

## **CAREER MANAGEMENT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE FROM A PROTEAN CAREER PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigates how organizational policies and practices support both career management and work-life balance in relation to organizational performance. The theoretical foundation of the research is the protean career concept, which emphasizes self-direction and a personal values orientation. In this context, organizational policies are becoming increasingly important, shaped by uncertainty and increasing pressures on managers in both leadership and operational roles. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, with a dominant qualitative component based on semi-structured interviews and an integrated quantitative component measured on a 1-5 Likert scale; the quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential methods to compare the public and private sectors. Data were collected from 67 senior and operational managers. The interviews were structured around four main themes: autonomy in decision-making, career management, work-life balance, and role conflict and career sustainability. The findings highlight how organizations' policies on career management and work-life balance influence performance through employee retention and customer satisfaction. In addition, the study shows that autonomy and role clarity are important for the sustainability of managerial careers. The research contributes to the application of the protean career concept within organizations and highlights the close links among career management, work-life balance, and organizational performance.

### **Keywords:**

career management, work-life balance, protean career, organizational performance, decisional autonomy, role conflict.

### **JEL Classification**

M10; M12; M54; J24; J81; J28

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