). Thus, CA is conceptually fits into model of PP (Crant, 2000). Secondly, numerous studies have well established the association between PP and CA (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Jiang, 2017; Tolentino *et al.*, 2014; Öncel, 2014; Hou, Wu, & Liu, 2014). This link can be determined by the way CA forces an individual to get promotion in her or his career actively rather than having a passive response in a career situation. Thirdly, in the current working environment dynamic and continuous

changes are occurring and new boundaryless work settings and career responsibility is becoming a key challenge (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Often, these challenges show weak situations but PP evokes proactive behaviors that are the part of adaptive career behavior. Fourthly, several scholars have recommended that individual differences have role to know the level of individuals regarding their career managing behaviors (Boudreau *et al.*, 2001; Spurk & Abele, 2011; Staw, Bell, & Clausen, 1986). PP has the characteristic that actively shapes her or his working environment which can be expected to predict the CA level represented by an individual. Further, despite these extensive empirical studies, all prior evidences have nearly all been conducted from university student perspectives. Extended investigation among different samples is warranted in those evidences, particularly among currently employed individuals. Thus, this research has extended to test the PP and CA relation in university employees from career establishment, maintenance and decline stages and the hypothesis is developed as:

H1: PP and CA have a positive relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

Personality is considered as an emergent asset of coping with emotion. Scholars were concerned mainly on personality traits that could influence the emotion management (Baranczuk, 2019; Eldesouky & English, 2018) and also call for more studies to know the role of personality in crafting the emotional regulation process (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Human emotions have emotional families that follow classification systems (Ekman, 1992; Plutchik, 1994; Izard, 1977; Shaver *et al.*, 1987) have primary emotions (first order) and secondary emotions (second-order). Second-order emotions are based on primary emotions and about 135 emotions were classified by Shaver *et al.* (1987) that presented six primary emotions such as fear, sadness, love, surprise, anger and joy. These various types of emotion showed valence

and activation circumplex dimensions to different extents. Thus, surprise, joy, and love were named as “*positive valence*”; fear, sadness, and anger were categorized as “*negative valence*”. The level of emotional activation was the second dimension: surprise and fear were recognized as highly active, sadness, anger and joy were medium level active, and love categorized by low level activation. Further, the scholars have distinguished emotions with their potency level or perceived strength. Sadness emerged as low and anger was high while emotions (fear, surprise, love and joy) as medium in their potencies (Shaver *et al.*, 1987). However, individuals can manage their emotions through emotional intelligence. EI played a central role in the process of emotion regulation. In particular, EI increase the ability of an individual to understand the various emotions appropriately and apply this emotional information to deal with the thoughts and behaviors of self and others (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008). A greater EI level leads to use strategies linked with adaptive regulation that permits positive and effective management of individual emotions (Nozaki, 2018; Zysberg & Raz, 2019).

The association among proactive personality and emotional intelligence can be organized theoretically in many ways. One way is to know that the personality influences coping with stress that has emotional outcomes. For instance, effective coping results in relief while ineffective coping results in anxiety (Lazarus, 1999). Moreover, individuals responded to loss, harm and threat in various ways, which is labeled as “*coping*”. Several studies have pointed out the role of coping in the process of distress regulation and the impact of personality dispositions on managing with stressors of life effectively (Aspinwall, & Taylor, 1997; Carver & Scheier, 1999). However, a lesser amount of studies has been conducted to answer how coping can be influenced by individuals for avoiding or minimizing the function of stress or emotions (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). In the past, when stress occurred then coping is mainly studied as reactions towards emotions or stressors. Recently, more attention has been given to individuals who have proactive personalities and proactive coping (Schwarzer, 1999;

Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Proactive coping has three characteristics (Greenglass, 2002). First, commonly individuals have made reactive efforts for coping to manage the stressful events of life which have occurred already or in order to manage the past's loss or harm, however, proactive coping has a future orientation and includes such efforts which build up resources to improve personal growth and goal attainment. The second characteristic is that upcoming difficulties, demands or future risks are not taken as potential losses or threats rather as challenges, so in this case proactive coping is focused on goal management rather than risk management. Third, motivation behind proactive coping is positive but the motivation behind reactive coping is negative due to threats and it includes risk appraisal. Long-term planning, resource accumulation, and skill development are the elements of proactive behavior that focus on stress regulation, not stress avoidance. PP who adopted proactive coping have internal positive resources (Greenglass, 2002) resulting in negative or positive emotional outcomes; anxiety or depression. Findings reported that PP who applied proactive coping have a negative relationship with trauma (Vernon, Dillon, & Steiner, 2009) and depression (Uskul & Greenglass, 2005; Gan *et al.*, 2007; Pasikowski *et al.*, 2002; Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, & Eaton, 2006).

In another way, positive psychology broadens the importance of cognition, attention, traits, and behavior that equip the individual with a variety of resources which can be used to deal with the potential threats or improve goal attainment (Fredrickson, 2001; Taylor *et al.*, 2000). One of the positive traits is known as proactive personality. An individual's personal resources (e.g. proactive personality) enhance the proactive coping and negatively influence the emotions or stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Individuals vary considerably with respect to their coping resources and styles (Ferguson, 2001; Watson, Hubbard, 1996). Individuals behave differently towards emotions and impact the emotional states which have implications for physical and psychological health in the long run (Winter & Kuiper, 1997). Therefore, in the presence of

stress-appraisal-coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), PP can impact on any point of this sequence: exposure, reactivity or appraisal to stressors (e.g., individuals can see stress as a challenge or threat), coping or response to stressors (Suls & Martin, 2005). Similarly, emotions can be experienced in any parts of this sequence because stress is followed by emotions (Lazarus, 1999). Stress-appraisal-coping strategy minimizes the emotions that are linked to stress with the help of distraction, social support and reappraisal. But it is not necessary that emotions can follow the sequence. One can perceive stress as a problem, appraise and cope with it without having strong emotions or cope with experiencing directly through one's emotions. As mentioned above, Bateman and Crant (1993) introduced the notion of PP and referred to it as the individual who is unconstrained by situational forces and scans opportunities, influence the environment change, take initiative and action, until they bring change. Proactive personality has followed high proactive coping which changes the situation that does not exist yet, into a desirable environment. For this PP has a motivation to take constructive and purposeful actions and also develop growth opportunities (Locke & Latham, 1990; Parker *et al.*, 2010). Proactive personalities who are using proactive coping, have social support, reappraisal and distraction strategies to experience fewer negative emotions (Hambrick & McCord, 2010).

In summary, the proactive personality has personal resources that stimulate him/her to get more personal resources such as emotion intelligence. As literature indicates indirect association such as PP use proactive coping strategies which allow them to manage their own or other emotions actively and passively. Therefore, it introduces such individualistic characteristics that forces employees to interact actively with their working environment and shape themselves to better fit with the job (Bindl & Parker, 2011). Consequently, employees who have strong PP, identified opportunities and pursued constantly within their working environment and also gain advantages from them by having perseverance, emotional stability, showing, initiative,

and autonomy until they receive meaningful outcomes. The COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) states that persons are stimulated to behave in such ways through which they can foster, protect, and retain their resources. Several individuals identified those activities that can threaten the resources and at the same time showed withdrawal behaviors. However, few individuals may be involved in draining resources who are not participating in building resources for the future (Hobfoll, 1989). But, this study claims that individuals who have high PP reserves resources by managing their emotions and other's emotions in the workplace. From the perspective of aging, individuals at an earlier career stage do not have stable personality traits (PP) and also have less emotional intelligence while individuals in mid and later age have stable personality traits (PP) but they may or may not have EI. But, it is also indicated that individuals with high PP considered negative experiences are under human control, predictably, they founded less risk in addressing the negative sources (e.g., anger, jealousy, theft, backbiting, leg-pulling, abuses) and apply their resources just like the proactive approach, in order to minimize the loss of resources (Haynie *et al.*,2017). On the other side, an individual with low PP does not have the desire to actively learn and develop good working environments (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014; Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge, & Scott, 2009) so they do not apply any proactive approach and deplete more personal resources and leading to this hypothesis;

H2: PP and EI have a positive relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages

At present, individuals navigate in demanding working contexts as they have unpredictable and unfamiliar constraints and situations, as well as various job uncertainty and career transitions during their careers (Biemann, Zacher, & Feldman, 2012). Thus, developing such an individual's abilities that deal and cope with continuous career transitions and changes has become crucial. These abilities or skills are referred to as career-meta competencies (Coetzee

& Harry, 2014). In recent years, two competencies have taken the attention of scholars. On the one hand, exploring how an individual makes and uses self-regulatory resources in order to cope with job and career transitions that are at the heart of career construction theory (Savickas, 2005; Johnston, 2018). On the other hand, many scholars have indicated how EI can assist an individual in managing career events, making decisions about their career and have emotional adjustments in their behaviors (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2015). This led researchers to stress the significance of EI and CA as essential meta-competencies that help individuals in crafting sustainable careers and responding to the career changes effectively (Buyken *et al.*, 2015; Potgieter, 2014). In the career development process, individuals who have higher EI might be in a better position in planning professional objectives and goals, fit in various organizational cultures, anticipate emotional consequences of career transitions, changes and tasks as well as develop and maintain social associations (Potgieter, 2014).

Although, numerous studies have understood the impact of EI within career context however, the predictive nature of EI in terms of CA (Savickas, 2005; Savickas, 2013) has been less explored (Celik & Storme, 2018; Merino-Tejedor, Hontangas, & Petrides, 2018; Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Udayar *et al.*, 2018). Individuals use both cognitive and emotional abilities when developing and constructing narratives regarding their career (Brown, George-Curran, & Smith, 2003). The individuals with CA have competencies in the form of decision making, planning, exploring and problem solving (Savickas, 2013) and first competency (career decision making) CA is improved when an emotionally intelligent individual uses his/her emotional expression, communication and experience (Kidd, 1998). Emotion is considered to be a regulating, controlling and energizing action (Young, Paselukho, & Valach, 1997) and thus leads to participation in the process of career decision making, career self-management and increasing career commitment (Brown *et al.*, 2003; Schutte, Malouff, & Bhullar, 2009; Carson & Carson, 1998). An emotionally intelligent person increases the second competency

(career planning) when he/she applies emotions to provide guidance about their own thinking and action that seems to link feeling and perceptions of efficacy in managing and planning career related tasks and actions (Brown *et al.*, 2003), cognitive performance of tasks (Schutte, Schuettpelez, & Malouff, 2001), greater emotional functioning and adaptability (Schutte *et al.*, 2008). EI also positively enhances the third competency such as exploration by having greater career commitment, career exploration and self-efficacy linked to career decision as well as to less dysfunctional thinking about their career (Puffer, 2011). Fourthly, EI has a role in predicting the complexities or problems about decision making about careers (Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, & Bar-On, 2012; Fabio *et al.*, 2013) and influences the life achievement and success behavior (Cobb & Mayer, 2000; Goleman, 1998). So, individuals who know their feelings are able to regulate them and thus achieve greater performance in decision making (Yitshaki, 2012; Seo & Barrett, 2007). Within these perspectives, individuals who have greater EI also have greater adaptive functions (Schutte *et al.*, 2008) that result in more emotional awareness and merge emotional experiences with actions and thoughts (Emmerling & Cherniss, 2003; Brown *et al.*, 2003).

According to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 1998), EI is an essential resource to reduce the strain. Specifically, COR states that individuals are stimulated to sustain their resources (Hobfoll, 1989) and also interested in gaining more resources. This implies that EI is an abundant resource that can minimize the development of strain. Indeed, many researchers have revealed that several resources can lessen the detrimental influence of strain or stress (De Cuyper *et al.*, 2014; Lawrence, Halbesleben, & Paustian-Underdahl, 2013). EI is known as resourceful skill that is relevant with COR theory. In addition, CA is also a crucial resource for employees (Flum, & Blustein, 2000) and it would be influenced by EI for two reasons. First, higher emotional stability tends to have higher CA level (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017). Second, individuals with high EI are adaptive to their environment which is the characteristic of CA (Savickas &

Porfeli, 2012; Udayar *et al.*, 2018). On the basis of COR, this study proposes that EI is a resource that is influenced by age and also has the capacity to make adjustment in the behaviors of an individual with respect to multiple situations and so, an employee has more chance to gain one more resource “*career adaptability*” with age. Therefore, this study has plausible the hypothesis as:

H3: EI and CA have a positive relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages

Based on the above discussion, this study posits that the impact of a PP on CA is mediated by emotional intelligence. Although, there is strong empirical evidence that PP is associated with CA, little is tested on this underlying mediating mechanism. One model which is most relevant in describing the indirect effects of personality on the criteria of career is the meta-theoretical model, introduced by McCrae and Costa (1996), claimed that personality impacts the adaptation characteristics, which involves personal motivation states, attitudes, strivings and self-regulatory tendencies that affect in turn the objective biography of an individual. The active role of PP regulates attitudes for conducting work activities through which they have more control in changing and structuring the environment and maintain it until the desired change happens. In this case, individuals who are less proactive are adaptive to situations, face the emotional dissonance and consequently give up job activities. On the other hand, individuals who are more proactive adjust their career and have strong emotional intelligence in their career stages (see figure 9). So, the hypothesis is proposed as:

H4: EI acts as mediator among PP and CA in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages

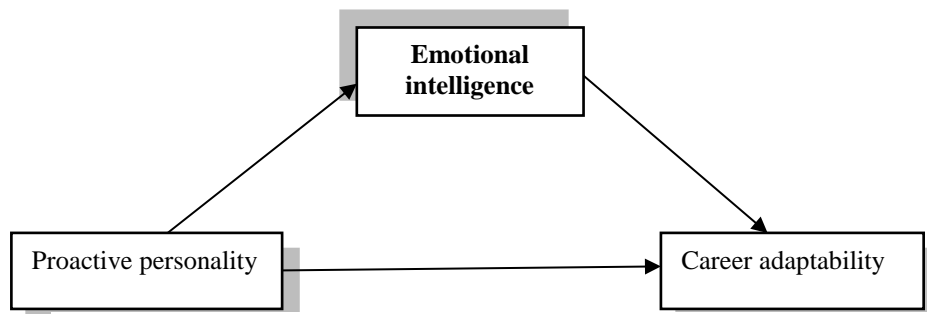


Figure 9: Model 1: PP-EI-CA

2.13.2. Model 2: Career Adaptability-Person-Environment Fit-Career Plateau

Previous contemporary theories of career force the significance of adaptability to handle the demands of organizational life, economic uncertainty, globalization, diversity, and technological advancements (Gowan, 2014; Lyness & Erkovan, 2015). Career adaptability has a career meta-competency (Lent & Brown, 2013) and self-regulation resources set (e.g., confidence, curiosity, control, and concern) that assists in shaping career and making sense to show adaptation behaviors which are essential for gaining a successful work environment fit (Savickas, 2013). Individuals can use their resources of adaptability to perform adapting behaviors that tackle the changing working conditions (Hirschi *et al.*, 2015). Individuals can apply CA to address the changes in career roles and fit themselves to the workplace. CA is an essential skill which is useful for future career development and also in adapting the employment requirements (Hou *et al.*, 2012). Further, intrinsic motivation can impact individual behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The motivation of getting promotion and challenging job tasks enhance many positive behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 1985). CA is known as human capital resources, motivates the individual to provide a solution to ill-defined, complex, and unfamiliar problems presented by work traumas, vocational development tasks and occupational transitions (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) in all age groups. The adaptive individual has a career mindset to adapt to new career plans, work settings, demands or tasks (Hall, 1996; Savickas, 1997). An individual with high adaptability level feels comfortable for developing her/himself and make themselves open to new experiences in order to make an adjustment in current working settings (Hall, 1996). Career adaptability has a direct association with job promotion

and challenging job activities because it also promotes personal agency, flexibility, resilience and openness to career experiences in decision making (Betz, 2007; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). So, personal resources in the form of CA lead to more job promotions and challenging job tasks (Lent, 2004; Lyness & Erkovan, 2015). Individuals with higher personal resources are more likely to take threats of downsizing and economic uncertainties as challenges instead of threats because of their perception regarding self-confidence and personal control (De Cuyper *et al.*, 2008). A few studies have also indicated that the tendency of an individual to reveal career self-management behavior is linked with promotional outcomes (Koen *et al.*, 2010; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). Thus, a higher level of personal resources would have positive career outcomes because individuals will have control over their careers (Hall, 1996; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994).

In another way we can say this, the degree to which an individual is able to adapt, this capability will be showed behaviorally through adapting responses (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Hence, in general CA has acted proactively in getting desired career outcomes (Tiedeman, & Miller-Tiedeman, 1984) in the form of more positional power (e.g. immediate supervisors) (Crites, 1969). Involving in the adapting responses with the help of ingratiation can be the best strategy of gaining job promotion for an individual (Aryee, Wyatt, & Stone, 1996; King, 2004) and reducing CP. For example, engaging in this strategy obtains positive influence through reciprocal attraction; the reason is that the supervisor may not feel comfortable towards those individuals who feel superior to him/her (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Similarly, adapting with respect to opinion conformity can elicit the supervisor's perceptions as similar to their employees. Individuals are more likely to attract those who share similar attitudes and beliefs with them (Wayne & Liden, 1995). Individuals with high CA can gain favor from the other person that can engender positive impact introduced by an attractive person (Westphal & Stern, 2006). As a result, positive impressions generated through use of ingratiation would influence

positively a supervisor's assessments regarding promotability and negatively affecting the CP. Indeed, the ratings of supervisors are susceptible to ingratiation because it has a particularly subjective nature (Thacker & Wayne, 1995). Since, adaptable individuals are capable of managing work challenges; it is more desirable for them to receive a promotion and challenging task. Thus, according to TWA, successful adjustment towards work changes is expected for those individuals who have the ability of work adaptation. Indeed, higher CA has been revealed to be linked with the increased likelihood of gaining promotion and challenging tasks (Tolentino *et al.*, 2013; Zacher, 2014) in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. Given empirical and theoretical justifications of the researches predict that:

H5: CA and CP have a negative relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages

A career reveals the sequences of jobs that an individual has, therefore it is consistent with the correspondence principle (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970a, 1977b). Human development can be achieved by continuous environmental adaptation with the goal of PEF (Savickas, 2005). Career development and individual adjustment is considered as a contextualization process based on various work and career related settings which have a successful person-environment integration (Savickas, 2002, 2013). CA resources such as confidence, concern, curiosity, and control can function together to guide an individual's perceptions, thoughts, and reflections. These types of self-regulatory resources encourage employees to have P-E congruence (Guan *et al.*, 2013). For instance, CA resources direct individuals to spend energy and time in planning as well as guide them how they can adapt their work characteristics and fit into work settings, assist them to show conscientious behaviors and to make careful decisions, facilitate them in the exploration of environment and self, ensure that individuals will sustain their efforts and try to solve the difficulties when they are blended into their organizations and jobs. Altogether,

CA plays a significant role in the integration process of PEF and also increases the likelihood that individuals will have a good congruence with their personal attributes, organization and job characteristics (Guan *et al.*, 2013).

At organizational level, Individuals who are engaged with experience, training, and education show higher work performance and consequently receive higher organizational support (e.g. compensation and rewards) (Becker, 1964). The career progression of an individual is contingent upon the quality and quantity of human assets (Becker, 1964) as well as experiences and skills that individuals bring to the job which are linked with compensation (Agarwal, 1981). The resources of human capital impact the employee performance, increase personal attributes that enable an individual to perform their job better and subsequently their pay will increase accordingly; in every addition of human capital this will improve the compensation package (Tharenou, 2001). Thus, individuals with CA skills have the ability to make adjustment to their working environment. The working environment or PEF is a broader construct that includes a variety of lower level variables which have a nexus between the environment and the individual (Oh *et al.*, 2014). It is known as one of the ideal psychological conditions pursued and preferred by many individuals (Jiang & Jiang, 2015). In the working context, PEF is referred to as the perceived congruence or compatibility among the individual characteristics of her or his associated job or organization (Edwards *et al.*, 1998). PEF has a subjective nature and dynamic related to time, just like an individual who represents change over time as he/she shift their attitudes, experience, and skills. Subsequently, the environment also changes as individual come and go, because organizations adjust and job demands also change with the environments (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). PEF is a multi-faceted construct that is influenced due to individual associations with various types of PEF fits (PJ, PO, PG, PV and PS) (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). In other words, organizations attract and hire those individuals who will have a better fit and those who have no fit, will leave the organizations.

This process becomes more homogenous with time inside an organization. The actions of an organization that enhance fitness include recruitment and selection through which new employees are hired, however this is not merely the mechanism through which an organization can influence the employee's fitness or impose organizational changes. In the early days of employment, organizations arrange socialization programs to assist new employees for adjustment and training to have PEF (Bauer *et al.*, 2007). Organization can improve their efforts through orientation of newcomers which increases the understanding of new employees about the organizational values and shift their personal values towards organizational values (Cable & Parsons, 2001). Similarly, perceived and actual PEF enhances with time because socialization programs stabilize the actual PEF and employees do not change but perceived PEF is increased due to social support (Cooper-Thomas *et al.*, 2004). So, career adaptive individuals have PEF which is the result of socialization and training (Cooper-Thomas *et al.*, 2004; Cable & Parsons, 2001).

At a personal level, individual precursors also change the PEF. Adaptability influences the individual's attitudes and his or her work performance. It shows the ability to change and willingness that predict the motivation for PEF over time (Wang *et al.*, 2011). Adaptability influences the PEF through two ways. First, adaptability continuously occurs until the individual attain actual and perceived PEF because the job meets the individual needs. Second, it contributes to the impression so that the individual meets the job demands (Wang *et al.*, 2011). Individuals with high CA level shape negotiate environments to accomplish a better fit among their abilities, needs and resources within the environment. The term "*PEF*" is at the heart of TWA (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Particularly, according to TWA, individuals have many needs and multiple reinforcements existing in the working environment. Individuals feel satisfaction when the system of reinforcement within the work environment corresponds to the individual needs system (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). But, the CA skill of an individual allows

him/her to explore, plan, decide and solve the problems of working environments and demands reinforcer according to their career stages. In this situation, the job also facilitates the individual in career stages, by providing appropriate job sources, socialization, training, mentoring, recognition, promotion and compensation with respect to need, age and motivation, to have a better fit. Thus, a hypothesis can be developed as:

H6: CA and PEF have a positive relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages

According to the structural approach, structural characteristics help an individual in their career advancement. Specific, organizational factors such as internal promotional activities influence the self-career management (Tosi *et al.*, 2000). Organizations which have more diverse, complex activities and hierarchical systems facilitate promotion through corporate hierarchy (Oliver, 1997; Hall & Moss, 1998; McDonald Brown, & Bradley, 2005). Job Promotion increase the job responsibilities and challenging tasks for an employee (Dessler, 2008). Further, PEF is important in fulfilling the need of job promotions and challenging job activities. Managers should strive to increase the fit through fulfilling the job demands and improve the employee's abilities, subsequently, the supervisor and subordinate attract each other on the basis of similarities which is known as "*fit*" (Diefendorff Greguras, & Fleenor 2016; Chuang, Shen & Judge, 2016). Three factors influence each person in PEF; people, behavior and environment. Environment includes physical and social environments that can influence the individual's behavior. Social environment involves colleagues, friends and family members. Physical environment includes facilities given at the workplace for performing tasks efficiently. Both environments give social support and opportunities which encourage learning behavior and behavioral changes in an individual. These changes can be in the form of increasing one's ability and skill or changes in personality and attitude. As the PEF process

occurs continuously and reciprocally, the individual's ability, skill and attitude are reinforced and reviewed so that it will be developed completely. In addition, observational learning occurs when an individual observes the actions of another individual and also the reinforcements that another individual gets (Bandura, 1997). When individuals have high PEF at work, this will enhance the job involvement in the form of positive work performance, job attitude and behavior (Cable & Judge, 1996; Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005) and have individual outcome (Downes *et al.*, 2017) such as decreased work stress, intention to quit, career satisfaction, occupational commitment, career involvement and ethical behavior (Griffin & Hesketh, 2003; Lyons & O'Brien, 2006; Sekiguchi, 2004). Consequently, an individual, who has congruence with his /her working environment, influences the CP. The assumptions of Dawis and Lofquist (1984) indicate that fit among organizational characteristics and individuals or working context should increase the chance of job promotions and challenging tasks. TWA takes a unified approach by considering the significance of both personal and environmental factors for reducing CP (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Lyness & Erkovan, 2015). As a proximal contextual notion, in this section the importance is given to "*working environment*". It shows the degree to which an organization provides the support, regarding career plateau. Organizations that invest in the career plateau reduction strategies and also provide mentorship, training and other developmental opportunities to improve the skills of an individual, have the possibility of managing the CP. Contextual factors in the form of career development opportunities, plans for personal development, training programs (Barnett & Bradley, 2007; Lyness & Ragins, 2011) and effective organizational level CP strategies such as reducing the significance of job promotion as a sign of success, hiring of more solid citizens and fewer stars, transitions into individual retirement, equitable promotions, the role of self-efficacy to help the solid citizens, honest feedback, job enrichment opportunities, and meaningful rewards, supportive supervision, participation in the organizational life and taking care of employees' health

(Milstein,1990a, 1990b) predicting the positive outcomes of CP such as an increase in organization commitment, lower absenteeism, turnover intentions, and increased performance (Sturges *et al.*, 2005).

In the light of the above studies and the principles of TWA this study has taken the environmental factors into consideration in minimizing CP. This study proposes that individuals who worked in such organizations that followed the CP strategies would have lower CP because organizational practices can help the individuals with respect to age groups in discovering what they need from their career and ways to accomplish those career goals. So, this research claims that the relationship among PEF and CP is stronger in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages of employees because organizational CP strategies help to make adjustments in the working environment. Therefore, this hypothesis is introduced:

H7: PEF and CP have a negative relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages

As explained above, career plateau has dysfunctional influences on commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, performance and actual turnover among employees (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, it is essential to uncover those factors that impact the CP. In addition, past studies of Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) operationalized PEF, POF and PJF in the workplace. However, current research has identified more types of PEF within the work setting such as PSF, PVF, and PGF (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005). So, comprehensive PEF may capture the mediating mechanisms underlying the association among CA and CP (Jiang, 2016; Shabeer *et al.*, 2018). This research claims on the basis of TWA, career adaptability as a personal resource in career stages (e.g. establishment, maintenance and declines) which is improved and can help an individual to obtain PEF in this process contextual factors (e.g. CP organizational level strategies) for all age groups (see section 2.10) become beneficial for the achievement of

fitness that consequently manages the CP present in career stages (see figure 10). Thus, taken together it is proposed that:

H8: PEF acts as mediator among CA and CP in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages

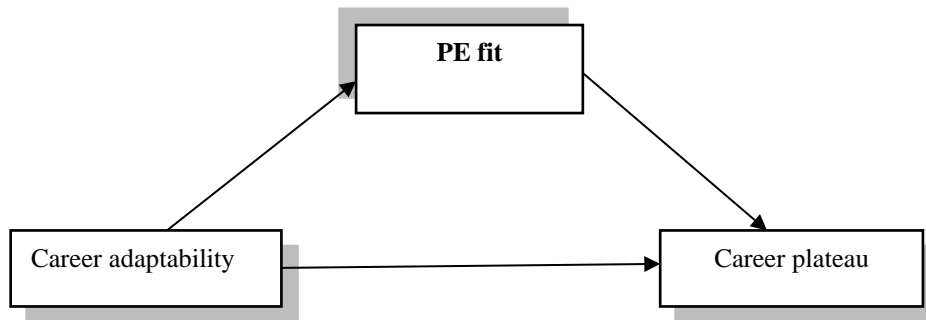


Figure 10: Model 2: CA-PEF-CP

2.13.3. Model 3: Proactive Personality-Career Adaptability-Career Plateau

The sections 2.17.1 and 2.17.2 have already described the association among PP and CA, CA and CP. This section is going to explain the relationship between PP and CP. PP is a motivator of proactive behaviors in the workplace and beneficial for an individual's career because it is linked with adjustment (Kammeyer, Mueller, & Wanberg, 2003), performance (Crant, 1995), intrinsic and extrinsic career success (e.g. promotions) (Seibert *et al.*, 2001). The importance of proactive behavior is that it has dispositional attribute with respect to the actor's behavior when others see it. Due to having dispositional attribution, PP is based on internal characteristics instead of situational factors (Ross, 1977; Gilbert & Malone, 1995). Often, dispositional attributions are considered as errors that occur when observers do not recognize the situational forces sufficiently (Malle, 2006). However, proactive behavior is derived from voluntary choices of an individual to plan, anticipate and act in advance but dispositional attributions are appropriate because the choices of individuals are self-implicating. PP is often initiated within an individual; he/she chooses voluntarily and also takes responsibility for their

behaviors. The behaviors of PP appear to be a reflection and an expression of an individual's personal idiosyncratic styles and signatures. Since, PP is anticipated and acted in advance; it is tough to feature the proactive behavior due to situational factors (Grant, Parker, & Collins, 2009). Moreover, career plateau is a contextual phenomenon that occurs because of structural limitation. Thus, we can say that PP has a low chance of getting affected by CP. PP is more likely to be diagnostic on the bases of values and beliefs (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999; Tetlock, 1985). In the situation of CP, PP shows a range of dispositional attributions and personal evaluations of several proactive behaviors, including feedback-seeking (Edwards, 1995) and helping behavior (Bolino, 1999).

The dispositional attributions regarding PP increase the possibility that the individual will get both punishment and reward for their actions (Staw, 1984). When the PP performed behavior is due to dispositional causes, they consider that those actions are chosen by an individual. This study argues on the bases of TWA that punishment (demotion, salary deduction, firing) and reward (salary, promotion, and career progression) reinforces that what an individual receives due to PP is dependent on the satisfaction of the environment (Ashford *et al.*, 2003). If co-workers and supervisors are happy with PP, they will be interested to reward it in the form of promotion; if they are not pleased with PP and their behaviors, they will express a negative evaluation. Within the context of career plateau, an individual with PP can follow these CP strategies (Rantze & Feller, 1985) to achieve a satisfactory environment such as the hopscotch and placid approach, changes in the uniform approach, developing a realistic picture of the environment, entrepreneurial approach, being entrepreneurial and seeking methods to grow within the same job position. Many reinforcements are given to PP who is involved in proactive behavior. Firstly, When PP is taken as self-serving, unethical or causing harm it is related to punishment reinforcement. For instance, individuals who engage in premeditated crimes such as fraud and theft are usually reprimanded, ostracized, jailed and fired (Greenberg, 2002;

Holtfreter, 2005). Individuals who engage in premeditated violence and aggression are prosecuted, disciplined, reprimanded and even retaliated against (Griffin & Lopez, 2005), and individuals who are involved in premeditated work of betraying the other's trust are frequently penalized (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998). While these types of proactive behaviors are indicated by premeditation, planning and anticipation-inadvertent or accidental behaviors have less possibility of punishment (Darley & Pittman, 2003). Secondly, PP perceived that organizational and interpersonal relations are related to rewards and reinforcements. For instance, individuals who have taken personal initiatives as well as having social networks are evaluated favorably by their supervisors (Thompson, 2005), individuals who show innovation and career initiatives get higher salaries and promotions (Seibert *et al.*, 1999, 2001), individuals who tend to display proactive behavior are considered by others as charismatic leaders (Crant & Bateman, 2000) and individuals who display higher efforts and help others, show persistence, take initiative and self-discipline entertain higher ratings from supervisors, more awards and greater number of job promotions (Van Scotter, Motowidlo & Cross, 2000). Thirdly, PP that is taken as mixed in their behaviors. For instance, harmful to some and beneficial to other parties- is linked to both punishments and rewards. PP who expressed themselves vocally and deliberately involved in whistle-blowing are rewarded sometimes and punished in some cases (Warren, 2003; Miceli & Near, 1997). When an individual is involved in proactive self-handicapping in which he/she broadcasted low expectations that can be exceeded later (Becker & Martin, 1995; Tice & Baumeister, 1990), they may obtain rewards on exceeding the performance expectations and receive punishments on setting low expectations of their performance. On the basis of these lines of evidence and reasoning, the study offers that a proactive personality who is perceived as ethical, has more chances of getting job promotions or other rewards within the organization, this reduces the CP in career

establishment, maintenance and decline stages. Therefore, the following hypothesis is introduced:

H9: PP and CP have a negative relationship in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

CA has a set of competencies and attitudes that the individual applies in adjusting themselves to the working place (Savickas, 2013). CA is a psychosocial construct (Savickas, 1997) that is unstable and nearer to psychological capital rather than personality traits, and assists in transforming strategies for giving direction to adaptive behavior and acts as an agent (Savickas, 2013). CA is linked with work and career outcomes such as career optimism, proactive personality (Jiang, 2017; Tolentino *et al.*, 2014), job satisfaction (Fiori, Bollmann, & Rossier, 2015), sense of control (Duffy, 2010), subjective success of career (Zacher, 2014), employability (de Guzman & Choi, 2013), and searching strategies for jobs (Koen *et al.*, 2010). CA also acts as a mediator in determining career networking, proactive skill, career planning (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015), strategic competence (Guan *et al.*, 2016), career exploration (Li *et al.*, 2015), personality (Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016) and career competencies (Dumulescu, Balazsi & Opre, 2015). As mentioned earlier, previous studies have indicated the mediating role of CA in predicting adaptive behaviors. Thus, this study tested how the CA mediates the link between PP and CP on the basis of TWA, in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages (see section 2.14) and introduces the hypothesis (see figure 11):

H10: CA acts as mediator among PP and CP in career (a) establishment, (b) maintenance, and (c) decline stages.

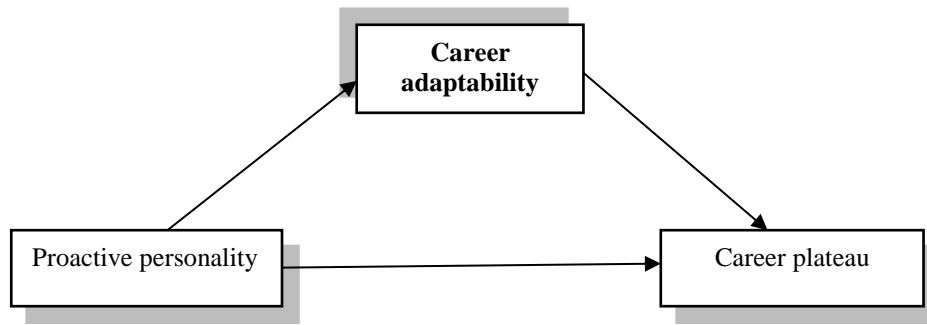


Figure 11: Model 3: PP-CA-CP

2.13.4. Integrated Research Model 4

Building on the claims of COR, which is concerned with resource gaining, protection and sustaining in the context (e.g. stress) of resource loss and TWA explains the process of achieving PEF through key individual and organization level factors, the integrated model of this research aims at investigating the influence of the proactive personality on career plateau among employees of higher educational institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan who are in their career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. This model has three sub-models. The first model represents the mediating role of EI in the association among proactive personality and career adaptability in career stages by relating the PP with EI, EI with CA and PP with CA. The second model reveals the mediating role of PEF in the association between CA in career stages by linking the CA with PEF, PEF with CA, and CA and CP. The third model indicates the mediating role of CA among proactive personality and career plateau in career stages by proposing the PP with CA, CA with CP and PP with CP.

To sum up, PP has personal resources that encourage her/him to take initiatives and bring changes in the environment. PP engages in emotional intelligence by applying proactive coping strategies that help in the understanding the self and other emotions. According to COR theory, an individual who has the ability to gain resources; he/she will be more interested in acquiring more new resources. Thus, an individual that has PP and EI has personal resources which force him/her to adjust according to the needs of their career. In this situation, they apply career adaptability skills to fit in the environment. According to TWA, when the needs of an

individual and reinforcements are matched, an individual does not show negative attitudes in the work place. Individual personal recourses (e.g. proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability) help him/her to make PEF then both individual and organizational. CP strategies are used which increase the chance of getting more promotions and challenging tasks. In other words, all these personal resources participate in minimizing CP among employees of HEIs in Pakistan who are in different career stages (see figure 12).

This explanation leads to a hypothesis:

H11: EI, CA and PEF sequentially mediate the association among PP and CP.

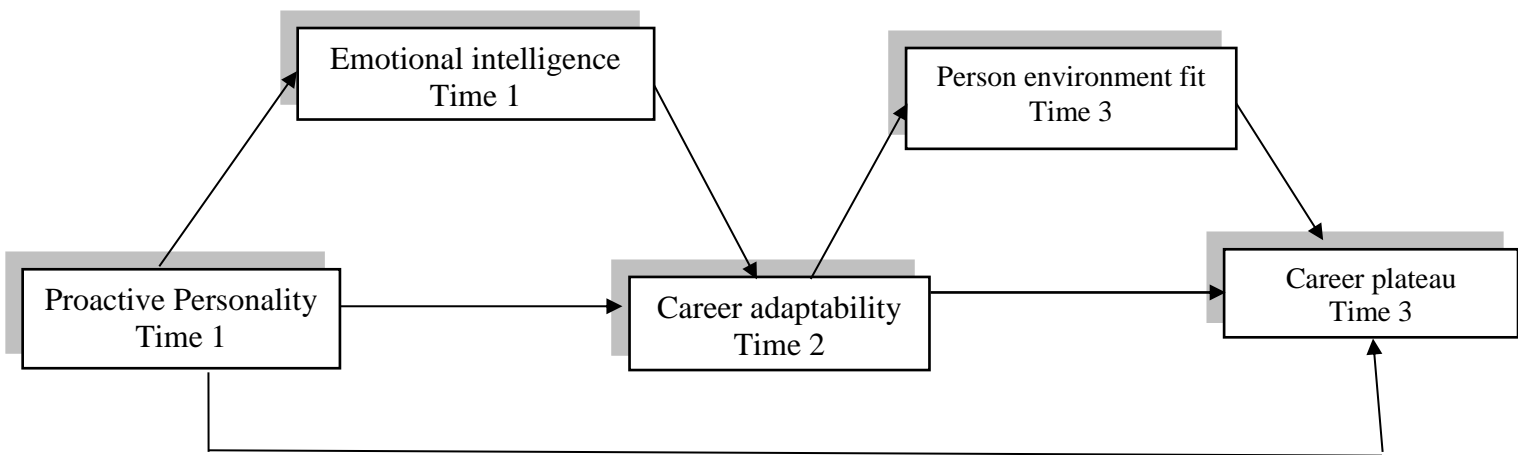


Figure 12: Integrated research model 4 (PP-EI-CA-PEF-CP)

This model gives a holistic view of reducing career plateau at an individual level by considering the more personal constructs and fewer organizational constructs. The rationale behind taking more personal constructs is that currently people following the boundaryless career (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) which could render the plateau notion.

2.14. Chapter Summary

Based on the significance of career plateau in the HEIs, as discussed in chapter one, this chapter has unlocked the black box of the PP-CP association among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages of employees in HEIs and provided a detailed discussion on it. After briefly introducing the country, the context and existence of CP of HEIs in Pakistan, reviews of the study variables such as proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability, person-environment-fit and career plateau are mentioned in this chapter. After that theoretical lenses of COR and TWA are explained in term of their usage in building proposed hypotheses for this research. As the research is divided into career stages, in the next section Super's career stages and its relevance with study variables are mentioned. The literature on mediating models was termed as 'black box' and presented with named model 1, model 2 and model 3. The model 1 postulated the positive association among PP and CA, PP and EI, EI and CA and the mediating role of EI among selected career stages. The model 2 proposed the positive relationship among CA and CP, CA and PEF, PEF and CP, and the mediating role of PEF among preferred career stages. Model 3 developed the positive link among PP and CP, PP and CA, CA and CP and the mediating role of CA among career stages in HEIs of Pakistan. Lastly, the integrated model or serial mediation is introduced with the help of COR and TWA.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The key objective of the study is to test the association among PP and CP through mediating mechanisms such as proactive personality- emotional intelligence- career adaptability, career adaptability- person environment fit- career plateau, and proactive personality- career adaptability-career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. Cross-sectional studies are preferable to test the mediations; it is affected by common method bias that is an error of systematic method due to having single source or single rater (Rindfleisch *et al.*, 2008). An effective way for minimizing this type of bias is to gather data in various time intervals (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) and in pilot study, most of the participants recognized the questionnaire was lengthy, also recommended to collect data in different times. Due to these reasons, this research was designed to collect the data in three waves, with two weeks' time intervals among each wave and it permits the collection of data as PP, and EI (time 1), CA (time 2) and PEF and CP (time 3).

3.1. Research paradigm

The beginning of the study starts from a topic and a certain paradigm. In the social and human sciences, paradigms help to comprehend the phenomena by updating assumptions regarding the social world such as what develops as legitimate issues, proof criteria, solutions, and how science must be performed. Paradigms incorporate both methods and theories (Creswell, 1994). The notion “*paradigm*” was originally applied by Kuhn (1962) to explain a set of values, beliefs, and generalizations for community specialists (Deshpande, 1983). But, Creswell and Clark (2011) favored the notion “*worldview*” that is not restricted to be related with any scholar's community; rather it recommends the shared values and beliefs of scholars: the knowledge argues, the methods, the strategies, all add to the study approach that is required to be qualitative, quantitative or mixed (Creswell, 2009) (See figure 13).

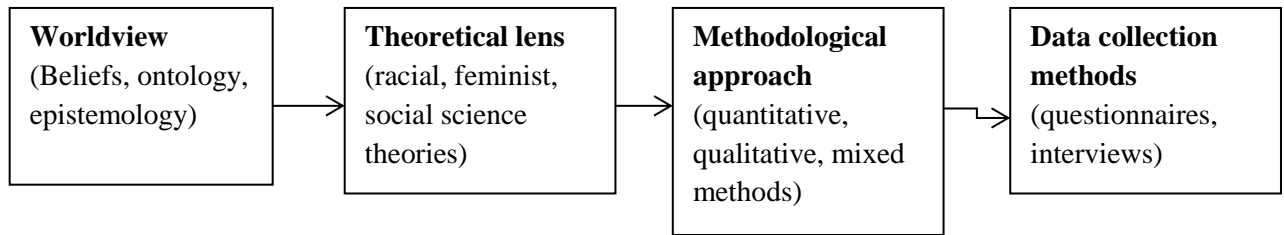


Figure 13: Designing a research study (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2009)

There are four levels in designing a study. The paradigm indicates the theory which the scholar applies. The theory helps the scholar to select the research strategy or methodology to conduct the research. Lastly, the methodology includes the appropriate procedures or methods to gather, analyze and interpret the data (Creswell & Clark, 2011). When designing research, constant variations occur in terms of “*methods*” and “*methodology*” (Giddings, 2006; Foss, 2002). Methods and methodology shared a synergetic association and scholars often explain them in different ways, dependent on the scholar’s philosophical approach (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007). It is claimed that a scholar frames the question of research and decides the methods and process to apply that named “*methodology*” while the tools applied to gather and analyze the data are termed “*methods*” (Kothari, 2004; Giddings, 2006). The basic belief system of four paradigms is characterized summarily on the basis of rhetoric, ontology, axiology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology is linked to assumptions regarding the issues about ‘what exists and the nature of reality (Burrell & Morgan, 1985). Epistemology is related with the beliefs regarding the nature of knowing or what we already know and how we can know (Annells, 1996). Methodology is referred to as the research processes and rhetoric is the writing style or research language (Creswell, 1994). Axiology reflects on the contribution of values in the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Paradigms are termed constructivist, post-positivist, participatory and pragmatist (Creswell & Clark, 2011) as discussed below.

The “*post-positivist worldview or paradigm*” (also named empirical science, quantitative research and positivism) is explained as a notion of singular reality in which truth is objectively discovered, in term of quantitative study (Morgan, 2007; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Giddings,

2006; Feilzer, 2010; Doyle, Brady & Byrne, 2009). The study includes phenomenon description and systematic observation, contextualized within a theory or model, hypotheses development, the execution of controlled experimental research, the usage of inferential statistics for testing hypotheses and lastly, the statistical results interpretation on the bases of original theory (Creswell, 2009; Cacioppo, Semin, & Berntson, 2004). The axiology is unbiased because the scholars apply checks to minimize bias and the rhetoric is applied on the formal research report (Creswell & Clark, 2011). This approach has advantages; ease in collection of data and analyses within a short period of time. However, it is tough to identify subjective issues such as beliefs, perceptions and motivations (Roux & Barry, 2009).

The “*social constructivist worldview*” includes exploring reality by selecting qualitative methods for research (Giddings, 2006; Feilzer, 2010; Creswell & Clark, 2011). The constructivists reflect that every person has different meanings and views about the same situation and opinions must be valued. These different opinions are linked with the historical, cultural and social interaction of individuals. The scholars believed that they have more chances to get biased results, if the background intervenes in the interpretation of data (Creswell, 2009). The scholars talked actively regarding their biases and interpretations as well as the reports of research which are informally written (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Since, this approach is beneficial, it permits deeper understanding of the beliefs, motivations and attitudes of individuals. Shortcomings involve more time needed to gather data, analysis complexity, difficulty to approach each subject of the targeted population (Roux & Barry, 2009) and the scholar is biased due to being more inclined towards qualitative instead of quantitative methods (Creswell, 2009).

The “*participatory worldview*” describes the issues of social justice omitted by remaining worldviews. The scholars adopted this worldview because research considers political nature and agreed that it is driven by political concerns (Creswell & Clark, 2011). This approach

provides benefits for marginalized groups by gaining knowledge from the research process and research results. The drawbacks are that scholars may not be recognized by various groups in the community due to their varied agendas. Furthermore, empowered officials, politicians, street and communities may pressurize the scholar to stop the research from taking place (Roux & Barry, 2009). The scholars negotiate the biases with respondents and the report of the research is written in the style of advocacy (Creswell & Clark, 2011). This kind of worldview is not appropriate for the current study.

The “*pragmatist worldview*” recommends that specific physical research constraints can be determined without using data or theory exclusively (Doyle *et al.*, 2009). This worldview is suggested for a mixed method study because it permits the scholar to move flexibly among the deduction and induction phases, when conducting an inquiry (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Scott & Briggs, 2009; Doyle *et al.*, 2009; Morgan, 2007; Feilzer, 2010; Jang *et al.*, 2008; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007; Giddings, 2006). Axiology is considered mixed and scholars include both unbiased and biased information in the findings and process and the report of research is also written in informal and formal style (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The key advantage of this worldview is the research design flexibility to select the strategy and method. Therefore, the strength of the method overcomes the weakness of method when quantitative and qualitative approaches are applied in combination. But there is a difficulty in developing a research design that makes the balance between practical implications and application. Another challenge is that involved methods reveal opposite results that must be taken into consideration while designing methodology and interpreting the findings (Roux & Barry, 2009).

3.2. Selected Research Paradigm for This Study

It is essential to discuss the philosophical assumptions in order to frame the study inquiry. Scholars are guided that they must fully understand the philosophical assumptions of

worldviews (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) because failure to determine the philosophical issues influences the research process quality (Bryman, 2012; Easterby-Smith, 2008).

The sound and clear knowledge of philosophical assumptions can assist in selecting research design and also enables a scholar to take informed decisions on determining a certain research strategy and approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Bryman, 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2008). Each worldview involves basic assumptions (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011): epistemological, ontological and methodological. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that the scholar approaches the world with the help of a set of framework and ideas (ontology and theory) that have specific questions (epistemology) which is examined in different methods (research methodology). However, the positions we consider regarding world nature and world knowledge have provided the suggestions for what and how questions/data should be answered, posed or investigated and interpreted. In short, these types of philosophical commitments shape the methodological choices for the study. Three questions are interconnected (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011): ontological, epistemological and methodological. In the following section these questions are addressed for the inquiry of this study.

3.2.1. Ontological Stance

The ontological stance claims that reality is not considered an objective phenomenon and has several realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A scholar performs the study inquiry with the ontological knowledge of the research. The logic of following research strategy requires to be based in the assumptions of ontology and nature of humanity that explain the scholar's own view regarding the social world. Knowing the assumptions of ontology about the social world in which the individual operates, lives in defining the basic worldview that will act as the basic research inquiry foundation (Creswell, 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2008).

In the process of research, ontological assumption is critical because we make assumptions regarding what can be determined about reality and world nature (Bryman & Bell, 2008). By considering the external world (involving social phenomenon and structures), the scholar believes that it is independent from our understanding and identification (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000). In this regard, critical realism is not recognized however it also improves the subjectivity in our interpretation and observations. When we expect to find and research a phenomenon that we have conducted with prior experiences and understandings (Creswell, 2012). This assumption has certain implications for any study that is aimed at examining the social world and individual behavior in which she or he lives.

Within the ontological framework, the objective of my research is to test the proposed models of proactive personality and career plateau with the help of established theories of TWA and COR in the context of HEIs of Pakistan. The intent of the study is aimed at objective observations because the phenomena is not going to be impacted by our assumptions, knowledge and interpretations rather it assumes that the social world or individual behaviors are fixed entities, therefore, historical and social-cultural are not changing (Ussher, 1999). Hence, within a critical realism framework, the objective is to develop objection predictions; we will make a fruitful contribution through the study's description and interpretations of the outcomes (Ussher, 1999). A detailed explanation of how the scholar has reached the employees of HEI who experienced career plateau will be discussed in the later section, where the researcher has explained the sampling techniques in detail.

3.2.2. Epistemological Stance

Knowledge of epistemology argues how the scholar begins to gain knowledge regarding the social world of an individual (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell, 2012). The epistemological stance acquires what we know regarding the knowledge of reality and how we can acquire that knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). The philosophical questions need a scholar to not examine

the nature of knowledge but to come up with an argument through which things we thought are possible to be discovered (Bryman, 2012) Epistemological positions are diverse and involve positivism and social constructionism (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2012). Post-positivism deals with deductive logic and it are related closely to the object knowledge of the research (Bryman, 2012). Positivism believes that social science is organized and combines the deductive logic with empirical observations in order to explore and support the causal laws that are applied to learn the generalized patterns of human activity (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). Positivists say that empirical facts are separate from thoughts or personal ideas; they are guided by cause and effect law; the patterns of social reality are considered stable and its knowledge is additional (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003; Crotty, 1998).

Choosing the right worldview is dependent on the questions of research which are being examined (Hair,Bush & Ortinau, 2003). Creswell (2003) also recommends that the selection of a suitable approach is related with research problems that require to be solved. For example, if the problem is needed to identify such factors that impact the outcome, the use of an intervention, knowing the best predictors of consequences or explanation or to investigate a theory, then the quantitative/ post-positivism design is appropriate (Creswell, 2003). The research objective of this study is to postulate and test the mediating mechanisms of proactive personality and career plateau across HEIs in Pakistan and to have generalized results through a sample of various career stages. Moreover, the terms of proactive personality and career plateau are well understood and established in my context, thus, a quantitative approach under the worldview of post-positivism is the most appropriate way for achieving the objectives of my research.

Quantitative research has different research types: intervention, associational and descriptive studies.

- a) *Descriptive study* identifies and explains the research problem; summarizes the sample characteristics, behaviors and attitudes of the problem (Franekel & Wallen, 2000). This information can be collected through qualitative methods and content analysis.
- b) *Association study* is more linked with determining the association among the variables (Franekel & Wallen, 2000). It has two types- causal comparative and correlation research (Franekel & Wallen, 2000; Ary *et al.*, 1996). Correlation study describes a data set in order to know whether an association is present or not.
- c) *Causal comparative study* includes the careful choice of groups with key differences and tries to control extraneous variables which can influence the difference. In this study, the scholar has attempted to select samples on the bases of working experiences that are faced with career plateau and classified into career stages.
- d) *Manipulation or experimental study* (Franekel & Wallen, 2000) which permits the investigator to make changes in the environments or subjects that presumably impact the outcomes. This approach is appropriate for investigating theoretical model and determining causation (Franekel & Wallen, 2000).

To sum up, many methodologies are present in a quantitative study. Since, the purpose of this research is to test the association among proactive personality (independent variable) and career plateau (dependent variable) including the mediated impacts of career adaptability, emotional intelligence and person-environment fit, the association method is applied for data analysis of this study.

3.2.3. Methodological Stance

The assumptions of ontology and epistemology are explained above which claim that there are various procedures included in choosing a design for a single study. Thus, a single procedure is not followed that will lead to the best design for answering a particular question (Davis, 2005). Many scholars recommend that different approaches are good at performing different things that are linked with the research query which requires an answer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2008; Creswell, 2012). As the nature of the study is association and relies on testing the proposed hypotheses, the post-positivism approach is adopted for knowledge testing (Gracia & Brush, 2012; Bryman, 2012).

There are two associated strategies in quantitative research: survey research and experimental design. Experimental design involves random subject assignment to create a treatment of conditions and involves quasi-experiment (Keppel, 1991) Single subject designs are addressed in experimental design. Secondly, survey research strategy is applied in social sciences commonly for gathering the data (Ary *et al.*, 1996). It includes the use of a structured interview or questionnaire to gather data in either longitudinal (e.g. time-lag) or cross-sectional timeframes (Babbie, 1990). Explaining certain population aspects quantitatively is the key characteristic of survey research (Mclyntyre, 1999; Bell, 1996) and it applies in the research of social science, especially in the context of career management and development, the current research uses the survey method because it serves the research objectives of the present study, by enabling the scholar to collect responses from a large sample. As, this study has objective to investigate a theory but not to propose a theory, my epistemological stance is post-positivism in which the scholar has applied the survey method as the inquiry strategy. Data collection is performed through questionnaires applying the self-administered survey method.

3.3. Rationale for Post-Positivism

The rationale for post-positivism has several aspects. Firstly, career plateau is a growing phenomenon that requires the methodology's most essentially quantitative methods to improve the generalization of the outcomes based on a framework of hypothetical-deductive methods. Currently, scholars are encouraged to develop a framework on career plateau which solves this issue through quantitative methods. Secondly, in the Pakistani context, career plateau is a widely experienced phenomenon which calls for a generalization of a solution-oriented framework. Creswell (2012) indicated that quantitative approaches are best for this purpose. The gaps mentioned in chapter 1 also give the justification for using this technique. It also gives the opportunity to gather data through questionnaire which is reliable (Creswell, 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2008). The philosophical claims of ontology and epistemology have been formed for my selected study inquiry. After deciding on this worldview, the next consideration was the criteria of respondents and sampling techniques.

3.4. Research design

To choose the appropriate design of research, the paradigm, research approach and method provided the ground. This study has followed the post-positivism, deductive approach and quantitative method. The aims of research were to test the relationships between PP and CA via EI, CA and CP via PEF and PP and CP via CA among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. For these objectives, the survey design was applied in which the data was gathered at three different times to reduce the chance of CMB. At T1 the data of PP and EI were collected at T2 (time lag of two weeks) the data of CA were gathered and at T3 (time lag of two weeks) the data of PEF and CP were taken. It was an appropriate method because data was collected by applying a closed ended survey at more than one time and the objective was not to develop manipulation but to test the associations between the interested constructs. This study has used the post-positivism view and deductive approach to develop the hypotheses

from existing theories and literature. In this situation, the quantitative method was selected to investigate the hypotheses and a closed ended survey was the most suitable that enabled the data collection from a large population in an economical and timely fashion and meet the generalizability requirements (Crewell, 2012).

3.5. Participants and procedure

The population referred to each case that is conceivable could be participated in the study (David & Sutton, 2011; Babbie, 2015). The target population of this research was employees of HEIs working in the Punjab province of Pakistan. As per the HEC of Pakistan 217 HEIs were registered in all the provinces of Pakistan at the time of the data collection, which took place in 2020. The current study was performed in the Punjab province that had a total of 73 universities in 2020. As shown in the table, out of 71 HEIs, 28 universities are private and the remaining 43 institutions are functioning under the umbrella of public bodies (see table 8) (HEC recognized universities list, 2021).

Table 8

<i>HEIs in Punjab</i>			
Sector	Private	Public	Total
	28	43	71

Source: HEC recognized universities list (2021)

In the research project, the scholar can't add everything (Punch, 2013). In the research process, sampling is a main step which indicates the selection method of segment (sample) from the interested population (Franekel & Wallen, 2000). With the help of sample results, scholars are able to make claims or generalize the findings regarding the population. Generally, sampling methods have two categories: non-probability sampling and probability sampling. The probability sampling technique is related to probability theory and drawn from units of samples from a population which has an equal chance of being selected. This technique is used widely

by scholars in quantitative researches because each sampling unit has an equal probability/chance to be selected which reduces the bias, this enables scholars to have statistical inferences to the target population and permits estimated sampling error magnitude from which scholars can know the difference in statistical significance of indicators. In contrast, the non-probability sampling technique involves the chance of selection of sampling unit is not equal from an unknown population. This type of technique is used for qualitative studies in which the sample is selected on the bases of the scholar's judgments (Babbie, 1990). Knowing the general principles of quantitative research, the current study has used the probability sampling procedure because this method gives more scientific and objectively defensible findings as compared to the non-probability procedure because probability sampling is less time consuming and costly, shows its vulnerability in the matter of data evaluation and unbiased representation. The current research has utilized random sampling. Random sampling is widely used (Black, 1999): a) random sampling confirms the representative and illustrative sample for the complete population; b) random sampling allows the evasion of cluttering free constructs with irrelevant components which may have influenced the views that were not controlled unequivocally in the investigation. Additionally, probability sampling has less researcher bias as compared to non-probability sampling (Babbie, 2015).

The current research is also applying "*cluster and stratified random sampling*" that are the part of probability sampling. In this sampling, respondents are chosen on a random basis in which the respondent list is impossible to be identified for a selection of sample (Babbie, 2015). First, the cluster is chosen on a geographical basis from the population, as in the current research, the scholar has made nine geographical clusters as it was difficult to obtain the responses from whole population of Punjab province (Divisions of Punjab, Pakistan, 2020): 1) Lahore division (Lahore is known "hub of HEIs"), 2) Bahawalpur division, 3) Dera Ghazi Khan division, 4)

Faisalabad division, 5) Gujranwala division, 6) Multan division, 7) Rawalpindi division, 8) Sahiwal division and 9) Sargodha division (see table 9).

Table 9
Cluster and Stratified Sampling

Clusters \ Strata	Public	Private
Lahore division	13	20
Bahawalpur division	3	—
Dera Ghazi Khan division	2	—
Faisalabad division	4	1
Gujranwala division	—	1
Multan division	5	2
Rawalpindi division	6	2
Sahiwal division	1	—
Sargodha division	1	—

Source: Divisions of Punjab, Pakistan (2020)

The participants consisted of employees from private and public HEIs and universities of the Punjab (Pakistan). The Punjab is considered as the HEIs hub and the most populated province of Pakistan because it includes 71 DAIs/universities: 43 in the public sector and 28 in the private sector. Among them 37 universities are presented in Lahore (the capital of Punjab) (see appendix 5), and the remaining 36 universities are located in other divisions of the Punjab. As mentioned above, this research has divided the Punjab province into nine clusters on a geographical basis. Moreover, this research has subdivided the population into two strata on the organizational characteristic basis: private universities and public universities. Stratified random sampling is applied when the population has homogeneous subsets that do not overlay

on one another and are named “*strata*”. Stratification assists in increasing the chance of sample selection on a probability basis which shows the whole population. Table 9 depicts a number of universities categorized in all clusters and strata (see Appendix 5 to know HEC recognized HEIs in 2020).

3.5.1. Stage First: Stratified Cluster Random Sampling

The population of the current research was too large for a survey (i.e. 71 HEIs in Punjab), therefore the sample was chosen to generalize the findings and collect the data easily (Babbie, 2015). As compared to other clusters, Lahore division cluster was selected because it has more number of universities and also known as the educational hub of the Punjab and appendix 6 reveals the number of universities selected for each stratum as in the above-mentioned criteria.

Public universities in Lahore division

$$N_{14}=16$$

$$n_{14}= 02$$

Private universities in Lahore division

$$N_{18}=21$$

$$n_{18}= 03$$

Table 10

Criteria for selection of number of universities

If $N \leq 18$	$N_{18}=n_2$
----------------	--------------

If $N > 18$ or $N=23$	$N_{23}=n_3$
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If $N > 23$ or $N=36$	$N_{16}=n_5$
-----------------------	--------------

Source: (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005)

Firstly, the scholar compiled the list of universities for each stratum and randomly chose the universities for data collection. From the first strata, number 11 and 15 universities were nominated randomly from public universities strata as sample ‘n’, furthermore, number 2, 5, 12 universities were randomly selected from the private universities’ strata. In the multi-stage sampling, several samples can be drawn and every sample is the population for the next stage and we chose a sample “Lahore division” which was the population for next stage (see appendix 5). In this situation, the scholar chooses the one cluster and 2 strata. Thus, after stratification a total of 5 universities were selected for the next sampling stage.

3.5.2. Stage two: Multistage sampling

The total number of employees working in higher educational institutions (HEIs) of the Punjab either in private or public universities is not countable. But, in the sample the number of employees in HEIs is countable. This research set a low and high range according to Hajvery University (HU) and Punjab University (PU) (Khyzer Bin Dost, 2018). In order to have accuracy in the sample size, the University of Punjab has the highest number of employees (approximately 21000 employees) was focused on (Nasir, 2018) and a minimum sample size through applying the formula of Yamane (1967) as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where: n=sample size, N= study population, and e= significance level (0.05)

$$n = \frac{21000}{1 + 21000 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{21000}{1 + (21000 * 0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{21000}{1 + 52.5}$$

$$n = \frac{21000}{53.5}$$

$$n = 393$$

And if we take the lowest population in our sample, HU has a low number of employees at 400 (Nasir, 2018) and the same formula of Yamane (1967) was used:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{400}{1 + 400 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{400}{1 + (400 * 0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{400}{1 + 1}$$

$$n = \frac{400}{2}$$

$$n = 200$$

Therefore, the lower and upper limit of the sample is 200 and 393 respectively. By averaging both dimensions, the sample size became 297. According to the further clarification given by (The Research Advisors, 2007), Based on this the sample from each university must be from 196 to 378 and by taking an average of these two it comes to 287. As per Krejcie and Morgan (1970), if the population is 400-420 then the sample size should be 201 and for above 20,000-30000 it comes to 379 and by taking an average of these two it comes to 290. Moreover, the studies on career plateau (Xie, Lu & Zhou, 2015; Wickramasinghe & Jayaweera, 2010; Jung & Tak, 2008; Jiang, 2016; Shabeer, *et al.*, 2018) were also have sample size less than 300.

3.6. Data Collection Modes

As explained in the pilot study, the self-administered questionnaires were used to gather data and it is also confirmed that participants did not face difficulties in completing the responses. In addition, to improve the response rates, in 2nd and 3rd time lags reminders were sent to participants (Mesch, 2008). Both pen and paper and web surveys (De Leeuw & Hox, 2008)

were used in this study. Each form has disadvantages and advantages. The paper and pen self-administration form are described in the pilot study section. Here, because of a series of lockdowns in the Covid-19 pandemic in Pakistan, all universities academic and non-academic work was performed online. Thus, web-surveys were also applied. The web surveys permit the data collection at higher level within a short timeframe (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010) and it is the most cost-effective strategy of data gathering because it saves both on the cost and time of data entry and data processing (Lozar Manfreda & Vehovar, 2008). The Google form was used for web surveys; it allows the researcher to share the link through the e-mail addresses of participants. With respect to paper and pen surveys, this survey improves the response rate because it encourages the participants to finish the questionnaire in their office and obtain immediate required information regarding the questionnaire (Fink, 2013). Initially (December 2019- February 2020), data was only collected by paper and pen surveys by visiting the offices of selected universities in Lahore. But later on, to increase the response rate and due to lockdown, the mixed mode of surveys was applied (Greenlaw & Brown-Welty, 2009).

One concern regarding the mixed mode surveys is a mode impact, which happens when the data is collected from one mode that is different from another mode. However, many studies found that the web and paper and pen surveys have no difference among the responses (Aritomi & Hill, 2011; Beullens, 2003; Gesell, Drain, & Sullivan, 2007). In the period of lockdown (March 2020- May 2020), the researcher only used the web-surveys because it reduces the geographical constraints and allows the respondents to record the responses at different locations and timing. Of the 574 collected responses in period of December 2019 to May 2020, n=270 responses were gathered via paper and pen (December, 2019 and February, 2020), and n= 304 responses were collected via online survey (March and May 2020).

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting the study, ethical considerations were applied namely anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Voluntary participation was emphasized and maintained throughout the data collection phase. The introductory page of paper and pen, and web surveys was completely voluntary, so individuals were informed that they had no pressure of study participation. With regard to confidentiality, the individuals were informed on the introductory page that information would be provided to the researcher and two supervisors, and their responses would be confidential. Specifically, confidentiality was maintained by encrypting the electronic data collected. The data was stored in the Gmail drive of a researcher whose password is protected. Paper questionnaires were placed in a locked cabinet, to which only the researcher has access. With respect to anonymity, the respondents were informed in the questionnaire that responses were not identifiable. They were requested to not provide their name; hence, they supplied their e-mail address if they were interested in taking part in the three-time lag study or wanted to get a brief report of the results. Although the scholar gathered the e-mail addresses they were only used to send online questionnaire links across different time frames.

3.8. Control Variable

Traditionally, CP has referred to the phenomenon of older individuals who have no potential of upward movement. However, CP includes employees at an early career stage (Bardwick, 1986) and it is more relevant to those individuals who are in their career establishment stage (Xie, Xin, & Bai, 2016; Bai, Ling, & Li, 2011). According to this career stage, individuals aged 25-44 that fall into career establishment stage of Super are appropriate for data. So, in this study, the employees of career establishment stage who has a minimum age of 25 is suitable for data collection because they are starting to experience career plateau, however the scholar

has also collected the data from employees of career maintenance and career decline because older employees are also more likely to face this phenomenon.

3.9. Sampling criteria

Data was collected from the employees (female and male) who had minimum age 25 years old and had minimum education graduation and worked in private universities such as Beaconhouse national university, Hajvery university and Lahore university of management sciences and public universities such as university of Punjab and university of Engineering and technology located in Lahore region.

3.10. Instruments

3.10.1. Proactive Personality

A shortened version of Bateman and Grant's (1993) PP scale introduced by Seibert, Crant, and Kraimer (1999) was used. It had 10-items and responses were gathered on a 7-likert scale (1-totally disagree- 7-totally agree).

3.10.2. Emotional Intelligence

The EI scale developed by Wrong and Law (2002) was used in this study. It had 16-items and four sub-scales: use of emotion, other's emotional appraisal, emotion regulation, and self-emotion appraisal. It was noted on a 7-likert scale (1-totally disagree- 7-totally agree).

3.10.3. Career Adaptability

The Career Adapt-Ability Scale (CAAS) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) was applied which have 4-sub-scales such as concern, curiosity, control, and confidence which each had six items. Responses were recorded on a 7-likert scale (1-totally disagree- 7-totally agree).

3.10.4. Person-Environment Fit

PE fit was evaluated with sub-scales; P-O fit and P-J fit, 12 items (7-likert scale) (Cable & DeRue, 2002), P-V fit and P-G fit, 8 items (7-likert scale) (Vogel & Feldman, 2009) and P-S fit, 5 items (7-likert scale) (Chuang, Shen, & Judge, 2016).

3.10.5. Career Plateau

Career plateau was evaluated through the scale of Milliman (1992). Respondents were asked to respond to 12 items of these scales on a 7 likert scale 7 (totally agree) to 1 (totally disagree). It has two sub-scales job content plateau (6-items) and hierarchical plateau (6-items).

3.11. Pilot Study

After reviewing the literature of career plateau and confirmed the aims of this research, this chapter moves on to how the pilot study was conducted.

3.11.1. The Objectives of Pilot Study

Before undertaking the complete research, there are several reasons to do a pilot study (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). For this study, pre-testing is essential to accomplish three objectives. The first objective is to test the adequacy of adapted scales (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). In this research, two topics of the questionnaire require more examination, namely, (1) emotional intelligence and (2) career plateau. First, the wordings of several items in the career plateau require to be adjusted to ensure it is independent of an employees' expectations, therefore pre-testing is required to confirm that this amendment does not influence the validity and reliability of the survey instruments. The final objective of the pilot study is to understand the feasibility of research and questionnaire designs (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001) before the launch of the questionnaire. It is essential to confirm that study design is clearly addressing the research problems and approaching the target populations. A pilot study can assist the researcher to fulfill this by adding a section at the end of the

questionnaire (Campanelli, 2008). In this section, respondents were asked to show how they had understood the questions of the scales. Constructive feedback was helped the researcher to know the procedures and problems that may be overlooked in the initial design of research or provided the good assurance that full research is prepared to be launched.

3.11.2. Adaptation of Instruments

This first objective of a pilot study is to determine the qualities of adapted measures. This section describes in detail how the items of career plateau and emotional intelligence were adapted.

3.11.2.1 Adaptation of Scales

The measure developed by Milliman (1992) was used to know the level of career plateau. The word “organization” is replaced with “university” (see table 11).

Table 11

Adapted Words of Career Plateau

Original items	Adapted items
1. Job responsibilities have increased significantly.	My job responsibilities have increased a lot.
2. My opportunities for upward movement are limited in the organization.	The chances of upward job promotions are less in this university.
3. I have reached a point where I do not expect to move much higher in this organization.	I will not get more job promotions in this university, because it is the highest job position.

3.11.2.2. Emotional Intelligence

EI scale developed by Wrong and Law (2002) is applied in this study (see table 12).

Table 12

Adapted Words of Emotional Intelligence

Original items	Adapted items
I am able to control my temper and handle difficulties rationally.	I have ability to control my anger and manage the difficulties wisely.
I can always clam down quickly when I am very angry.	I can relax easily when I become very aggressive.

3.11.3. Methodology

A self-administered questionnaire was taken in the form of “*paper and pen*” and selected in the pilot study. There are several important reasons to adopt this method. To begin with, the characteristic of a self-administered questionnaire is that it provides privacy to participants who are given space to answer the sensitive inquiries and to avoid them from providing answers based on social desires (De Leeuw & Hox, 2008). In addition, self-administered questionnaires give flexibility to respondents through which they can answer the questionnaire at their preferred place and time (Lozar *et al.*, 2008; De Leeuw & Hox, 2008). For example, working participants may be busy at the workplace however, they can answer the questionnaire when they are less busy or get off work. The last reason of selecting a self-administered questionnaire is that it is a less costly method of collecting data as compared to face to face interviews (Lozar *et al.*, 2008).

The content of the pilot study had four sections. The first section briefly explains the basic information, including the aims of the research, the time required for completion and the importance of the study. The second section involved all the study constructs which

incorporated the adapted instruments of PP, EI, CA, PEF and CP. The third section asked respondents regarding their demographic information such as gender, age, marital status, job tenure and organizational tenure that are control variables in the literature of CP. The next chapter discusses this in detail. The last section involves an open-ended question where participants were asked to give feedback on the questionnaire. Respondents have the chance to describe the unclear questions and give other suggestions that they think would improve the questionnaire.

3.11.3.1. Procedure

The respondents of the pilot study were employees of University of Gujrat, Pakistan who were a minimum age of 25. In this pilot study, the sample size was 80 because it is suggested that a sample size should be 10% of the project sample size or should be between 25-100 respondents (Treece & Treece, 1982; Emory & Cooper, 2003) and convenience sampling is applied to approach the sample (Calder, Phillips, & Tybout, 1981). A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed between November and December 2019. By the end of December 2019, a total of 69 completed questionnaires were received. After careful consideration, responses that were unqualified or incomplete were eliminated. The numbers of incomplete responses were 12 that were not completed entirely or the responses had all neutral answers. 57 completed questionnaires were considered for the pilot research.

3.11.4. Data Analysis

In order to conduct the data analysis, data screening was performed. The study of Fabrigar *et al* (1999) suggested that data should be distributed normally. Firstly, the normality test is undertaken applying skewness and kurtosis tests through SPSS; the findings revealed that data was distributed normally in the pilot study. After that outlier and missing values analysis were done, it was found in this pilot study, the outliers were less than 2% and missing values were

also less than 5%. The study of Cohen, Ravikumar, and Fienberg (2003) suggested that outliers fewer than 2 or 1 percent should be left alone as well as Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) also recommended that missing values less than 5% should not be treated. To accomplish the objectives of the pilot study, statistical tools such as IBM SPSS and Amos were applied, to determine the reliability (Cronbach alpha) and validity of construct (factor analysis).

3.11.4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Table 13 shows the values of mean (M), standard deviation (S.D) and inter-correlations among constructs in the pilot study. Of the 57 responses, 61% were male and 38% were female, males were a higher percentage. The average age of respondents was 35.1 (1.5), with job status 79% permanent, overall working experience 4-6 years (SD=1.4), organizational tenure 4-6 years (SD=1.1), time taken for last promotion 0-3 years (SD=1.0), and job nature 40% only doing management jobs.

Table 13

<i>Correlation Analysis of Pilot Study</i>					
	CA	CP	PP	PEF	EI
CA	1				
CP	-.33**	1			
PP	.35**	-.55**	1		
PEF	.48**	-.25**	.47**	1	
EI	.28**	-.35**	.39**	.45**	1
M	4.1	5.5	5.0	5.8	4.5
S.D	0.6	.04	.09	.05	.04

N= 57, M=mean S. D= Standard deviation
 **0.01, *0.05

Perhaps the most vital information in table 14 was the high correlation between study variables.

The meaning of high correlation is that two constructs are not different from each other.

However, to investigate further whether it is accurate or cross-loading on other variables, factor analysis is required to be carried out.

3.11.4.2. Reliability of Instruments

Reliability of instruments was measured using Cronbach alpha. This coefficient indicates internal consistency and correlation among measuring scales (Cronbach, 1951). The value of Cronbach alpha is ranged from 1 to 0, with a higher score presenting increased level of reliability. A criterion of above .70 was applied to show an acceptable range of reliability (Nunnally, 1978). The results of table 14 present the Cronbach alpha of five study variables that the researcher is interested to test, namely proactive personality ($\alpha = .88$), emotional intelligence ($\alpha = .78$), career adaptability ($\alpha = .83$), person environment fit ($\alpha = .80$), and career plateau ($\alpha = .77$) were all above 0.70 and hence were a reliable variable.

Table 14

Reliability Analysis in Pilot Study

Proactive personality (PP)	.88
Emotional intelligence (EI)	.78
Career adaptability (CA)	.83
Person environment fit (PEF)	.80
Career plateau (CP)	.77

3.11.4.3. Construct Validity

Proactive Personality. To fulfill objectives of pilot study, the CFA was performed to know the distinctive items of construct namely, proactive personality.

Table 15

<i>CFA Analysis Of PP</i>	
	Factor 1
PP2	.521
PP3	.763
PP4	.827
PP5	.587
PP6	.782
PP7	.764
PP8	.562
PP9	.949
PP10	.760
Model fitness indices:	
X ² /d.f.=	2.07, TLI=.87,
CFI=.90,	SRMR=.04,
RMSEA=.06	

In the next step, a total 10 items that evaluated the proactive personality were investigated by CFA. Communalities with a cut-off value .40 were used as recommended by Costello and Osborne (2005). One item upon screening from the proactive personality (PP1 “I am searching constantly for new ways to enhance the quality of life, .37) was under .40, therefore deleted. The remaining results are shown in table 15.

All other items of proactive personality were loaded in one factor (factor 1). In the matter of cross-loading, the researcher applied a rule of thumb as.32. An item with over .32 factor loadings in two or more variables or factors must be interpreted with concern (Tabachnick &

Fidell, 2001). Upon the study variable's examination, cross-loading was not a matter of concern for this scale.

To know the validity of the construct of the emotional intelligence, career adaptability, person environment fit and career plateau, the same procedures were followed on the remaining variables. Table 16 illustrates the results of factor analysis.

Table 16

<i>CFA Analysis of Pilot Study Variables</i>															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
PJ1	.791														
PJ2	.884														
PJ3	.843														
PJ4	.581														
PO1		.878													
PO2		.954													
PO3		.843													
PO4		.596													
PG1			.807												
PG2			.769												
PG3			.696												
PG4			.642												
PG5			.642												
PS1				.717											
PS2				.911											
PS3				.888											
PS4				.835											
PS5				.847											
PV1					.777										
PV2					.757										
PV3					.757										
SEP1						.771									
SEP2						.913									
SEP3						.853									
SEP4						.804									
OEA1							.736								
OEA2							.841								
OEA3							.570								
OEA4							.883								
UE1								.767							

UE2	.780		
UE3	.841		
UE4	.842		
RE1	.871		
RE2	.886		
RE3	.692		
RE4	.865		
JCP1		.701	
JCP2		.661	
JCP4		.592	
JCP5		.762	
JCP6		.559	
HP1		.533	
HP2		.591	
HP3		.827	
HP5		.664	
HP6		.822	
CN1			.611
CN2			.825
CN3			.828
CN4			.760
CN5			.883
CN6			.728
CT1			.827
CT2			.662
CT3			.846
CT4			.814
CT5			.843
CT6			.887
CR1			.824
CR2			.833
CR3			.762
CR4			.869
CR5			.836
CR6			.911
CF1			.845
CF2			.896
CF3			.725
CF4			.841
CF5			.866
CF6			.854

Model fitness indices: $X^2/d.f.$ = 1.19, TLI=.85, CFI=.88, SRMR=.03, RMSEA=.05

JCP3 and HP4 were deleted due to low factor loading.

PJ= Person job, PO= person organization, PG=person group, PV=person vocation, PSF=person supervisor fit, SEP=Self-emotional appraisal and emotional expression of the own self, OEA=Other's emotional appraisal and other's emotional recognition, RE= Regulation of emotion, UE=Use of emotion, JCP= job content plateau, HP=hierarchal plateau, CN= career concern, CT= career control, CR= career curiosity, CF= career confidence

3.11.4.4. Feedback from the Participants

The final objective of the pilot study was to get feedback from participants on how well the research was conducted. Specifically, the question was:

- Do you have any suggestion or unclear questions that may assist us to enhance our research?

A total 27 out of 57 participants replied to this question. A small number of respondents (n=15) commented that many questions appeared repetitive and similar and this may minimize the respondent's interest to finish the questionnaire. DeVellis (2012) mentioned that multiple items seemed similar and repetitive are helpful for researcher in capturing the various perspectives of the construct. The scholar is conscious of the negative impact of confusion from either repetitive or negatively worded items; however, it is able to dismiss any negative aspects of items because a small percentage of participants were concerned.

Participants (n=9) reported that few items caused confusion because of negative wording. In actual fact, negatively worded items are an essential part of measuring a variable. Both negative and positive worded items are required in the same instrument, to minimize agreement or affirmation, or acquiescence bias (DeVellis, 2012). Such bias easily happens when all items in a measure are positively worded and respondents are susceptible to award a high level in the scale. Moreover, the views on negatively reported items in measures may be redundant and are not necessarily a negative comment that needs revision. Most of the respondents confirmed simplicity in the items or questions. If the majority of the respondents reported repetitive and negative wording of the questions, the researcher would have taken immediate action in order

to handle the problem. In summary, survey questions were easy to comprehend for most of the respondents and are appropriate to be applied in the full research.

The suggestion stemming from respondents that the questionnaire is lengthy as the number of items are more than 70 and have less time to respond, so it was divided it into different time intervals. The researcher considered this recommendation as useful and separated the variables in different time lags. This change permits a more honest and convenient measurement of study variables.

Hence, although pilot studies can be a time -consuming process, they may assist the researchers to tackle the unexpected problems they are necessary and worthwhile to do for minimizing innocent misuse of efforts and further resources in the full research (Mason & Zuercher, 1995). This section is a good example of a pilot study which became a good base for full research. In small level research, the researcher was able to get the statistical verification that the all the constructs namely, proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability, personal environment fit and career plateau were reliable and valid. Lastly, on the bases of constructive feedback from the respondents' research changes were made to get data on different variables at different times in order to receive honest responses and for the convenience of participants in the full research.

3.12. Chapter Summary

This chapter explained the reasons for selecting a three-time lag study. It also discussed why self-administrated are suitable for obtaining data. The ways of data collection for each time lag; ethical considerations and questionnaire design of the questionnaire were also discussed. SEM was the appropriated analysis technique to test the mediation models while PROCESS macro was applied for serial mediation. Lastly, the pilot study and its results are presented.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Results

This section gives a brief introduction of data analysis techniques applied in this study. Hence, this is a three-time lag research; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and PROCESS macro of Preacher and Hayes were used to test the four mediating mechanisms in the relationship of PP and CP.

4.1. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

SEM is used to investigate the main effects and mediation effects (or indirect effects) in this research. Gunzler, Chen, Wu and Zhang (2013) have defined the advantages of using SEM to carry out mediation analysis. First, in SEM various independent constructs, mediators and dependent constructs can be examined at the same time and it is easier relatively to interpret the mediation effects. Second, the interface of SEM is user friendly and a path diagram is a basic visualization in SEM that gives a clear picture of causal relationships. Taking these advantages into account, the usage of SEM gives more robust findings for the main and mediator effects. SEM can be conducted by using many statistical packages: EQS, LISREL, Mplus or SPSS and Amos. This study used Amos 26 version software to perform CFA and mediation analysis. Moreover, SPSS is also run to identify the descriptive statistics and to test the serial mediation by PROCESS MACRO of Preacher and Hayes.

4.2. Data Collection in Three-Time Lags

The researchers have given the greater attention to studies of short time lags (Dormann & Griffin, 2015). Time lag researches have strengths as well as limitations. These researches are beneficial because they are clearly focused, highly flexible and effective in knowing the cause and effect relationship. Beside this, time lag researches have limitations such as costing a great deal of money and time, large sample and attrition experience. Thus, on the basis of above

discussion this study has short time lags. The data was gathered in three-time lags and probability of each time lag was two weeks. To confirm that each paper and pen questionnaire was filled by the same employee, a registered ID is assigned to each questionnaire and in case of web surveys, email addresses ensured the same employee responded (see appendix 3 and 4).

450 paper and pen questionnaires were targeted at employees of randomly chosen public and private universities of Lahore in the 1st time lag and 400 questionnaires were received. Again, this retrieved sample of 400 was circulated between the same participants in the 2nd time lag and about 350 filled questionnaires were received. In the 3rd time lag, the same sample of 350 participants was approached and 270 were retrieved. In total, 270 questionnaires were completed which yielded a 33% response rate. After February, 2020 the covid-19 pandemic occurred and all universities were closed and shifted to online for all their activities. In this situation, respondents were approached through their e-mail addresses that were obtained from human resource departments and websites of randomly selected universities. In addition, many meta-analysis studies highlighted that online surveys have a low response rate (6-15%) as compared to other modes of surveys (Vehovar & Lozar Manfreda, 2008; Fan & Yan, 2010; Smyth & Pearson, 2011). Thus, to be on the safe side, in the 1st time-lag of web surveys, a total of 3000 online questionnaire links were emailed to employees and 1010 completed emails were received. In the 2nd time-lag, the same participants were approached and invited for web surveys, 585 filled online questionnaires were retrieved. In the 3rd time lag, 585 of the same employees were contacted through emails and 304 questionnaires were received. In total, 304 filled online questionnaires were obtained (See table 17). All this data collection phase was done in the period of December 2019- May 2020.

Table 17

<i>Responses in different time lags</i>					
Modes of data collection	Questionnaires distributed	1 st time lag	2 nd time lag	3 rd time lag	Response rate
Paper and pen	450	400	350	270	60%
Online survey	3000	1010	585	304	10.13%
Total				574	

4.3. Data Screening

Data screening was done to confirm that inappropriate responses were eliminated so that the data set became suitable for analysis. Data were screened by following these guidelines. Firstly, a total of 80 responses showed a sign of inattention and were excluded. In the matter of reverse-scored items, careless responses were identified (Woods, 2006; Weems, 2007). In scales of CP, EI, PEF and CA, many reverse items were added. Secondly, if answers on one of these scales were on the same scale (all 7s on the scale of 7-point likert), it has a high probability that participants may be rushing to finish the questionnaire or misread the items by providing the same answers. Subsequently, these responses were removed. Thirdly, responses that were left unanswered were eliminated. This includes responses that missed many answers or one constructs or half answered or completely left blank. A total of 27 responses were removed. Taken together, a total of 107 responses were deleted in the process of data screening. In the remaining 497 responses, a total of 70 missing items were found. To investigate the randomness of missing data, MCAR test was used by using SPSS 26 (Little, 1988). Results revealed that data were completely randomly missing ($X^2=1,654.20$, $df=1,865$, $p>.05$) which recommended that unbiased estimates can be received (Rubin, 1976). To deal with the few missing values that were present in the data sheet, the expectation Maximization (EM) algorithm was applied.

4.3.1. Outliers

Outliers are known as observations that have more of a deviation trend as compared to other observations which produce various mechanisms in values (Hawkins, 1980). Outliers can be multivariate or univariate. Univariate are the data points or cases that have extreme or unusual value in a single construct while multivariate are the data points which have extreme values for many constructs (Kline, 2005). Multivariate outliers are measured by testing the squared Mahalanobis D^2 for every construct. It evaluates the distance in units of standard deviation among sample means and set of scores for all outlier constructs. The outlier constructs have different D^2 from other D^2 values in the data (Byrne, 2001). According to Cohen et al (2003), outliers fewer than 2% or 1% can be left alone. On the other hand, if the outliers are great in number, in this case Yuen (1974) suggests that Winsorized variances and trimmed means can be used. Thus, in this study, multivariate outliers were 3.5% and treated with trimmed means (omitted outliers).

4.3.2. Multicollinearity Diagnosis

Multicollinearity is a phenomenon through which one construct is linearly predicted from other constructs with considerable accuracy. In order, to test the multicollinearity between study variables the value of tolerance and VIF (variance inflation factors) were analyzed. The value of tolerance close to or greater than 0.20 and VIF is close to or less than 5 shows no multicollinearity (Rogerson, 2001). In this research, there is no multicollinearity issue as in the table 18 depicted.

Table 18

<i>Multicollinearity Analysis</i>		
Model	Collinearity	Statistic
(Constant)	Tolerance	VIF
PP	.258	3.881

EI	.220	4.185
CA	.343	1.298
PEF	.350	1.180

a. CP= Career plateau

4.3.3. Normality

Normally distributed data is the requirement of CFA and SEM techniques. Several methods are available to test the normality; however, kurtosis and skewness were applied in this research. If the sample size is greater or equal to 200, the underestimated variance having negative and positive kurtosis is dissolved (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In this study, the sample size was 497 and it is suggested that variance underestimates along with negative and positive kurtosis can be dissolved and the skewness values do not have noticeable deviations. The data of behavioral and social sciences are anomalous that support the phenomenon of normal distribution in many cases (McDonald & Ho, 2002). Table 19 reveals the values of skewness and kurtosis falling into normal range.

Table 19

<i>Normality Analysis</i>				
Constructs	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	St.D.	Statistic	St.D.
PP	-1.99	.015	2.01	.029
EI	.795	.015	-1.00	.029
CA	1.93	.015	-2.00	.029
PEF	-1.20	.015	-1.29	.029
CP	.911	.015	.998	.029
N=497				

4.3.4. Common Method Bias

The data of study was assessed for testing the presence of a common method bias. The marker test was used by applying the CFA marker technique as recommended by Richardson, Simmering, and Sturman (2009). Firstly, the CFA of the entire measurement model was conducted in Amos 26 after that a common latent factor was included which was related with each observed item present within the model and all links were equally constrained. Model estimates were measured and the common variance between the constructs was 15%. A marker variable was added which theoretically had no link with other variables of the model, thus any variance calculated by this construct with other constructs could not have occurred due to CMB. After correlating the marker variable with other constructs, model estimates were calculated again and the findings mentioned that the marker variable minimized the common variance between the construct to 6%. Model fit indices had a little change after adding the marker variable which recommends that marker variable common method variance was not significant for co-variance among the key constructs in the model. Considering the above, there is no need to worry that CMB can contaminate the study constructs or results (see appendix 7).

4.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CFA was performed to confirm that all measurement models had appropriate psychometric properties and the associations among latent variables were suitable for analysis. This type of analysis was conducted by using Amos 26. Various model fit indices ensured the measurement structure quality. Fit indices have two categories. First, “*absolute fit indices*”. As the name recommends that such indices simply test, how well sample data is fitted in the model (McDonald & Ho, 2002) and shows which model has a superior fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). It includes; “*Root Mean Square Error of Approximation*” (RMSEA), “*Standardized Root Mean Square Residual*” (SRMR) and “*Chi-square test*” (χ^2) (Steiger, 1990). Typically, good fitness indices have values less than or equal to 3.00 in Chi-square test,

SRMR is less than or equal to 0.08 and RMSEA is less than or equal to 0.08 (Barrett, 2007; Hooper & Martin 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The second is the “*comparative fit*” or “*incremental fit*” index that evaluates the model fit through comparing the observed model with respect to a baseline model. It includes: “*Tucker-Lewis Index*” (TLI) and “*Comparative-Fit Index*” (CFI) (Tucker & Lewis, 1979; Bentler, 1990) whose value range is 0-1. A larger value of both indices is indicated as good model fitness as greater or closer to 0.95 (CFI) and 0.98 (TLI) (Kline, 1998; Byrne, 2001; Kriston *et al.*, 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003; Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Although, many indices have been introduced, there is a considerable debate regarding usage of the most appropriate fit indices. It is difficult to decide which universal cutoff fit indices should be used because they are mainly influenced by data type, sample size, model complexity and estimation methods (Brown, 2015). Under specific circumstances, different fit indices mislead and it is not advised to accept or reject a model merely based on one fit index. For example, when the sample size is small, RMSEA and TLI are susceptible to reject the proposed model by mistake (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In addition, measuring a model on the basis of a chi-square test is also unreliable because when the sample size is large, certain model features may be overlooked and leads to false model rejection (Russell, 2002). To reduce these drawbacks, multiple fit indices are suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999) for testing. Through this way, the mediating models can be measured from several perspectives. Along with the chi-square test, they recommend one or two other fit indices that are enough for the model. The current study has followed these guidelines to evaluate the model fitness.

4.4.1. Model Fit Indices

Each latent variable was estimated and re-estimated using these indicators. Firstly, items validity was measured through the significance of Z-test which is calculated from the estimated value of items divided by standard errors of items (Est./S. E). If Z-statistics has 1.96 or more

value at $P < .05$ then it showed validity of scale. Secondly, each item should have 0.40 factor loading (Hinkin, 1998). Thirdly, CR (composite reliability) was applied to assess the reliability of construct. A CR .70 or greater is reported good level of reliability (Hair et al., 2009). Lastly, AVE (Average Variance Extracted) was used to know the convergent validity. This study followed the guideline of Fornell and Larcker (1981) who recommended that value above .50 indicated appropriate convergence. The results of CFA for latent variables are discussed in detail in the coming paragraphs which reports standardized factor loadings, AVE, CR and Z-statistics in table.

4.4.2. CFA for Proactive Personality

Proactive personality was evaluated by applying an adapted 10-items scale introduced by Bateman and Crant (1993). The results of CFA represented that only chi-square ratio, CFI, TFI and SRMR model fitness criteria were matched ($\chi^2/df=4.9$, TLI=.79, CFI=.83, RMSEA = .15, SRMR =.08) and overall recommended that it was not a good fitness model. However, modification indices showed that error of PP1, PP2 and PP8 were correlated. The guideline by Bowen (2014) mentioned that modification through association of error terms can only be made when this is theoretically justified. One condition that permits this kind of mediation is when the scale's items are phrased similarly. In the proactive personality scale, items PP1, PP2 and PP8 were all similarly written in that they required the respondents to assess how they fix the problems and seize opportunities. For this rationale, error terms of items were permitted to co-vary. As a result, the modified model revealed a good fit, ($\chi^2/df=2.5$, TLI=.91, CFI=.94, RMSEA = .12, SRMR =.055) (see table 20). In addition, the CR value (.88) and AVE value (.44) of the construct recommend that the model was not suitable. Although the value of RMSEA was not close to cut off neither scale had an acceptable value of AVE. this suggests that the items had no convergent validity and 10-items of the model cannot be accepted. One way to improve the AVE was by deleting the items (Ping, 2009). Two items were removed

from the scale and AVE was run on the remaining items. The combination of items which produced the best AVE was adopted for this study. In the model, the set of items PP1, PP2, PP5, PP6, PP7, PP8, PP9 and PP10 reported best AVE (.53). The CR of modified model had good value as .87, it showed the adequate fit ($\chi^2/df=2.6$, TLI=.92, CFI=.95, RMSEA = .05, SRMR =.04). The items are presented in the figure 14 below.

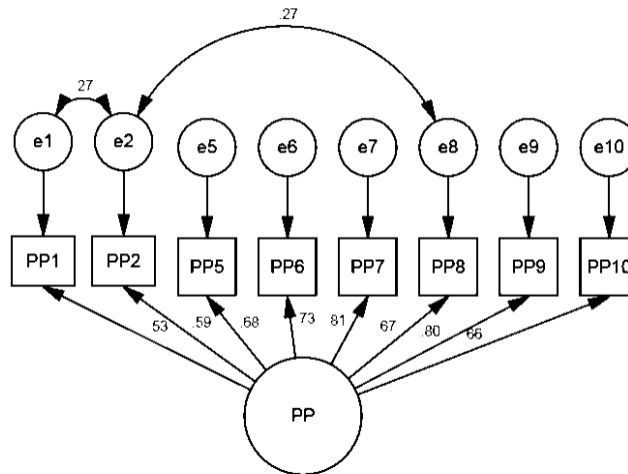


Figure 14: CFA of PP

Table 20

CFA of PP for a Full Study

Proactive personality	Items	Factor loading (Standardized)	Est./S.E.= Z	CR	AVE	α
	PP1	.53		0.87	0.53	.87
	PP2	.59	6.9			
	PP5	.67	6.4			
	PP6	.73	6.7			
	PP7	.81	7.0			
	PP8	.67	6.4			
	PP9	.80	7.0			
	PP10	.661	6.3			
Model fitness indices	X ² /d.f.	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	p

Thresholds for acceptable fit		≥ 0.80	≥ 0.85	< 0.08	≤ 0.08	≤ 0.05
	≤ 5.00					
Thresholds for good fit	≤ 3.00	≥ 0.95	≥ 0.95	< 0.08	≤ 0.05	≤ 0.05
Original model	4.9	.79	.83	.08	.15	≤ 0.05
Modified model	2.6	.92	.95	.04	.05	≤ 0.05

4.4.3. CFA for Emotional Intelligence

A total of 16 items were applied to evaluate emotional intelligence. The CFA of 16 items revealed four factors namely, SEP, OEA, UE, RE and fit indices ($\chi^2/df=2.5$, TLI=.88, CFI=.90, RMSEA = .07, SRMR =.05) were achieved by the cut off measurement model (see table 21). Further, the CR and AVE of this model were adequate such as .80 and .51. Figure 15 depicts the items of the scale.

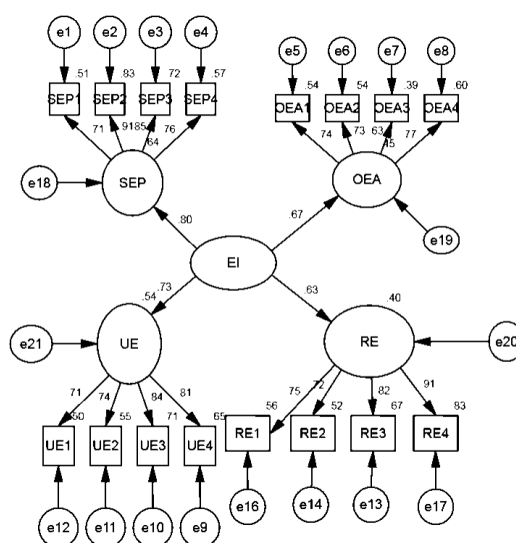


Figure 15: CFA of EI

Table 21

<i>CFA of EI for a Full Study</i>						
Emotional intelligence	Items	Factor loading (Standardized)	Est./S.E.= Z	CR	AVE	α
	SEP1	.71		0.80	0.51	.90
	SEP2	.91	11.333			
	SEP3	.85	10.752			

	SEP4	.75	9.627			
	OEA1	.73				
	OEA2	.73	8.738			
	OEA3	.62	7.581			
	OEA4	.77	9.104			
	UE4	.80				
	UE3	.84	11.818			
	UE2	.74	10.363			
	UE1	.70	9.714			
	RE2	.81				
	RE1	.72	10.443			
	RE3	.75	11.010			
	RE4	.91	13.778			
Model fitness indices	X ² /d.f.	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	p
Thresholds for acceptable fit	≤5.00	≥0.80	≥0.85	<0.08	≤0.08	≤0.05
Thresholds for good fit	≤3.00	≥0.95	≥0.95	<0.08	≤0.05	≤0.05
Original model	2.5	.88	.90	.05	.07	≤0.05

4.4.4. CFA for Career Adaptability

The latent variable of career adaptability involved 24 items. The original model showed this fit ($\chi^2/df=2.5$ TLI=.88, CFI=.88, RMSEA= .09, SRMR =.06) however, RMSEA criterion was not met. The modification indices showed that the error terms of CN1 and CN2, CF1 and CF2, CF5 and CF6 were highly correlated. Moreover, theoretically these items were evaluating the same phenomena thus, error terms were covered. As a result, the four factors (CN, CT, CR and CF) modified model were ($\chi^2/df=2.1$, TLI=.89, CFI=.91, RMSEA= .05, SRMR =.05) achieved the cut off indices (see table 22). In addition, the CR and AVE values of CA were .94 and .80. The items are shown in figure 16.

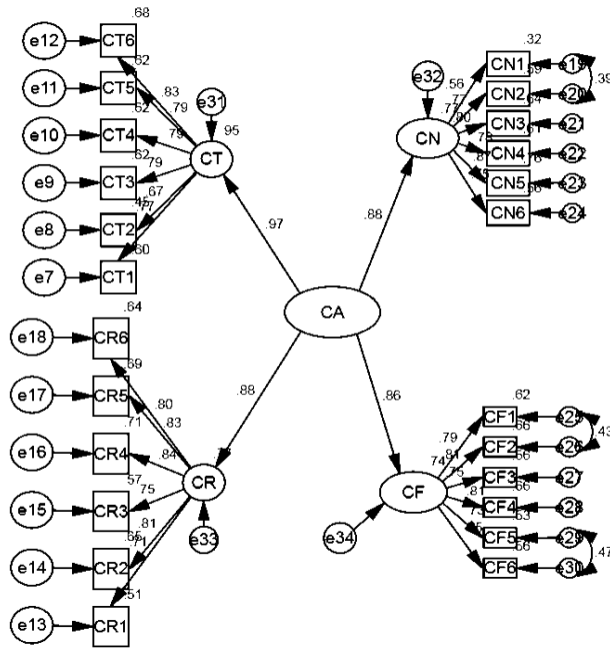


Figure 16: CFA of CA

Table 22

CFA of CA for a Full Study

Career adaptability	Items	Factor loading (Standardized)	Est./S.E.= Z	CR	AVE	α
	CN1	.77		0.94	0.80	.96
	CN2	.67	9.3			
	CN3	.78	11.2			
	CN4	.78	11.2			
	CN5	.78	11.2			
	CN6	.82	11.9			
	CT1	.71				
	CT2	.80	10.4			
	CT3	.75	9.7			
	CT4	.84	10.9			
	CT5	.83	10.7			
	CT6	.80	10.3			
	CR1	.56				
	CR2	.76	9.2			
	CR3	.80	7.7			
	CR4	.78	7.5			
	CR5	.87	8.0			

	CR6	.75	7.4			
	CF1	.78				
	CF2	.80	15.4			
	CF3	.74	10.4			
	CF4	.81	11.5			
	CF5	.72	10.0			
	CF6	.75	10.4			
Model fitness indices	$\chi^2/d.f.$	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	p
Thresholds for acceptable fit	≤ 5.00	≥ 0.80	≥ 0.85	< 0.08	≤ 0.08	≤ 0.05
Thresholds for good fit	≤ 3.00	≥ 0.95	≥ 0.95	< 0.08	≤ 0.05	≤ 0.05
Original model	2.5	.85	.90	.05	.09	≤ 0.05
Modified model	2.1	.89	.91	.05	.05	≤ 0.05

4.4.5. CFA for Person Environment Fit

PEF was measured in five perspectives, namely, PJF, POF, PVF, PGF and PSF. Each dimension has more than three items and is independent from each other. CFA was conducted on this construct. All five-dimensions had good model fit exceptionally ($\chi^2/df=2.0$ TLI=.88, CFI=.90, RMSEA = .07, SRMR =.05). Upon investigation of factor loadings, PG5 and PV3 received a lower value of loading (.08 and .02). As suggested by Hinkin (1998), each item should have at least 0.40 factor loading. The item PG5 and PV3 were removed. CFA was performed on the remaining items and the modified model had fitness indices ($\chi^2/df=1.9$, TLI=.91, CFI=.92, RMSEA = .05, SRMR =.06) (see table 23). Moreover, the CR and AVE cut off values for PEF were also achieved as .76 and .55. Figure 17 graphically showed the CFA results.

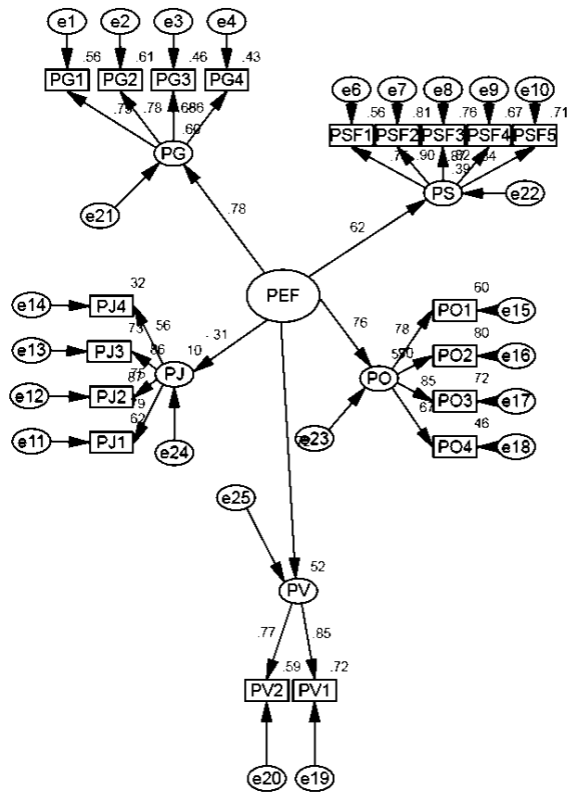


Figure 17: CFA of PEF

Table 23

CFA of PEF for a Full Study

Person environment fit	Items	Factor loading (Standardized)	Est./S.E.= Z	CR	AVE	α
	PG1	.75		.76	.53	.84
	PG2	.78	9.4			
	PG3	.68	8.3			
	PG4	.65	8.0			
	PSF1	.74				
	PSF2	.90	12.5			
	PSF3	.87	12.1			
	PSF4	.81	11.2			
	PSF5	.84	11.6			
	PJ1	.78				
	PJ2	.86	12.1			
	PJ3	.85	11.9			

	PJ4	.56		7.4		
	PO1	.77				
	PO2	.89		12.6		
	PO3	.84		12.0		
	PO4	.67		9.1		
	PV1	.85				
	PV2	.76		7.9		
Model fitness indices	X ² /d.f.	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	p
Thresholds for acceptable fit	≤5.00	≥0.80	≥0.85	<0.08	≤0.08	≤0.05
Thresholds for good fit	≤3.00	≥0.95	≥0.95	<0.08	≤0.05	≤0.05
Original model	2.5	.88	.90	.05	.09	≤0.05
Modified model	1.9	.91	.92	.06	.05	≤0.05

4.4.6. CFA for Career Plateau

The career plateau scale involved two aspects namely, job content plateau and hierarchical plateau. Each sub-scale had 6-items. CFA results depicted that model fitness was not appropriate ($\chi^2/df=3.0$ TLI=.80, CFI=.85, RMSEA=.12, SRMR=.05). The factor loadings of items reported that JCP3 and HP4 had low value, this removed from the scale. The remaining model showed adequate model fitness ($\chi^2/df=2.2$ TLI=.91, CFI=.92, RMSEA=.08, SRMR=.05) with an acceptable value of CR and AVE as .85 and .59 (see table 24). CFA graphically shown in figure 18.

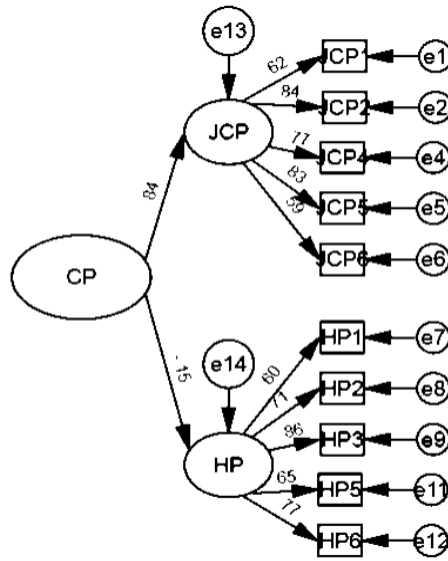


Figure 18: CFA of CP

Table 24

CFA of CP for a Full Study

Career plateau	Items	Factor loading (Standardized)	Est./S.E.= Z	CR	AVE	α
	JCP1	.61		0.85	0.59	.74
	JCP2	.84	8.5			
	JCP4	.77	8.0			
	JCP5	.82	8.4			
	JCP6	.58	6.5			
	HP1	.60				
	HP2	.70	7.3			
	HP3	.85	8.2			
	HP5	.64	6.9			
	HP6	.77	7.8			
Model fitness indices	$X^2/d.f.$	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	p
Thresholds for acceptable fit	≤ 5.00	≥ 0.80	≥ 0.85	< 0.08	≤ 0.08	≤ 0.05
Thresholds for good fit	≤ 3.00	≥ 0.95	≥ 0.95	< 0.08	≤ 0.05	≤ 0.05
Original model	2.5	.88	.90	.05	.09	≤ 0.05
Modified model	2.2	.91	.92	.05	.08	≤ 0.05

4.5. CFA for Overall Measurement Model

As a preliminary measurement of validity and reliability, CFA on each latent variable was completed. After completing this, it was essential to do CFA on all latent constructs and overall items collectively. The results of CFA for overall measurement model show a thorough evaluation because it assessed all the constructs simultaneously and permitted investigation of structural discriminant validity. More specifically, CFA performed on measurement model facilitates the examination of structural modeling whether it would meet the adequate fit or not (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Due to these reasons, the researcher generated a 16-factor model and CFA results revealed the initial model fitness ($\chi^2/df=2.0$ TLI=.79, CFI=.80, RMSEA = .06, SRMR =.05) in which TLI was not achieved. Upon examination of modification indices, the error terms of RE1 and RE2, CF1 and CF2, CF5 and CF6 were highly correlate and theoretically these items were also measuring the same phenomenon. As a result, a good model fit was accomplished ($\chi^2/df=1.7$, TLI=.80, CFI=.81, RMSEA = .06, SRMR =.07). Moreover, table 25 illustrates the AVEs were over .50 and CRs were above .70). The researcher calculated further the value of Cronbach alpha for each variable (Cronbach, 1951) to test the internal consistency. The results show that items of each construct have nearly or much greater .70 internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 25

<i>CFA of an Overall Model</i>						
Constructs	Items	Factor loading (Standardized)	Est./S.E.= Z	CR	AVE	α
PP	PP1	0.56		0.80	0.50	.85
	PP6	0.68	7.0			
	PP7	0.82	7.7			
	PP8	0.71	7.1			
	PP9	0.78	7.5			
	PP10	0.64	6.6			
CA	CN1	0.58		0.78	0.56	.89

	CN2	0.78	8.0			
	CN3	0.80	8.1			
	CN4	0.77	8.0			
	CN5	0.87	8.6			
	CN6	0.73	7.7			
	CT1	0.77				
	CT2	0.67	9.4			
	CT3	0.79	11.4			
	CT4	0.78	11.3			
	CT5	0.78	11.3			
	CT6	0.81	11.8			
	CR1	0.72				
	CR2	0.80	10.5			
	CR3	0.75	9.9			
	CR4	0.84	11.1			
	CR5	0.82	10.8			
	CR6	0.79	10.4			
	CF1	0.80				
	CF2	0.81	12.3			
	CF3	0.74	11.0			
	CF4	0.81	12.2			
	CF5	0.76	11.3			
	CF6	0.78	11.7			
EI	SEP1	0.71		0.89	0.65	.86
	SEP2	0.91	11.4			
	SEP3	0.84	10.7			
	SEP4	0.75	9.6			
	OEA1	0.69				
	OEA2	0.68	7.9			
	OEA3	0.70	8.1			
	OEA4	0.78	8.8			
	UE1	0.76				
	UE2	0.71	9.5			
	UE3	0.80	10.8			
	UE4	0.82	11.1			
	RE1	0.74				

	RE2	0.71	9.4			
	RE3	0.82	11.0			
	RE4	0.91	12.0			
PEF	PG1	0.72		0.86	0.51	.80
	PG2	0.81	9.6			
	PG3	0.67	8.2			
	PG4	0.65	7.9			
	PSF1	0.74				
	PSF2	0.90	12.4			
	PSF3	0.87	12.0			
	PSF4	0.82	11.2			
	PSF5	0.84	11.5			
	PJ1	0.79				
	PJ2	0.86	12.1			
	PJ3	0.85	12.0			
	PJ4	0.56	7.5			
	PO1	0.77				
	PO2	0.91	12.6			
	PO3	0.84	11.9			
	PO4	0.62	8.4			
	PV1	0.83				
	PV2	0.77	10.0			
CP	HP1	0.60		0.84	0.53	.76
	HP2	0.69	7.3			
	HP3	0.85	8.2			
	HP5	0.64	6.8			
	HP6	0.78	7.9			
	JCP1	0.67				
	JCP2	0.83	9.6			
	JCP4	0.76	9.0			
	JCP5	0.79	9.2			
	JCP6	0.58	7.0			

4.6. Correlation Analysis among Study Constructs

In table 26 the correlation analysis among the study constructs are illustrated. With regards to proactive personality, the results showed that PP significantly correlated with emotional intelligence ($r=.48$, $p < .01$), career adaptability ($r=.45$, $p<.01$) and career plateau ($r=-.64$, $p<.01$). With regards to CA, the results indicated that CA was correlated with personal environment fit ($r=.28$, $p<.01$) and career plateau ($r=-.44$, $p<.01$). Further, emotional intelligence and CA ($r= .43$, $p<.01$) and person environment fit and career plateau ($r=-.47$, $p<.01$) were also significantly correlated.

Table 26

<i>Correlations between study variables</i>					
	CA	CP	PP	PEF	EI
CA	1				
CP	-.44**	1			
PP	.45**	-.64**	1		
PEF	.28**	-.47**	.44**	1	
EI	.43**	-.33**	.48**	.53**	1
M	4.6	6.7	5.2	5.9	5.3
S.D	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.8
$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$.75	.80	.73	.86	.71

N= 497, M=mean S. D= Standard deviation

**0.01, *0.05

4.7. Discriminant Validity

After measuring the correlations among study constructs, discriminant validity was calculated. The guidelines of Fornell and Larcker (1981) were followed which recommends that comparing the square root of AVE with correlation among two constructs. When the square root of AVE is more than the correlations of two variables, it is considered as good discriminant validity. To show this clearly, the square root of AVE was added to the table. Upon comparison, it is seen that discriminant validity of each construct has been satisfied (see table 27).

Table 27

Discriminant Validity Analysis

Constructs	AVE
PP	0.53
EI	0.51
CA	0.64
PEF	0.53
CP	0.59

4.8. Control Constructs Analysis

The Super et al (1957) theory of career development divides the five career stages; however, this study is focused on career establishment (25-44 years), career maintenance (45-64 years) and decline (+65 years) stage. The means of career plateau were 3.04 (SD=.91) for the career establishment stage, 6.17 (SD= 1.33) for career maintenance stage and 4.53 (SD= 1.68) for career decline stage. In general, individuals at the career maintenance stage achieved a higher career plateau. The results of one-way ANOVA indicated that the difference among the three career stages were significant with career plateau; career establishment ($F=1.22$, $P<.05$), career maintenance ($F=2.62$, $P<.05$) and career decline ($F=1.56$, $P<.05$). Given results suggested that the analysis can be performed to segment the respondents into career stages.

4.9. Mediation Analysis

To test the mediation effects, this research has followed the procedures suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004). The mediation model has three types of constructs namely, Y, the dependent construct, X, the independent construct and M, the mediator. To test the mediation, three paths were developed between the constructs. The path c' is the path from X to Y controlling through M. Path "a" shows the path from X to Y while path "b" represents path from M to Y constructs.

Preacher and Hayes (2004) have mentioned two criteria to understand the mediation effect. Firstly, path c (or the main effect) must not be equal to zero for the presence of mediation. Secondly, an indirect effect (ab) should be significant, in line with the proposed direction. To investigate the significance, the method of bootstrap was conducted on the indirect effect (ab). This method minimizes the assumption of Sobel test (1982, 1986) that incorrectly presumes the indirect effect's normality. As ab is asymmetric in reality thus applying the Sobel test generates unreliable results (Stone & Sobel, 1990; Bollen & Stine, 1990). In contrast, the method of bootstrap has appropriate results because it "*makes no assumption about the shape of the distributions of the variables or the sampling distribution of the statistics*" (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, p. 722). This method is preferable over the Sobel test because it can be applied on small and large sample sizes (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Bollen & Stine, 1990). In this study, 5,000 re-samples were produced from the original sample; the indirect effect should be significant at $p < .05$ if the zero does not exist into 95% confidence interval bootstrap.

SEM findings are showed in tables. The path diagrams are shown in figures. In investigating the main effects were determined and it was supported that none of the coefficient paths were zero, hence not every path was significant. As the non-significant associations should not be of concern. Moreover, the significant association among X and Y is not a prerequisite to examining the indirect effects (Hayes, 2009). As long as the two constructs (path $c \neq 0$) has an existing effect, mediation analysis can be performed. If there is no relationship between X and Y and the direct effect is also insignificant then it is known as "*full mediation*" while if the direct effect is significant in the presence of significant association between X and Y, it is known as a "*partial mediation*".

4.9.1. Career Establishment Stage

4.9.1.1. Demographics

A total of 497 questionnaires were found in useable form among them 128 (16%) were grouped in the career establishment stage. Most of individuals (78%) were working in private sector universities and the remaining individuals (22%) were working in public sector universities of Punjab. The demographics of 128 participants revealed that 61% (n=78) were male. The age of respondents was between 25 and 44, and 52% (n=66) participants were 35-39 years' age. In terms of marital status, the majority of the respondents were unmarried 55% (n=70) while 45.3% (n=58) respondents were married. As a whole, respondents held a higher educational degree such as M.Phil.48% (n=61) with working experience of 4-6 years (n=47) and organizational tenure of 4-6 years (n=42). A wide range of individuals had a contract-based job (n=98) and 46% (n=59) of them had done a teaching job as well as they were struggling to get promotion in the next job because they had taken 10-12 years (27.3%) in HEIs. A detail of demographics of career establishment stage is shown in table 28.

Table 28

<i>Demographics of Career Establishment Stage</i>								
Gender	F	Percent	Marital status	F	Percent	Job status	F	Percent
Female	50	39.0	Unmarried	70	54.6	Permanent	30	23.4
Male	78	60.9	Married	58	45.3	Contract	98	76.5
Working experience			Organizational tenure			Time taken for promotion		
0-3 years	36	28.1	0-3 years	38	29.6	0-3 years	10	.07
4-6 years	47	36.7	4-6 years	42	32.8	4-6 years	40	31.2
7-9 years	25	19.5	7-9 years	23	17.9	7-9 years	29	22.6
10-12years	12	.09	10-12 years	18	14.0	10-12 years	35	27.3
13-15 years	5	.03	13-15 years	6	.04	above 15 years	14	10.9
above 15 years	3	.02	above 15 years	1	.007			
Age (years)			Job responsibility			Education		
25-29	28	21.8	Teaching	59	46.0	Graduation	52	40.6

30-34	34	26.5	Only management	43	33.5	M.Phil.	61	47.6
35-39	66	51.5	Both teaching and management	16	12.5	Ph.D.	15	11.7
40-44	6	.04						
<hr/>								
N=128								

4.9.1.2. Model 1 (PP-EI-CA)

H1a: PP and CA have a positive relationship in career establishment stage.

H2a: PP and EI have a positive relationship in career establishment stage.

H3a: EI and CA have a positive relationship in career establishment stage.

H4a: EI acts as mediator among PP and CA in career establishment stage.

The mediation hypotheses were examined by investigating the importance of the indirect impact of IV (independent variable) on DV (dependent variable) through M (mediator), measures such as the product impacts of IV on the M and the impact of M on the DV, partialling out the impact of IV. These were the suggestions by Baron and Keny (1980) and Preacher and Hayes (2008). The SEM by AMOS was applied to run the mediation analysis. Results are illustrated in table 29 and figure 19 shows the representation of the model.

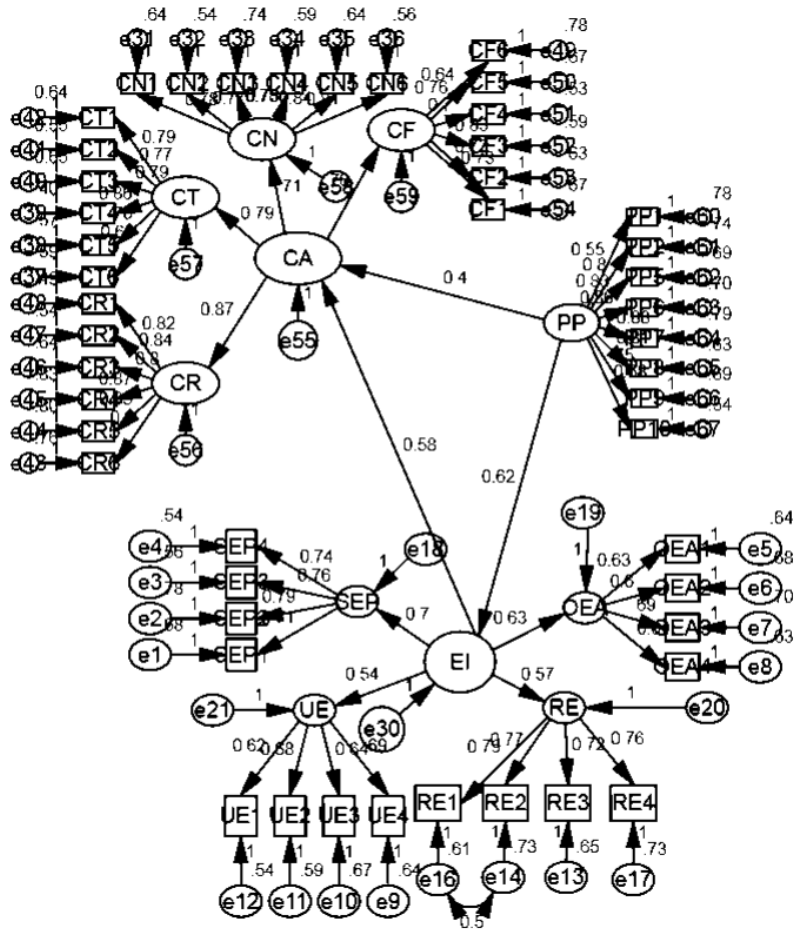


Figure 19: Model 1 for career establishment stage

Table 29

SEM Results of Model 1 for Career Establishment Stage

Direct paths	β	SE	lower	Upper	P- value
PP → EI	.62	.06	.48	.73	.000
PP → CA	.40	.05	.29	.49	.001
EI → CA	.58	.05	.48	.68	.000

Model fitness indices: $X^2/d.f.= 2.14$, TLI=.88, CFI=.89, SRMR=.04, RMSEA=.07

Table 29 reveals the findings of a path coefficient for the model of the research. Model fitness indices depict that model fitness was appropriate ($\chi^2/df=2.14$ TLI=.88, CFI=.89, RMSEA=.07, SRMR=.07). The testing of the hypotheses depicted the significance of three proposed hypotheses, respectively. Firstly, the association between PP and CA was supported ($\beta = .40$, $p = .000$). Secondly, proactive personality influences emotional intelligence ($\beta = .62$, $p = .001$) has been confirmed by results. Thirdly, the results confirmed that emotional intelligence had an effect on career adaptability ($\beta = .58$, $p = .001$). Therefore, hypotheses 1a, 2a and 3 were supported.

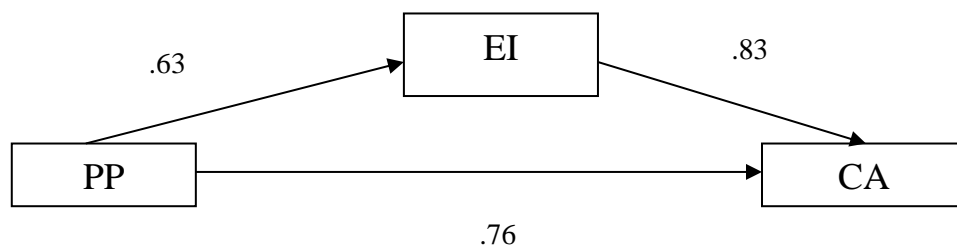


Figure 20: Indirect effect calculation for career establishment stage (Model 1)

The procedure of checking mediation is recommended by Zainudin (2015) as follows:

- The indirect effect (Figure 20) ($.63 * .83 = .52$)
- The direct effect .76
- The value of indirect effect must be less than the value of direct effect for occurrence of mediation
- Since the significant of direct effect between IV and DV showed partial mediation (Table 30)

Table 30

Bootstrapping Results for Career Establishment Stage (Model 1)

	Indirect effect PP → EI → CA	Direct effect PP → CA
Bootstrapping results	.52	.76

Bootstrapping p-value	.000	.001
Result	Mediation happens	Significant
Type of mediation	Partial mediation, as direct effect is also significant	

The result of mediation was conducted by applying the bootstrap method as recommended by Zainudin (2015). The research had performed the Maximum Likelihood Bootstrapping procedure with a sample of 5000 bootstrap and bias correction 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the findings of bootstrapping as indicated in the table were approved the mediation results as done before where emotional intelligence played as partial mediator on the association among PP and CA. Thus, hypothesis 4a was confirmed.

4.9.1.3. Model 2 (CA-PEF-CP)

H5a: CA and CP have a negative relationship in career establishment stage.

H6a: CA and PEF have a positive relationship in career establishment stage.

H7a: PEF and CP have a negative relationship in career establishment stage.

H8a: PEF acts as mediator among CA and CP in career establishment stage.

Table 31 revealed the findings of the path coefficient for the model of the research and figure 21 shows the representation of the model. Model fitness indices depicted that model fitness was appropriate ($\chi^2/df=1.11$, TLI=.89, CFI=.89, RMSEA=.03, SRMR=.05). The testing of hypotheses depicted the significance of the proposed three hypotheses, respectively. Firstly, the association between CA and career plateau was supported ($\beta = -.23$, $p = .000$). Secondly, career adaptability influences person environment fit ($\beta = .40$, $p = .003$) had been confirmed by results. Thirdly, the results showed that person environment fit had an effect on career plateau ($\beta = -.31$, $p = .000$). Therefore, hypotheses 5a, 6a and 7a were supported.

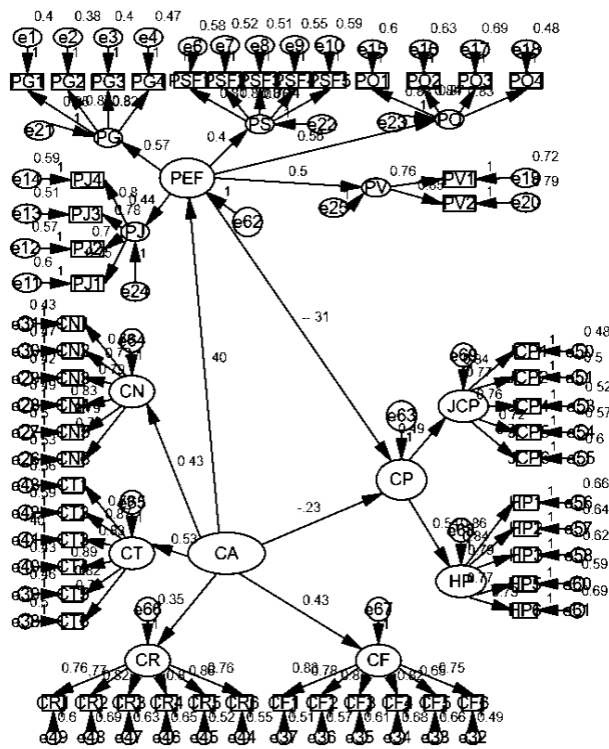


Figure 21: Model 2 for career establishment stage

Table 31

SEM Results of Model 2 for Career Establishment Stage

Direct paths	β	SE	lower	Upper	P- value
CA → PEF	.40	.07	.26	.531	.008
CA → CP	-.23	.07	.07	.383	.003
PEF → CP	-.31	.06	.18	.444	.009

Model fitness indices: $\chi^2/d.f.= 1.11$, TLI=.89, CFI=.89, SRMR=.03, RMSEA=.05

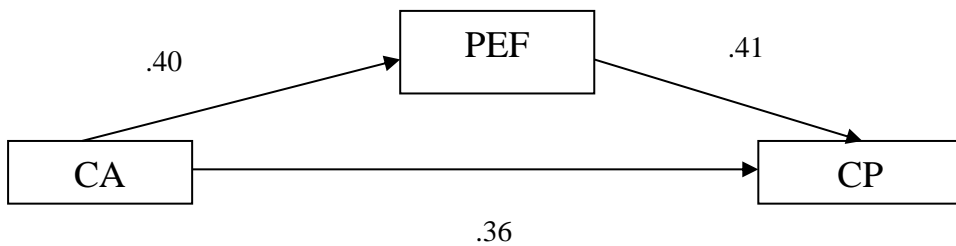


Figure 22: Indirect effect calculation for career establishment stage (Model 2)

The procedure of checking mediation is recommended by Zainudin (2015) as follows:

- The indirect effect (Figure 22) (.40*.41=.16)
- The direct effect .36
- The value of indirect effect must be less than the value of direct effect for occurrence of mediation
- Since the significance of direct effect between IV and DV. (Table 32)

Table 32

<i>Bootstrapping Results for Career Establishment Stage (Model 2)</i>		
	Indirect effect CA → PEF → CP	Direct effect CA → CP
Bootstrapping results	.16	.36
Bootstrapping p-value	.003	.046
Result	Mediation does not happen	Significant
Type of mediation	Partial mediation, as direct effect is significant	

The result of mediation was conducted by applying the bootstrap method as recommended by Zainudin (2015). The research performed the Maximum Likelihood Bootstrapping procedure with a sample of 5000 bootstrap and bias correction 95% confidence intervals. Therefore, the findings of bootstrapping were indicated in the table had proved the mediation results as complete before where person environment fit played as partial mediator on the association among career adaptability and career plateau. Thus, hypothesis 8a was supported.

4.9.1.4. Model 3 (PP-CA-CP)

H9a: PP and CP have a negative relationship in career establishment stage.

H10a: CA acts as mediator among PP and CP in career establishment stage.

Table 33 revealed the findings of path coefficient for the model of the research and figure 23 showed the representation of model. Model fitness indices depicted that model fitness was appropriate ($\chi^2/df=1.27$, $TLI=.87$, $CFI=.86$, $RMSEA=.05$, $SRMR=.06$). The testing of hypotheses depicted the significance of the proposed three hypotheses, respectively. Firstly, the association between PP and CA was supported ($\beta = .64$, $p = .001$). Secondly, PP and career plateau ($\beta = -.33$, $p = .006$) had not been confirmed by results. Thirdly, the results proved that career adaptability had an effect on career plateau ($\beta = -.54$, $p = .00$). Therefore, hypothesis 9a was supported.

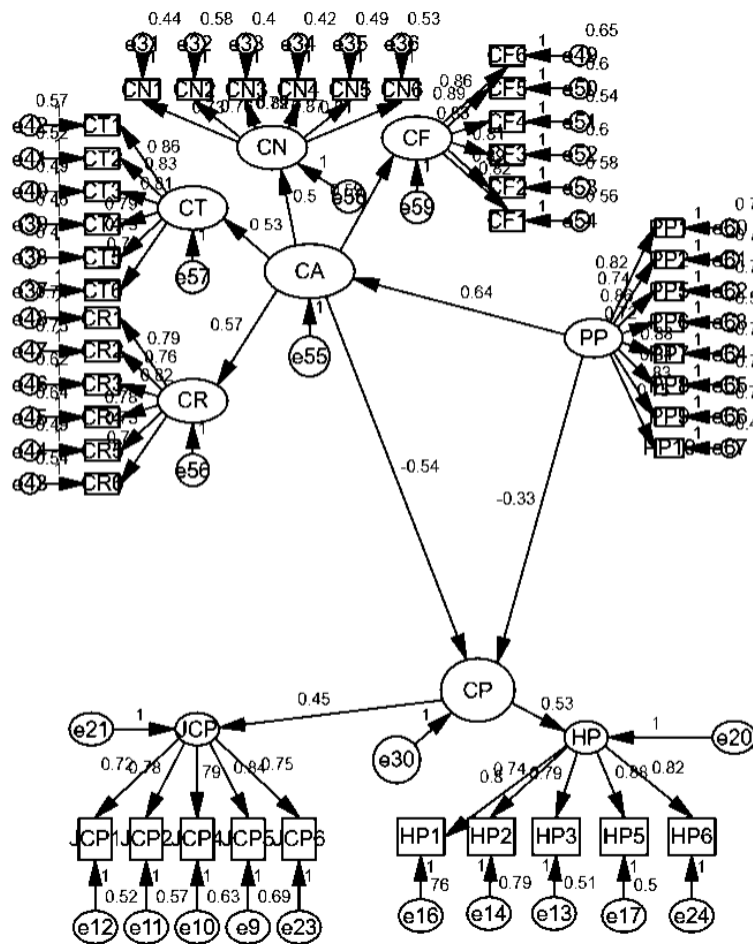


Figure 23: Model 3 for career establishment stage

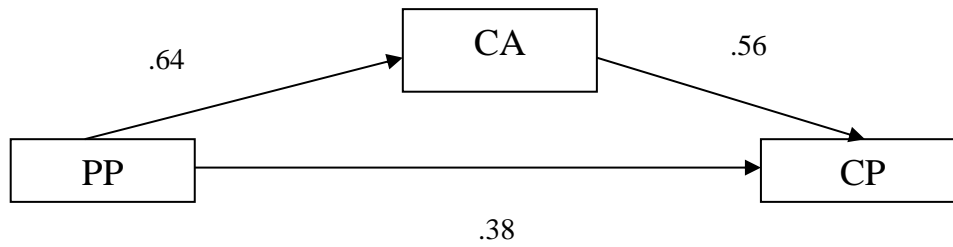


Figure 24: Indirect effect calculation for career establishment stage (Model 3)

Table 33

SEM Results of Model 3 for Career Establishment Stage

Direct paths	β	SE	lower	Upper	P- value
PP → CA	.64	.06	.51	.75	.000
PP → CP	-.33	.06	-.09	.16	.006
CA → CP	-.54	.07	.38	.67	.000

Model fitness indices: $X^2/d.f.$ = 1.27, TLI=.87, CFI=.86, SRMR=.05, RMSEA=.06

The procedure of checking mediation is recommended by Zainudin (2015) as follows:

- The indirect effect (Figure 24) ($.64 * .56 = .36$)
- The direct effect .38
- The value of indirect effect must be less than the value of direct effect for occurrence of mediation
- Since the significance of direct effect between IV and DV. (Table 34)

Table 34

Bootstrapping Results for Career Establishment Stage (Model 3)

	Indirect effect PP → CA → CP	Direct effect PP → CP
Bootstrapping results	.36	.38
Bootstrapping p-value	.00	.026
Result	Mediation happens	Significant
Type of mediation	Partial mediation, as direct effect is significant	

The result of mediation was conducted by applying the bootstrap method as recommended by Zainudin (2015). The research had performed the Maximum Likelihood Bootstrapping procedure with sample of 5000 bootstrap and bias correction 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the findings of bootstrapping were indicated in table had approved the mediation results as done before where career adaptability played as partial mediator on the association among proactive personality and career plateau. Thus, hypothesis 10a was supported.

4.9.2. Career Maintenance Stage

4.9.2.1. Demographic Information

A total of 497 questionnaires were found in useable form among them 268 (33.5%) were grouped in career maintenance stage. Majority of the individuals (65%) were working in public sector universities and remaining individuals (35%) were working in private sector universities of Punjab. A demographics of 268 participants revealed that 62.3% (n=168) were male. The age of respondents was between 45 and 64 and 50% (n=134) participants were 49-53 years' age. In terms of marital status, most of the respondents were married 75% (n=201) while 25.2% (n=67) respondents were unmarried. As a whole, respondents held higher educational degree such as a Ph.D.68.2% (n=183) with working experience of 13-15 years (n=123) and organizational tenure of 10-12 years (n=114). The wide range of individuals had permanent jobs (n=198) and 38.4% (n=103) some of them had performed both teaching and management jobs as well as struggling to get promotion in the next job because they had taken 4-6 years (46%) in HEIs. A detail of demographics of career maintenance stage is shown in table 35.

Table 35

<i>Demographics of Career Maintenance Stage</i>								
Gender	F	Percent	Marital status	F	Percent	Job status	F	Percent
Female	101	37.6	Unmarried	67	25.2	Permanent	198	23.4
Male	167	62.3	Married	201	75.0	Contract	70	76.5
Working experience			Organizational tenure			Time taken for promotion		
0-3 years	2	.007	0-3 years	4	.01	0-3 years	10	.03
4-6 years	6	.022	4-6 years	12	.08	4-6 years	122	45.5
7-9 years	16	.059	7-9 years	13	.04	7-9 years	87	32.4
10-12 years	22	.08	10-12 years	114	42.5	10-12 years	35	13.0
13-15 years	123	45.8	13-15 years	97	36.1	above 15 years	14	.05
above 15 years	99	36.9	above 15 years	28	10.4			
Age (years)			Job responsibility			Education		
44-48	49	18.2	Teaching	75	27.9	M.Phil.	61	22.7
49-53	134	.50	Only management	90	33.5	Ph.D.	183	68.2
54-64	85	31.7	Both teaching and management	103	38.4	Post. Doc	24	.08

N=268

4.9.2.2. Model 1 (PP-EI-CA)

H1b: PP and CA have a positive relationship in career maintenance stage.

H2b: PP and EI have a positive relationship in career maintenance stage.

H3b: EI and CA have a positive relationship in career maintenance stage.

H4b: EI acts as mediator among PP and CA in career maintenance stage.

Table 36 reveals the findings of the path coefficient for the model of the research and figure 25 shows the representation of the model. Model fitness indices show that model fitness was appropriate ($\chi^2/df=2.29$, TLI=.85, CFI=.85, RMSEA=.04, SRMR=.05). The testing of the hypotheses depicted the significance of proposed three hypotheses, respectively. Firstly, the

association between PP and EI was supported ($\beta = .35, p = .002$). Secondly, proactive personality influences career adaptability ($\beta = .42, p = .000$) had been confirmed by results. Thirdly, the results approved that emotional intelligence had an effect on career adaptability ($\beta = .50, p = .001$). Therefore, hypotheses 1b, 2b and 3b were supported.

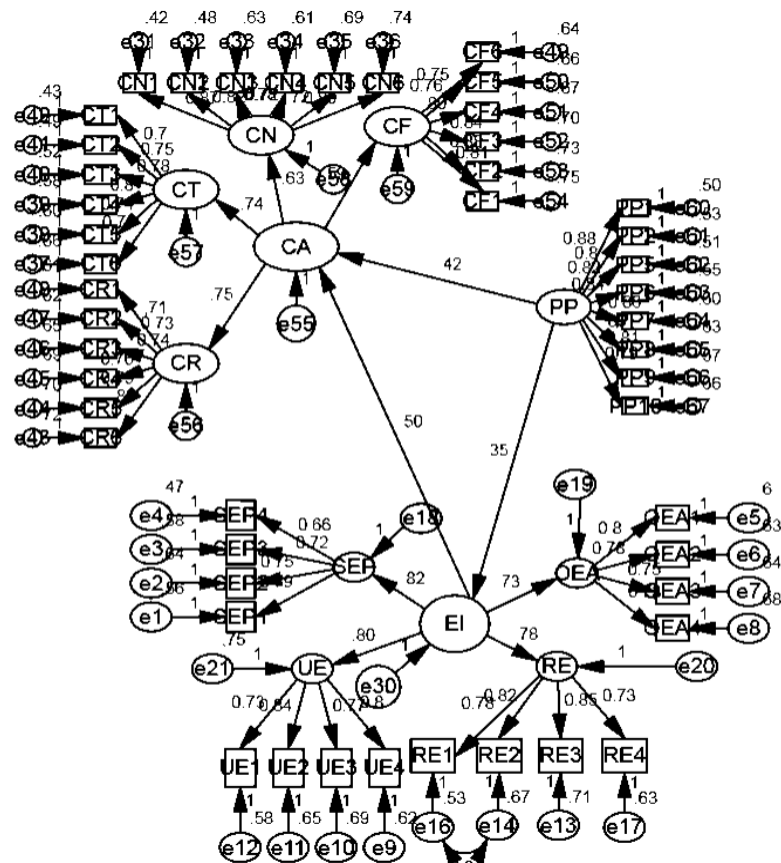


Figure 25: Model 1 for career maintenance stage

Table 36

SEM Results of Model 1 for Career Maintenance Stage

Direct paths	β	SE	lower	Upper	P- value
PP → EI	.35	.14	.04	.585	.02
PP → CA	.42	.09	.24	.592	.015
EI → CA	.50	.07	.33	.641	.021

Model fitness indices: $\chi^2/df=2.29$, TLI=.85, CFI=.85,

RMSEA=.04, SRMR=.05

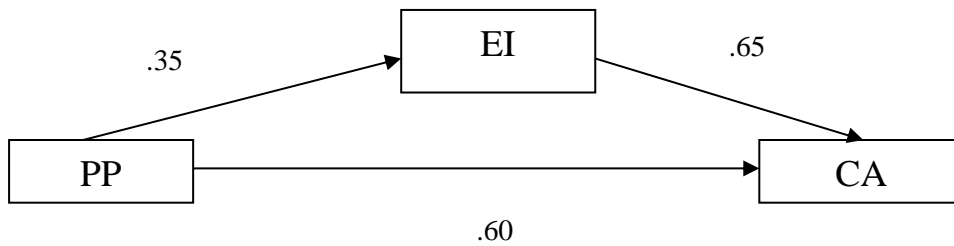


Figure 26: Indirect effect calculation for career maintenance stage (Model 1)

The procedure of checking mediation is recommended by Zainudin (2015) as follows:

- The indirect effect (Figure 26) ($.35 \times .65 = .22$)
- The direct effect .36
- The value of the indirect effect must be less than the value of the direct effect for occurrence of mediation
- Since the significance of direct effect between IV and DV. (Table 37)

Table 37

Bootstrapping Results for Career Maintenance Stage (Model 1)

	Indirect effect	Direct effect
	PP → EI → CA	PP → CA
Bootstrapping results	.22	.36
Bootstrapping p-value	.025	.000
Result	Mediation happens	Significant
Type of mediation	Partial mediation, as direct effect is also significant	

The result of mediation was conducted by applying the bootstrap method as recommended by Zainudin (2015). The research was performed by the Maximum Likelihood Bootstrapping procedure with a sample of 5000 bootstrap and bias correction 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the findings of bootstrapping were indicated in the table had approved the mediation results as done before where emotional intelligence played a part as partial mediator on the

association among proactive personality and career adaptability. Thus, hypothesis 4b was confirmed.

4.9.2.3. Model 2 (CA-PEF-CP)

H5b: CA and CP have a negative relationship in career maintenance stage.

H6b: CA and PEF have a positive relationship in career maintenance stage.

H7b: PEF and CP have a negative relationship in career maintenance stage.

H8b: PEF acts as mediator among CA and CP in career maintenance stage.

Table 38 reveals the findings of path coefficient for the model of the research and figure 27 shows the representation of the model. Model fitness indices depicted that model fitness was not appropriate ($\chi^2/df=4.27$, $TLI=.77$, $CFI=.76$, $RMSEA=.09$, $SRMR=.08$). The testing of the hypotheses depicted the significance of the proposed three hypotheses, respectively. Firstly, the association between CA and PEF was not supported ($\beta = -0.5$, $p = .687$). Secondly, career adaptability influences career plateau ($\beta = .63$, $p = .001$) had been confirmed by results. Thirdly, the results approved that person environment fit had no effect on career plateau ($\beta = .19$, $p = .156$). Therefore, hypotheses 6b, and 7b were not supported while 5 was confirmed.

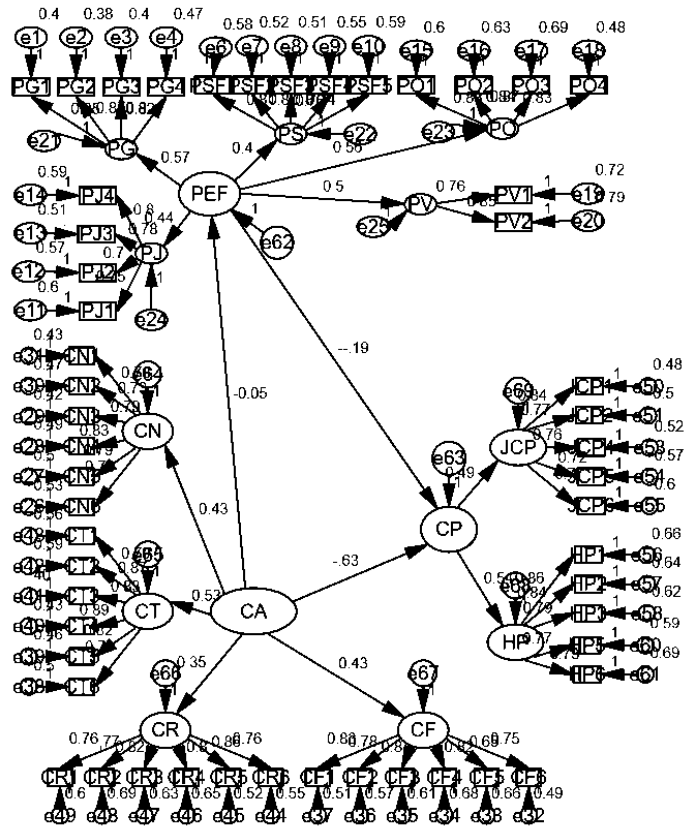


Figure 27: Model 2 for career maintenance stage

Table 38

SEM Results of Model 2 for Career Maintenance Stage					
Direct paths	β	SE	lower	Upper	P- value
CA → PEF	-.05	.14	-.31	.24	.687
CA → CP	-.63	.09	.40	.79	.001
PEF → CP	-.19	.13	-.07	.44	.156

Model fitness indices: $X^2/d.f.=4.27$, TLI=.77, CFI=.76, SRMR=.09, RMSEA=.08

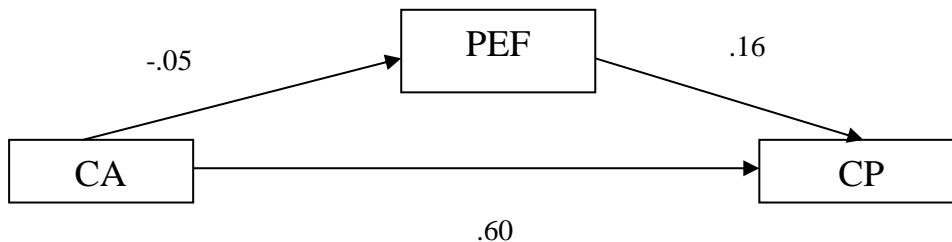


Figure 28: Indirect effect calculation for career maintenance stage (Model 2)

The procedure of checking mediation is recommended by Zainudin (2015) as follows:

- The indirect effect (Figure 28) (-.05*.16=-.008)
- The direct effect .60
- Since, the value of the indirect effect is insignificant and the direct effect is significant
- Since X and M, M and Y conditions are not met. (Table 39)

Table 39

<i>Bootstrapping Results for Career Maintenance Stage (Model 2)</i>		
	Indirect effect CA → PEF → CP	Direct effect CA → CP
Bootstrapping results	-.01	.63
Bootstrapping p-value	.511	.001
Result	Mediation not happens	Significant
Type of mediation	No mediation, as indirect effect is not significant	

The result of mediation was conducted by applying the bootstrap method as recommended by Zainudin (2015). The research was performed by the Maximum Likelihood Bootstrapping procedure with a sample of 5000 bootstrap and bias correction 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the findings of bootstrapping were indicated in the table and had approved the mediation results as done before where person environment fit did not play a part as a mediator in the association among CA and career plateau. Thus, hypothesis 8b was not confirmed.

4.9.2.4. Model 3 (PP-CA-CP)

H9b: PP and CP have a negative relationship in career maintenance stage.

H10b: CA acts as mediator among PP and CP in career maintenance stage.

Table 40 reveals the findings of the path coefficient for the model of the research and figure 29 shows the representation of the model. Model fitness indices depicted that model fitness was appropriate ($\chi^2/df=2.49$, TLI=.86, CFI=.86, RMSEA=.02, SRMR=.03). The testing of hypotheses depicted the significance of proposed three hypotheses, respectively. Firstly, the association between PP and CA was supported ($\beta = .60$, $p = .001$). Secondly, PP and career plateau ($\beta = -.18$, $p = .003$) had not been confirmed by results. Thirdly, the results approved that career adaptability had an effect on career plateau ($\beta = .73$, $p = .00$). Therefore, hypothesis 9 was not supported.

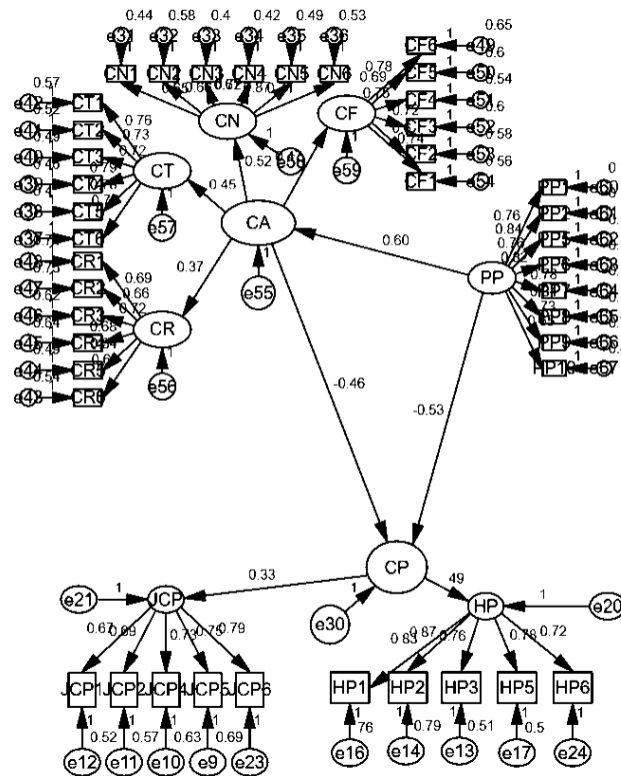


Figure 29: Model 3 for career maintenance stage

Table 40

SEM Results of Model 3 for Career Maintenance Stage

Direct paths	β	SE	lower	Upper	P- value
PP → CA	.60	.04	.34	.76	.000
PP → CP	-.18	.09	-.43	.08	.003

CA → CP .73 .10 .46 .92 .000

Model fitness indices: $\chi^2/d.f.=2.49$, TLI=.86, CFI=.86,
SRMR=.02, RMSEA=.03

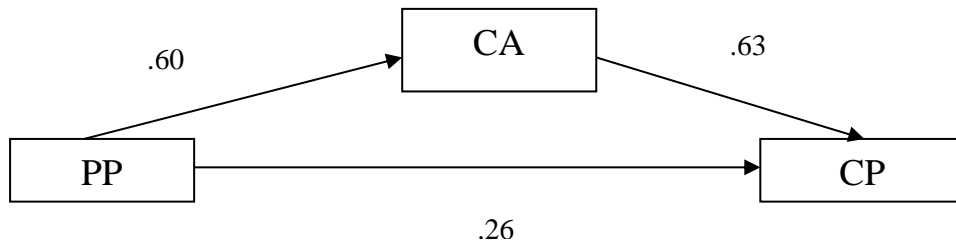


Figure 30: Indirect effect calculation for career maintenance stage (Model 3)

The procedure of checking mediation is recommended by Zainudin (2015) as follows:

- The indirect effect (Figure 30) ($.60 \times .63 = .37$)
- The direct effect .26
- The value of the indirect effect must be less than the value of the direct effect for occurrence of mediation
- Since the significance of the direct effect between IV and DV. (Table 41)

Table 41

Bootstrapping Results for Career Maintenance Stage (Model 3)

	Indirect effect PP → CA → CP	Direct effect PP → CP
Bootstrapping results	.37	.26
Bootstrapping p-value	.00	.03
Result	Mediation happens	Significant
Type of mediation	Partial mediation, as indirect effect is significant	

The result of mediation was conducted by applying the bootstrap method as recommended by Zainudin (2015). The research had performed by using the Maximum Likelihood Bootstrapping procedure with a sample of 5000 bootstrap and bias correction 95% confidence

interval. Therefore, the findings of bootstrapping were indicated in the table had approved the mediation results as done before where career adaptability played a part as partial mediator on the association among proactive personality and career plateau. Thus, hypothesis 10b was supported.

4.9.3. Career Decline Stage

4.9.3.1. Demographic Information

A total of 497 questionnaires were found to be in useable form among them 101 (13%) were grouped in the career decline stage. Most of the individuals were working in private sector universities in Lahore. The demographics of 101 participants revealed that 77.2% (n=78) were male. The age of respondents was between 65 and above. In terms of marital status, the majority of the respondents were married 90% (n=91) while .09% (n=10) respondents were unmarried. On the whole, respondents held higher educational degree such as a Ph.D. 74.2% (n=75) with working experience of above 15 years (n=82) and organization tenure above 15 years (n=97). A wide range of individuals had contract-based jobs and 56.4% (n=57) of them had done teaching as well as they were not struggling to get promotion in the next job within HEIs. A detail of the demographics of the career decline stage is shown in table 42.

Table 42

<i>Demographics of Career Decline Stage</i>								
Gender	F	Percent	Marital status	F	Percent	Education	F	Percent
Female	23	22.7	Unmarried	10	.09	Ph.D.	75	74.2
Male	78	77.2	Married	91	90.0	Post. Doc	26	25.7
Working experience			Organizational tenure			Job responsibility		
13-15 years	19	18.8	13-15 years	4	.03	Teaching	57	56.4
above 15 years	82	81.1	above 15 years	97	96.0	Only management	44	43.5
Age (years)								
65	45	44.5						
Above 65	56	55.4						

N=101

4.9.3.2. Model 1 (PP-EI-CA)

H1c: PP and CA have a positive relationship in career decline stage.

H2c: PP and EI have a positive relationship in career decline stage.

H3c: EI and CA have a positive relationship in career decline stage.

H4c: EI acts as mediator among PP and CA in career decline stage.

Table 43 reveals the findings of the path coefficient for the model of the research and figure 31 shows the representation of the model. Model fitness indices depicted that model fitness was appropriate ($\chi^2/df=2.84$, TLI=.89, CFI=.90, RMSEA=.04, SRMR=.04). The testing of hypotheses depicted the significance of the proposed three hypotheses, respectively. Firstly, the association between PP and emotional intelligence was supported ($\beta = .45$, $p = .002$). Secondly, proactive personality influences career adaptability ($\beta = .52$, $p = .001$) had been confirmed by the results. Thirdly, the results approved that emotional intelligence had an effect on career adaptability ($\beta = .45$, $p = .001$). Therefore, hypotheses 1c, 2c and 3c were supported.

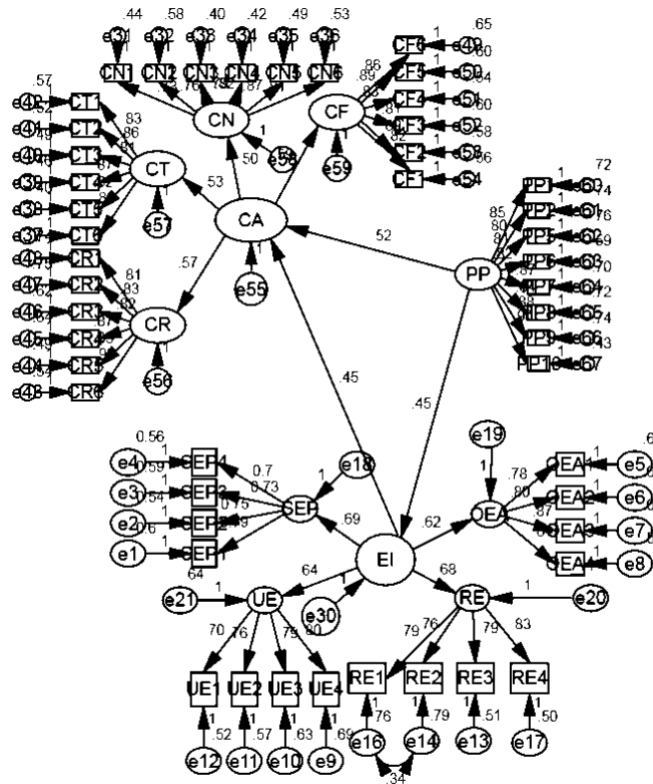


Figure 31: Model 1 for career decline stage

Table 43

SEM Results of Model 1 for Career Decline Stage

Direct paths	β	SE	lower	Upper	P- value
PP → EI	.45	.08	.26	.60	.000
PP → CA	.52	.07	.36	.67	.001
EI → CA	.45	.10	.24	.63	.001

Model fitness indices: $X^2/d.f.=2.84$, TLI=.89, CFI=.90, SRMR=.04, RMSEA=.04

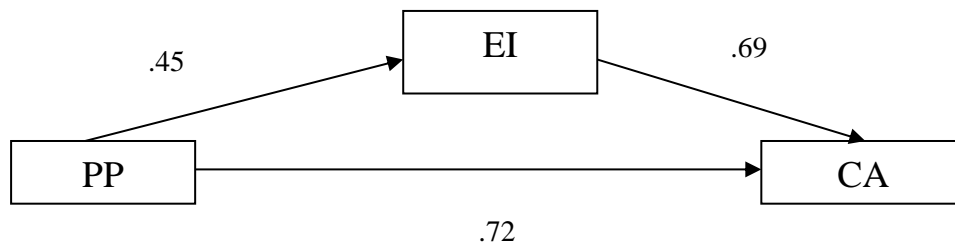


Figure 32: Indirect effect calculation for career decline stage (Model 1)

The procedure of checking mediation is recommended by Zainudin (2015) as follows:

- The indirect effect (Figure 32) ($.45 * .69 = .31$)

- The direct effect .72
- The value of the indirect effect must be less than the value of the direct effect for occurrence of mediation
- Since the significance of direct effect between IV and DV. (Table 44)

Table 44

<i>Bootstrapping Results for Career Decline Stage (Model 1)</i>		
	Indirect effect PP→ EI → CA	Direct effect PP→ CA
Bootstrapping results	.31	.72
Bootstrapping p-value	.000	.001
Result	Mediation happens	Significant
Type of mediation	Partial mediation, as direct effect is also significant	

The result of mediation was conducted by applying the bootstrap method as recommended by Zainudin (2015). The research was performed by using the Maximum Likelihood Bootstrapping procedure with a sample of 5000 bootstrap and bias correction 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the findings of bootstrapping as indicated in the table had approved the mediation results as done before where emotional intelligence played a part as partial mediator on the association among PP and CA. Thus, hypothesis 4c was confirmed.

4.9.2.3. Model 2 (CA-PEF-CP)

H5: CA and CP have a negative relationship in career decline stage.

H6: CA and PEF have a positive relationship in career decline stage.

H7: PEF and CP have a negative relationship in career decline stage.

H8: PEF acts as mediator among CA and CP in career decline stage.

Table 45 reveals the findings of the path coefficient for the model of the research and figure 33 shows the representation of the model. Model fitness indices depicted that model fitness was not appropriate ($\chi^2/df=4.66$, TLI=.65, CFI=.68, RMSEA=.09, SRMR=.10). The testing of hypotheses depicted the significance of the proposed three hypotheses, respectively. Firstly, the association between CA and PEF was supported ($\beta = -.25$, $p = .004$). Secondly, career adaptability influences career plateau ($\beta = .41$, $p = .001$) had been confirmed by results. Thirdly, the results approved that person environment fit had no effect on career plateau ($\beta = .12$, $p = .278$). Therefore, hypotheses 5c, and 6c were confirmed while 7c was not supported.

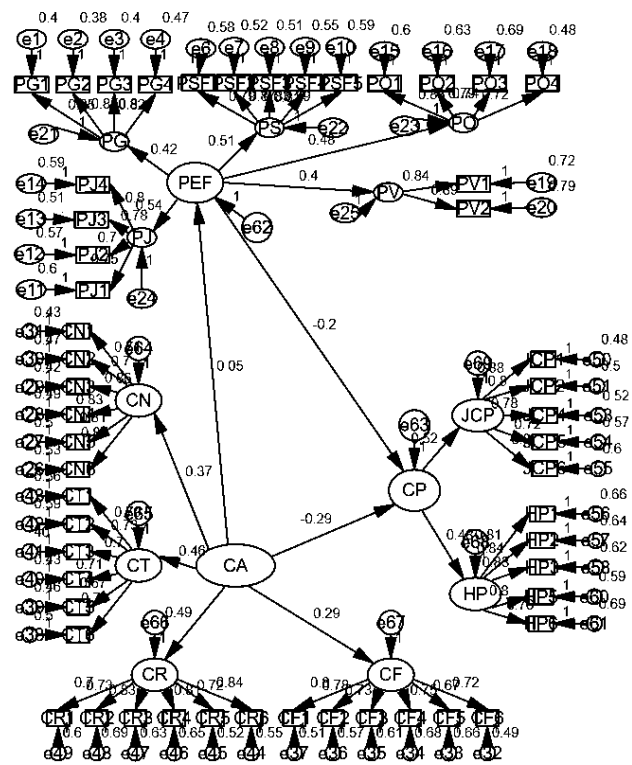


Figure 33: Model 2 for career decline stage

Table 45

<i>SEM Results of Model 2 for Career Decline Stage</i>					
Direct paths	β	SE	lower	Upper	P- value
CA → PEF	.25	.08	.07	.41	.004
CA → CP	.41	.10	.20	.63	.001
PEF → CP	.12	.12	-.10	.38	.278

Model fitness indices: $X^2/d.f.=2.84$, TLI=.89, CFI=.90, SRMR=.04, RMSEA=.04

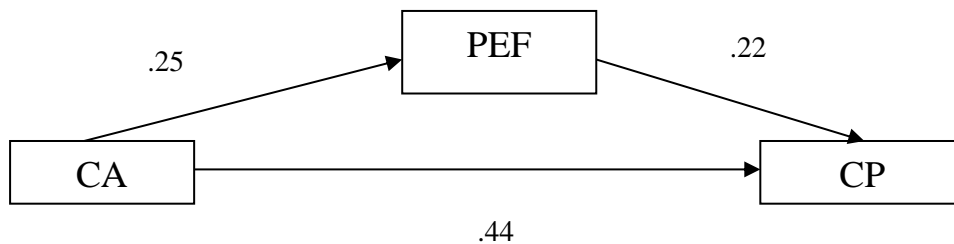


Figure 34: Indirect effect calculation for career decline stage (Model 2)

The procedure of checking mediation is recommended by Zainudin (2015) as follows:

- The indirect effect (Figure 34) ($.25 * .22 = -.05$)
- The direct effect .44
- Since, the value of the indirect effect is insignificant and the direct effect is significant
- Since M and Y condition was not met (Table 46).

Table 46

<i>Bootstrapping Results for Career Decline Stage (Model 2)</i>		
	Indirect effect CA → PEF → CP	Direct effect CA → CP
Bootstrapping results	-.05	.44
Bootstrapping p-value	.244	.001
Result	Mediation not happens	Significant
Type of mediation	No mediation, as indirect effect is not significant	

The results of mediation were conducted by applying the bootstrap method as recommended by Zainudin (2015). The research performed the Maximum Likelihood Bootstrapping procedure with a sample of 5000 bootstrap and bias correction 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the findings of bootstrapping as indicated in the table had approved the mediation results as done before where person environment fit did not play a part as a mediator on the association among CA and CP. Thus, hypothesis 8c was not approved.

4.9.2.4. Model 3 (PP-CA-CP)

H9c: PP and CP have a negative relationship in career decline stage.

H10c: CA acts as mediator among PP and CP in career decline stage.

Table 47 reveals the findings of path coefficient for the model of the research and figure 35 shows the representation of the model. Model fitness indices depicted that the model fitness was appropriate ($\chi^2/df=1.94$, TLI=.90, CFI=.94, RMSEA=.04, SRMR=.05). The testing of hypotheses depicted the significance of the proposed three hypotheses, respectively. Firstly, the association between PP and CA was supported ($\beta = .72$, $p = .001$). Secondly, PP and career plateau ($\beta = -.47$, $p = .002$) had been confirmed by the results. Thirdly, the results proved that career adaptability had an effect on career plateau ($\beta = -.36$, $p = .008$). Therefore, hypothesis 9c was supported.

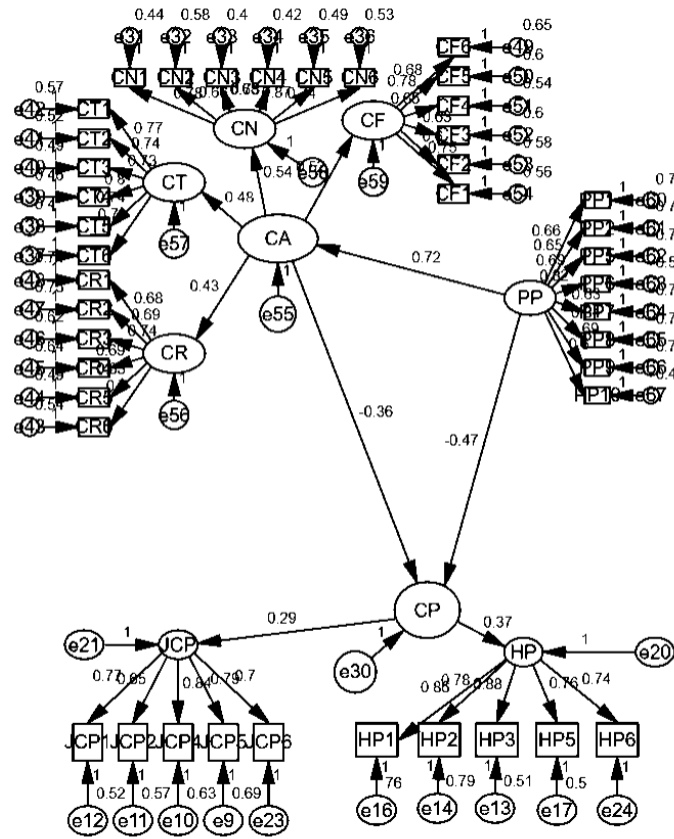


Figure 35: Model 3 for career decline stage

Table 47

SEM Results of Model 3 for Career Decline Stage

Direct paths	β	SE	lower	Upper	P- value
PP → CA	.72	.04	.59	.82	.001
PP → CP	-.47	.09	.18	.77	.002
CA → CP	-.36	.16	-.20	.42	.008

Model fitness indices: $X^2/d.f.=1.94$, TLI=.90, CFI=.94,

SRMR=.04, RMSEA=.05

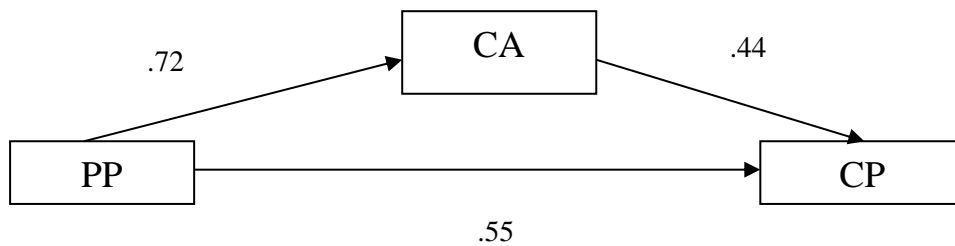


Figure 36: Indirect effect calculation for career decline stage (Model 3)

The procedure of checking mediation is recommended by Zainudin (2015) as follows:

- The indirect effect (Figure 36) (.72*.44=.31)
- The direct effect .55
- The value of indirect effect is insignificant and the direct effect is significant
- M and Y condition was not met (Table 48).

Table 48

<i>Bootstrapping Results for Career Decline Stage (Model 3)</i>		
	Indirect effect PP→ CA → CP	Direct effect PP→ CP
Bootstrapping results	.31	.55
Bootstrapping p-value	.005	.002
Result	Mediation happens	Significant
Type of mediation	Partial mediation, as indirect effect is significant	

The result of mediation was conducted by applying the bootstrap method as recommended by Zainudin (2015). The research was performed by the Maximum Likelihood Bootstrapping procedure with a sample of 5000 bootstrap and bias correction 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the findings of bootstrapping as indicated in the table had approved the mediation results as done before where career adaptability did not play a part as a mediator on the association among PP and CP. Thus, hypothesis 10c was not confirmed.

4.9.4. Serial Mediation

H11: EI, CA and PEF sequentially mediate the association among PP and CP.

In table 49, the serial mediation is performed through the PROCESS MACRO (model 6) which indicates the indirect effect of PP on CP with the mediating mechanism of emotional intelligence, CA and person environment fit. As figure 36 shows that the total effect (c=-.38,

SE=.05, $t=2.74$, $p<.05$) of PP on CP was significant. The direct effect of proactive personality on emotional intelligence ($B=.25$, $SE=.08$, $t=5.166$, $p<.05$), career adaptability ($B=.33$, $SE=.06$, $t=5.13$, $p<.05$), and person environment fit ($B=.29$, $SE=.09$, $t=4.11$, $p<.05$) were significant. In addition, the direct effect of emotional intelligence as a first mediator on second mediator career adaptability ($B=.12$, $SE=.07$, $t=5.02$, $p<.05$), and career adaptability as a second mediator on third mediator person environment fit ($B=.22$, $SE=.11$, $t=6.19$, $p<.05$) were significant. The direct effects of mediators on career plateau revealed that emotional intelligence ($B=-.18$, $SE=.06$, $t=7.05$, $p<.05$), career adaptability ($B=-.25$, $SE=.09$, $t=9.05$, $p<.05$), person environment fit ($B=-.32$, $SE=.04$, $t=4.16$, $p<.05$) and emotional intelligence-career adaptability-person environment fit ($B=-.18$, $SE=.09$, $t=5.38$, $p<.05$) were also significant. Now, the result of proactive personality and all mediating constructs showed that the direct effect was significant ($c'=-.23$, $SE=.15$, $t=9.51$, $p<.05$). Overall the model was seen to be significant ($F=54.21$, $p<.05$) and have 48% total variance in career plateau (see figure 37).

Table 49

<i>Serial Mediation Analysis</i>				
Effects	Product coefficients		Bootstrapping 95% confidence interval	
	Point estimate	SE	Lower	Upper
Total indirect effects				
PP→EI→CP	-.264*	.012	-.321	-.356
PP→CA→CP	-.275*	.018	-.129	-.192
PP→PEF→CP	-.348*	.011	-.215	-.286
PP→EI→CA→CP	-.165*	.017	-.386	-.405
PP→EI→CA→PEF→CP	-.385*	.019	-.268	-.349

N=497; $p < .05$

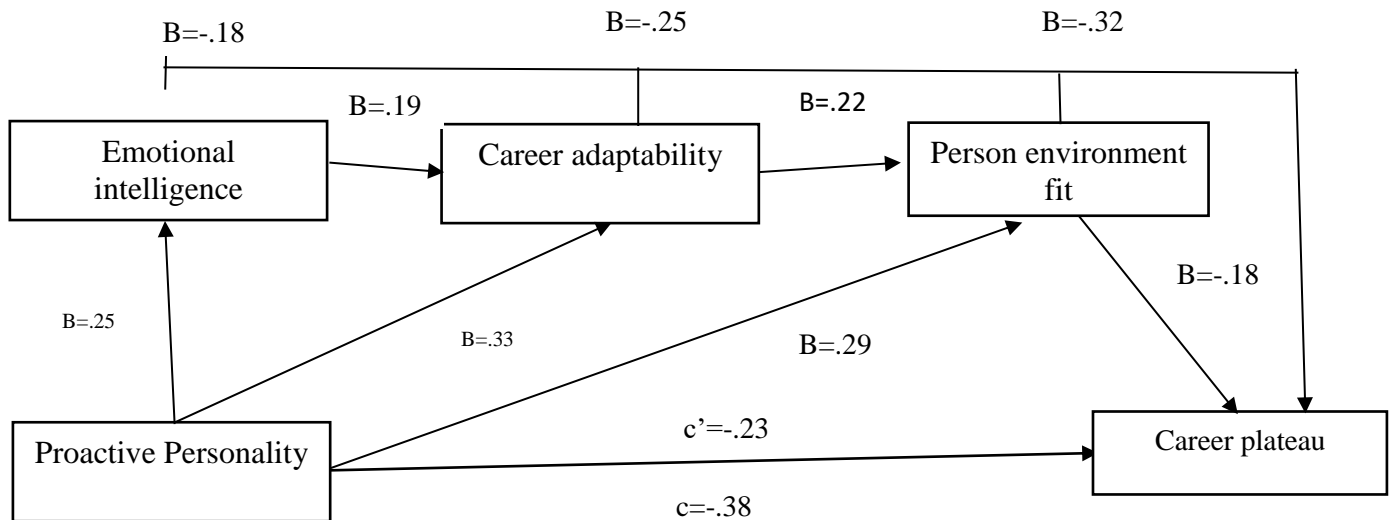


Figure 37: PROCESS MACRO Model 4 (Serial Mediation)

Further, table 49 shows that serial mediation of EI, CA and PEF (point estimates= $-.385$, 95% CI [$-.268$, $-.349$]) was statistically significant. The value of indirect effect fell among $-.268$ and $-.349$ at confidence interval which was different from zero significantly. Therefore, hypothesis 11 regarding serial mediation was confirmed.

Table 50

Summary of Results

Career Establishment Stage

1a	H1: PP and CA have a positive relationship.	Supported
2a	H2: PP and EI have a positive relationship.	Supported
3a	H3: EI and CA have a positive relationship.	Supported
4a	H4: EI acts as mediator among PP and CA.	Supported
5a	H5: CA and CP have a negative relationship.	Supported
6a	H6: CA and PEF have a positive relationship.	Supported
7a	H7: PEF and CP have a negative relationship.	Supported
8a	H8: PEF acts as mediator among CA and CP.	Supported
9a	H9: PP and CP have a negative relationship.	Supported
10a	H10: CA acts as mediator among PP and CP.	Supported

Career Maintenance Stage

1b	H1: PP and CA have a positive relationship.	Supported
2b	H2: PP and EI have a positive relationship.	Supported
3b	H3: EI and CA have a positive relationship.	Supported
4b	H4: EI acts as mediator among PP and CA.	Supported
5b	H5: CA and CP have a negative relationship.	Supported
6b	H6: CA and PEF have a positive relationship.	Not supported
7b	H7: PEF and CP have a negative relationship.	Not supported
8b	H8: PEF acts as mediator among CA and CP.	Not supported
9b	H9: PP and CP have a negative relationship.	Supported
10b	H10: CA acts as mediator among PP and CP.	Supported

Career Decline Stage

1c	H1: PP and CA have a positive relationship.	Supported
2c	H2: PP and EI have a positive relationship.	Supported
3c	H3: EI and CA have a positive relationship.	Supported
4c	H4: EI acts as mediator among PP and CA.	Supported
5c	H5: CA and CP have a negative relationship.	Supported
6c	H6: CA and PEF have a positive relationship.	Supported
7c	H7: PEF and CP have a negative relationship.	Not supported
8c	H8: PEF acts as mediator among CA and CP.	Not supported
9c	H9: PP and CP have a negative relationship.	Supported
10c	H10: CA acts as mediator among PP and CP.	Supported

Serial mediation

11	H11: EI, CA and PEF sequentially mediate the association among PP and CP.	Supported
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Chapter 5

Discussion

The research framework of the study had four models such as model 1 (proactive personality-emotional intelligence-career adaptability), model 2 (career adaptability-person environment fit-career plateau), model 3 (proactive personality-career adaptability-career plateau) for career establishment, maintenance, decline stages and model 4 (proactive personality-emotional intelligence-career adaptability- person environment fit-career plateau: integrated model). Particularly, the four aims of this dissertation were: (1) to test EI as a mediator among PP and CA in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages, (2) to investigate the person-environment fit as a mediator among CA and CP in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages, (3) to examine CA as a mediator among proactive personality and career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages and (4) to assess the impact of three mediators (EI, PEF and CA) jointly in a relation of proactive personality and career plateau. To fulfill these research objectives; the study has adopted time lags design across almost six months' periods. Having reported the findings in the previous chapters, this chapter explains the key results in relation to past theoretical and empirical arguments.

5.1. Discussion

5.1.1. *Research question 1*

- a) Does emotional intelligence mediate the association among PP and CA in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages?

To answer this question, direct and mediating mechanism of PP and CA among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages are proposed in this research. The results indicate that there is a positive association between PP-EI, EI-CA and PP-CA among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages, in HEIs of Pakistan. It has also been discovered

that emotional intelligence significantly and partially mediates the association between PP and CA among career stages.

To comprehend the first hypothesis, this research has observed a positive association among PP and CA in all career stages that is in line with past studies (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Hou *et al.*, 2014; Öncel, 2014; Jiang, 2017; Green, Noor & Hashemi, 2020; Tolentino *et al.*, 2014; Wang, Mei, Xie, Zhao & Yang, 2021; Shabeer, *et al.*, 2021; Haynie, Flynn & Herda, 2020; Peng, Song & Yu, 2021). Specifically, the results indicate that high PP is more likely to boost the work and be able to introduce adaptability resources in career and work contexts. Managing one's job is linked with proactivity which is similar to managing a career. PP feels the personal responsibility for their career (Hall & Mirvis, 1995). One way to actually get in control of accomplishing career goals and needs is by career adaptability. Career adaptability is a career competency (Akkermans *et al.*, 2018; Bocciardi, *et al.*, 2017; Safavi, & Bouzari, 2019; Paradnike, & Akkermans, 2017) that achieves career-related abilities, skills, and knowledge amid fulfilling career goals (Akkermans *et al.*, 2013). The integrated research framework of Akkermans *et al.* (2013) explained the three dimensions of career competencies which are a part of CA. First, it focuses on making a useful professional network and effective communication and being able to show the individual's strength to impact others. For example, understanding how and whom he/she will go for career advancement guidance. Second, it addresses the personal reflections and awareness on the career. For instance, the reflection on an individual's passion and motivation as well as also his/her limitations and strengths concerning a particular career. Third, it entails learning, searching for career opportunities and setting goals, for example, pursuing education to become an expert in a certain work task. Proactive employees adopt these characteristics to control their environment for career advancement (Seibert *et al.*, 2001). Proactive employees seek methods to enhance their professional network (Thompson, 2005) and be involved in development programs (Major *et*

al., 2006). This study provides evidence that PP has relation with CA because individuals are inclined to reflect actively, apply their connections and produce career opportunities in the education sector of Pakistan.

With respect to the second hypothesis, the results confirmed the assertion that PP is linked to and influences EI significantly across career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. PP is an important trait for developing EI in employees EI. One possible reason for this association could be that proactive persons have tendencies such as exploring new methods and taking initiative, employees further apply their emotions to provide guideline for their thinking as well as actions which result in more new thinking and ideas. Therefore, the findings are synced with the findings of other scholars (Griva & Anagnostopoulos, 2010; Jafri, Dem, & Choden, 2016; Mazzetti *et al.*, 2019; Segerstrom, & Smith, 2019 Ashkanasy, 2021; Cui & Li, 2021; Öneren, Çetiner, Arar & Yurdakul, 2019; Darmayanti & Salim, 2020). The personality factor is an important one (Batey & Furnham, 2006) in this association due to which employees have a better emotional state to deal with problems and exploit their competency of intelligence in a creative manner. PP are motivated in order to apply the successful strategies for managing discrepancies responses (Randolph & Dahling, 2013). Overall PP is in a better position to control the inner negative emotions including visible expression to understand the needs of others and building positive relationships (Mazzetti *et al.*, 2019). People with high PP and EI promote divergent thinking, evaluate multiple options, flexibility and related processes of cognition that facilitate the production of useful and novel ideas. Both emotions and intelligence are intertwined and integrated. EI is also a coping mechanism that moves towards meaningful self-regulation in order to accomplish the desired goals (Riley & Schutte, 2003). The process of coping involves those procedures, through which an individual can manage her/his emotions by using and thinking of them in an organized method, perform and organize his/her behaviors, act in non-social and social environments, and control her/his automatic

arousals towards decreasing or changing stressors (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). EI or controlling emotions are linked with a higher coping ability (Mayer Salovey, & Caruso, 1997). So, proactive personality and positive emotions manage processes that can assist in decreasing the intensity and frequency of stressors and also help to endure the stressful situations in HEIs of Pakistan.

With respect to the third hypothesis, the findings of this research support that EI has a positive relationship with CA in all career stages (establishment, maintenance and decline). These results are corroborated with past researches (Brown *et al.*, 2003; Celik & Storme, 2018; Coetzee & Beukes, 2010; Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Parmentier, Pirsoul, & Nils, 2019; Merino-Tejedor *et al.*, 2018; Schutte *et al.*, 2008; Udayar *et al.*, 2018; Hamzah, Kai Le & Musa, 2021; Mittal, 2021) which show EI is the predictor of career commitment, career exploration, planning and decision-making self-efficacy. Overall, this study has provided the empirical evidence that higher level of self-efficacious related to emotional functioning improve the self-efficacious related to adaptive functioning within the domain of cognitive-affective behavior of CA. Individuals who can manage their own emotions report an increase in their willingness and motivation to plan their vocational future, take responsibility for work and career experiences and search for an environment to gain more opportunities but are also interested in mastering development activities and challenges linked with their career (Coetzee & Harry, 2014). Managing individual's own emotions is part of emotional intelligence, involving applying a positive mood to persist in case of obstacles, have confidence in controlling personal emotions and stimulate an individual's self to gain success (Schutte *et al.*, 2009). The emotional intelligence function is vital for dealing with the challenges of career, setting clear career plans, goals, and engaging in problem solving behaviors (Coetzee & Beukes, 2010; Schutte *et al.*, 2008; Coetzee & Beukes, 2010; Brown *et al.*, 2003). The study of Salovey and Mayer (1990) also contends that emotions are responsible for producing various future plans, facilitate

decision making, creative thinking and improve persistence in meeting challenging jobs. In summary, it can be stated that EI of employees in universities of Pakistan are improving the CA with abilities to manage their careers.

In line with hypotheses first, second and third, this research has observed a positive association among PP-EI, EI-CA and PP-CA in career stages. Along with these findings, this study has confirmed the theoretical conjecture of PP attributes such as change in orientation for enhancing the surroundings which are related to career adaptability (Tolentino *et al.*, 2014; Savickas, 2002). Extending this research line, the detected mediation functioning of emotional intelligence in this study has highlighted a mechanism or process through which PP may shape CA. Specifically, the findings indicate that high PP are more likely to have EI and as a result they will be able to improve CA resources in career and work contexts. The EI-based mediation mechanism explains to some extent that how and why the effect of PP can be shifted to influence on CA. Further, these results support the propositions of COR (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) in which it is stated that resource gain becomes the source of gaining or sustaining new or existing resources. Within the framework of COR theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018), it is confirmed that a proactive personality has personal resources and emotional intelligence as a general adaptive resource together which stimulates an individual to mobilize and develop their CA resources and deal their career issues. Moreover, this research also confirmed the view of Porath *et al.*,(2012) as they found that PP has internal constructive and positive changes that ignite learning which implies a continuous orientation towards career development for sustaining and further learning. In short, by testing the EI-based mediation, this research develops an empirical explanation about the role of EI in PP and CA process.

In addition, the findings of this study also confirmed that PP, EI and CA are linked with career stages. In other words, employees in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages have proactive personalities, emotional intelligence and career adaptability. Many people believed

that aging is an unhappy and lonely journey due to decline in physical and cognitive health but the result of this study is consistent with (Jiang& Fung, 2019) which found that older employees have more positive emotions and fewer negative emotions compared to younger employees. These results are supported by several scholars because older adults solve their problems effectively through balancing emotional regulation with proactive personality traits and career adaptability resources (Blanchard-Fields, 2007; Ouwehand, de Ridder, & Bensing, 2008). Due to having an accumulation experience, older employees are more likely to manage the difficulties related to life with an array of problem-solving techniques compared to young employees. Older employees combined (a) strategies of emotional regulation that buffer their psychological stress and (b) actions targeted directly to the source of problem. It shows that when older employees experience problems, they display more flexible, complex and emotionally mature behaviors or functioning (Blanchard-Fields, 2007). This result is also placed in stark opposite to stereotypes of “*older adulthood rigidity*” and traditional researches of declined reasoning that are linked often with an individual’s advancing age. Of course, it applies to older adults who are functioning normally and not to such individuals who are developing dementia and seem to be less adaptive and more rigid with increasing age. Although, normal age advancement may be linked with cognitive decline these declines are not readily studied with PP, EI and CA. Now, this study has given a better understanding for the situations of older and young adults who apply their PP to regulate their emotions and CA resources, have a balance in instrumental and emotional aspects of the problem.

5.1.2. Research Question 2

- b) Does PE fit mediate the association among career adaptability and career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages?

To find out the answer to this question, direct and indirect relationship among CA and CP are introduced for career establishment, maintenance and decline stages in this study. In the career

establishment stage, the results found that there is a positive association among CA-PEF, PEF-CP and CA-CP in HEIs of Pakistan. It has been mentioned before that PEF significantly and partially mediates the relationship among CA-CP in career establishment stage. However, in the career maintenance and decline stages, CA-CP has a negative and significant relationship but CA-PEF and PEF-CP have no significant relationship. The results show that PEF mediates the association among CA and CP in career establishment stage but PEF did not mediate this association in career maintenance and decline stage among HEIs in Pakistan.

With respect to hypothesis five, the results confirmed that CA and CP have a negative association in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. The HR practitioners and management of HEIs in Pakistan can reduce the impact of career plateau by giving more attention to career adaptability as anticipated (Tolentino *et al.*, 2013; Chan, Mai, Kuok, & Kong, 2016; Jiang, 2016, Shabeer *et al.*, 2018; Sibunruang, Garcia, & Tolentino, 2016; Savickas, 2013; Shabeer, *et al.*, 2021; Kaur & Kaur, 2021). This finding has also extended the standpoint rooted within the theory of the career construction theory (Savickas, 1997, 2005) that adaptability resources of individuals can be regulated by them to manage stressful events (Maggiori *et al.*, 2013) like career plateau (McCleese *et al.*, 2007). When employees are adaptable in their career and work lives, they are in a position to face negative psychological states (e.g. career plateau) due to their self-regulatory resources. In the career context, CP is regarded as an adaptive response and the result of this study has supported that CA shapes and precedes indicators or adapting responses (Hirschi *et al.*, 2015; Savickas, 2013). Further, the negative link among career adaptability and career plateau reveals that adaptable employees are concerned about a healthier career progression. For example, adaptive employees may show their potential of promotion and apply their internal resources (concern, control, curiosity and confidence) to introduce good competencies and work habits and find themselves as promotable by preparing for those jobs which have a higher opportunity for growth. CA is a

personal resource that motivates individuals to show proactive career behaviors (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Savickas, 2013). In this regard, CA can improve the potential of getting promotion and promotability is critical to maintain a career path because adaptive employees require boundaryless working environment (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). So, management could help in retaining the adaptive employees by stimulating and encouraging employees to enhance their skills, knowledge and marketability by applying proactive strategies to involve them in a continuous process of learning. Hence, training can enhance the quality of work (Koen, Klehe, & Van Vianen, 2012), management can be prudent to give more resources (e.g., providing incentive programs and learning opportunities) to support employees to improve their career competencies and capability -enhancing different technical and interpersonal skill, while developing confidence in employees not only to perform their job responsibilities but to have successful moves and convey diverse tasks. By having opportunities to apply the professional skills and access to learning opportunities or training, employees may believe that they have more promotional chances. Thus, the influence of CA has enriched the research of CP by introducing new constructs that require consideration in the diminishment of CP perception.

With respect to hypothesis six, the results found that CA and PEF have a positive association in career establishment and in the decline stage of employees working in HEIs in Pakistan. This finding is consistent with (Guan *et al.*, 2013; Jiang, 2016, Shabeer *et al.*, 2018; Kaur, & Kaur, 2020; Yen, Cheng, Hsu & Yen, 2019), which indicates that CA facilitates integration with the working environment to have greater fit. At the career establishment stage, when an employee is new, she/she will pass through the socialization process to fit themselves into a particular organizational culture. The focal aim of the socialization process is to get a better fit among employees' beliefs and values within an organization (Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007). In this situation, CA helps the new employee to make adjustments within the organizational contexts. For example, CA motivates an individual to invest their efforts and

time in planning how personal characteristics and their working environment can be matched so, he/she can deliberately decide and take conscious actions for receiving growth opportunities. CA sustains the efforts of an individual and their persistency when he/she face difficulties in the job. All these characteristics of CA improve the likelihood of matching one's abilities, needs and values with the working environment. Moreover, with respect to hypothesis seven, the findings of this research demonstrated that PEF and CP have a negative relationship in the career establishment stage of employees who were working in HEIs in Pakistan as supported by previous studies (Jiang, 2016, Shabeer *et al.*, 2018; Xie, Xin & Bai, 2016; Kumar, Akbar & Khan, 2021) which also reflected that fit perceptions impact the career plateau. It is logical that when the needs of an employee are met by environmental reinforcements, they are more likely to experience less CP. In line with the fifth, sixth and seventh hypotheses of model 2, this study supports that PEF partially mediates the relationship among CA and CP only in the career establishment stage and these results are consistent with prior researches (Jiang, 2016; Shabeer *et al.*, 2018). This empirical investigation has showed that the PEF based mechanism of mediation underline the impact of CA on CP and offers the explanation why CA is beneficial for reducing CP issues. The results regarding mediation reflect past empirical and theoretical perspectives that indicate the importance of PEF in work and career settings. In other words, CA suggests that the process of career development is based on the adaptation of environment to the goal of PE integration (Savickas, 2005) but CP is an unfavorable experience in the career journey of an individual (McCleese *et al.*, 2007) that can function on contextual and personal factors (McCleese *et al.*, 2007; Hofstetter & Cohen, 2014). The current results have extended these perspectives which indicate PEF integrate the reflection and exploration of their environment and self, it can be a connector of CA to CP (Edwards *et al.*, 1998; Shabeer *et al.*, 2018). This evidence recommends the significance of PEF in transmitting the impacts of CA resources to cope with CP. On the whole, this study supports the TWA (Dawis & Lofquist,

1984) to describe the psychological process about alleviating the CP phenomenon at work from self-regulatory adaptive resources. Importantly, this mediation has extended the past models (Hirschi *et al.*, 2015) rooted in CCT by confirming the path of relating adaptability and constructs of adaptation from a PE integration perspective. Furthermore, this research has indicated that CA, PEF and CP are shown in employees in the career establishment stage in universities of Pakistan. This finding has confirmed that younger and older employees are differentiated in their utilization of personal resources. Age is a proxy for experience and cognitive abilities through which individuals can adopt various ways to apply their individual resources. Younger and older employees are not different in their level of resources but in the application of those resources (Connor- Smith & Flaschbart, 2007). Personality antecedents are essential for adaptation and PE fit whereas age assists this process (Connor- Smith & Flaschbart, 2007). Because adults who display flexibility in their coping behaviors are dependent on cognitive abilities and working experiences (Connor- Smith & Flaschbart, 2007). Hence, older employees have more organizational tenure and job experience rather than younger employees which has positive impacts on adaptation and utilization, however older employees are less motivated to invest in resources and resist against change to meet the new challenges (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004; Jones & Meredith, 1996; Caldwell, Herold, & Fedor, 2004) like career plateau.

The results of this research have shown that CA and PEF and PEF and CP were not supported neither PEF act as a mediator between CA and CP in the career maintenance and decline stage. It means that universities of Pakistan have poor PEF, and are not suitable for mid and late career employees to reduce CP but there are individual and contextual factors that may be the cause of this situation. Firstly, at an organizational level, poor PEF can be caused due to age discrimination because older employees who face discrimination in organizations or group may feel less motivation and more stress at the workplace (Maertens *et al.*, 2012). In general,

optimal working experiences are the sources of intrinsic motivation and sustainability; consequently, an individual can become more adaptive and manage their CP. However, if older employees perceived negative stereotyping in their organization or group, they lose intrinsic motivation (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004; Kanfer, Beier, & Ackerman, 2013). Moreover, lack of contact with older employees may reduce their sense of meaningful work (Fasbender & Wang, 2017) increase potential of becoming less adaptive and experiencing less challenging tasks and promotional opportunities within organization. Secondly, at an individual level, older individuals experienced negative changes in terms of decreasing energy, fitness and physical ability levels (Steverink *et al.*, 2001). Physical loss lowers the health levels (Wurm *et al.*, 2007; Steverink *et al.*, 2001). In turn, health is positively linked with focusing on opportunities and remaining lifetime (Zacher & Frese, 2009; Kooij & Van De Voorde, 2011). Individuals in mid and late career stages also experience negative social changes like feelings of being less needed, loneliness and decline in social contacts (Fasbender *et al.*, 2019; Steverink *et al.*, 2001). Further, individual cognitive changes are dependent on environmental influence, maturation and individual differences (learning experience, processing efficiency, speed, etc.) (Craik & Bialystok, 2006) and cognitive abilities have a negative relation with age because several capacities of individuals may start to decline at age 60 or above gradually (Salthouse, 2006). Cognition functions are divided into fluid intelligence (selective attention, working memory and processing speed) and crystallized intelligence (wisdom, skills, and accumulated knowledge). Fluid intelligence decreases in later life while crystallized intelligence increases at age 60 or later (Truxillo, Cadiz, & Hammer, 2015). What an individual wants and expects from work is stable after the age of 50 (Nord, Brief, Atieh, & Doherty, 1988; Jin & Rounds, 2012) like stable occupational-socialization models and occupational-selection (Mortimer & Lorence, 1979). Stability has two types; first order stability (relative work importance) and second-order stability (intra-individual changes due to societal and maturation changes).

Second order changes in work values are influenced by age such as shifting work motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic, less competition, affirming self-concepts, self-identity and coaching others (de Lange *et al.*, 2010). These changes also alter the work meaning for older employees because they pay less attention to achievement motives, power, competition and pay more attention to generative motives and their internal values and drivers (Kooij *et al.*, 2011). Now, career development shifts from organizationally driven to employee driven (Hall & Mirvis, 1995). Employee based career needs self-learning, adaptability and identity awareness. These meta-competencies are very essential for older employees because they have spent a large time of their career in developing job-related skills and organizational identities (Greenhaus Callanan, & Godshalk, 2010). Hence, it is observed that older employees are not motivated to take part in career development tasks because they receive less support from co-workers and supervisors (Posthuma & Campion, 2008). Therefore, older employees decrease their career planning, exploring, problem solving and decision-making abilities and have poor PEF, they may not be able to meet the demands of organizations that generate low job performance and receive fewer challenging activities and job promotions.

5.1.3. Research Question 3

c) Does CA mediate association among PP and CP in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages?

To find out the answer to this question, four hypotheses were introduced as PP-CA, CA-CP and PP-CP have a positive relationship and CA acts a mediator among PP and CP among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. The results of PP-CA and CA-CP are already discussed in the section above. The findings of hypothesis ten reflect that PP and CP have a negative association and CA significantly mediates the relationship among PP and CP in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. These results are consistent with past studies (Seibert *et al.*, 2001; Yang, & Chau, 2016; McCarthy, 2002; Turban *et al.*, 2017; Rode *et*

al., 2008; Shabeer, *et al.*, 2021) which revealed that individuals who control environments and their own behavior actively (Bandura, 1989; Converse *et al.*, 2012) are more likely to have a number of promotions. It supports the argument of Crant and Batemen (1995) that PP creates and selects a situation that can enhance higher performance through career management skill. This study also confirms Ashford and Black's argument (1996) that PP receive career support and sponsorship for making and sustaining career planning in facing the career obstacles (e.g. career plateau). Our findings are also in line with person-centered perspective regarding career processes which is mentioned by many scholars (Bell & Staw, 1989; Hall, 1996). Most of the researches on career deal with the individuals who are malleable and passive, emphasizing the impact of situational factors on behavior (Bell & Staw, 1989); in contrast, this study claimed that individuals can actively shape their environments and develop outcomes (e.g. career progression) for organizations and themselves. Now, a protean career is achieved by the individual who reinvents her or his career from time to time in order to respond to the personal and environmental changes (Hall, 1996). Our findings are supported in this perception that highly PP is actively involved in behaviors which negatively effects career plateau in HEIs of Pakistan.

As the direct hypotheses of model 3 are significantly related so, this study has confirmed the hypothesis eleven which states, CA acts as a mediator among PP and CP in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. As in the past studies (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015; Guan *et al.*, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2015; Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016; Dumulescuet *al.*, 2015; Shabeer, *et al.*, 2021), this study also supports that career adaptability has mediation properties among PP and CP. Similarly, this research has supported the claim that PP links the CA (Tolentino *et al.*, 2014) and these individuals are able to successfully adapt due to their propensity to create, select and influence the working environment (e.g. career plateau). It also strengthens the theoretical perspective that adaptivity adjusts the changing situations and

requires the proactive stance by taking action to deal with the imminent changes at work and enhance career circumstance (Savickas, 2013). Further, this research has supported the theoretical perspectives of TWA which explains that individuals use their skills to match with their working environment such as proactive personality and career adaptability manage the environment constraints such as career plateau.

The results supported that PP, CA and CP changed with career stages. Although, trait perspective recommends that personality in adulthood has individual stability differences (Roberts & Mroczek, 2008) but contextual perspective shows that personality changes occur due to life experiences. The latter views reflect that meaningful changes in the personality are dependent on age (Caspi, Roberts, & Shiner, 2005). Roberts and Mroczek (2008) stated that about 75% changes in personality traits occur in middle and old age, evidenced by improved emotional stability, self-control, warmth, conscientiousness and agreeableness (Wille *et al.*, 2014). This study also gives signals of maturity of personality and career attitudes over time. These changes over age in personality and career adaptability explain why individuals in establishment, middle and decline career stage become more satisfied and this implies better relations with co-workers, emotional work attachment and positive work values (Kooij *et al.*, 2011) in the case of career plateau. Further, PP and CA help in personal growth over lifespan linked with learning new skills, capabilities, self-worth, hope (Wurm *et al.*, 2007) and older employees who believed aging experience as a personal growth then they focus on opportunities for eliminating career plateau through development and continuous learning in the workplace (Henry, Zacher, & Desmette, 2015).

5.1.4. Research Question 4

d) Do EI, CA and PEF jointly effect the PP and CP relationship?

Consistent three simple mediations analyzed indirect effects of PP on career plateau, proactive personality on CA and CA on career plateau are mediated by emotional intelligence, person-environment fit and career adaptability in the above discussion. The finding of serial mediation integrates the theories of conservation of resource and work adjustment to explain the process of managing career plateau. Also, the integration of the mediator's emotional intelligence, career adaptability and person-environment fit influence proactive personality- career plateau association jointly and the aforementioned mediations offer useful insights about the complex interplay of an individual's psychological state, predisposition and career relevant resources.

5.2. Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the results of the study given in the chapter 4. The overall findings give the empirical support to the concept that the proactive personality contributes to emotional intelligence, PEF and career adaptability which consequently negatively influence the career plateau in the career establishment stage and career decline stage while the proactive personality does not contribute to PEF which negatively impacts the career plateau in career maintenance and decline stage. Implicit in the notion of COR, the results indicate that the proactive personality has the ability to gain more resources in the form of EI and CA to manage the resource loss which occurs due to the experience of career plateau. Similarly, according to the TWA perspective, PEF and career adaptability become critical factors which serve as a mediating mechanism through proactive personality influencing the career plateau. Hence, the findings of this research are aligned and confirmed with the perspectives of TWA and COR that were introduced and investigated in a Western cultural setting. In relation to the continuous debate over the role of proactive personality this can generate valuable resources for handling the career plateau. This study has provided the evidence that older employees do not fit into the environment for several reasons while younger employees have PEF so older employees suffer CP due to lack of PEF. The top management should take steps for developing PEF both

for younger_ and older employee to manage the CP. Therefore, the employment of talented and qualified individuals can be valueless without effective process which confirms that individuals are working well and also have the desire to contribute to the goals of an organization (Lado & Wilson, 1994).

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Many theoretical and practical implications can be made for this research. This section shows the implications of the thesis.

6.1. Implications of the Study

6.1.1. Theoretical Contributions

At a theoretical level, this dissertation has offered nine areas of implication. The first area of contribution is in the literature of career plateau and aging. Several studies reflected that age is one of the causes of experiencing CP. This study has divided the age groups with respect to Super's career development stages (e.g. career establishment, maintenance and decline stages) to learn the occurrence of CP across time and also conducted a meta-analysis in this regard see section 2.4. Thus, this research adds in the literature that career plateau should be managed according to career stages or the age of an employee. Further, this research did not confirm the assumptions that older employees have a less contemporary mindset or are less adaptive as compared to younger employees as in the case of model 1 and model 3. The results revealed that older individuals applied their personal resources no differently from younger employees. The findings have contradicted the literature, which argues that older individuals may be lacking in adaptability and flexibility to manage the challenges from changing careers due to dynamics and demands (Loi & Shultz, 2007; Bendick, Brown, & Wall, 1999).

Past research has only tested a few dimensions of PEF (e.g. PJF and POF) (Jiang, 2016; Shabeer et al., 2018), whereas the current study has provided a comprehensive understanding of the PEF term by adding other dimensions of PEF like person supervisor fit, person-vocational fit and person-group fit and tested as a composite variable in the relation of CA and

CP. Through this, it confirms that the environment is the combination of supervisor, co-workers, organization and job that influence career related outcomes.

Although the past studies (Jiang, 2016; Jiang, Hu, & Wang, 2018; Shabeer *et al.*, 2018) have widely examined the antecedents of career plateau, none has challenged the limitation of a common method bias. This research goes beyond the past studies to do time lag data collection and indicates that the lack of job promotion and unchallenging tasks can be effectively managed across career stages. These results make an essential contribution to the CP field as it explains the influence of PP, EI, CA and PEF on an individual's CP experience from a time lag perspective.

Career management literature has provided the insights of the mediating mechanisms through which career plateau can be managed. As stated in chapter 1 several researches have sought to describe career plateau as a negative relationship with work outcomes. This research proposes emotional intelligence, PEF and career adaptability as mediators in three separate models, and gives a novel explanation in dealing with the PP and career plateau relationship. In the first model, emotional intelligence proposes as a mediator in PP and CA association among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages and provides a detailed justification about how the proactive personality and the emotionally stable individual can have career adaptive resources. In the second model, person-environment fit is introduced as a mediator in the association of CA and career plateau among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages and provides a description of career plateau that can be influenced because of CA and PEF. Similarly, in the third model, CA is viewed as a mediator in proactive personality and CP among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages and also explains the details of how career plateau can be eliminated through PP and CA. Understanding lack of PEF is one of the reasons behind an unfavorable association of CA and CP in career maintenance and decline stages.

The fifth area added in the management literature with respect to findings of unique direct effects of study variables. For example, the career adaptability was not a significant impact on the PEF neither did PEF influence the CP in career maintenance and decline stages. It means that individual and contextual factors of Pakistan's universities are not favorable for older employees. Lack of good health, cognitive abilities and age discrimination could be the possible reasons for this insignificant relation (Wurm *et al.*, 2007; Salthouse, 2006).

The current study contributes to the literature is the application of COR (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) and TWA (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) frameworks to the proposed models. Hence, COR and TWA are frequently applied and discussed in the field of organizational studies, the study relates the theoretical perspectives of two theories together to test the association of PP and CP is in its embryonic phase. The theoretical stance considered in this research adds to the literature by giving insight into one potential explanation of the integrated causal relations of PP, EI, CA, PEF with CP. The findings of this research give the quantitative support to the assertion of COR that PP and EI can be the personal resources that can be considered for gaining more resources like CA which may help in reducing the stress caused by CP. Additionally, based on the TWA (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) assumptions, it has been considered more importantly in this study that the results underscore that both organizational characteristics and personality play vital roles in obtaining fitness, highlighting that removing career plateau in one's life is a result of proactivity, adaptive resources and also organizational efforts to achieve success regarding career plateau within an organization.

The literature is updated by providing the support regarding the applicability of Western approaches and theories of career management from the developing and non-Western perspective. For example, the results confirm the assertion that PP, EI, CA, PEF and CP notions are usually developed and investigated only in the Western context, and are shown to be effective when it is applied in HEIs of Pakistan. Through this way, these constructs are being

universally held as true in the current research. Regardless of cultural differences among non-Western and Western contexts, the Western theories can be used in the Pakistani context. The population of this research is the academic and non-academic employees in HEIs of Pakistan which are exposed to Western personal resources, thus enhancing the chances of Western theories to apply in Pakistan. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the term that famous variables of Western theories should not be dismissed automatically because of culture (Kipkebut, 2010).

Lastly, in the situation of the pandemic of covid-19, all fields of management literature are searching for the ways to cope with the worst impact of lock-downs on educational organizations and individuals. This study contributes to the management literature for covid-19 by introducing a set of personal resources (e.g. PP, EI, and CA) which permit individuals to manage the anticipated and current transitions and challenges in HEIs such as shifting towards online work and feelings of stagnation. Through the individual resources of this study, employees will be conscious of their ability to adapt, improve their adaptability and also be more interested to adapt according to the world of work (Savickas, 2013).

6.1.2. Practical Implications

While this research contributes to career management literature in many areas, it has substantive practical implications to overcome the feelings of stagnation at the time of pandemic or other crisis.

The current environment setting (covid-19 and the economic situation of Pakistan) the organizations can't ignore the influence of CP over different career stages. There are six ways which can minimize the feelings of end of a career. Firstly, organizations can start introducing a 'pattern about a normal career' that involves the typical pattern of a career within organizations (Bardwick, 1986). This information should also explain the status of CP and take

this phase as a normal career state rather than state of desperation. Secondly, organizations should appreciate and show respect to productive and passionate plateaued individuals constantly by informing them of the significance of their work contribution (Bardwick, 1986). Organizations can value the plateaued individuals by giving them equal chances of skill development and career planning programs (Allen *et al.*, 1999; Bardwick, 1986). Career developing opportunities permit organizations to comprehend what plateaued employees can contribute to the companies further and what skills these companies still require to accomplish the goals. Thirdly, flatter organizational structures have fewer promotional opportunities, but organizations can minimize these restrictions through redesigning or redefining promotional policies (Feldman & Weitz, 1988b). Although traditional promotions have more benefits and higher positions, however organizations can replace these rewards with mentoring opportunities or competitive training. As the study by Bardwick (1986) mentions, money and promotion should not be the only rewards that organizations can provide. Instead of this, organizations should be creative in giving rewards to employees as anything can be a reward if it is something that an individual value, earns and competes for. For example, an employee is assigned as a mentor which can be a reward because mentoring is found to reduce the CP (Wang *et al.*, 2014). Fourthly, managerial strategies can be used to lessen the perceptions of stagnant feelings such as job enlargement, job enrichment and job rotation (Choudhary, Ramzan, & Riaz, 2013; Tremblay & Roger, 1993). Fifthly, managerial support is the key to minimizing the CP. The more support an employee receives from the managers; they are less likely to have feelings of stagnation (Allen *et al.*, 1999). Supervisory support can involve provision of constructive feedback or counseling for plateaued individuals (Bardwick, 1986). Sixthly, for organizations that are suffering from CP, few scholars have introduced a compensating effect among work content and promotion. Specifically, the study of Nachbagauer and Riedl (2002) indicated that interesting tasks can compensate the limitation of

promotional opportunities, while routine job tasks can be understood until the unavoidable period or next promotion that gives the chance of a challenging task. Similarly, organizations should decrease the significance of promotion with time and improve the value of challenging tasks (Bardwick, 1986). This can be conducted when organizations reward the employees for good job performance with opportunities to get work or assignments that are attractive.

The results indicate that PP grew within career establishment, maintenance, decline stages and managing the CP. Practically, these findings have five standpoints. First, organizations can select employees who have high PP and are more adaptive towards proactive behaviors. For existing employees, organizations can train employees in the skills related to proactive thinking (Li *et al.*, 2014; Strauss, Griffin, & Parker, 2012). Secondly, organizations can select or train the leaders with transformational leadership characteristics because they elicit proactive behaviors from workers (Schmitt, Den Hartog & Belschak, 2016). Thirdly, organizations can apply strategies of work design to develop a fertile environment for PP. Particularly, establishing a culture of flexibility and innovation is suitable for PP (Patterson *et al.*, 2005). The successful strategies of work design revolve around a culture of flexibility and innovation Patterson *et al.* (2005) explains that these work designs (1) reflect an organization rapidly responding to the changing needs, (2) focusing on new ideas that are valued and accepted (3) shows an organization which will change procedures and policies to solve the problems and meet with new situations, and (4) demonstrate top management who are aware of identifying the changing needs for the purpose of continuous improvement. Fourthly, within the aging context, organizational practitioners are required to search the ways to support, attract, motivate and retain their older employees (Truxillo *et al.*, 2015). As mentioned by Ng & Feldman (2010), older employees have a more proactive personality compared to younger employees. The age stereotypes need to be removed within organizations (Truxillo *et al.*, 2012) and this information should be spread among relevant stakeholders of an organization because older

employees are more likely to engage in proactive activity on the job strategic and socio-emotional behaviors. Minimizing age related stereotypes can improve the proactive behaviors in older employees and their occupational well-being (Von Hippel *et al.*, 2013). Fifthly, usually older employees are not motivated to do the career and educational advancements but, if an organization convinced them then training and career development activities (e.g. self-paced learning, lateral job positions and integrated training content with work experience) can be beneficial for them to have PP. Similarly, studies on age management further recommends that organizations should provide equal access to all age groups of employees for training and career development which positively influences on the older employee's participation and motivation (Böhm, Schröder, & Kunze, 2013; Naegele & Walker, 2011). Sixthly, older employees have experience-based judgment and knowledge, established social networks, and socio-emotional skills that assist them in potential declines in physical and cognitive abilities. In this situation, organizations must motivate older employees to take new important roles as facilitators of innovation and knowledge transfer, organizational ambassadors, and mentors (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Calo, 2005). This can be achieved by compensating and recognizing the older employees.

Emotional intelligence across the career stages can help to minimize the CP. The findings recommend that young and old employees have EI which help them to display career related behaviors. Organizations can follow these guidelines to improve the EI. Firstly, although it is illegal to make the selection of an employee on the basis of age however, selection can be by applying EI for service industry. Employees who have high EI can choose appropriate EI strategies and have a better well-being in the service job positions. This may provide benefit to organizations by lowering the health costs associated for employees. Hiring employees with high EI should be started in the recruitment process. The manger should consider the capacity, temperament and personality of the right employee. Individuals who are active and passionate

will have high emotion regulation skills. Therefore, in the process of recruitment, psychological tests and interviews are recommended ways to test the EI. The psychological assessment involves personality assessment, clinical interview, behavioral assessment and intellectual functioning assessment. Personality tests allow interviewers to understand thoroughly an individual and his/her behavior which involves non-cognitive characteristics, temperament, motivation, personality, values, interests and attitudes. While the interviewing process allows the interviewer to understand the candidate through adapting and extending ways of asking questions related to achievement, experience, knowledge and education. By these two methods, the organization can judge the interviewees and choose the appropriate qualified and EI staff for the job. Further, the EI of existing employees can be improved by training. Practical training can increase the EI levels, for example, implementing employee assistance programs (EAPs) in an organization to foster emotional competence. EAPs are known as benefit programs that give professional guidance and advice to assist the older and younger employees in solving their work related or personal problems. So, managers should introduce and apply EAPs in training existing employees. Secondly, organizations should pay attention to the moods of employees. At individual level, EI changes both outside relationships and inner minds and cultivates clearer perceptions, better attitudes within them and generates social relationships that are important in diverse life and career settings (Goleman, 1995). Organizations can develop positive moods in individuals if tasks are important to them (Isen, 1999). One strategy to achieve this is through increasing the task significance. For example, employees work productively when they meet the beneficiaries in order to have fundraising activities (Grant *et al.*, 2007). Thirdly, in the context of career development, EI is an important domain. EI has provided the possibility of performance (Schutte *et al.*, 2008) and the individual may or may not display EI in their daily functioning (Jain, 2012). The well-developed EI give the readiness, self-regulatory capacity and energy for achieving career goals. EI is a vital psychosocial

resource for adaptive functioning and effective decision-making for a career (Schutte *et al.*, 2009; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). EI can be developed through counseling, coaching, and training (Potgieter, 2012; Johnston *et al.*, 2013). The model of ability states that training programs can enhance the EI (both self-reported and ability based) (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2011; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002). The EI is a strong factor which prepares an individual to increase their adaptability and environment demands to enhance their social skills and successful life (Hage *et al.*, 2007). From a preventive aspect (Kenny *et al.*, 2009), EI is an essential ingredient in career decision making. Fourthly, organizations which implement EI development programs improve the EI competencies of HR that powerfully changes and witnessed quicker improvement in the quality of employee effectiveness and found sustained changes with time (Park, 2005; Brooks & Nafukho, 2006). The research shows that creating EI at workplace truly drives careers and performance inside the organizations (Carmeli & Josman, 2006; Park, 2005). Recently, personality relevant interpersonal competencies have received more weight like EI in getting organizational and career success (Urquijo, Extremera, & Azanza, 2019). Older employees who have high EI can improve their experience of positive emotions as compared to negative emotions which they face due to age such as social support, income, and physical health. For instance, older employees can select their goals and apply compensation and optimization strategies to feel good regarding their remaining career lives (Baltes & Baltes, 1990). Moreover, EI is learnable and trainable (Mayer *et al.*, 2000) thus, health professionals and HR managers may focus on enhancing the individual's understanding about others and their own emotions and apply emotional regulation strategies effectively (e.g. cognitive reappraisal) to manage their emotions.

Career adaptability in young and old employees can help in handling the CP. Practically, CA can be improved by following these four suggestions. Firstly, the HR managers of the HEIs in Pakistan can improve the four competencies of CA. For instance, HR can increase the work

value by having contemporary knowledge of the industry, to enhance better career confidence and control. CEO or top management could share skill expectation and future jobs, and help an individual for their future career concerns. Shared failure and success experiences trigger individuals to adopt various pathways for achieving career success. Direction dialogues with employees allow them to feel like part of the industry and gain confidence. Secondly, HR managers can apply CAAS selection tools for screening potential candidates in the hiring process and recruitment of candidates who have a positive outlook. Those candidates who are high in CA, have the tendency for self-career development consequently, they may improve themselves outside or at work or take initiatives for their learning. They will be known as less passive employees, waiting for training or instructions to do things. Thirdly, a career counselor can help the adult by examining their personal characteristics such as life-style preferences, values, abilities and interests such as working in the evenings to help their spouse during the day for child care, desire to live next to aging parents, fellowships, apprenticeships and their training needs. The model of life design intervention suggests that individual career counseling must help in mastering and performing those adapting responses that fit in the social context of an individual (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Career counselors can apply social modeling and behavioral rehearsal as strategies to correspond with cultural norms (Pratomthong & Baker, 1983). Involving employees in practicing and exploring and adapting resources in a supportive and safe counseling environment increases the personal agency for career advancement. Fourthly, organizations can motivate their older employees for late career planning to have CA by changing their way of perceiving opportunities and the time available for them to work on them. It may include organizational or governmental initiatives linked with non-monetary benefits such as staying active, social contacts, time-structure and sense of contributing in terms of collective purposes that increase the psychological well-being of older employees (Paul & Batinic, 2010). Organizations can also focus on introducing supports and values for older

employees within an organization like socializing them with role-models (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015; Zacher, 2015). Organizations can set the culture of life-long development and learning actively for older employees (Burmeister, Fasbender, & Deller, 2018). Similarly, counselors or employers may search for ways of counteracting the elements which impact the physical loss by identifying those career opportunities which demand less physical activity.

The findings show that PEF play a role in managing the plateaued individuals while older employees have poor PEF. PEF can be managerially managed by these three suggestions. Firstly, organizations should begin by avoiding developing unrealistic promises regarding future work contents or career advancements, particularly in the period of recruitment and later career development stages (Zhao *et al.*, 2007; Tekleab & Taylor, 2003). Secondly, employer and employees should have frequent interactions to ensure that the expectation gaps of each party are kept to a minimum (Zhao *et al.*, 2007; Tekleab & Taylor, 2003). Organizations should make efforts frequently in understanding the expectations of employees and have the career plans in an applied nature. Giving honest appraisals, for example, is one way to minimize the discrepancy among a manager's assessments and an employee's expectations (Bardwick, 1986). Fulfilling the employee's expectations and concerns and responding with clarity and honestly are both effective strategies to lessen the negative outcomes of CP (Zottoli, 2003). Thirdly, contract breaches may be reduced when procedures of career development, rewards, job content and promotions are ensured and fairly carried out by organizations (Bal, Chiaburu, & Jansen, 2010). Similarly, expectations of getting challenging tasks and promotions may be eliminated or reduced when organizations introduce fair policies to confirm that these matters are dealt with on an equal basis. It would be helpful for organizations to introduce a 'pattern of normal careers' that includes the information of the average number of career levels or number of years in a particular job role and the percentage of those employees that can have the opportunity to get the next promotions (Bardwick, 1986). Being clear and honest with

employees regarding their career in the future is the key to reducing unrealistic expectations and negative behaviors of plateaued employees.

The last implication is linked with career plateau. Our results indicated that older and younger plateaued employees are equally trying to manage the CP. Organizations should not ignore any career development stage when dealing plateaued individuals. Developing an age-diversity organizational climate is important and can be accomplished by applying age related HR practices in three domains of policy (Boehm, Kunze, & Bruch, 2014). Firstly, this policy domain has the employee's abilities, skills and knowledge. Organizations should start by introducing age-neutral policies that give training opportunities to develop more knowledge and skills for employees of all career stages. These policies will be important in individuals of any age to gain new or challenging tasks and have effective solutions to minimize the perceptions of CP. The second policy domain is about effort and motivation. Employees should be provided with equal opportunities for job transferal and promotion, regardless of age (Boehm *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, organizations should invest in the training of managers to become competent in managing a diverse age workforce and to be sensitive enough to know and react according to the employee's needs at various ages. Managers who can be effectively aware of their employee's different needs may be quick to meet the expectations of employees about new realistic responsibilities or promotion, hence preventing unfavorable work outcomes. The third policy domain includes introducing age-friendly culture in an organization. Organizations should value the efforts of all individuals, irrespective of their career stage or age group. Both older and younger plateaued employees should be informed and appreciated for their significance to the certain aspects of an organization when those employees reflect a good job performance.

6.2. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although, PP is positively linked with CA via EI, CA is negatively linked with CP via PEF and PP is negatively linked with CP via CA among career stages. But this research has been faced with these seventh types of limitations. The first limitation is linked with time lag data which did not test the impact of one variable on it-self and other variables. Future studies are required to examine the proposed model from a longitudinal, qualitative and mixed method design perspective. The second limitation is regarding self-reporting bias. This research has taken the steps to reduce the common method bias (Conway & Lance, 2010) such as well-established scales with strong construct validity and reliability reported by past studies and this research's factor analysis and three-time lagged data collection (Podsakoff *et al.*,2003). Common method marker variable analysis and common method variance showed that the common method bias was not found in this dissertation (see chapter 4). However, self-reported data has the issue of social desirability that refers to the extent to which self-reported items are answered well from a respondent perspective instead of answered in a truthful and accurate manner (Holtgraves, 2004). Individuals who received CP as negative may not be interested in agreeing with the stagnant phase even if research confidentiality and anonymity were confirmed. Future studies should collect multi-source data to seek the cause-effect relationship among the proposed constructs. The third limitation stems from time lagged design which is famous for dropout issues. Several efforts were made to involve the continuous participation involving sending e-mail reminders (Manzo & Burke, 2012). Hence, attrition bias was not the concern of this research but the scholar was not able to find the reasons of non-response from the number of dropouts in time lag 2 and 3 for both paper and pen and online data collection. The failure to know the causes of dropouts leads to bias findings. For example, individuals who discontinued their survey may not participate further due to their intention to leave the organization because of being plateaued. Consequently, in future studies, the results should be

tested and also the reasons of follow ups for non-participation. The fourth limitation is related with the nature of society. Drawing samples from one industry working in a collective society by Pakistani values reduces the chances of generalization of results. Different industries have different employment cultures that can impact the career plateau. Future studies can adopt the comparison researches among individualistic and collective societies in the same or different sectors to investigate the models. The fifth limitation is related to job tenure. This study has not added job tenure as a control variable. As the research of Bai et al (2011) found that ten percent of employees started experiencing CP after working for three years in their current organization. Future studies can take job tenure as a control variable in the research model of this study. The sixth limitation is that this research has not taken the study constructs as a composite variable. But emotional intelligence, career adaptability, person environment fit and career plateau are multidimensional constructs. Future researches can test the models through dimensions to know which aspect of the study variables is playing their greater roles in minimizing the career plateau. The seventh limitation is that this study has not explored the moderators such as reasons of plateauing, non-renewal of contract, age, job tenure, and gender to explain the mediation models. Various reasons for plateauing result in different job attitudes (Godshalk & Fender, 2015). Individuals who are plateaued because of internal reasons usually do not reveal negative attitudes (better PEF) while individuals who are plateaued because of external reason show negative attitudes (poor PEF) in the workplace. Further, if plateaued employees believed that the current psychological contract can't be improved or replicated in other organizations then CP is tolerable with less negative job attitudes (Sonnenberg, Van Zijderveld & Brinks, 2014). The study of Bown-Wilson and Parry (2013) tested the phenomenon of career progression in older employees aged over 50 and it was also reported that female and male employees have different motivation levels for future career progression. This indicates that older female and male plateaued employees perceive career plateau

differently. Specifically, older plateaued women are warranted because they tend to outlive the men and when their fertility decreases, the female participation rate in the labor workforce increases (Kulik *et al.*, 2014). As a result, it will be of managerial value to know in future studies how employees of different gender and age have different work content and promotion and how they are impacted by CP. As the ages have several types such as calendar age or chronological age and organizational age (Sterns & Doverspike, 1987; McCarthy *et al.*, 2014). It is suggested that future research should consider the organizational age in the form of career stages as a moderator in investigating the CP. In this area, future studies can give help in exploring the conditional effects that influences career adaptability and career plateau via PEF for career maintenance and decline stages.

Future scholars can follow these research directions. As has been confirmed the PP-EI-CA, PP-CA-CP, and CA-PEF-CP models in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages, but career maintenance and decline do not support the relationship of CA-PEF-CP. The future studies can search for more possible mechanisms to test these three models. Potential mediators can be self-efficacy, task proactivity and job involvement because it is the predictive of proactive performance, adaptability and CP (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Godshalk & Fender, 2015; Crant, 2000). Other self-regulatory resources such as effort (VandeWalle *et al.*, 1999), social competence and feedback-seeking (Porath & Bateman, 2006) will also be best suited to learn which career development stages will be useful. The importance of cognitive and affective changes is under-represented in the model over time such as negative and positive emotions, changes in processing speed and memory and improving emotional-regulation skills (Doerwald *et al.*, 2016; Fasbender & Klehe, 2019; Truxillo, Cadiz, & Hammer, 2015). Thus, it will be useful to explore cognitive and affective changes from the aging experience in the CP perspective. This study calls for empirical examination regarding individual aging experience in the context of the career development stages. HR practices and policies (inclusive leadership,

merit-based career promotions, structured and formal performance appraisal, selection practices, employee participation systems) can help the employees in developing an age friendly organizational culture (Shabeer, Nasir, & Rehman, 2020; Polat, Bal & Jansen, 2017; Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015) to continue working within the organization. Consequently, several interventions can be anticipated to increase the chances of removing CP, including the creation of achievement opportunities, reinforcement contingencies, rewards on positive performance, and skill development support (London & Bray, 1984; Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Future studies should add the role of organization support in the proposed models. Spiritual beliefs influence the individual's perceptions of "happiness" "success" or "good life". Pakistan society has three main religions (Islam, Christianity and Hinduism) which impact career related decisions. Future studies can investigate the different religions, ethnic groups or spiritual inclinations. The study has tested several predictors but more extensive investigation may qualify these results. The study has been conducted on academic and non-academic staff of universities. However, it would be interesting to search the career plateau within these two samples working in public and private universities comparatively or separately. Since gaining job promotions are political in nature (Markham, Harlan & Hackett, 1987) and advancements are the source of accomplishing career success, more investigations to address promotability will be significant. Situational factors such as a highly political working context has the scarcity of resources and HR procedures and policies are not enforced strictly (Ralston, 1985). In this context, employees are motivated to use adaptability resources and perform career management behaviors (reactive, proactive and tolerant behaviors) to minimize their barriers (Griffin & Hesketh, 2005). Future studies can consider the culture of an organization in the proposed relationships.

The ninth research direction belongs to the training of employees. When testing the route of reducing career plateau, past studies have presented the lasting effects by adding the career

management preparedness or training intervention (Vuori, Toppinen-Tanner, & Mutanen, 2012; Koen *et al.*, 2012) to know how older and younger employees adjust to the environment. For instance, detailed training includes the individual's self-knowledge, environmental knowledge and implementing self-concepts into the work setting. Older employees are interested in increasing their self and environment knowledge as compared to younger employees and graduate students, in this case, training provides exercises of long-term and short-term goals, and manages the potential obstacles. Future studies can test the impact of training on older and younger employees for managing CP. This study has categorized the employees into career development stages. Lastly, future research direction can test two forms of CP (job content and hierarchical plateau) in the three proposed mediation models. The traditional careers concepts are founded on single organization (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Recently, boundaryless career is well-known, further examination of employment plateau, occupational plateau, professional plateau and inclusive plateau are suggested. These four types of plateaus have extended the definition of CP which are beyond the boundaries of organization and focus more on individual level opportunities for progression professionally instead of present organizations.

6.3. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the findings of the research given in the previous chapter. The overall results provide the empirical support to the notions that proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability and person-environment fit affect the career plateau. Implicit in the COR, the results suggest that emotional intelligence can be a useful construct in the association of PP and CA in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. Similarly, according to the perspective of TWA, PEF and career adaptability are the critical factors explaining the mediating mechanisms among CA and career plateau as well as among proactive personality and career plateau in career establishment, maintenance and decline stages.

However, PEF does not serve as a mediator among CA and CP in career maintenance and decline stages. It means that PEF is not appropriate for older employees but only for younger employees in HEIs in Pakistan. HEIs must focus on PEF for older and younger employees because they are enriched with wisdom, skills and knowledge. It is clearly mentioned in this research that highly qualified employees can be worthless without having a proactive personality, emotional intelligence, career adaptability, person-environment fit to reduce career plateau. The discussion is followed by theoretical and practical implications, limitations and future research directions.

In conclusion, the current research theoretically contributes to the literature of career plateau in four areas. It gives three new mediators (e.g. EI, PEF and CA) in the relationship of PP and career plateau among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. Firstly, the findings indicate that emotional intelligence played the role of mediator among these relationship and career stages. Secondly, the research signals that PEF is the mediator among career adaptability and career plateau among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. However, in the career stage of maintenance and decline, the mediation was not confirmed. Thirdly, this research has supported the role of CA as a mediator among PP and career plateau among career establishment, maintenance and decline stages. Finally, this is a first research that seeks to solve the issue of common method bias from a time-lagged perspective. Practically the results suggested that it is essential for HEIs in Pakistan to have age friendly organizations and provide realistic expectations for all career stage employees rather than merely for individuals in the career establishment stage to manage the career plateau. Further, HEIs should take care of the emotional health of existing and potential employees by paying attentions to their moods and providing them counselling and moral support. Further, Universities should focus on hiring and development or training of proactive

personality and career adaptability in their employees by providing them innovation-oriented culture and career development opportunities.

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Appendix 1

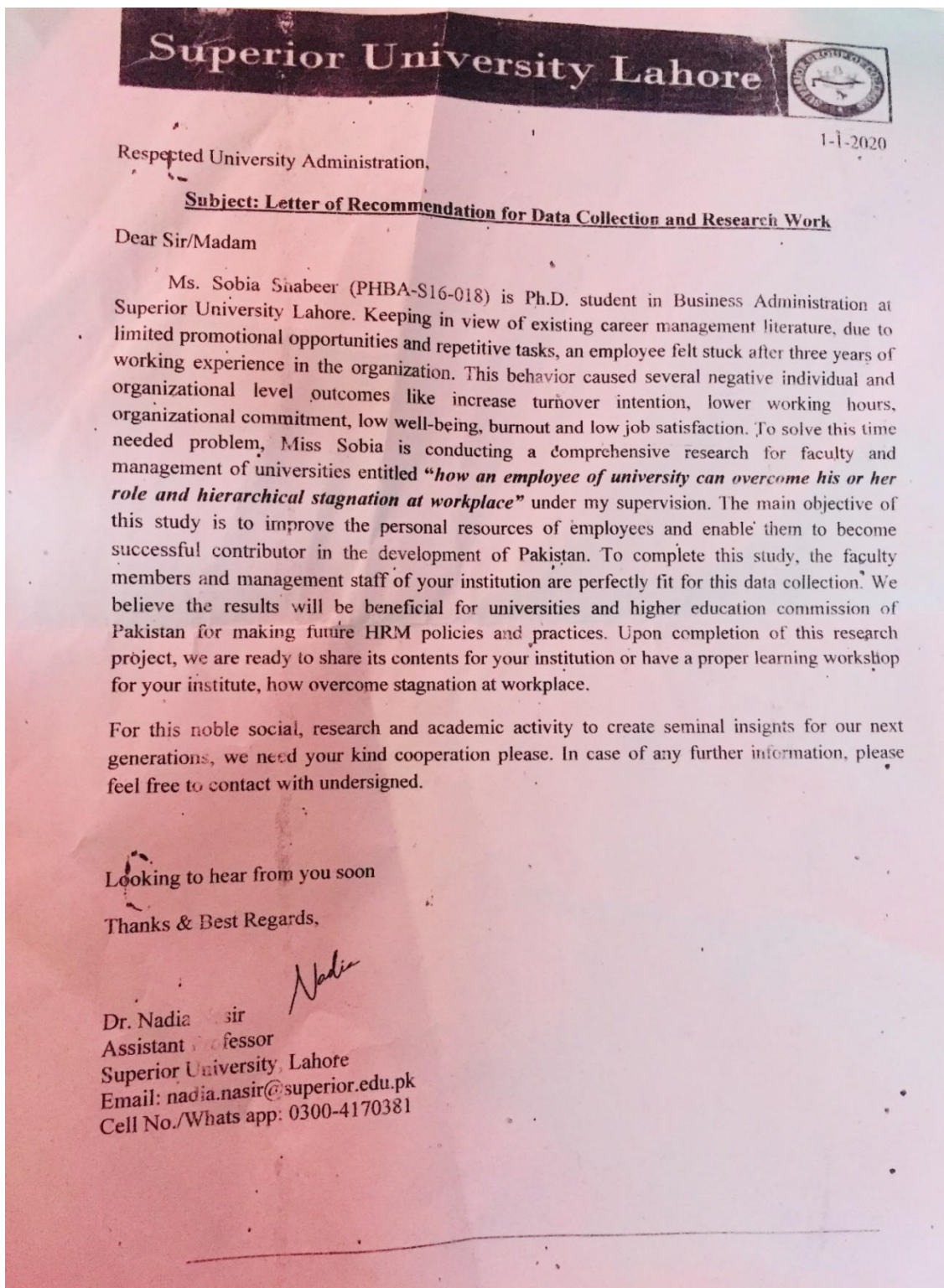
The Data of Career Plateau and Age

Studies	Age mean	St.D.	CP mean	St,D.
(De Clercq, Haq, Azeem, & Hassan, 2019)	25	0.29	5.8	0.58
(Jung & Tak, 2008)	35.63	6.06	2.55	.90
(Wen & Liu, 2015)	25	0.59	3.52	0.87
(Lentz, 2004)	43.06	11.67	3.02	.83
(Xie, Lu, & Zhou, 2015)	31.02	6.23	3.19	1.20
(Yang, Johnson, & Niven, 2018)	34.51	9.89	2.93	0.91
(Wickramasinghe & Jayaweera, 2010)	31.36	2.48	1.76	0.45
(Hurst, Baranik, & Clark, 2017)	34	1.41	2.42	0.57
(Armstrong-Stassen, 2008)	54.52	3.53	2.17	0.7
(Godshalk & Fender, 2015)	41.75	8.69	1.23	1.28
(Heilmann, Holt, & Rilovick, 2008)	23.92	3.56	2.93	0.76
(Hofstetter & Cohen, 2014)	48.26	10.44	3.45	0.89
(Cheng & Su, 2013)	32.28	4.52	3.48	.46
(Jiang, 2016)	40	1.01	2.42	1.02
(Jiang, Hu, & Wang, 2018)	33.83	6.57	2.27	0.90
(Lentz & Allen, 2009)	43.06	11.69	3.02	0.83
(Lapalme, Tremblay, & Simard, 2009)	43.1	10.73	3.98	1.68
(McCleese & Eby, 2006)	38	8.26	3.08	1.33

(Xie, Xin, & Bai, 2016)	29.62	2.6	3.17	1.17
(Wen & Liu, 2015)	30	0.59	3.52	0.87
(Wang, Hu, Hurst, & Yang, 2014)	35	.21	2.50	0.61
(Tremblay & Roger, 2007)	43.4	9.0	4.25	3
(Salami, 2010)	38.64	7.90	3.09	0.81
(Shabeer, Mohammed, Jawahar, & Bilal, 2018)	26	.42	2.5	0.9
(Ku, 2017)	33.05	7.62	4.30	.83

Appendix 2

Permission Letter



Appendix 3

Paper and Pen Questionnaire



The Superior College, Lahore Questionnaire for Ph.D. study

Respected Participant,

My name is Sobia Shabeer and I am a doctoral student at Superior College, Lahore. For my Ph.D. thesis, I am examining the ways “*how an employee of university can overcome his or her role and hierarchical stagnation at workplace*”. We believe the results will be beneficial for universities and higher education commission of Pakistan for making future HRM policies and practices. Because you **are an employee of the university and also have more than three years of working experiences along with age, above 25 years**. Thus, I am inviting you to participate in this research by completing the attached survey.

The following questionnaire will require approximately 20-25 mints to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and return the completed questionnaires promptly at sobiashabbir10@gmail.com or location Sobia Shabeer D/O Shabeer Ahmad, Jalalpur Jattan, Dist. Gujrat, Pakistan.

Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavours. If you would like a summary copy of this study, please complete and detach the Request for Information Form and return it to me in a separate envelope. Completion and return of the questionnaire will indicate your willingness to participate in this study.

If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at the number listed below.

Sincerely,

Ph.D. Scholar

Sobia Shabeer
Cell. +92-315-7704400
Email: sobiashabbir10@gmail.com
Address: Sobia Shabeer
nadia.nasir@superior.edu.pk
D/O Shabeer Ahmad
Jalalpur Jattan, Dist. Gujrat, Pakistan
Lahore

Ph.D. supervisor

Dr. Nadia Nasir
Assistant Professor
Superior University, Lahore
Email:

Address: 31 Tipu Block new
Garden town, kalma chowk,

Questionnaire for Ph.D. thesis Time 1

Tick Mark the suitable response of each Question 1=Totally disagree 2= disagree 3= somewhat disagree 4=neutral 5= somewhat agree 6= agree 7=Totally agree									
1	I have a good sense of why I have specific feelings most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2	I have good understanding of my own emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3	I really understand what I feel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4	I always know whether or not I am happy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5	I always know my friends' emotions from their behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6	I am a good observer of others' emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7	I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	I have good understanding of the emotions of people around me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9	I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10	I always tell myself I am a competent person.(R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
11	I am a self-motivated person.(R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12	I would always encourage myself to try my best.(R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
13	I have ability to control my anger and manage the difficulties wisely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
14	I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
15	I can relax easily when I become very aggressive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
16	I have good control of my own emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
17	I am constantly searching for new ways to improve my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
18	I am motivated for constructive change.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
19	Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
20	If I see something I don't like, I fix it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
21	No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
22	I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
23	I excel at identifying opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
24	I am always looking for better ways to do things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
25	If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
26	I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Gender: Female Male **Marital status:** Unmarried Married Widow
separated

Age: 25-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 55 above

Last Degree: Graduation M.Phil. Ph.D. others _____

Current Job title: _____ **University:** Private Public **Department:**

Current Job status: Permanent or Contract **Past job title:** _____

Overall working experience: 0-3years 4-6 years 7-9 years 10- 12 years 13-15years
above 15 years

Experience in this university only: _____ **Pay scale name:** _____

How much time (years or months) you have taken to get promotion from past job/University to recent job/ University? _____

Are you doing? (a) Only teaching (b) Only management job (c) both (a) & (b)
(d) Business (e) All (a), (b) & (d) other_____

Are you available for time 2 and 3 survey? Yes No Your Email: _____

Thank you for your time and support!

Questionnaire for Ph.D. thesis time 2

Tick Mark the suitable response of each Question								
1= Totally disagree 2= disagree 3= somewhat disagree 4=neutral 5= somewhat agree 6= agree 7= Totally agree								
1	I am thinking about what my future will be like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I am realizing that today's choices shape my future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I am preparing for the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I am becoming aware of the educational and career choices that I must make.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I am planning how to achieve my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I am concerned about my career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I am keeping upbeat.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I am making decisions by myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I am taking responsibility for my actions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	I am sticking up for my beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I am counting on myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	I am doing what's right for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	I am exploring my surroundings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	I am looking for opportunities to grow as a person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	I am investigating options before making a choice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	I am observing different ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	I am probing deeply into questions I have.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	I am becoming curious about new opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	I am performing tasks efficiently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	I am taking care to do things well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	I am learning new skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	I am working up to my ability.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	I am overcoming obstacles.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	I am solving problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Gender: Female Male **Marital status:** Unmarried Married Widow
separated

Age: 25-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 55 above

Last Degree: Graduation M.Phil. Ph.D. others _____

Current Job title: _____ **University:** Private Public **Department:**

Current Job status: Permanent or Contract **Past job title:** _____

Overall working experience: 0-3years 4-6 years 7-9 years 10- 12 years 13-15years
above 15 years

Experience in this university only: _____ **Pay scale name:** _____

How much time (years or months) you have taken to get promotion from past job/University to recent job/ University? _____

Are you doing? (a) Only teaching (b) Only management job (c) both (a) & (b)

(d) Business (e) All (a), (b) & (d) other _____

Thank you for your time and support!

Questionnaire for Ph.D. thesis time 3

Tick Mark the suitable response of each Question								
1= Totally disagree 2= disagree 3= somewhat disagree 4=neutral 5= somewhat agree 6= agree								
7= Totally agree								
1	I suppose to be constantly challenged in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I have an opportunity to learn and grow a lot in my current job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	My job tasks and activities have become routine for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	My job responsibilities have increased a lot.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	My job requires me to continually update my abilities and knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I am challenged by my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I am not likely to obtain a much higher job title in my university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I suppose to advance to a higher level in my university in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	The chances of upward job promotions are less in this university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	I suppose to be promoted frequently in my university in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I will not get more job promotions in this university, because it is the highest job position.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	The chance that I will get ahead in my university is limited.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	I identify strongly with the goals of my university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	My personal goals and the goals of my university are very similar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	I don't care about the goals of this university as much as many of my co-workers do (R).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that my university values.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	My personal values match my university's values and culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	My university's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	The attributes that I look for in a job are fulfilled very well by my present job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	The job that I currently hold gives me just about everything that I want from a job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	My abilities and training are a good fit with the requirements of my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	My personal abilities and education provide a good match with the demands that my job places on me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	Working with the other people in my group is one of the best parts of this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	I get along well with the people I work with on a day-to-day basis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	There is not much conflict among the members of my group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	If I had more free time, I would enjoy spending more time with my co-workers socially.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	There are some people I work with I try to avoid when possible (R).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	There is a good fit between my personal interests and the kind of work I perform in my occupation (teaching/Management).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

31	My skills and abilities are well suited for the vocation (profession/trade) that I am currently in.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	When I think about my interests, I sometimes wonder whether I chose the right occupation (teaching/Management) after all (R).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**1=totally no match 2= moderately no match 3= slightly no match 4=neutral 5=slightly match
6=moderately match 7=totally match**

1	How would you describe the match between the things you value in life and the things your head values?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	How would you describe the match between your personality and your head's personality?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	How would you describe the match between your work style and your head's work style?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	How would you describe the match between your lifestyle and your head's lifestyle?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	How would you describe the match between your head's leadership style and the leadership style you desire?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Gender: Female Male **Marital status:** Unmarried Married Widowed separated

Age: 25-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 55 above

Last Degree: Graduation M.Phil. Ph.D. others_____

Current Job title: _____ **University:** Private Public **Department:** _____

Current Job status: Permanent or Contract **Past job title:** _____

Overall working experience: 0-3years 4-6 years 7-9 years 10- 12 years 13-15years above 15 years

Experience in this university only: _____ **Pay scale name:** _____

How much time (years or months) you have taken to get promotion from past job/University to recent job/ University? _____

Are you doing? (a) Only teaching (b) Only management job (c) both (a) & (b)
(d) Business (e) All (a), (b) & (d) other_____

Thank you for your time and support!

Appendix 4

Online Questionnaire Interface

The screenshot shows a Google Forms interface for a questionnaire titled "Questionnaire for Ph.D. study". The form is displayed in a browser window with a yellow address bar and a taskbar at the top. The browser address bar shows the URL: docs.google.com/forms/d/1FOpvCC4vZjWzU4knSsUMDQZe5kdCjJhn-WwGZyk7nK0/edit. The taskbar shows several open applications, including "JOM_Style_Guide_r...", "Human Resource D...", "German Journal of...", "Guide for authors -...", "Chinese Managem...", and "Management and...". The questionnaire content is displayed in a white box with a green header bar that says "Section 1 of 3". The title "Questionnaire for Ph.D. study" is centered at the top of the form. Below the title, the text reads: "Respected Participant, My name is Sobia Shabeer and I am a doctoral student at Superior University, Lahore. For my Ph.D. thesis, I am examining the ways 'how an employee of the university can overcome his or her role and hierarchical stagnation at the workplace'. We believe the results will be beneficial for universities and higher education commission of Pakistan for making future HRM policies and practices. Because you are an employee of the university and also have more than three years of working experience along with age, above 25 years. Thus, I am inviting you to participate in this research by completing the attached survey. The following questionnaire will require approximately 20-25 mints to complete. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at the contact listed below." Below the text, it says "Sincerely, Sobia Shabeer Ph.D. Scholar Superior University, Lahore Email: sobiashabbir10@gmail.com". On the right side of the form, there is a vertical toolbar with icons for adding, deleting, and other editing functions.

Section 1 of 3

Questionnaire for Ph.D. study

Respected Participant,

My name is Sobia Shabeer and I am a doctoral student at Superior University, Lahore. For my Ph.D. thesis, I am examining the ways "how an employee of the university can overcome his or her role and hierarchical stagnation at the workplace". We believe the results will be beneficial for universities and higher education commission of Pakistan for making future HRM policies and practices. Because you are an employee of the university and also have more than three years of working experience along with age, above 25 years. Thus, I am inviting you to participate in this research by completing the attached survey.

The following questionnaire will require approximately 20-25 mints to complete. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible.

Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at the contact listed below.

Sincerely,

Sobia Shabeer
Ph.D. Scholar
Superior University, Lahore
Email: sobiashabbir10@gmail.com

Appendix 5

Lahore division

Public universities list

Sr.	Name	Sector	Discipline	Province	City
1	Fatima Jinnah Medical University, Lahore	Public	Medical	Punjab	Lahore
2	Government College University, Lahore	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore
3	Information Technology University of the Punjab	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore
4	King Edward Medical University	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore
5	Kinnaird College for Women	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore
6	Lahore College for Women University	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore
7	Punjab Tianjin University of Technology, Lahore	Public	Engineering & Technology	Punjab	Lahore
8	University of Education	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore
9	University of Engineering & Technology	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore
10	University of Health Sciences	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore
11	University of Home Economics, Lahore	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore
12	University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore
13	University of the Punjab	Public	General	Punjab	Lahore

Private universities list

Sr.	Name	Sector	Discipline	Province	City
1	Ali Institute of Education	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
2	Beaconhouse National University	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
3	Forman Christian College	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
4	Global Institute, Lahore	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
5	Hajvery University, Lahore	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
6	Imperial College of Business Studies	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
7	Institute of Management Sciences	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
8	Lahore Garrison University	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
9	Lahore Leads University	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
10	Lahore School of Economics	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
11	Lahore University of Management Sciences	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
12	Minhaj University	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore

13	National College of Business Administration & Economics	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
14	Nur International University	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
15	Qarshi University	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
16	The Superior College	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
17	University of Central Punjab	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
18	University of Lahore	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
19	University of Management & Technology	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore
20	University of South Asia	Private	General	Punjab	Lahore

Appendix 6

Randomly chosen universities from Lahore division

Public universities strata

11. University of Engineering & Technology
15. University of Punjab

Private universities strata

2. Beaconhouse National University
5. Hajvery University, Lahore
12. Lahore University of Management Sciences

Appendix 7

A. Common Variance

Model Fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.15$

