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Running head: Career adaptability and strategic competence

Predicting Chinese Human Resource Managers' Strategic Competence:  
Roles of Identity, Career Variety, Organizational Support and Career Adaptability

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## Abstract

Based on career construction theory, the predictors of human resource managers' strategic competence in the Chinese context were examined. Results from a survey administered to Chinese HR managers ( $N = 220$ ) showed that professional identification, career variety and organizational support for strategic human resource management positively predicted Chinese human resource managers' strategic competence. In addition, career adaptability served as a significant mediator for the above relations. The results further showed that the effect of professional identification on career adaptability was stronger among employees who perceived a higher (vs. lower) level of organizational support for strategic human resource management. The corresponding moderated mediation model was also supported such that the indirect effect of professional identification on strategic competence was stronger among employees who perceived a higher (vs. lower) level of organizational support for strategic human resource management. These findings carry implications for career construction theory and human resource managers' career development in China.

Keywords: career construction theory, career adaptability, career variety, professional identification, strategic competence

### Predicting Chinese Human Resource Managers' Strategic Competence:

#### Roles of Identification, Career Variety, Organizational Support and Career Adaptability

In the last two decades, much attention has been paid to human resource (HR) managers' role in organizations and two contrasting views have emerged (e.g., Roche & Teague, 2012; Wright, 2008). On the one hand, it has been argued that the importance of the HR department is declining as HR managers add limited strategic value to organizational success (Guest & King, 2004). As a result, many HR managers are assigned administration-focused rather than strategy-focused tasks in organizations (Guest & King, 2004; Wright, 2008). Moreover, some researchers doubt whether HR managers possess the competence that would make them credible strategic partners (Caldwell, 2001). On the other hand, it has also been argued that HR managers can help organizations to build sustainable competitive advantages by co-creating and implementing important business strategies (e.g. Brandl & Pohler, 2010; Cascio, 2005; McCracken & Heaton, 2012; Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001; Ulrich, 1997). Ulrich (1997) strongly advocated the strategic role of HR managers in organizations, but indicated that HR managers need to proactively refine and update their competence related to these challenging functions.

Based on their empirical studies among HR managers and general managers across various countries, Ulrich and colleagues (2013) identified six aspects of HR competence that contribute most to the organizational effectiveness: the ability to co-create an organization's strategy (strategic positioner); to build personal trust through business acumen (credible activist); to identify and develop a company's culture, process, or identity

(capability builder); to initiate and coordinate the organizational change process (change champion); to integrate HR practices into unified solutions to solve future business problems (HR innovator and integrator); to grasp and align technology for information, efficiency, and relationships (technology proponent). These findings strongly suggest that in order to play a strategic role in organizations, HR managers not only need the specialized knowledge and skills related to HR management, but must also develop general managerial abilities to cope with the challenges of strategy development and implementation. However, not much work has been done on the antecedents of HR managers' strategic competence (Ulrich et al., 2013). A systematic investigation on this question will thus provide important information on how to improve HR managers' effectiveness and enhance organizations' HRM advantage.

Drawing upon career construction theory (Savickas, 2005; 2013), this study aims to advance current knowledge on the individual and organizational factors that contribute to the strategic competence of HR managers. Career construction theory (Savickas, 2005, 2013) posits that career development is a process driven by adaption to various career roles and environments. Individuals with a high level of career adaptivity (the willingness to change oneself to meet career transitions with fitting responses) are motivated to develop their career adaptability (psychological resources that enable individuals to cope with the challenges in their career development), which in turn will help individuals to achieve adaptive results (Savickas, 2005, 2013). Accordingly, in this study, professional identification (the extent to which an individual feels a sense of "oneness" with their

profession) and career variety (the diversity of functional areas and institutional context experiences accumulated in an individual's career) were selected to capture the HRM professionals' career adaptivity. It is proposed that these two variables will have a positive effect on their strategic competence through the mediation of career adaptability.

Organizational support for strategic human resource management (SHRM) was also incorporated as an important contextual factor and it is proposed that when organizations highly value the strategic role of HR department, HR managers will have more opportunities and resources to develop their strategic competence; and these positive effects will be stronger for managers with a high level of professional identification. Consequently, a moderated mediation model is proposed (Figure 1), which will be tested among a sample of Chinese HR managers.

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Insert Figure 1 here  
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#### *The Role of Professional Identification*

Professional identification reflects the extent to which an individual's profession is incorporated in his/her self-concept (Hekman, Steensma, Bigley, & Hereford, 2009; Johnson, Morgeson, Ilgen, Meyer, & Lloyd, 2006; Van Dick & Wagner, 2002). According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals with a high level of professional identification tend to form more positive evaluations of their profession, and hold higher-level working interests and motivation. For instance, it has been found that school teachers'

professional identification positively predicted their work motivation and satisfaction (Van Dick & Wagner, 2002), and amongst American veterinarians, profession identification was found to make a unique contribution to predicting job satisfaction, above and beyond the effects of work group and organizational identification (Johnson, Morgeson, Ilgen, Meyer, & Lloyd, 2006). Drawing on career construction theory (Savickas, 2005; 2013), it is proposed that the high intrinsic motivation associated with professional identification will not only sustain a high level of job satisfaction, but will also encourage individuals to devote more effort in developing relevant career competence as well.

When HR managers have a high level of identification towards their profession, they are more likely to set long-term career goals closely related to HR management, and to act from the profession's perspective (Savickas, 2005; 2013). Accordingly, these managers may be motivated to proactively explore relevant situations and roles, develop a better understanding of the future possibilities in this profession and prepare themselves for what might come next. Professional identification can also motivate HRM managers to make deliberate decisions and take conscientious action, and maintain their confidence when coming across difficult situations (Savickas, 2013). Therefore, professional identification is likely to positively predict career adaptability (Savickas, 1997; 2005; 2013), which comprises four elements: career concern (individuals' psychological strengths in considering and preparing for future career possibilities); career control (making thoughtful decisions and taking actions); career curiosity (exploring various situations and roles) and career confidence (maintaining confidence when implementing their aspirations). A high

level of career adaptability can in turn enable HR managers to develop their strategic competence, as discussed below.

Career adaptability has been established as an important predictor for the professional competence of social work students (Guo, Guan, Yang, Xu, Zhou, She et al., 2014) and the employment skills of technical school students (de Guzman & Choi, 2013). The positive effect of career adaptability on employees' performance was also found in previous research (Ohme & Zacher, 2015), even with the effects of mental ability and conscientiousness controlled. For HR managers, career curiosity and career concern enable them to explore various HR functions with greater personal initiatives, and prepare themselves for strategic functions in their organizations. Career control enables HR managers to implement their aspirations through assertive actions; career confidence will sustain HR managers' efforts to develop themselves as strategic partners. In summary, a mediation model is proposed for the relations among HR identification, career adaptability and HR competence.

*Hypothesis 1:* Professional identification relates positively to HR managers' strategic competence, with this effect mediated by career adaptability.

#### *The Role of Career Variety*

In addition to specialized expertise on how to attract, motivate and retain employees, strategic HRM competence also lies in the ability to co-create organizational strategies and coordinate the organizational change process (Ulrich, et al. 2013). In light of this, apart from developing abilities in the specialized areas of the HR profession, HR managers may



also benefit from career variety through experiences in diverse functional areas (such as production and sales), as well as in diverse institutional contexts (such as different organizations or industries; Karaevli & Hall, 2006). It is proposed that by accumulating job rotation and job mobility experiences, HR managers can effectively enhance their career adaptability and competence (Direnzo & Greenhaus, 2011; Karaevli & Hall, 2006).

It has been suggested that when individuals spend their career in one specialized functional area, or a specific context, they may over invest in the exploitation of their current capabilities and may risk becoming cognitively rigid (Karaevli & Hall, 2006; Levinthal & March, 1993). Accordingly, HR managers with a more homogenous working experience may lack the cognitive flexibility to play a strategic role in organizations (Cascio, 2005). In contrast, HR managers who have a high level of career variety are more likely to develop a broad scope of knowledge, skills, and perspectives. As a result, career variety is likely to enable HR managers to explore diverse situations and roles (career curiosity), and to prepare for the predictable and unpredictable challenges they may face (career concern).

Furthermore, exposure to a wider variety of functions and contexts can serve as early training for decision making and problem solving in a changing and complex environment (Norburn, 1989). Through a variety of experiences, HR managers can develop the ability to differentiate and integrate various sources of information to make important decisions, and to generate new ideas to guide their actions (career control). These working experiences can also strengthen HRM professionals' belief that they have the ability to cope with the difficulties or traumas arising in their career development (career confidence). In sum, these

analyses suggest that early exposure to multiple experiences may enhance HR managers' career adaptability, which in turn will positively predict their strategic competence.

*Hypothesis 2: Career variety relates positively to HR managers' strategic competence, with this effect mediated by career adaptability.*

#### *The Role of Organizational Support for Strategic Human Resource Management*

In addition to the individual predictors discussed above, the organizational support for strategic human resource management (SHRM) was also considered as a contextual factor that can affect HRM professionals' strategic competence (Caldwell, 2001; Guest & King, 2004; Wright, 2008). Although more and more organizations are recognizing the importance of human resources in sustaining their success, there still exist significant differences among top managers over whether make people management their strategic priority and delegate high decision-making power to the HR department. Some organizations prefer to delegate administrative or operational tasks to their HR department, while others regard their HR department as one of the key forces sustaining their competitive advantage (Brandl & Pohler, 2010; McCracken & Heaton, 2012; Wright et al., 2001). When the HR department plays a strategic role in the organization, HR managers are more likely to be empowered to initiate and coordinate strategic tasks, which will facilitate the development of their career adaptability and strategic competence. In addition, when the HR department plays a strategic role in an organization, HR managers also have more resources and support from the organization, which further benefits the development of relevant competence.

*Hypothesis 3:* Organizational support for SHRM relates positively to strategic competence, through the mediation of career adaptability.

From a person–situation interactionist perspective, it is further proposed that organizational support for strategic HRM may also moderate the effects of professional identification on outcome variables. According to trait-activation theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003), under some organizational circumstances, employees' motivational orientations will more strongly predict behavior and performance. Specifically, job contexts containing salient identity-related cues are more likely to strengthen the identity-behavior relationship. Similarly, organizational support for SHRM is laden with cues relevant to the professional identification of HR managers. The opportunities and resources in turn activate the positive effects of professional identification on career adaptability and strategic competence, such that individuals higher in professional identification engage in more activities to develop their competencies, compared with those with a lower level of identification. In contrast, in a context lacking support for SHRM, individuals' professional identification is unlikely to be transformed into relevant competencies due to lack of empowerment and resources.

*Hypothesis 4:* Organizational support for SHRM moderates the effects of professional identification on career adaptability and strategic competence, such that these effects will be stronger when HR managers perceive a high level of organizational support for SHRM.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

The data for this study were collected in 2014 through an online survey (see Yang, Guan, Lai, She, & Lockwood, 2015). With the help of an association for human resource management professionals, e-mails were sent inviting participants to take part. These participants were also asked to forward the emails to their peers. Participation was voluntary and participants did not receive financial rewards. Two hundred and twenty full-time Chinese human resource management professionals (85 males and 135 females), from various organizations, completed the survey. Of these, 37.3% of participants were at basic managerial level (e.g., HRM specialists), 29.1% were at supervisor level, 27.3% were at department manager level, and 6.4% were at HRVP level. In terms of age distribution, 6.4% were between 21 to 25 years; 33.6% were between 26 and 30 years; 32.7% were from 31 to 35 years; 9.1% were from 36 to 40 years; 12.7% were from 41 to 45; 3.2% were from 46 to 50 years; 2.3% were 51 years or above. Participants worked for different types of organizations: state-owned (57.3%), privately-owned (15.5%), foreign-invested (25.5%), or others (1.7%).

#### Measures

*The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale.* The Chinese version of the *Career Adapt-Abilities Scale* (Hou, Leung, Li, Li, & Xu, 2012) was used to measure participants' career adaptability. The scale contains four subscales, with 6 items each, to measure the adaptive resources of concern, control, curiosity and confidence respectively. Respondents rated each item on a scale from 1 ("not strong") to 5 ("strongest"). Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the four scales ranged from .83 to .88 (see Table 1). For the global indicator, Cronbach's

alpha was .94.

*Professional Identification.* Professional identification was measured using a previously validated scale (Hekman et al., 2009), which consisted of four items. Response options ranged from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). An example of the items is “In general, when someone praises HR managers, it feels like a personal compliment”. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .82.

*Career Variety.* Based on previous research (Crossland et al., 2014), participants were asked to report the specific number of different sectors, firms and functional areas that they had worked for on three items, for instance, “How many different sectors have you worked for since you had your first full-time job?”. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .71 and the mean score of these three items was used to represent HR managers’ career variety.

*Organizational Support for SHRM.* The eight-item measure developed by Law et al. (2009) was employed, rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”), for example, “The head of our HR department participates in the strategy formulation and development of our company”. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .91.

*Strategic Competence.* Strategic competence was measured by the 20-item scale developed by Ulrich et al. (2013). This scale was developed based on a large-scale survey among HR professionals all over the world. Respondents rated each item on a scale from 1 (“not strong”) to 5 (“strongest”), for example, “Interpreting global business context”. The

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .95.

*Control Variables.* In order to examine the unique effects of professional identification, career variety, organizational support for SHRM and career adaptability on strategic competence (Becker, 2005; Ulrich et al., 2013), the current study measured and controlled the effects of participants' demographic variables such as gender ("male" = "0", "female" = "1"); age ("21 years or below" = "1", "between 21 to 25 years" = "2", "between 26 to 30 years" = "3", "between 31 to 35 years" = "4", "between 36 to 40 years" = "5", "between 41 to 45 years" = "6", "between 46 to 50 years" = "7", "between 51 to 55 years" = "8", "between 56 to 60 years" = "9", "61 years or above" = "10") and education ("primary school or below" = "1", "junior middle school" = "2", "senior middle school" = "3", "associate degree" = "4", "bachelor's degree" = "5", "master's degree" = "6", "doctor's degree" = "7"). Besides, as previous research suggested that the career-based knowledge and skill that accumulated through education, training, work experience may have effects on individual's career adaptability and professional competence (Brandl & Pohler, 2010; Guo et al., 2014; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Wright et al., 2001), we also controlled the effects of total years of working; university ranking ("1" = "first tier universities, included in the '985' project of China", "2" = "second tier universities, included in the '211' project of China, "3" = "other universities"); experience of learning HRM in university ("0" = "not majored in HRM in university", "1" = "majored in HRM once in undergraduate, postgraduate, or PhD studies"; "2" = "majored in HRM twice in undergraduate, postgraduate, or PhD studies"; "3" = "majored in HRM three times in undergraduate, postgraduate, or PhD studies"),

managerial level (“HR Generalist or Specialist” = “1”, “HR Supervisor” = “2”, “HR Department Manager” = “3”, “HR VP” = “4”), organizational size (“100 employees or less” = “1”, “101 to 500 employees” = “2”, “501 to 1000 employees” = “3”, “1001 employees or more” = “4”) and organizational type (“1” = “state-owned”, “2” = “privately-owned”, “3” = “foreign-invested”, “4” = “others”, “state-owned” as reference group when dummy coded).

## Results

### *Descriptive Statistics and Correlations*

The descriptive statistics and correlations between professional identification, career variety, career adaptability, organizational support for SHRM and strategic competence are shown in Table 1. Professional identification correlated positively with career adaptability ( $r(220) = .40, p < .01$ ), organizational support for SHRM ( $r(220) = .34, p < .01$ ) and strategic competence ( $r(220) = .41, p < .01$ ). Career variety correlated positively with career adaptability ( $r(220) = .23, p < .01$ ) and strategic competence ( $r(220) = .23, p < .01$ ). Career adaptability correlated positively with organizational support for SHRM ( $r(220) = .27, p < .01$ ) and strategic competence ( $r(220) = .56, p < .01$ ). Organizational support for SHRM correlated positively with strategic competence ( $r(220) = .24, p < .01$ ).

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### *Examining the Mediation Models*

We adopted a procedure initiated by Preacher and Hayes (2008) to examine the

mediation model. By adopting the bootstrapping method, this approach estimates the path coefficients as well as indirect effects, and avoids the problem of non-normality in sampling distribution (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). In line with Aiken & West's (1991) suggestion, all continuous predictors were mean-centered for analysis. The procedure proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) identified a three-step criterion to examine a mediation effect. Firstly, the independent variable should be significantly related with the mediator. Secondly, after controlling for the effect of the independent variable, the mediator should be related to the dependent variable. Lastly, the indirect effect of the independent variable should be significant through a bootstrapping test.

After controlling for gender, age, education, period of learning HR, years of working, level, size of organization, university rank and organizational type, professional identification ( $B = .34, SE = .07, t = 5.12, p < .001$ ), career variety ( $B = .20, SE = .08, t = 2.58, p < .05$ ) and organizational support for SHRM ( $B = .17, SE = .07, t = 2.48, p < .05$ ) related positively with career adaptability. When career adaptability was added to the model, it was positively related to strategic competence ( $B = .59, SE = .08, t = 7.34, p < .001$ ). Furthermore, the bootstrapping result showed that the indirect effect of professional identification on strategic competence was significant (95%  $CI = [.09, .26]$ ). The indirect effects of career variety (95%  $CI = [.01, .20]$ ) and organizational support for SHRM (95%  $CI = [.01, .16]$ ) were also significant. The above results confirmed the mediation models, suggesting that career adaptability simultaneously mediated the effects of professional identification, career variety and organizational support for SHRM on strategic competence.



*Examining the Moderated Mediation Model*

The moderated mediation model was examined by a procedure proposed by Preacher, Rucker and Hayes (2007). Two regression equations are examined in this procedure, the “mediator model” (career adaptability as dependent variable) and the “dependent model” (strategic competence as dependent variable). If independent variables significantly predict the mediator, the “mediator model” will be satisfied. If the interaction between the moderator and the independent variable is significant, the “dependent model” will be satisfied. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 2.

Both professional identification and career variety were significantly related to career adaptability, as examined in the mediation models above, and the results revealed that the interaction between professional identification and organizational support for SHRM was significant ( $B = .14$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $t = 2.87$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

In support of the moderated mediation model, the indirect effect of professional identification on strategic competence was examined at both lower and higher levels of organizational support for SHRM. When organizational support for SHRM was higher (one standard deviation above the mean), strategic competence was significantly predicted by professional identification (95%  $CI = [.13, .36]$ ); when organizational support for SHRM was lower (one standard deviation below the mean), however, this relationship was not significant (95%  $CI = [-.03, .19]$ ).

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### Discussion

Based on career construction theory, the current research examined the predictors of human resource managers' strategic competence in the Chinese context. Results from a survey study among Chinese HR managers showed that professional identification, career variety and organizational support for strategic human resource management positively predicted Chinese human resource managers' strategic competence. In addition, career adaptability served as a significant mediator for the above relations. The results further showed that the effects of professional identification on career adaptability and strategic competence were stronger among employees who perceived a higher (vs. lower) level of organizational support for SHRM. These findings carry implications for career construction theory and Chinese human resource managers' career development.

In recent years, the strategic role of HR managers in organizations has been questioned by many researchers, and many HR managers also have serious uncertainty about their long-term career development (Caldwell, 2001; Guest & King, 2004; Wright, 2008). However, it has also been argued that by refining and updating their strategic competence, HR managers can maximize their value to organizations, rather than confining their work to administrative functions (e.g. Brandl & Pohler; 2010; Cascio, 2005;

McCracken & Heaton, 2012; Ulrich, 1997; Ulrich et al., 2013). This study addresses an important question relating to how HR managers' strategic competence can be developed through effective career construction actions, and identifies important individual and contextual predictors in this process. Future research should continue to examine other relevant predictors of HR managers' strategic competence.

The results of this study also showed that career adaptability partially mediated the effect of professional identification, and fully mediated the effects of career variety and the strategic role of the HR department on HR managers' strategic competence. Career adaptability has previously been found to be an important predictor of individuals' professional competence (Guo et al., 2014) and employment skills (de Guzman & Choi, 2013). The current study provides new evidence that career adaptability also serves as a proximal predictor for HR managers' strategic competence. From the perspective of career construction theory (Savickas, 2005; 2013), career curiosity and career concern enables HR managers to explore the different HR functions, and prepare themselves to play a strategic role in their organizations. Career control enables HR managers to implement their aspirations through conscientious actions, and career confidence will help maintain their efficacy in this process. Future research should empirically examine the specific roles of these dimensions in the development of HR managers' strategic competence.

Previous research has established that the salience of individuals' future work selves (Guan et al., 2014), and their personality serve as important predictors of career adaptability (Cai, Guan, Li, Shi, Guo, Liu et al., 2015; Li, Guan, Wang, Zhou, Guo, Jiang et al., 2015).

The current research further revealed professional identification as an important predictor of career adaptability and supported the idea that individuals with a high level of career adaptability are motivated to develop their career adaptability, which in turn results in positive outcomes (Savickas, 2005, 2013). As suggested by this study, a high level of professional identification motivates HR managers to develop their professional competence. The results also showed that the effect of professional identification on strategic competence was not fully mediated by career adaptability. It is possible that the effect of professional identification can also be explained by variables more specific to HRM expertise, rather than career adaptability. This question should be examined in future research.

Career variety was also established as an important predictor of HR managers' career adaptability and strategic competence. Experiences in different functional areas, organizational or industrial contexts can provide HR managers with opportunities to grasp a broad scope of knowledge, skills, and perspectives (Cascio, 2005), and develop their ability to resolve unpredictable problems in complicated environments. This study only focused on the number of different functional areas, organizations, or industries, but did not consider the nature of career variety, such as the magnitude (the relevance of career experiences to HRM), pacing (the time spent in each one), or the career stages (early vs. late) at which HR managers accumulated these experiences (Karaevli & Hall, 2006). By considering these complicated aspects related to career variety, future research can substantively advance the understanding on how individuals' career experiences shape their adaptability and competence.

The study also showed that organizational support for the strategic role of the HR department can also affect HR managers' career adaptability and strategic competence. Organizations differ in their inclination to put people management as a strategic priority and to delegate high decision-making power to the HR department (Caldwell, 2001; Guest & King, 2004; Wright, 2008). When organizations regard HR department as one of the key forces that sustain their competitive advantages (Brandl & Pohler, 2010; McCracken & Heaton, 2012; Wright et al., 2001), HR managers are more likely to be empowered and supported to develop relevant competencies. From a person–situation interactionist perspective, this positive environment also strengthens the effect of professional identification on career adaptability (Tett & Burnett, 2003). The opportunities and resources, in turn, activate the positive effects of professional identification on career adaptability and strategic competence, such that individuals with higher professional identification engage in more activities to develop their competencies compared with those with a lower level of identification. In contrast, in a context lacking support for strategic HRM, individuals' professional identification is unlikely to be transformed into relevant competencies due to the lack of empowerment and resources.

As the current results are based on a cross-sectional survey, the causal relations among these variables cannot be confirmed. That is, professional identification, career variety, organizational support for SHRM, career adaptability, and strategic competence may have reciprocal effects on each other. For example, a high level of strategic competence may have positive effects on HR managers' career adaptability and professional

identification. HR managers with a high level of strategic competence may also prefer to work in a variety of functional areas, firms, and industries, and perceive a high level of organizational support for their strategic roles. To address the problem of causality, experimental or longitudinal designs should be used in future research.

The current research also carries practical implications for HR managers' career development. The results suggest that in order to play a strategic role in organizations, HR managers need not only to grasp the specialized knowledge and skills related to HR management, but also need to develop general managerial abilities to cope with the various challenges in strategy creation and implementation. Professional identification and experiences accumulated in their career development serve as important bases for HR managers to develop relevant career competences. The results also suggest that organizations need to offer relevant opportunities to the HR department, in order to develop HR managers' strategic competence.

#### *Limitations and Future Directions*

Despite the theoretical and practical implications discussed above, the current research has several limitations. First of all, this study was conducted among a sample of human resource management professionals in China. More research should be conducted to examine whether the current findings can be generalized to other HR managers, to other occupations or to other countries. Second, common method bias may exist in this study as participants were asked to complete all the questions at the same time-point through a self-report method (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Future research should use

multiple data sources or multiple time points to collect data, in order to address this problem.

ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

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Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Coefficients, and Inter-Correlations among Variables*

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Professional identification	3.81	.62	<b>.82</b>								
2. Organizational support for SHRM	3.60	.68	.34**	<b>.91</b>							
3. Career variety	2.27	1.04	.08	.03	NA						
4. Career adaptability	3.96	.42	.40**	.27**	.23**	<b>.94</b>					
5. CA: Concern	3.82	.59	.32**	.26**	.19**	.81**	<b>.88</b>				
6. CA: Control	4.09	.47	.32**	.21**	.18**	.80**	.44**	<b>.83</b>			
7. CA: Curiosity	3.83	.53	.34**	.19**	.18**	.87**	.62**	.61**	<b>.85</b>		
8. CA: Confidence	4.11	.47	.35**	.24**	.19**	.84**	.53**	.65**	.63**	<b>.88</b>	
9. Strategic competence	3.49	.56	.41**	.24**	.23**	.56**	.44**	.39**	.56**	.46**	<b>.95</b>

Notes. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . Reliability coefficients appear on the diagonal in bold. CA stands for career adaptability.

Table 2

*Examining Moderated Mediation Models*

Dependent variable model with career adaptability as dependent variable				
Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
Constant	-1.47	.89	-1.65	<i>ns</i>
Gender	-.01	.13	-.05	<i>ns</i>
Age Group	.28	.13	2.06	< .05
Education	.10	.12	.82	<i>ns</i>
Period of Learning HR	-.11	.26	-.43	<i>ns</i>
Years of Working	-.32	.20	-1.57	<i>ns</i>
Level	-.05	.08	-.68	<i>ns</i>
Size of Organization	.01	.06	.07	<i>ns</i>
University Rank	-.08	.08	-.97	<i>ns</i>
Organizational Type (State-owned)	.06	.46	.13	<i>ns</i>
Organizational Type (Private)	-.05	.48	-.11	<i>ns</i>
Organizational Type (Foreign-owned)	.15	.48	.32	<i>ns</i>
Professional Identification	.33	.06	5.19	< .001
Career Variety	.19	.08	2.38	< .05
Organizational Support for SHRM	.16	.07	2.43	< .05
Professional Identification × Organizational Support for SHRM	.14	.05	2.87	< .01
Dependent variable model with strategic competence as dependent variable				
Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
Constant	1.18	.78	1.52	<i>ns</i>
Gender	-.27	.12	-2.27	< .05
Age Group	-.23	.12	-1.94	<i>ns</i>
Education	-.01	.10	-.03	<i>ns</i>
Period of Learning HR	-.16	.23	-.69	<i>ns</i>
Years of Working	.35	.18	1.95	<i>ns</i>
Level	.08	.07	1.21	<i>ns</i>
Size of Organization	.01	.05	.10	<i>ns</i>
University Rank	-.14	.07	-1.92	<i>ns</i>
Organizational Type (State-owned)	.39	.41	.95	<i>ns</i>
Organizational Type (Private)	.59	.43	1.37	<i>ns</i>
Organizational Type (Foreign-owned)	.26	.42	.63	<i>ns</i>
Professional Identification	.20	.06	3.38	< .001

Career Variety	.07	.07	.95	<i>ns</i>
Career Adaptability	.46	.06	7.59	< .001

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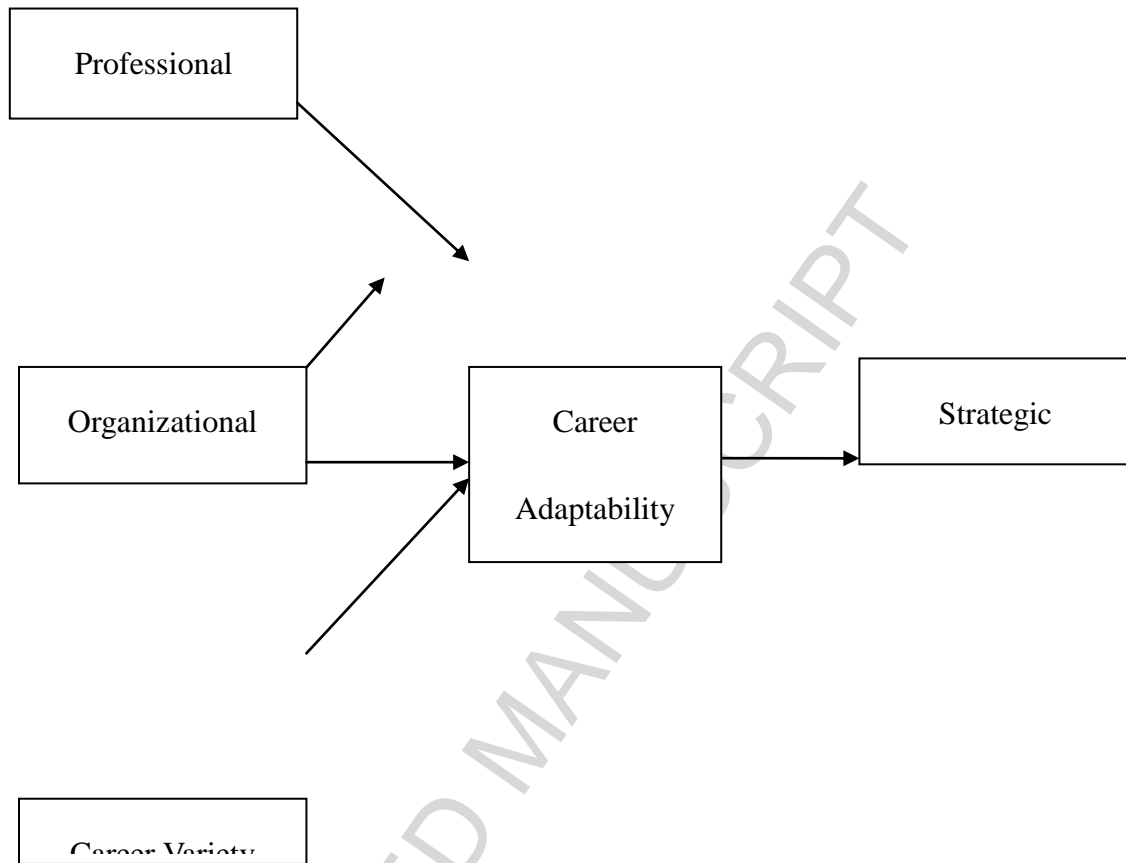


Table 2 (Cont.)

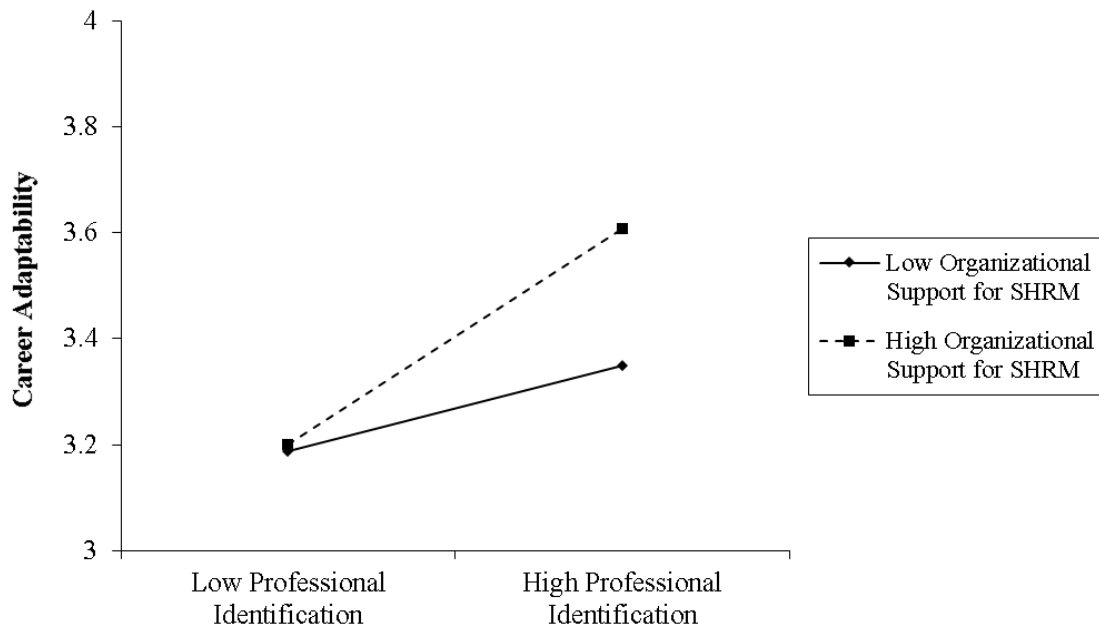
*Examining Moderated Mediation Models*

Conditional indirect effect as a function of organizational support for SHRM				
Value of Organizational Support for SHRM	<i>Indirect Effect</i>	Professional Identification		
		Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
-1 <i>SD</i> (-1.00)	.09	.06	-.03	.19
+1 <i>SD</i> (1.00)	.22	.06	.13	.36

*Note.*  $N = 220$ . Bootstrap sample size = 1000.



**Figure 1.** The Proposed Model.



**Figure 2.** Interaction between Professional Identification and Organizational Support for SHRM on Career Adaptability

*Notes:* Low professional identification and low organizational support for SHRM are defined as at least one standard deviation below the mean; high professional identification and organizational support for SHRM are defined as at least one standard deviation above the mean. High numbers indicate greater career adaptability.

### Highlights

- HR managers' professional identity positively predicted strategic competence.
- Career variety positively predicted strategic competence.
- Organizational support for strategic HRM also predicted strategic competence.
- Career adaptability mediated the above relations.