

Anita C. Keller · Robin Samuel
Manfred Max Bergman
Norbert K. Semmer *Editors*

Psychological, Educational,
and Sociological
Perspectives on Success
and Well-Being in Career
Development

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Chapter 1

Introduction

**Robin Samuel, Manfred Max Bergman, Anita C. Keller,
and Norbert K. Semmer**

1.1 Introduction

Understanding what constitutes success is a complex endeavour. In psychology, success often refers to attaining a personally meaningful goal, such as being in a relationship, completing a task or securing a reasonable income (Diener and Biswas-Diener 2002; Lewin 1936; Locke and Latham 1990). In sociology, success may be understood as having attained positions of higher social status (Merton and Kitt 1950; Merton 1968), prestige or a desired lifestyle (Bourdieu 1979; Treiman 1977). Moreover, each of these disciplines are underpinned by particular concepts such as ‘career success’ and ‘work success’, rendering it difficult to clearly define and thus operationalize the boundaries of ‘success’.

However, several academic disciplines share established conceptual frameworks for well-being. Veenhoven (1984) defines well-being as “the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life-as-a-whole favorably. In other words: how well he likes the life he leads” (1984, p. 22). Well-being is a subjective evaluation of one’s life, consisting of cognitive and affective components (Diener 1984; Tatarkiewicz 1976; Veenhoven 1984). The former may refer to a global assessment of one’s life or to specific domains, such as, health or career development, and the latter to positive and negative affect, which touch on the frequency of experiencing positive and negative emotions (Bradburn 1969).

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