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Title: A qualitative study of four Singapore secondary teachers’ career stages, career anchors, internal and external careers pertaining to progression  
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ABSTRACT

This study examines four Singaporean secondary school teachers’ motivations for career progression by documenting their teaching career stages according to the Fessler and Christensen’s (1992) Teaching Career Cycle model. Through interviewing the teachers in four case studies, the study attempts to understand teachers’ career stages and progression, as well as how career anchors affected their internal and external careers; their subjective and objective perceptions of career success. This study found the teachers’ career stages to be “non-linear” and iterative. The teachers also reported experiencing the stages of ‘Enthusiastic and Growing’ and ‘Career Frustration’ alternately and repeatedly. With regard to teachers’ internal careers, the ‘Service’ anchor was found to be dominant at the start of the teachers’ careers while the ‘Technical’ anchor dominated the teachers at the ‘Competency-Building’ stage. The ‘Managerial’ anchor was found to influence the teachers in their ‘Enthusiastic and Growing’ stage and it seemed to pose some problems for the teachers. It also influenced the teachers’ external careers negatively, affecting their perceptions of external definitions of work success. In addition, teachers with the ‘Managerial’ anchor seemed to react negatively to career-related comparisons. They reported low pride for their profession and lacked objective views on upward career progressions. The findings suggest that schools need to consider the teachers’ career anchors related to their internal and external career motivations when planning for teachers’ career development.