

Career Competencies of Public Administrators: Review & Research Agenda

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Introduction

Since as early as 1937, careers researchers have been interested in defining careers and identifying the factors contributing to a successful career (e.g., Hughes, 1937). Such research has remained a sustained interest to individuals and organisations (Spurk et al., 2019; Heslin et al., 2018).

Career success is understood as "the accomplishment of desirable work-related outcomes at any point in a person's work experiences over time" (Arthur et al., 2005, p. 179). Typically, researchers have categorised career success into objective and subjective success. Objective career success (OCS) refers to outcomes that can be appraised by others, such as the evolution of promotion, pay, and rank with the progression of one's career (Ng et al., 2005; Heslin, 2005; Spurk et al., 2019). These are generally measured against the prevailing socio-cultural norms of succeeding in a career. On the other hand, subjective career success (SCS) may be understood as the employee's perception and experience in obtaining personally meaningful career outcomes (Briscoe et al., 2021; Spurk et al., 2019). Frequently, career success is evaluated through its objective manifestations; however, there has been a rising scholarly interest in evaluating both objective and subjective career success (Dries, 2019). SCS is typically assessed as career satisfaction (Greenhaus et al., 1990), a combination of intrinsic fulfilment, external compensation, and work-life balance (Pan & Zhou, 2013). On the other hand, Briscoe et al. (2021) validated a scale for SCS across multiple countries and identified seven dimensions - learning & development, work-life balance, positive impact, entrepreneurship, positive work relationships, financial security, and financial success. Studies have revealed that OCS and SCS are distinct constructs with moderate to no correlation between them (Briscoe et al., 2021; Spurk et al., 2019).

However, our review revealed that much of the research on career success is centred on employees of private corporations. In fact, research on human resource management practices for public organisations, specifically in the context of public administration, is still in its infancy (Osborne, 2017; Knies et al., 2018)

Public organisations are funded, regulated by the government, create and deliver public value and are directly impacted by the political climate (Bach & Kessler, 2009; Kjeldsen & Jacobsen, 2013; Knies et

al., 2018). Moreover, public organisations execute policies and are expected to serve the masses while having limited resources; they are expected to be more responsive, their actions accounted for, and services standardised (Knies et al., 2018; Vogel & Willems, 2020). Simultaneously, they are expected to handle external political pressures and administrative limitations. Scholars have argued that politicisation often leads to low efficiency and legitimacy (Rainey, 1997; Bach & Kessler, 2009; Veit & Scholz, 2016). This results in possible juggling of responsibilities amidst inadequate resources.

No wonder public administrators must deal with 'wicked issues' (Weber & Khademian, 2008). 'Wicked issues' are a wide range of intricate and uncontrollable challenges whose nature and scale cannot be grouped under a single category of problems. Instead, such issues veer through jurisdictional, organisational, operational, professional, and generational boundaries (Williams, 2002). Hence, identifying the source of these 'wicked issues' becomes difficult, making their resolution arduous (Williams, 2002; Weber & Khademian, 2008; Head & Alford, 2015). The resolution of 'wicked issues' thus goes beyond an individual's or organisation's endeavour. Instead, 'wicked issues' require systemic redressal changes and result in public administrators facing different contingencies (Williams, 2002; Head & Alford, 2015; Knies & Leisink, 2017). Hence, although public administrators have a linear hierarchical career graph, the unpredictable challenges they face make the outcomes of their careers difficult to predict. Accordingly, career success in the context of public administrators becomes a compelling idea for career researchers to explore.

Career Resources

Career resources enable individuals to attain professional objectives and foster personal growth (Akkermans, 2013). Developing career competencies enables individuals to effectively navigate and exert control over their career trajectories and employment prospects (Blokker, 2019; Akkermans, 2013). The escalating complexities of modern-day careers underscore the importance of effectively developing and utilising myriad career resources to achieve successful careers (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020). We explore the career resources (personal & contextual) available to public administrators that facilitate their career success and personal development. Spurk, Hirschi & Dries (2019), using the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), explained that career success would be

accounted for by the availability & the degree to which individuals can draw support from either personal or contextual resources to attain their career goals. Availability or absence of career resources (personal or contextual) has been found to impact employees' career paths (Ng et al., 2005; Spurk et al., 2019).

Scholars have broadly categorised career success predictors, which are the career resources that help an individual navigate the challenges of a particular profession (Hirschi et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2009; Ng et al., 2005). Several factors act as predictors of career success, encompassing socio-demographic factors such as age and gender and work environment aspects like working conditions, peer relationships, supervisor support, organisational support, personal relationships, familial support and other structural factors. In addition, other factors include human capital resources, such as educational achievement, motivation, personality traits, and agentic behaviour, which are essentially career management behaviours- networking, learning, and seeking career opportunities (Hirschi et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2009; Ng et al., 2005). Studies have revealed that the state of motivational and structural career resources determined subjective career success, whereas skills, competencies, and knowledge were found to determine the objective career success of the individual (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020).

According to Brown (2010), public administrators steer their careers against the backdrop of varying contingencies, necessitating exploring the resources that enable them to do so. Factors that help attain a sense of accomplishment in objective and subjective ways must be explored in the specific context of public administrators, given the 'wicked issues' of the public policy field and the demands thereof.

Given the limited evidence available on the career success of public administrators, compared to employees in private sectors, a comprehensive review and understanding of the present state of the literature is necessary to advance future scholarly discourse. Accordingly, in this research, we intend to make three contributions. First, we systematically collate and analyse the career resources responsible for career success in the context of public administration. We especially organise the literature in terms of geographic representation, methodological preferences, and the theories used to interpret the nomological network of career resources. Second, we organise the career resources as discussed in the literature. Several researchers have drawn from COR theory (Hirschi, 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2014;

Spurk et al., 2019) explained that the personal and contextual resources at every job act as career resources which helps the employee meet the career demands or help them to overcome career hurdles. So, the availability or absence of career resources (personal or contextual) has been found to impact employees' career paths (Hirschi, 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Spurk et al., 2019). Finally, we present a few research agendas that might interest scholars in this field for future research.

Apart from the above contributions, our study responds to a larger call. Often scholars have emphasised the potential advantages of integrating Human Resource Management (HRM) with Public Administration (Boselie et al., 2021; Perry, 2010). This integration could populate the HRM literature with valuable insights from public administration's unique challenges. Additionally, this integration also has the potential to facilitate governance by addressing the human resources problems in the field of public administration (Sartirana et al., 2018; Boselie et al., 2021). In their recent publication, McDonald et al. (2022) emphasised the necessity of integrating interdisciplinary research in response to the evolving priorities within the field of public administration. This research helps address such a need.

The paper is structured as follows. Following this introduction, we discuss our approach to systematic review. Then we present and discuss our findings as well as offer suggestions for future research.

Methodology

The literature regarding the factors determining career success in public administration is dispersed, and to the best of our knowledge, such a synthesis of literature does not exist in the field. Therefore, we decided to do a structured literature review that allowed us to systematically and transparently identify, document, integrate and assimilate relevant work in accordance with the research approach followed by several authors (Tranfield et al., 2003; Secundo et al., 2020; Muskat et al., 2022). In addition to this, we also conducted a bibliometric analysis using the Visualization of Science Viewer (VOSViewer) software developed by Van Eck & Waltman (2010) to enhance and complement our literature review (Zupic & Cater, 2015; Secundo et al., 2020). The software facilitates scholars to cluster and analyse the relationships among papers, authors, institutions, and countries (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). It also assists in conducting bibliographic coupling analysis and co-citation analysis. Many studies (e.g.,

Secundo et al., 2020; Muskat et al., 2022) have been using it to bring forth a meaningful interpretation of the research in their respective areas.

Following the methodology prescribed by Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003), we carefully included articles based on three factors: relevance to the study, quality of the article, and recentness. We selected three databases, i.e., SCOPUS, Web of Science (WOS), and EBSCO, to retrieve the publications. We selected multiple databases for our study because they reported a preference for specific countries and languages in their journal coverage (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016).

Second, based on author and peer recommendations as well as our reading of the literature, we generated a string of relevant keywords, such as "career*", "career success", "career growth", "career advancement", "career success factor*", "career resource*", "career competenc*", "career graph", "career path*", "career satisfaction", "job satisfaction" for querying relevant articles on career success. Next, we ran another query with keywords such as "Public servant*", "Public administration", "Public administrator*", "Civil servant*", "Civil Service*", "Public Service*", "City administration", "City administrator*", "City manager", "bureaucrat*", "bureaucracy", "public policy", "policy maker*". We combined the two query strings, resulting in about 4969 articles, book chapters, books, and conference papers.

Third, we restricted our search to blind peer-reviewed articles published between 2000 and 2023. Such articles promise a more rigorous methodological treatment of the studies than editorials, conference papers, and book chapters (Adams et al., 2017; Thyer, 2008). Moreover, we chose the mentioned period of time as scholars (e.g. Osborne, 2017; Boselie et al., 2021) have argued that the field of public administration has notably been more interested in the HR practices and the behavioural aspects that affect the work of public administrators since the year 2000. Our inventory of articles was reduced to 2865.

Fourth, we restricted the subject area of these journal articles to social sciences, management, humanities & arts, psychology and business & economics. This brought us to a total of 2207 journal articles.

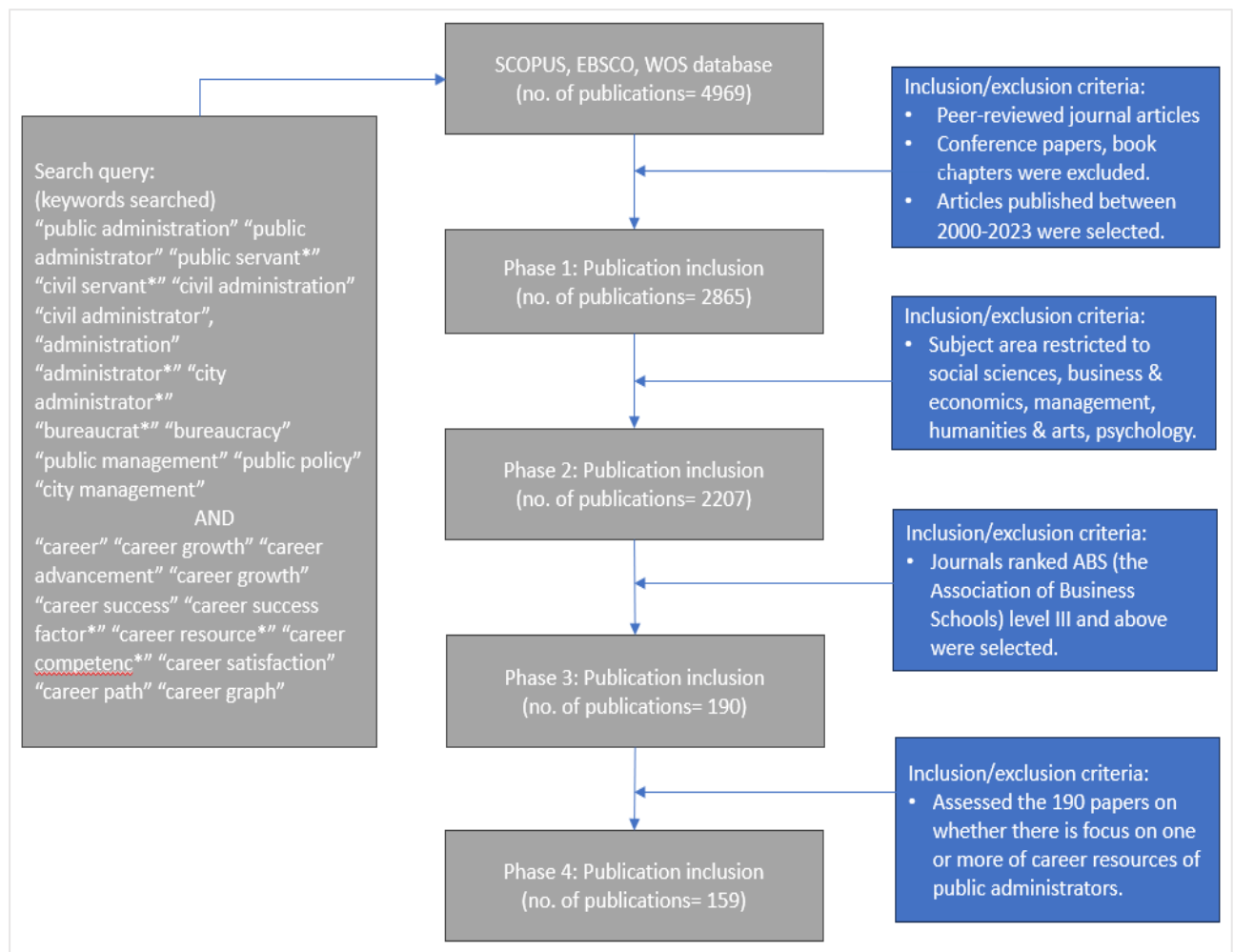


Fig. 1. summarises our methodological procedure.

Finally, we culled the list of articles by filtering out those published in journals ranked ABS (the Association of Business Schools) level III and above. Consequently, 190 articles published in high-impact journals such as Public Administration (PA), Public Administration Review (PAR), Public Management Review (PMR), Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (JPART), Review of Public Personnel Administration (RoPPA), International Review of Administrative Sciences, Governance, Politics & Policy, Gender, Work & Organization, International Public Management Journal, International Journal of Human Resource Management and American Review of Public Administration, were retrieved.

In the end, we read (and sometimes re-read) the full text of the retrieved articles to ensure that they focused on the public administrators' career resources and career success ($n = 159$). These articles, as of July 2023, were selected for review.

Findings and discussion

We present our findings based on our analysis of the 159 articles. We have organised our analysis under meaningful themes for better comprehension of the extant literature. We discuss our findings based on:

- Development of literature across time & geographies
- Articles across journals for career research in public administration
- Most cited authors in research on career resources in public administration.
- Methodological approaches in the study
- Theories used to study career resources in public administration

Development of literature across time & geographies

While career researchers have explored career success in the private sector for several decades now, such research among public administrators has appreciated only over the last five years (see Fig.2). One of the possible triggers for this sudden spike in scholarship since 2017 could be the troubled relationship between President Donald Trump of the USA and the civil servants. His public chastisement of officials and their abrupt removal upon disagreements (see Lewis & Richardson, 2021 for a detailed discussion) would have left many of these officials clueless about their careers. In fact, the Trump administration is alleged to have allocated insufficient budget to the agencies for their missions, thus forcing them to let go of civil servants (Lewis & Richardson, 2021). In fact, many civil servants quietly exited or expressed an intent to exit the bureaucracy for a job in academia, non-governmental organisations, and other branches of the government (Kuscinkas & Zylan, 2023).

Documents by year

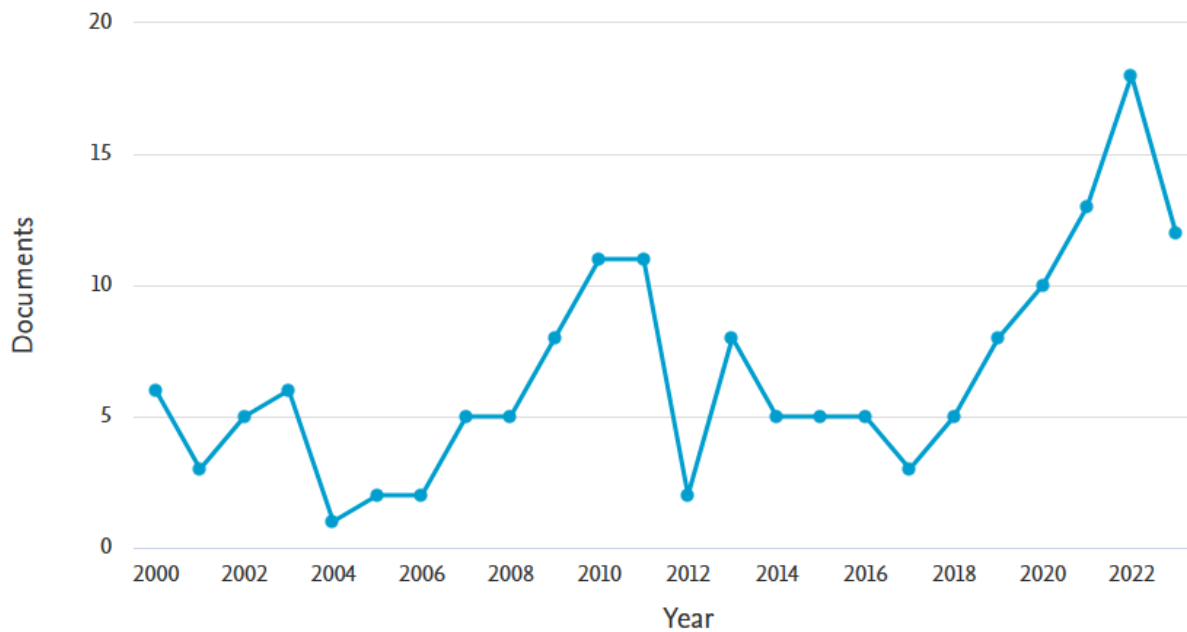


Fig.2. Articles published on career success factors of public administrators over the years 2000-2023.

Further, our analysis revealed that more than 50% of studies have emerged from the USA. Research from Europe forms a sizable portion too. However, there needs to be more representation from Asia. Only two countries from the continent, Singapore and South Korea, contributed to career success research in public administration. This necessitates encouraging other geographies/countries to contribute to this stream of literature.

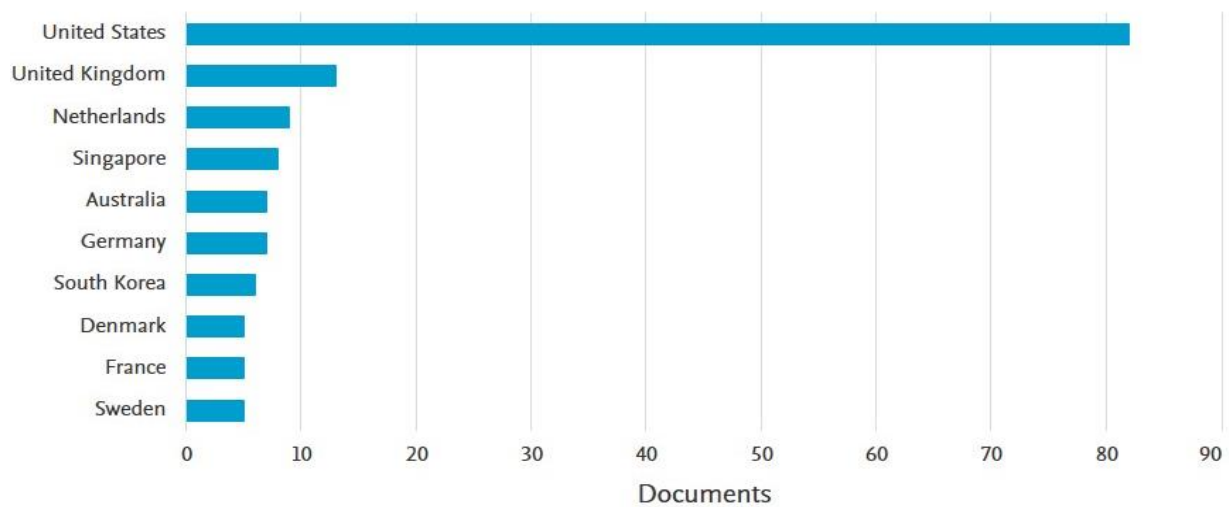


Fig. 3. Leading countries publishing on career success factors of public administrators.

Notable research in the field has predominantly emerged from the USA, followed by Europe (see Fig.3). There is insufficient information from the non-western countries- the Global South, except for Singapore & South Korea, which impedes us from developing a diverse perspective on the subject (see Fig. 3).

Articles across journals for career research in public administration

The journals that publish the highest number of articles on careers research in public administration are listed in Table 1. Journals such as - Public Administration Review, Review of Public Personnel Administration, International Review of Administrative Sciences & Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory are notably more inclined to explore career-related issues in the field of public administration. In contrast, the International Journal of Human Resource Management is an HRM journal that is more likely to indulge in research in public administration.

Table 1: Journal articles per journal

Source	No. of articles
Public Administration Review	36
Review Of Public Personnel Administration	25
International Review of Administrative Sciences	22
Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	15
American Review of Public Administration	12
International Public Management Journal	9
International Journal of Human Resource Management	8
Public Administration	8
Gender Work and Organisation	7
Public Management Review	7
Politics & Policy	6
Governance	4

Most cited authors in research on career resources in public administration.

VOSviewer allows us to elucidate the top cited articles and their authors using the bibliographic coupling tool, the unit of analysis being the journal articles included in our literature review. Table 2 shows the 15 most cited authors and their works.

Table 2: Most cited authors and their work

Author	Title	Journal	Citations
Bakker (2015)	A job demands-resources approach to public service motivation	Public Administration Review	198
Bird (2011)	unsettling universities' incongruous, gendered bureaucratic structures: A case-study approach	Gender, Work and Organisation	152
Lee & Wilkins (2011)	More similarities or more differences? Comparing public and non-profit managers' job motivations	Public Administration Review	127
Giauque, et al., (2013)	Stress perception in public organisations: expanding the job demands-job resources model by including public service motivation	Review of Public Personnel Administration	87
Hays & Sowa (2006)	A broader look at the "accountability" movement: Some grim realities in state civil service systems	Review of Public Personnel Administration	80
Feiock & Kim (2001)	Form of government, administrative organisation, and local economic development policy	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	79
Mccabe et al. (2008)	Turnover among city managers: The role of political and economic change	Public Administration Review	71
Gallo & Lewis (2012)	The consequences of presidential patronage for federal agency performance	Journal Of Public Administration Research and Theory	69
Hsieh (2014)	Burnout among public service workers: The role of emotional labour requirements and job resources	Review of Public Personnel Administration	63
Houston & Cartwright (2007)	Spirituality and public service	Public Administration Review	61

Van de walle, et al., (2015)	Extrinsic motivation, PSM and labour market characteristics: a multilevel model of public sector employment preference in 26 countries	International Review of Administrative Sciences	57
O'Leary (2010)	Guerrilla employees: Should managers nurture, tolerate, or terminate them?	Public Administration Review	55
Ward (2014)	Cultivating public service motivation through AmeriCorps service: a longitudinal study	Public Administration Review	53
Feeney & Stritch (2019)	Family-friendly policies, gender, and work-life balance in the public sector	Review of Public Personnel Administration	53
Morris & Farell (2007)	The 'post-bureaucratic' public sector organisation. New organisational forms and HRM in ten UK public sector organisations	International Journal of Human Resource Management	50

Co-citation analysis

The co-citation analysis allows us to understand the most frequently cited papers and authors in the selected sample of our review (Secundo et al., 2020). VOSviewer helped us to identify some of the seminal works frequently cited to understand career resources in public administration. Fig. 4 lists the 14 most commonly co-cited articles and their authors. The article 'the motivational bases of public service' (1990) by Perry & Wise remains the most commonly cited paper across most of the articles in our sample.

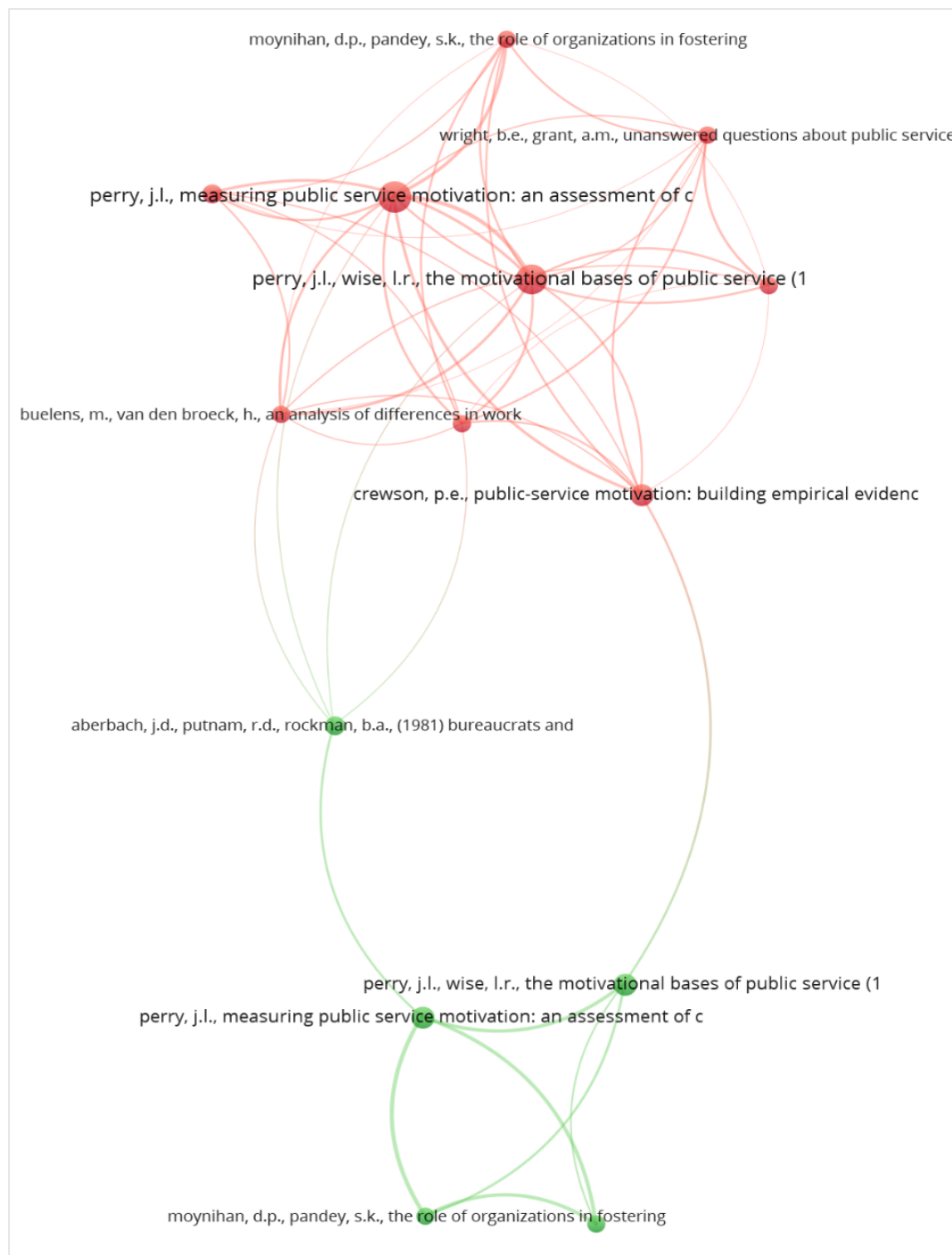


Fig. 4. Co-citation map of most cited authors

Methodological approaches in the study

The field's research has been majorly shaped by studies adopting quantitative methods such as cross-sectional analysis and surveys. In contrast, very few qualitative inquiries and experiments have been conducted to study the career of public administrators (see Table 3).

Table 3: Paper distribution based on methodologies studied

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Selected exemplary citations</i>
<i>Qualitative</i>	Pérez-Chiqués & Rubin, 2022; Althaus & O'Faircheallaigh, 2022; Friedman, 2022; Pati & Kakani, 2022; O'Connor, Knox & Janenova, 2021; Neal, Gherardi & Olejarski, 2020; Vinarski Peretz, 2020; Yu, 2020; Selling & Svallfors, 2019; Ebinger, Veit & Fromm, 2019; Svallfors, 2016; Schilling, 2015; Magee & Frasier, 2014; van der Wal, 2013; Awortwi, 2010.
<i>Quantitative</i>	Mussagulova, Chen & Dennis Dong, 2022; Lewis & Emidy, 2022; Yi & Chen, 2022; Miller-Mor-Attias & Vigoda-Gadot, 2022; Fischer & Schott, 2022; Ashworth, Krøtel & Villadsen, 2022; van der Meer, Vermeeren & Steijn, 2022; Chen, Hsieh, Chen & Wen, 2022; Gans-Morse, Kalgin, Klimenko, Vorobyev & Yakovlev, 2022; Chen & Xu, 2021; Tuan, Rowley, Khai, Qian, Masli & Le, 2021; Mullins, Charbonneau & Riccucci, 2021; Bolton, De Figueiredo & Lewis, 2021; Li & Wang, 2021; Finkel, Grøn & Hughes, 2021; Boon, Wynen & Kleizen, 2021; Chen, Chen, Liao & Kuo, 2020; Johnson & Lewis, 2020; Jin & Rainey, 2020; Coen & Vannoni, 2020; Feeney & Stritch, 2019; Zandberg & Morales, 2019; Doherty, Lewis, & Limbocker, 2019; Yi & Chen, 2019; Gross, Thaler & Winter, 2019; Ballart & Rico, 2018; Lu & Guy, 2018; Hattke, Vogel & Znanewitz, 2018; Carroll, 2017; Veit & Scholz, 2016; Van Ryzin, 2016; Hsieh, 2014; Ward, 2014; Giauque, Anderfuhren-Biget & Varone, 2013; Oh & Lewis, 2013; Gallo & Lewis, 2012; Alkadry & Tower, 2011
<i>Conceptual</i>	Bakker, 2015; Rhodes, 2016
<i>Experiments</i>	Aleksovska & Schillemans, 2022; Chen, Hsieh & Chen, 2021; Kroll & Porumbescu, 2019; Linos, 2018;

Theories used to study career resources in public administration

Most of the studies in the field do not allow a theory to explain or guide their investigation. Table 4 illustrates 16 out of 100 relevant articles that used a theory.

Table 4: Prominent theories adopted for career resources in PA literature

Theories adopted	Exemplary citations
Social exchange theory	Mullins, Charbonneau & Riccucci, 2021; Hattke, Hattke, Homberg & Vogel, 2020;

JD-R theory	Pati & Kakani, 2022; van der Meer, Vermeeren & Steijn, 2022; Vinarski Peretz, 2020; Gross, Thaler & Winter, 2019; Bakker, 2015; Giauque, Anderfuhren-Biget & Varone, 2013.
COR theory	Tuan, Rowley, Khai, Qian, Masli & Le (2021).
Signalling theory	Veit & Scholz, (2016).
Imprinting theory	Ashworth, Krøtel & Villadsen, 2022;
P-E fit theory/ P-O fit theory	Miller-Mor-Attias & Vigoda-Gadot, 2022; Gans-Morse, Kalgin, Klimenko, Vorobyev & Yakovlev, 2022;
Social learning theory	Fischer & Schott, 2022;
Transformational leadership	Jin & Rainey, 2020;
Motivation crowding theory	Kroll & Porumbescu, 2019.

Research streams of career resources in public administration

The review presents the state of career research in the field of public administration. The focus remained on the presence and utility of career resources in attaining career success in the field of public administrators. Hirschi et al. (2018) illustrated and validated the four categories of career resources necessary for career success; these career resources are broadly- human capital, social capital, motivational and career management behaviour resources. Building on this, we have looked into different streams of available career resources for public administrators. Table 5 shows the categories of career resources and the studies highlighting the utility of the respective career resources.

Table 5: Career resources for public administrators

Categories of career resources	Selected exemplary citations
Human capital (occupational expertise, competence, skills, traits)	Van Der Meer & Toonen, 2005; Houston & Cartwright, 2007; Gertha-Taylor, 2008; Bright, 2008; Moynihan & Pandey, 2008; Houston, Freeman & Feldman, 2008; Awortwi, 2010; Ritz, 2011; Colley, 2014; Anderfuhren-Biget, Varone & Giauque, 2014; Sundell, 2014; Carroll, 2017; Mau, 2017; Lu & Guy, 2018; Levitats, Vigoda-Gadot & Vashdi, 2019; Kruyen & Genugten, 2019; Fischer & Schott, 2022;

Environmental (political, socio-economic challenges, social support, work-life balance, organisational career support)	Brewer, 2003; Bowling, Kelleher, Jones & Wright, 2006; McCabe, Feiock, Clingermayer & Stream, 2008; Groeneveld, 2009; Christensen & Laegreid, 2009; Taylor & Westover, 2011; Alkadry & Tower, 2011; Gallo & Lewis, 2012; Vandenabeele, 2014; Tabvuma, Bui & Homberg, 2014; Schilling, 2015; Schwarz, Newman, Cooper & Eva, 2016; Veit & Scholz, 2016; Jin & McDonald, 2017; Feeney & Stritch, 2019; Hameduddin & Lee, 2019; Doherty, Lewis, & Limbocker, 2019; Jin & Rainey, 2020; Keulemans & Groeneveld, 2020; Yu, 2020; Yu & Jennings Jr., 2021; Mullins, Charbonneau & Riccucci, 2021; Bolton, De Figueiredo & Lewis, 2021; Boon, Wynen & Kleizen, 2021; Aleksovska & Schillemans, 2021; Mussagulova, Chen & Dennis Dong, 2022; Friedman, 2022; Lewis & Emidy, 2022; Pérez-Chiqués & Rubin, 2022; Ashworth, Krøtel & Villadsen, 2022; Chen, Hsieh & Chen 2022;
Motivational (career involvement, PSM, role clarity)	Bright, 2008; Vandenabeele, 2009; Taylor & Westover, 2011; Bakker, 2015; Rhodes, 2016; Van Ryzin, 2016; Weske & Schott, 2018; Kroll & Porumbescu, 2019; Gross, Thaler & Winter, 2019; Van der Wal & Chung-An Chen, 2020; Chen, Hsieh & Chen, 2021; Miller-Mor-Attias & Vigoda-Gadot, 2022;
Career management behaviour resources (Networking, learning, career exploration, opportunities)	Williams, 2002; Culpepper, 2002; O'Leary, et, al., 2012; Svallfors, 2016; Zandberg & Morales, 2019; Coen & Vannoni, 2020; Neal, Gherardi & Olejarski, 2020; O'Connor, Knox & Janenova, 2021; Yi & Chen, 2022; van der Meer, Vermeeren & Steijn, 2022

Research stream 1: Human capital factors (skills, competencies and knowledge) as a career resource for PA

The change in governance philosophy has particularly impacted the expectations from public administrators' competencies (Kruyen & Genugten, 2020; Brown, 2010). Traditionally, the public administration field has aimed to ensure technical skills and adhere to a hierarchical line of command. The focus shifted from a traditional bureaucratic structure to a more flexible orientation that encouraged public servants to be good at negotiation, accountable, 'customer-oriented' and more professional at handling public administration (Aberbach & Christensen, 2005). Lately, the new public governance philosophy acknowledges that bureaucrats function in a pluralistic world that insists on balancing the

demands of all stakeholders; therefore, the ask is to develop skills, traits and competencies that enable taking cues from their environment and in responding to their environment (Osborne, 2006; Kruiyen & Genugten, 2020).

While this stream of research propounds that there has been a leap in the governance philosophies of public administration, traditionally, the focus was more on the internal organisation to achieve effectiveness, and presently, it is more externally oriented and is acknowledging the role of external actors while focusing on how to better engage with them. With this leap in the vision governing the field, there has been a significant leap in the expected competencies from public administrators. Another stream concurs that regardless of the governance philosophies adopted, certain characteristic 'craft skills' will remain invaluable to public officials. These 'craft skills' are leadership, propriety, discernment, tact, and political expertise (Rhodes, 2016). Besides these, several authors identified the need for emotional intelligence in the field of public administration to enhance engagement, collaboration and organisational citizenship behaviour (Levitats et al., 2019; Vigoda-Gadot & Meisler, 2010).

Williams (2002) brings the focus in the field of public administration from the institutional level investigation of competencies to the more crucial role of individual actors' competencies that determine how inter-organisational transactions will be managed. The seminal paper explores where the boundaries of the job demands of a public administrator lie (Williams, 2002). Rhodes (2016) highlighted that in public administration, it is not about which skills are required for the role, but the focus should be on the suitable mix of skills appropriate in the given context (Rhodes, 2016). In line with this, Bertelli & Lewis (2013) explained that any individual who invests in agency-specific competencies becomes indispensable to the administrative system and the nation (Bertelli & Lewis, 2013).

Researchers have examined emotional intelligence, political perception & skills and found them to impact their performance directly (Vigoda-Gadot & Meisler, 2010). To our surprise, it was observed in the articles that public administration in both China and the US found it challenging to equipoise political accountability and their duties (Tsao & Worthley, 2009). In addition, Hartley et al. found that

political astuteness is a critical competency for public administrators as it helps them create and deliver 'public value' while balancing their allegiance between their duties and politics (Hartley et al., 2015).

Several scholars and professionals in the field have scrutinised the adequacy of the tests and other measures employed to assess and attract individuals with the appropriate skill set, competency, and knowledge for the public administrator role (Sundell, 2014). The authors contend that although certain candidates may possess the necessary skills and competencies for the particular role they are applying for, the overall assessment of their talents using a general aptitude test may not accurately reflect their true capabilities. Besides this, Empowerment practices which improve autonomy and self-efficacy, such as being informed about precise goals, being provided feedback about performance, and having the autonomy to modify processes and tasks, result in job satisfaction (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2015).

Another indispensable skill for public administrators is collaborative skills. Literature suggests that it is imperative to develop collaborative skills since public policy problems require collaborations across agencies, public or private organisations and governments (O'Leary et al., 2012; Gertha-Taylor, 2008). The problems arising in the field of public policy are intractable and often do not come under the ambit of one person, agency, or jurisdiction (Culpepper, 2002; Williams, 2002); not only does this make the career of public administrators a boundaryless career, but it also makes the role of networks, and social partners become more imminent. Networking skills are an indispensable part of any public administrator's job, and research shows that it is directly affected by agreeableness, conscientiousness and extraversion (Schonherr & Thaler, 2023).

Research stream 2: Social capital factors as career resources for PA

The ever-changing political landscape challenges public servants with shifting ideological interests. It brings new norms of doing the job, pluralistic requirements of rebuilding the existing administrations, new assignments, new information & new abilities to deliver their service. (Wessels, 2000). A study on US civil servants found that they might leave their jobs because of conflicting political orientations (McCabe et al., 2008). Van der Wal & Chung-An Chen (2020) highlight the importance of context while studying administrative practices; it has been built on the history and culture of the concerned nation -

whether social welfare or material gain is more valued in the nation would generally decide which will motivate the civil servants and what will be expected from them.

Evident from the study done on another state agency, their career is affected by the political and economic changes, and this impact is contingent on the political ideology one aligns with and the extent of the politicians' control of the said agency (Yu & Jennings Jr., 2021). This study also highlights that the main issue here is not subjugating oneself to the political views of the governing council but communicating & clarifying the principles to the public servants in this principal-agent relationship. Very few studies have examined the effect of external shocks on the subjective career success of an individual, especially in the public sector (Tabvuma et al., 2014). Moynihan & Pandey (2008) highlight that person-organisation fit (in terms of political preference) in the public sector differs significantly from the private sector. It is determined by how aligned employees' beliefs & values are with those of the organisation, resulting in increased job satisfaction for the employees. (Moynihan & Pandey, 2008). Tabvuma & his colleagues conducted a longitudinal study examining the job satisfaction of senior public servants post-election, intending to determine job satisfaction if the leader of their political preference did not win the election. They found that job satisfaction increased when the political leader was from the political party the male employees preferred, but this impact was not sustained after the initial years of the election; in contrast, the female employees' job satisfaction was less affected by political changes. (Tabvuma et al., 2014). In a similar vein, Veit & Scholz (2016) noted from their study that being actively associated with party politics over only having merit led to public servants' career success, favouring men over women in higher echelons.

Amongst the several structural barriers, women in this profession face added complications. Researchers have observed a stark difference in pay. Women are paid less than their male counterparts, marginalised to the lower hierarchy levels, and expected to be engaged in staff rather than core functions. (Bowling et al., 2006; Mani, 2001). The belief driving this practice is that men prove to be better administrators; women may take up social work or healthcare that are considered more feminine. (Yu, 2020; Christensen & Laegreid, 2009; Mani, 2001). In 2020, Yu found in her study that this glass ceiling also hindered women from networking as socialising in their official circles happened as it would

in a 'good ole boy's club'. (Yu, 2020; Groeneveld, 2009). Due to this, women lost opportunities to receive training and mentoring from their peers & seniors. (Yu, 2020; Veit & Scholz, 2016).

Research shows that implementing family-friendly benefits and other HRM policies has positively impacted the job satisfaction of public administrators (Ko & Hur, 2014). Flexible work arrangements have a direct impact on absenteeism, retention & productivity. Researchers have explained that public administration is where values like justice, fairness, and inclusion are the very base it stands on. Therefore, any incidence of unjust treatment or work policies sets off the employees and could even lead to turnover or dissatisfaction. (Mullins, Charbonneau & Riccucci, 2021; Saltzstein & Saltzstein, 2001). Taking the issue of family responsibilities discrimination (FRD) which is discrimination against an employee (primarily a woman) who is the family's caregiver by not allowing them to work flexibly, an empirical study confirmed its adverse impact on job satisfaction & the heightened tendency to quit for such public administrators (Mullins et al., 2021). To observe & consider the state's role in giving work-life balance support at public administration organisations, Dulk & Groeneveld collected data across 20 EU countries. The study emphasised that public sector entities are influenced by coercive or mimetic pressures exerted by governing institutions. Consequently, the extent to which the state provides ample or limited resources for rest, recreation, travel, education, and healthcare would shape the offerings available to public administrators. (Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012).

Supervisor support is a crucial job resource to receive more opportunities to work, learn and grow on the job and build networks. (Keulemans & Groeneveld, 2020; Jin & McDonald, 2017). Behavioural scientists are conversant with the effect that the emotional intelligence of leaders has on their subordinates; in the case of civil servants, it has been observed that training for improving the emotional intelligence of the supervisor and subordinate would reinforce their sense of duty towards society, overall engagement & organisational citizenship behaviour (Levitats et al., 2019). Peer support is needed in abundance, especially when civil servants are hired in two different ways, as in some countries. The efficient administration and smooth delivery of public services were assured if the elected members & professional managers shared a good rapport. (Nalbandian, 2004).

Christensen & Laegreid (2009) observed that among tenure and position held in the organisation, the latter is more critical as it guarantees ease of networking within the preferred political circle and allows for recognition within the department and outside. When a civil servant takes up a new assignment, their formal position is more advantageous to garner the necessary job resources to address the job demands rather than having a longer tenure (Christensen & Laegreid, 2009). Mitigating corruption has been a massive problem in the field of administration. Since monitoring cannot be implemented to the extent that it could replace the ethics of a civil servant, a study confirms that corruption is minimum when co-workers and seniors have been known to have rejected any bribe offered to them. (Silitonga, Dujin, Heyse & Wittek, 2019). The records of refusing bribes by co-workers act as cues for civil servants, and another study validates that seniors make role models for making attitudinal changes in public servants (Keulemans & Groeneveld, 2020; Silitonga et al., 2019). In an experiment designed to test whether micro-interventions affected turnover intentions, well-being and satisfaction of civil servants, it was affirmed that a reminder of how civil servants are creating a societal impact had favourable effects on all fronts (Vogel & Willems, 2020).

Research stream 3: Motivational factors (public service motivation) as a career resource for PA

Public servants are known to have an altruistic motive to serve society and work in a sector where they have less control over their job and are paid lesser than their private sector working counterparts. (Houston, 2000). Perry & Wise (1990) proposed & validated that public servants are concerned for others, which drives them to work for the betterment of society instead of working for any other motive, and called this motivating force - Public Service Motivation (PSM). Perry (1996) established PSM's four sub-dimensions: attraction to policy-making or politics, commitment to the public interest, compassion and self-sacrifice. These four dimensions are present in varying degrees in any individual (Vandenabeele, 2009). Depending on which of the four sub-dimensions of PSM is more compelling, there will be a better person-organisation fit if one catered to a related policy domain. An empirical study on 6885 Swiss civil servants exhibited that those who reported high compassion were inclined to stay in the welfare divisions, whereas civil servants who had deficient levels of compassion were

performing other core functions such as legal departments or compliance, those responsible for policy formulation had scored high on attraction to politics. (Anderfuhren-Biget, Varone & Giaque, 2014).

Kroll & Porumbescu (2017) found that individuals with high PSM would rationalise low levels of extrinsic rewards using cognitive coping mechanisms since they have higher intrinsic motivation. However, studies have also found that high-level PSM alone could not guarantee job satisfaction unless the public administrators were provided with a favourable working environment (Bright, 2008), and even the most highly motivated public administrator will lose psychological resources if job demands are continually high and job resources are consistently low (Bakker, 2015). It was observed that multiple motives - intrinsic motive and/or extrinsic motivation that could come from good pay or promotion, can exist simultaneously in individuals taking up public service as their career (Weske & Schott, 2018).

Research stream 4: Career management behaviour resources as career resource for PA

Besides the structural factors, stable individual differences & personal life perspective, career management behaviour such as exploration of career opportunities and networking is a fundamental determinant for career success in a protean and boundaryless career (Baruch, 2006). Networking, sharing and gaining access to valuable information regarding goals and processes can empower public administrators in their self-driven boundaryless careers and significantly impact their job satisfaction (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2015). There is a considerable emphasis in this field to collaborate to bring systemic change (Culpepper, 2002; Getha-Taylor, 2008; O'Leary et al., 2012). Williams (2002) addresses public administrators as 'boundary spanners' because of the nature of their job, which requires them to cross-sectoral, functional, organisational, and jurisdictional boundaries to collaborate and accomplish their work. Svallfors (2016) highlights that access to people who hold powerful positions is a significant criterion for career growth for policymakers. The determination of career success is contingent primarily on acquiring power, either through direct means or by establishing connections with influential policymakers, rather than being solely driven by wealth or reputation (Svallfors, 2016). Yi & Chen (2021) observed that public administrators prefer to pursue promotional possibilities that do not necessitate relocation to a distant place, and they will consider the opportunity provided that the demographic, economic, and political conditions of the prospective location are comparable to their

current work setting. Zandberg and Morales (2017) found evidence of a hierarchy of networking motivations, with the need to advance one's career preceding innovation and policy implementation.

Discussion and future research directions

There are two distinct ways by which this systematic review advances career research. We begin by outlining the current state of the literature on career resources available for public administrators and how this research is dispersed across various geographies, the fundamental theories that have been embraced, the research approach that has been adopted, and highlights the categories of career resources available to the public administrators that have been focused on in the field. Second, considering that a substantial amount of research has been done on career resources in the private sector, we explored future research areas in the field of career resources that could further expand our understanding and facilitate the career of a public administrator.

First, we found that the studies did provide a deep insight into the possible career resources available for public administrators. There is an appalling gap between the research on the private and public sectors, especially since the scope for studying and learning from the careers of public administrators is limitless. This review discusses the significance of public administrators' career resources - personal, structural and other contextual resources. Future studies could provide empirical evidence as to which factors contribute to objective and subjective career success in the field of public administration. Career research has not paid as much attention to subjective career success as it has to objective metrics of career success (Ng et al., 2018; Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020). Therefore, the factors that affect subjective career success for public administrators should be investigated as it would give us a rich insight into the meaning and challenges of attaining subjective career success in public administration and would also expand the literature on career competencies, and career resources in a boundaryless career and protean career.

Second, we concede that the field could benefit from studies conducted in Asian, African and Middle Eastern contexts, as Knies et al. (2018) suggest. As most of these studies have been done in the Western context, this makes a compelling case for studying whether these career resources are generalisable

across different contexts; if not, studies need to explore specific career resources for the public administrators in the global south as suggested by several researchers (Cooke, 2017; Budhwar et al., 2019).

Third, it is evident from this review that with time, the countries have shifted from the traditional public administration to the modern, more professional and nonpartisan version of public administration – new public governance. As a consequence, there has been a shift in their responsibilities and occupational requirements across the world (Kruijen & Van Genugten, 2020). Future research could investigate the impact of changing political climate, patronage, and citizen participation in policy-making processes. Furthermore, future studies could explore the impact of the balancing of dual roles of creating public value while keeping up with their political masters on the subjective career success and well-being of public officials.

Fourth, we observed that although few studies have revealed a distinction in senior vs new public servants' approach, but very few explore other demographic variables as a career resource. The issues of women as public administrators have begun to see a rise in the field but they are very few (Raadschelders & Lee, 2011); future studies could observe the factors that predict career success across various demographic variables such as age, gender, sexual orientation, caste and ethnicity. This could help us move from focusing solely on better performance to focusing on equity and inclusivity in this profession as prior research has also suggested (McDonald et al., 2022).

Fifth, we observed that prior research in the field of social psychology and psychology has explored the role of partners' or spouses' support in times of distress. The field of organisational behaviour has examined the impact of many factors such as organisational support, supervisor support, social support and parental support on an individuals' careers. However, a spouse or partner's specific role and influence in fostering career success or enabling individuals to navigate career distress is yet to be explored. In the context of a public administrator, whose profession is characterised by self-direction, where problems are 'wicked', boundaryless, and the associated obstacles are numerous and unparalleled. Consequently, the role and influence of a partner should be explored in this field.

Sixth, as there are existing gendered expectations and gender roles in society that make it several folds difficult for women to take up agentic roles such as that of public administrator. Therefore, future studies should look into the detrimental effects of these gendered expectations on women in the field of PA and how individuals strike a work-life balance and deal with family responsibilities discrimination.

Moreover, most of these studies were conducted on cross-sectional data, applying quantitative methodologies, and most did not back their analysis with a theory. Therefore, using more rigorous methodologies- for instance, incorporating qualitative inquiry- would give us a detailed understanding of PA. Using grand and middle-range theories would provide a better lens to analyse the hurdles to career success or help identify career resources for public administrators. Consequently, HRM and PA have much to gain from conducting interdisciplinary research.

Finally, we found that studies have highlighted how ethnic background, religious or spiritual beliefs, and legacies have determined whether public servants are more self-centred or altruistic; it would be interesting to explore further how these beliefs come in conflict with the job demands and how overall PSM is affected over time, with age, tenure. Studies can help make us aware if specific career resources become rare at a particular stage in the career and how the available resources can interact and improve or reduce the chances of developing a resource gain or loss spiral (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

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