

## **Impact of Employees' Protean Career Attitudes on Affective Commitment to organization (With special reference to financial sector in Sri Lanka)**

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### **Abstract**

With the emergence of new career theories, the present study attempted to provide insight upon the influence of protean career attitudes on an individual's affective commitment to their employing organization. As to date, there have been fewer theoretical and empirical research findings related to this topic. Within the literature this topic was done by various researchers, however, there is a knowledge gap it does not vitally answer the question with respect to if protean career attitudes impact affective commitment. A quantitative method research design was used. The data collection method was done using self-administered questionnaires and distributed to 100 young employees by using a convenient sampling technique. Data analysis was performed using simple and multiple regression analysis. The findings of the study indicated that young employees with protean career attitudes have a positive impact on affective commitment. Results of regression analysis show self-directed career management and value-driven predispositions positively related to affective commitment. The findings of the study concluded that young employees with a protean career attitude are even emotionally attached to the organization. Further, the study recommended that it would be important for the employers to provide more varied experiences and development opportunities inside the organization are more committed affectively to their organizations, they control over their work environment.

**Keywords:** Affective commitment, Protean career attitudes, Self-directed career, Value-driven predispositions

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of the study**

Traditionally, careers were typically characterized as far as an individual employee's relationship with an employing organization (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). These careers have been oriented externally to the person, emphasizing vertical progression through positions convening increasing responsibility, status, and rewards defined by the organization (Hall and

Mirvis, 1995) with individuals advancing up the firm's hierarchy seeking to obtain greater extrinsic rewards (Rosenbaum, 1979). But the careers in the twenty-first century are thought to be more internally oriented, flexible, and mobile, with goals defined by individual workers (Hall and Mirvis, 1995). Hall (1996) portrayed the conventional career by vertical achievement, climbing the corporate pyramid, and monetary rewards. The movement was in light of regular upward moves involving geographical portability (Edwards et al., 1999) and capacity diligent work and loyalty rewarded with increased seniority (Reitman and Schneer, 2003). Traditional career pattern has been complemented by contemporary protean career (PC) and boundaryless career (BC) approaches, applications of which are typically alluded to as examples of the “new career” (Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009). Two metaphorical originations of the career have dominated the careers literature: the Protean career since 1976, and the boundaryless career since 1994. As per Hall and Moss (1998) in contrast to traditional career, protean career is characterized by relationships which are driven by the individual, not the organization and are subjected to reinvention by the person from time to time as the person and environmental change. In the journey for self-fulfillment in career and boosting employability, the protean may have a various synchronous or overlapping employment arrangements requiring them to draw on an assortment of their generic and transferrable skills and perform a number of distinctive roles (Handy, 1994, Mallon, 1999). Protean career may be explained as a method of self-directed career management where individuals control their own career achievement depending on their personal values, work experiences and choices rather than by holding on to or considering organizational values (Hall, 2002). Briscoe et al. (2006) explicitly distinguish a values-driven (one's values) approach to defining career success and self-directed career management behaviors as two conceptually distinct but related components of the protean career.

Meyer and Allen (1991) depict in a meta-investigation on emotional affective commitment, continuous commitment, and normative commitment that affective commitment has weightage over the other two commitments, as it brings about more favorable results for both the workers and the employer. These good results incorporate lower absenteeism, better organizational citizenship behavior, high job performance, low turnover, reduced stress, and work-life balance (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The favorable benefits of affective commitment have accordingly, drove the researcher to confine the measurement of organizational commitment to affective commitment. Affective commitment has been characterized in various literature reviews as the individuals feeling closer to the organization not only emotionally as well as engaged with the

organization, and its vision and mission statements (Meyer et al., 2004). Employees with emotional attachment show energy for the organization, and "feel" fulfilled working for it (Allen, 2011).

The financial sector in Sri Lanka plays a major role in the economic development of the country. However, it is noted that it is confronted with various challenges with the changes in career paradigms. Hence it is worthwhile to assess whether these challenges can be addressed by retaining a dedicated and talented workforce. In the present tight labor market in Sri Lanka, organizations are confronting exceptional rivalry for talent and are giving increased attention regarding ways to retain talent as opposed to depending on expensive replacement and retraining.

Although previous literature upholds the relationship between career self-management and commitment (affective commitment and normative commitment), writings give mixed outcomes (Wickramaratne, 2018). For instance, It has been discovered that workers may decrease their commitment towards the firm when they assume greater responsibility for their careers (Allen, 2011) (Bambacas and Bordia, 2009). On the other hand, Bambacas (2010) identified that career self-management positively relates to affective commitment and normative commitment of employees.

Moreover study by Alonderienė and Šimkevičiūtė (2018) suggests that self-directed career management is positively associated with affective commitment, and negatively by values-driven career orientation. Consequently, youthful workers contrast whenever contrasted with those of different ages young employees will choose "new career" approaches (Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009); their organizational commitment will get differs with compared to those of employees who are older (Singh and Gupta, 2015). As Alonderienė and Šimkevičiūtė (2018) suggest empirical investigation needed to study whether and how contemporary career attitudes of young employees affect their organizational commitment in various sectors. This issue has been investigated in a few studies (Fernandez, 2008, Briscoe, 2009, Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012, Enache, 2013) and (Supeli and Creed, 2016). However, the studies have demonstrated mixed results.

Therefore further empirical investigation and testing indifferent settings in terms of different industries, sectors, countries, and respondent characteristics for the above-mentioned issue (Alonderienė and Šimkevičiūtė, 2018). Therefore, this study attempts to investigate this under-researched gap. It is unique as it complements the current examination on the impact between protean career attitudes and affective commitment, examining young adults in the finance sector in Sri Lanka, unlike any other previous research. The problem examined in this paper is

whether the protean career attitudes impact the affective commitment of young adults in the finance sector. The present study focused on two key objectives. They are to analyze the impact of protean career attitudes on affective commitment and how the attributes of protean career attitudes contribute to affective commitment.

The rest of the article is organized into the following major parts. First with a detailed analysis of the theoretical context and the hypotheses of the study. Second, the methodological approach is clarified and the discussion of the findings. Finally, conclusions are made along with implications to theory and practice.

### **Research Questions**

- What is the impact of protean career attitudes on affective commitment?
- How the attributes of protean career attitudes contribute to affective commitment?

### **Research Objectives**

- To analyze the impact of protean career attitudes on affective commitment
- To identify how the attributes of protean career attitudes contribute to affective commitment

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Protean career attitudes**

The term protean is derived from the Greek god Proteus, who could change his shape at will (Hall, 1976). According to Hall (1976) protean career orientation is individual will take responsibility in managing their career and the organization is not responsible, protean career orientation can be defined as being flexible, adaptive, and changeable (Hall, 2004). Briscoe et al. (2006) suggest protean career attitudes in career management highlights the individual evaluation of career success and entire life perspective which incorporate both work and non-work related encounters and can promote subjective and objective career success because it is positively related to a proactive disposition and intrinsic motivation for self-career management. According to Briscoe et al. (2006), the two most important features of a protean career orientation are being self-directed and value-driven.

### **Self-direction (SD)**

The first dimension of PCA is self-directedness, pursuing one's career proactively by defining vocational goals independently. It includes learning the demands of a career continuously and looking for work challenges and proceedings onwards to perform well in a job (Briscoe et al.,

2006). This approach makes the individual, as opposed to his or her employer, in charge of arranging what occurs in their career (Baruch, 2004).

### **Value-driven (VD)**

The second dimension, value-driven is the degree to which proposing the idea that one's career success is defined and measured depending mostly on internal values and beliefs rather than organizational ones (Briscoe et al., 2006).

### **Affective commitment (AC)**

Affective commitment (AC) is conceptualized as employees' emotional attachment to their employing organization (Meyer, 1991). According to (Meyer and Allen, 1991) employees with high affective commitment continue employment with the organization as a result of they want to do so and therefore these individuals usually demonstrate high levels of performance, positive work attitudes, and want to stay with the organization.

Individuals with strong AC establish with the organization and are more committed to pursue their goals (Darolia et al., 2010). As per Powell and Meyer (2004) suggested that AC correlated considerably with four side-bet factors, namely, satisfying conditions, expectations, self-presentation concerns, and individual adjustments. A meta-analysis of the antecedents correlates and consequences of OC conducted by (Meyer et al., 2002) found that AC related negatively with withdrawal cognitions, employee turnover, absenteeism, stress, and work-family conflict. The meta-analysis conjointly found that AC includes a strong positive relationship with both job performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Colquitt et al. (2010) concluded that employees who have high AC are willing to exert extra effort whenever they can and tend to engage in more interpersonal and organizational citizenship behaviors.

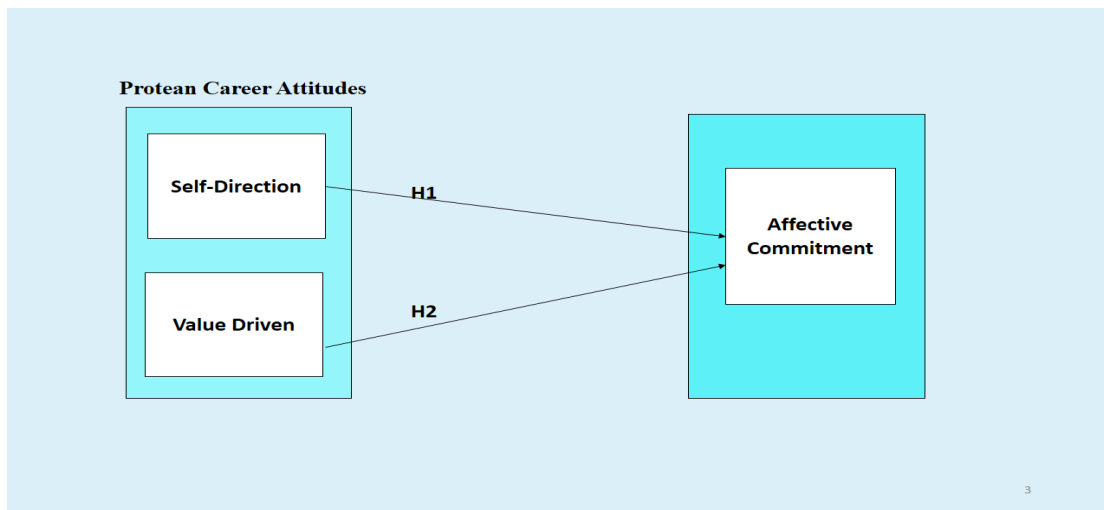
### **Protean career attitudes and affective commitment**

Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012) suggested self-directed career management has a positive relationship with affective commitment. It can be because self-directed career management and AC might be due to the reason that the individuals with an internal locus of control are more committed affectively to their organizations because they perceive that they have control over their work environments (Luthans et al., 1987).

According to research conducted by Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) suggest that organizations should expect as much (or as little) an affective commitment from those with PCA as anyone. There is a notable gap in the literature namely the effects of holding PCA upon employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization (Fernandez and Enache, 2008). The findings of (Fernandez and Enache, 2008) illustrate that PCA is important in predicting AC. They suggest that individuals high on PCA (VD predispositions

and SD attitudes) show high levels of AC and they are not inclined towards organizational mobility. Moreover the research results provide empirical support for the importance of taking PCA towards the career, which not only gives positive individual outcomes but also has an impact upon the employing organizations.

**Conceptual framework**



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework

Source: Researchers construction

**Hypothesis development**

H1: There is an impact of self-direction in career management on affective commitment

H2: There is an impact of value-driven predispositions in career management on affective commitment

**Operationalization of variables**

**Table 1: Operationalization of the independent variable and dependent variable**

Dimension	Indicators	Measurement	Source
Self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-efficacy</li> <li>• Self-responsible</li> <li>• Autarchic</li> <li>• Self-values</li> </ul>	5 point Likert scale	(Briscoe et al., 2006)  Cronbach

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent</li> <li>• Self-dependent</li> <li>• Career interest</li> <li>• Proactiveness</li> </ul>		Alpha 0.84
Value-driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal autonomy</li> <li>• Individual agency</li> <li>• Career sense of identity</li> <li>• Normative standards</li> <li>• Core beliefs</li> <li>• Self-perception</li> </ul>	5 point Likert scale	(Briscoe et al., 2006) Cronbach Alpha 0.73
Affective commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-image</li> <li>• Personal meaning</li> <li>• Proud of being with the employer</li> <li>• Emotionally attachment</li> <li>• Strong sense of belonging</li> <li>• My view of organizational problems</li> </ul>	5 point Likert scale	(Meyer et al., 1993) Cronbach alpha 0.91

## METHODOLOGY

### Research design

A deductive approach was used for the current study.

### Population and sampling

The target population of this current study was young employees working in financial sector institutions in Sri Lanka. Participants of the study were young individual employees working in financial sector institutions are the sample unit of this study. The sample size of this study is one hundred (100) employees and self-administered questionnaires were distributed. The convenience sampling technique was used to collect data. The main source of data used for this study is the primary data collection. The researcher used primary data collection to collect data for this study.

### Data analysis method

**Table 2: Data analysis method**

Objective	Analysis method (Quantitative)
To analyze the impact of protean career attitudes on affective commitment	Simple linear regression analysis
To identify how the attributes of protean career attitudes contribute to affective commitment	Multiple regression analysis

### Instruments

The protean career attitude scale developed by Briscoe et al. (2006) was adapted and used. Two dimensions are Self-directed career management (eight items: “When development opportunities have not been offered by my company, I’ve sought them out on my own” (Scale endpoints were to a great extent or no extent) and values-driven career orientation. (six items: Values-driven career orientation. (six items: “I navigate my career, based on my personal priorities, as opposed to my employer’s priorities. (Scale endpoints were to a great extent or no extent). Affective commitment scale developed by Meyer et al. (1993) (six items; “Being a member of this organization is important to my self-image”(Scale endpoints were to strongly agree or strongly disagree)



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The response rate of the study

This study has been conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed among individuals employed in financial sector institutions in Sri Lanka to collect data for the quantitative method. All respondents' responds and all questionnaires were returned. There was a 100% response rate.

### Reliability analysis of data

In order to measure the reliability of the constructs Cronbach's Alpha reliability test has been performed.

**Table 3: Reliability analysis**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Nu. Of items
Self-direction	0.848	8
Value driven	0.882	6
Affective commitment	0.860	6

Source: Based on data

As cited in the literature if the analyzed Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.70 there is an acceptable internal consistency. The performed reliability test above shows the reliability of the current study. Cronbach's Alpha value for all dimensions exceeds 0.70. There is an acceptable internal consistency.

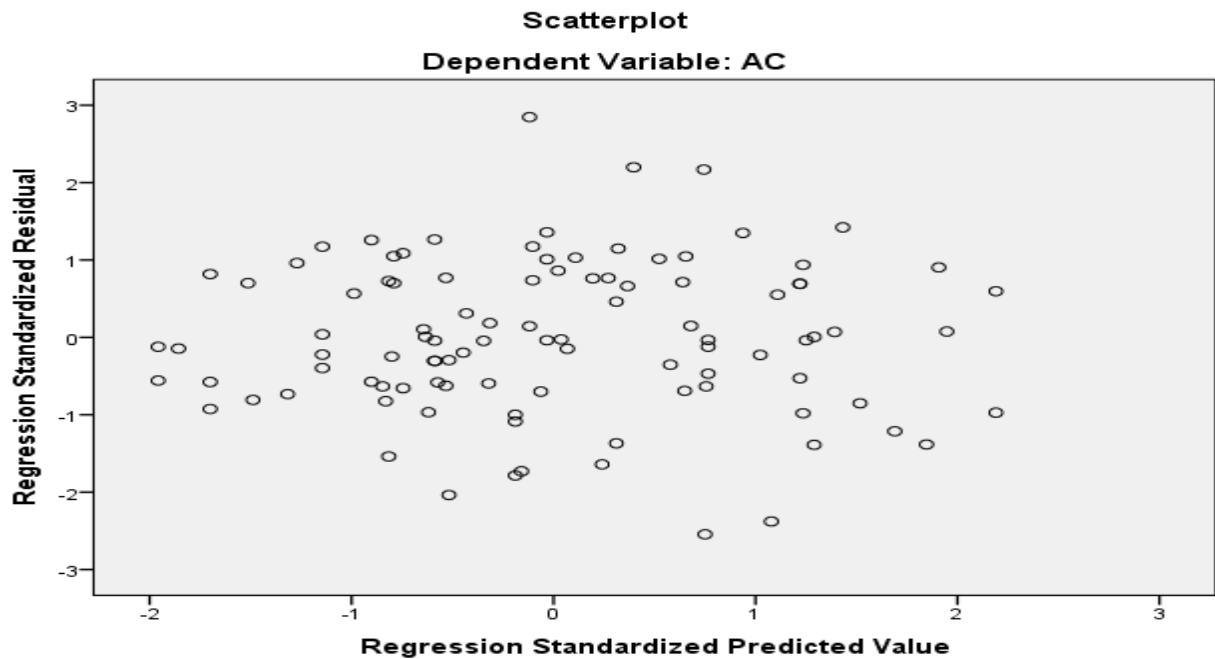
### Regression analysis

#### Assumptions of the regression model

Following assumption models were used by the researcher to diagnose the validity of regression results that are generated through this study.

#### Heteroscedasticity test

Using the scatterplot researcher can identify the distribution of the residuals. In the below figure standardized residuals were tested against the standardized predicted values. Through the figure researcher identified that the residuals are randomly distributed without concurring into any predicted pattern from which the researcher can conclude that the variance of residuals is constant. The regression model is free from heteroscedasticity problems and the data are highly valid.



**Figure 2:** Test of Heteroscedasticity

Source: Based on data

**Normality of residuals**

If the positive and negative results are set off each other, the mean value of the residuals becomes zero. So if the residuals are normally distributed the regression results can be considered valid. To identify the normality of residuals Shapiro Wilk test and normal Q-Q plot (graphical) is adopted in this research.

The hypothesis related to the normality of residuals test is;

H0: Residuals are normally distributed.

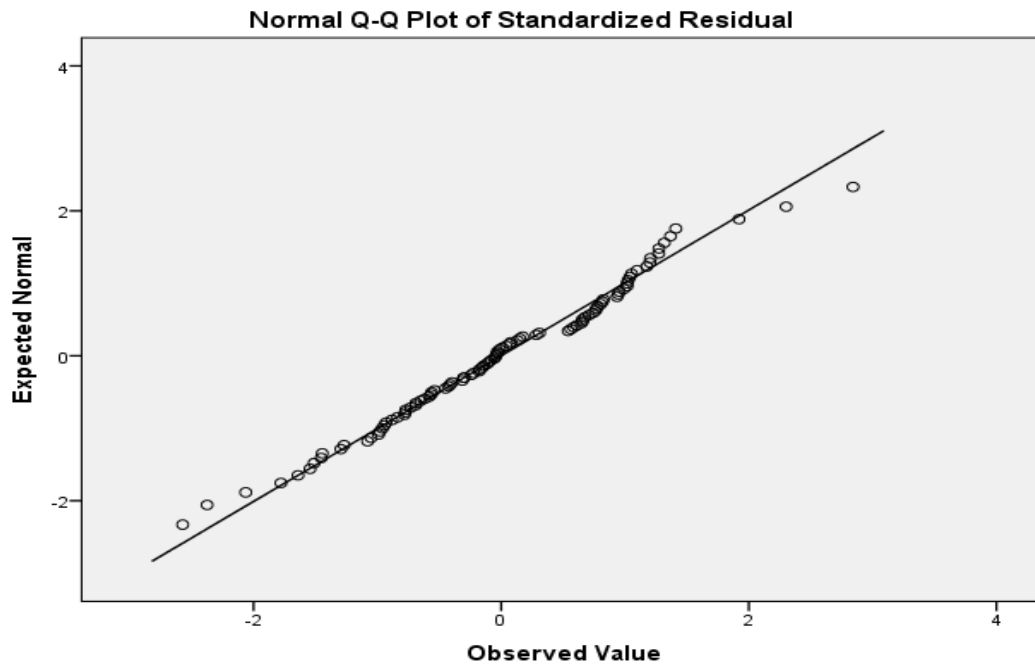
H1: Residuals are not normally distributed.

**Table 4: Normality of residuals**

Test	Shapiro - Wilk
<b>Standardized residuals P-Value</b>	0.562

Source: Analytical results from SPSS

According to the mathematical approach of the normality test P-value of the Shapiro Wilk test is 0.562. Results are insignificant at the confidence level of 0.05. Therefore residuals can be considered as normally distributed with zero mean making the regression results more valid.



**Figure 3:** Standardized residuals

Source: Based on data

Parallel to the normal Q-Q plot denoted by the figure most of the residuals is situated or distributed near to the linear line. Therefore the residuals can be considered normally distributed.

**Multi Collinearity**

**Table 5 Test of multi-collinearity**

<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>1.000</b>
<b>VIF</b>	1.000

Source: Based on data

In relation to the collinearity diagnostic, the VIF value is less than 10 and the tolerance value is greater than 0.1. It can be concluded that there is no multi-collinearity in the regression results. Therefore the model can be considered valid.

Through regression, the analysis researcher identified the impact of the independent variable carrying on the dependent variable in terms of quantitative measurement.

**Objective 01:** To analyze the impact of protean career attitudes on affective commitment.

**Table 6: Model summary of simple linear regression analysis**

<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>
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<b>0.756</b>	0.572	0.567
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Source: Based on data

R square value indicates how much of the dependent variable, affective commitment can be explained by the independent variable protean career attitudes. Results generated from the model summary R square is 0.572. It suggests that 57.2% of the dependent variable is explained by independent variables. The model can be considered as fitted. Adjusted R square refers to the modification of R square that adjusted for the number of explanatory in a model. The adjusted R square is 0.567.

**Table 7: Coefficient summary of simple linear regression analysis**

Predictor	$\beta$ coefficients	Standard error	T – value	P-value
<b>Constant</b>	0.571	.231	2.471	0.015
<b>Protean career attitudes</b>	0.832	0.073	11.441	0.000

Source: Based on data

Constant  $\beta_0$  was implied that when protean career attitudes remain zero, affective commitment is 0.571. The P-value of the constant is 0.015 and it denotes that statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance.

Moreover, protean career attitudes show a positive beta coefficient. It suggests one unit increase in protean career attitudes, affective commitment is increased by 0.832. Further this is significantly contributed to the model as P-value is 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

According to the above information, a simple linear regression model can be expressed as follows

$$\text{Affective Commitment} = 0.571 + 0.832 \text{ Protean Career Attitudes} + \varepsilon$$

### Multiple linear regression analysis

**Objective 02:** To identify how attributes of protean career attitudes contribute to affective commitment

**Table 8: Model summary of multiple linear regression analysis**

R	R Square	Adjusted R square
<b>0.758</b>	0.574	0.565

Source: Analytical results from SPSS

Correlation (R) is 0.758. There is an association between protean career attitudes and affective commitment as the R is more than 0.7 there is a strong positive association. R square indicates how much of the dependent variable, affective commitment is can be explained by independent variables self-direction career attitudes and value-driven career attitudes. According to the results generated from the model summary R square is 0.574. It suggests that 57.4% of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. The model can be considered as fitted. It indicates that 57.4% of affective commitment is can be covered by the model. Adjusted R square refers to the modification of R square that adjusted for the number of explanatory in a model is 0.565.

### Analysis of variance for multiple regression analysis

**Table 9: Analysis of variance for multiple linear regression**

Model	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	F	Significance
<b>Regression</b>	57.751	2	58.574	0.000
<b>Residual</b>	42.892	97		
<b>Total</b>	100.643	99		

Source: Based on data

ANOVA table contains the results of the analysis of variance associated with the regression model and it is included the sum of squares, degree of freedom value, and P-value. Results indicate that 57.751 of variation can be explained by regression and 42.892 of dependent variable affective commitment is explained by residual. It suggests that the regression model is fitted well because the significance is 0.000 which is less than the 0.05 significance level.

**Table 10: Coefficient table of multiple linear regression analysis**

Predictor	$\beta$ coefficients	Standard error	T- Value	P-Value
<b>Constant</b>	.565	.232	2.438	.017
<b>Self-direction</b>	.512	.147	3.479	.001
<b>Value driven</b>	.324	.143	2.269	.026

Source: Based on data

Constant  $\beta_0$  was implied that while protean career attitudes remain zero, affective commitment is 0.565. The P-value of the constant is 0.017 and it denotes statistically significant and at a 0.05 level of significance. Also, self-direction shows a positive beta coefficient. It suggests one unit increase in self-direction career attitudes while other variable remains constant, affective commitment is increased by 0.512. Further this is significantly contributed to the model as P-value is 0.001 is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

When considering the value-driven career attitudes the beta coefficient is 0.324 indicates that when value-driven career attitudes increase by one unit while the other variables remain constant, affective commitment increase by 0.324units. It can be seen that value-driven career attitudes significantly contribute to the model since P-value is 0.026 is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

According to the above information, the multiple linear regression model can be expressed as follows.

$$\text{Affective Commitment} = 0.565 + 0.512 \text{ Self Direction} + 0.324 \text{VD Value driven} + \varepsilon$$

## Discussion

**Table 11: Summary of hypothesis**

Hypothesis	Accepted or rejected
<b>H1: There is an impact of self-direction in career management on affective commitment</b>	Accepted
<b>H2: There is an impact of value-driven predispositions in career management on affective commitment</b>	Accepted

Source: Based on data

Results of the current study researcher identified that there is a positive impact on self-direction in career management on affective commitment. This agrees with the findings of Çakmak-Otluoğlu, (2012) and Alonderienė and Šimkevičiūtė (2018) which suggest self-direction in career management is positively related to affective commitment. Moreover, the findings, of Enache (2013) suggest self-direction in career management is a positive predictor of affective commitment.

Furthermore, the researcher found there is a positive impact from value-driven predispositions and affective commitment. It agrees with the findings of Fernandez (2008) which suggest individuals high on protean career attitudes (Value-driven predispositions and self-directed attitudes) exhibit high levels of affective commitment. Hence based on the current findings it could be said that the study has generated novel insights into the protean career literature.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Study findings from quantitative method results of the current research suggest even young individuals who perceive their careers are even expected to develop an emotional attachment

with their employers. Our research shows protean career attitudes predict affective commitment probably as long as the employers provide more varied experiences and development opportunities inside the organization employees appreciate it and emotionally attached and willing to stay with the employer. In an organization with better career management, employees with even high protean career attitudes are committed to the organization and do not find any difference from other employees. Researchers found that young employees working in financial sector institutions highly expressed protean career attitudes which impact their affective commitment.

### **Knowledge implications**

With the completion of this study knowledge gap that was found within the literature was addressed. One of the aspects of the research identified that there is little evidence on if and how the protean career attitudes contribute to affective commitment. Therefore, with this study researcher was able to provide novel insights into the protean career literature by validating findings obtained from the quantitative method. Finally, the researcher was able to provide strong implication to the little evidence available in the career literature with contradictory arguments.

### **Managerial implications**

The most important implication of this study is to help the managers to simply avoid stereotyping employees based on their career attitudes. This provides reassurance to managers who fear about investing in individuals with protean career attitudes.

These results assist HR practitioners to develop appropriate strategies that maximize the professional development of employees by navigating the changing context of the contemporary workplace by discovering the nature of the new career concept. Further, the financial sector institutions can develop their career development strategies for their employees and develop a tolerant culture with ample opportunities and HRM policies for career advancement

### **Directions for future research**

First, this study sample is composed only of respondents in financial sector institutions. Hence future research explores other industries. This study examined only affective commitment. It might be that protean career attitudes impact in different ways with other forms of commitment such as continuance and normative commitment, it is suggested to conduct a future study on other organizational outcomes. Moreover, future researchers can focus more on many moderators to identify moderation effects on existing relationships.

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