# Chapter 7
# The Value of Future-Fit Psychosocial Career Self-management Capabilities in Sustaining Career Wellbeing

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**Abstract** Future-proofing individuals for sustainable and meaningful careers amid the challenges and demands posed by Industry 4.0, calls for a critical review of enabling career self-management capabilities. The objective of the chapter is to offer an analytical assessment of the role of psychosocial career capabilities in individuals' self-directed career management and the relevance of these capabilities in facilitating future-fit careers. The chapter presents a thematic synthesis of the careers literature on future fit career self-management capabilities. The role of these capabilities as psychosocial career resources that facilitate career wellbeing are evaluated from the perspective of the normative social cognitive model of wellbeing and the broaden-and-build theory. The proposition is made that people and their career development remain important in the digital era, and a broadened repertoire of essential psychosocial career self-management capabilities are crucial to help them successfully adapt to rapidly changing technological-driven work contexts. The chapter offers implications for practice and makes recommendations for future research.

**Keywords** Career self-management capabilities · Digital era · Broaden-and-build-theory · Normative social cognitive model of wellbeing · Career wellbeing · Future-Fit career

## 7.1 Introduction

The capability to adapt to unpredictable smart-digital technological disruption and uncertain employment contexts plays a growing role in individuals' career management and development (Colbert, Yee, & George, 2016; Hirschi, 2018; Van Dam, Bipp, & Van Ruysseveldt, 2015). Organisations have come to rely on

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their workers' ability to be self-directed in regulating their career management and development for sustained success as a business. Individuals' career development dynamics are transforming amidst the dwindling of traditional career paths, the emergence of transitive careers and occupations, as well as the new job requirements of the digital-driven Industry 4.0 work context (Colbert et al., 2016; Spurk, Kauffeld, Barthauer, & Heinemann, 2015; Van Dam et al., 2015). The increasing prevalence of digital and smart technology in workplaces has a pervasive influence on the professional and career success of individuals (Hirschi, 2018; Lent, 2018; Zylka, Christoph, Kroehne, Hartig, & Goldhammer, 2015). The digital economy has expanded the boundaryless career by allowing people to work simultaneously for multiple employers on multiple projects in a short or long-term sequence, or both. Personal growth in terms of career development seems to increasingly occur in both work and nonwork roles (Hirschi, 2018). Owing to the changing nature of occupations and job characteristics, people seem to open up to exploring new career options and choices which require new capabilities for career success. The changing career development dynamics of Industry 4.0 witnesses an increased need to develop new career self-management competencies, as well as a self-regulated capability for continuous learning and upskilling in order to keep abreast with technological advancements and new job requirements (Hirschi, 2018). Scholars emphasise the increasing importance of cultivating the capability for career self-management for sustaining successful career development and growth in the digital era (Hirschi, 2018; Lent & Brown, 2013).

The self-regulatory capability for sustaining one's career is a precondition for career wellbeing and satisfaction (Van Dam et al., 2015). Positivity (i.e. the tendency to assess all aspects of life as good in reality) is regarded as a basic trait determinant of general wellbeing and effective psychological functioning (Çikrikci, 2016; Diener, Scollon, Oishi, Dzokoto, & Suh, 2000). In the career wellbeing space, self-regulatory career management presupposes certain positive psychosocial resources in the form of capabilities and attributes that help individuals to be proactive and successful in sustaining their career wellbeing amidst the turmoil of chaotic conditions (Van Dam et al., 2015). The present chapter focuses on the key psychosocial capabilities that are seen to enable positive self-directed career management and career wellbeing in the emerging digital workspaces.

## 7.2   Problem Statement

Although digitalisation and shifts in the nature of technology-driven work, industries, and occupations are currently considered as the most important socio-economic trends in the world, the research literature in career studies has been largely sparse on the impending impact of Industry 4.0 on individuals' career wellbeing (Hirschi, 2018; Lent, 2018). Emerging debates in the career psychology sphere point to the need for research that answers the question of which potentially

new career capabilities individuals need in order for them to thrive in a digital-driven economy and society (Hirschi, 2018; Lent & Brown, 2013). Research on the impact of technology on people emphasises the psychological wellbeing and mental health of people when interfacing with others in cyberspaces and utilising technology in the work and social context (Brusilovskiy, Townley, Snethen, & Salzer, 2016; Çikrikci, 2016; Zeng & Lee 2016).

Studies on the effect of the problematic use of technology on the wellbeing of individuals shows an increase in mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, loneliness and insomnia (Çikrikci, 2016). However, little attention has been given in the career psychology realm to the manner in which digital workspaces may affect the career wellbeing of people. More specifically, it is not clear how self-regulatory career management capabilities may help individuals become future fit for smart digital-driven career contexts. In this chapter, future-fit assumes a capacity to experience a sense of career wellbeing in managing the career in rapidly changing technology-driven workspaces. Career wellbeing implies the presence of positive capabilities for living a satisfying career-life over the lifetime, as well as positive self-beliefs about one's ability to control and impact upon the environment (Gawke, Gorgievski, & Bakker, 2017; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2016). It is imminent that career research will witness increased attention paid to future-proofing individuals for crafting meaningful careers amid the challenges and demands posed by Industry 4.0 (Hirschi, 2018; Lent, 2018; Lent & Brown, 2013). This chapter fills the current gap in career research by offering a thematic synthesis of enabling career self-management capabilities relevant to managing one's career wellbeing in the digital era.

## 7.3   Chapter Objective

The objective of the chapter is to present a critical review of the value of the positive psychosocial career resources embedded in future fit self-regulatory career self-management capabilities, and the manner in which these resources help enhance the career wellbeing of individuals. Positive career resources help individuals become future fit while regulating their career wellbeing in the turbulent context of technological advancement and employment uncertainty. This chapter contributes new knowledge by presenting an analytical assessment and thematic synthesis of the role of psychosocial career resources in individuals' self-directed career management and the relevance of these resources in enabling future-fit careers. The thematic synthesis of the literature review is approached from the theoretical perspective of the normative social cognitive model of wellbeing and career self-management (Lent, Taveira, Cristiane, Sheu, & Pinto, 2018) and the broaden-and-build theory (Frederickson, 2001).

## 7.4   Theoretical Framework

Career wellbeing is distinct from general subjective wellbeing which is charac-terised by measures of emotional, cognitive, and physical states of being such as happiness, psychological and physical health, and work-life satisfaction (Ekermans, 2016; Sirgy, 2012). Research on the concept of career wellbeing is scant. In this chapter, career wellbeing denotes sustainable psychological wellbeing which is about a cognitive-affective state of positive psychological functioning fostered by the personal agency belief that one has the required capabilities to craft a mean-ingful life-career even amidst adverse circumstances.

The concept of psychological functioning involves the self-efficacious devel-opment of one's potential, exercising self-regulatory control over life's circum-stances, cultivating beliefs that life has meaning (i.e. one has a purposeful role to play in life), and that one has the capability to build positive relationships with others (Kidd, 2008; Sirgy, 2012). Personal agency beliefs represent individuals' self-efficacy which is fundamental to their career wellbeing. The notion of agency combines three self-efficacy beliefs: (1) individuals have the power to influence the world; (2) the career-life serves a meaningful purpose, and people have the ability to craft a meaningful career-life; and (3) individuals are responsible for, and in control of their career goals and choices (Robertson, 2015).

Career self-management capabilities denote the agentic potentiality for under-going transition from a current form of career functioning to one of viable future functioning, specifically a career-life that one has reason to value (Robertson, 2015). Self-efficacy extends beyond the notion of confidence about capability; it is an ability catalyst because it helps determine what individuals believe they can achieve with their abilities (Lent, 2016). Self-efficacy beliefs about one's capability to demonstrate agency in career self-management and achieving one's career-life goals are key to optimal psychological functioning and career wellbeing (Lent, 2016; Robertson, 2015).

In this chapter, I first draw from the basic premises of the normative social cognitive model of wellbeing and career self-management to explain the manifes-tation of career wellbeing (Lent & Brown, 2008, 2013; Lent et al., 2018). Second, I draw from the broaden-and-build theory (Frederickson, 2001) to further delineate the process through which career self-management capabilities influence individ-uals' career wellbeing. The normative social cognitive model of wellbeing and career self-management proposes that people are more likely to be satisfied within a given life domain to the extent that they anticipate positive outcomes through self-directed career behaviour, feel capable and efficacious in the behaviours that help them successfully engage in goal-directed activity, and the extent to which they feel they make progress at their central goals in the domain. People's satis-faction and wellbeing are also influenced by the perception of having access to environmental support and resources to accomplish goals and perform effectively (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018; Lent et al., 2018).

Broaden-and-build theory explains that positive self-directed behaviours have the ability to broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring psychosocial resources. Seen through the lens of broaden-and-build theory, career wellbeing is a positive state-like outcome of the broadened thought-action repertoire's resources (Frederickson, 2001; Frederickson & Branigan, 2005; Lussier & Hartmann, 2017). Unifying the two theoretical lenses (i.e. social cognitive model of wellbeing and career self-management and broaden-and-build theory), contributes new insights to future-fit career wellbeing theory. The unifying approach elucidates the manner in which the self-regulatory career self-management capabilities enable individuals to accomplish positive functioning and career wellbeing under typical and atypical career-life conditions, as well as within and across particular employment domains.

## 7.5  The Future-Fit Career

The future-fit career is understood as flexible and agile movement through a relational space or setting (social, occupational, or organisational) within time, and within and/or across distinct career fields (Latzke, Schneidhofer, Pernkopf, Rohr, & Mayrhofer, 2015). Individuals accumulate and invest in career-related capital within particular career fields. Latzke et al. (2015) differentiate between the four career fields of (1) the company world (i.e. traditional organisational careers); (2) free floating professionalism (i.e. individuals as specialists have close relationships with one customer at a time); (3) self-employment (i.e. individuals have several customers simultaneously who do not change rapidly); and (4) chronic flexibility (i.e. frequent job changes, radical professional transitions, and a great diversity of tasks). The complexities of transitions across and within these career fields are compounded by the digital transformation of jobs and occupations which may give prominence to the career field of chronic flexibility (Hirschi, 2018; Lent, 2018).

Successful navigation of the career in Industry 4.0 features continuous learning, periodic renewal, the security that comes from sustainable employability, and self-regulatory career self-management (Lent, 2018). The accumulation and investment of career-related capital should be viable (i.e. fit to a field and enable agency that realise the potential embedded in a relation between individuals and the chosen context without overstretching individual, organisational, or societal resources), as well as flexible, agile adaptation with due consideration of personal wellbeing (Latzke et al., 2015; Lent, 2018). Sustainable career development within the future-fit career space is based on four elements: (1) the interdependency of the relationship between the individual careerist and the career field ecosystem at a point in time; (2) the focus on both short-and long-term career development strategies; (3) a balanced perspective between economic, environmental, and social concerns; and (4) the self-regulatory career self-management capability of the individual as career agent (Hirschi, 2018; Latzke et al., 2015; Lent, 2018).

Recently, the notion of an agile careerist has emerged to characterise the nature of career development in the digital era and to address the need for capacitating individuals for the career field of chronic flexibility (Konstant, 2017; Tirard, 2017). Konstant (2017, p. 1) describes the agile career as a "self-reflective, iterative career path, guided by response to change, evolving job roles, commitment to career segments as high performance projects owned by the individual, and designed to optimise creativity, a growth mindset, and happiness". The career is thought of as a series of projects with measurable milestones of accomplishments through the lifespan of work. Career development is reframed as navigating through multiple evolving job roles turned into high impact projects that make the best use of individuals' talents and interests for the length of the individual's employment. Individuals need self-regulatory career self-management capabilities and mindsets that enable them to reframe their jobs into high impact projects which not only expand on their expertise and unique talents, interests, and skills, but also help them broaden and build their continuously expanding portfolio of talents and skills (Konstant, 2017). Building on these notions of the digital-era career, career wellbeing is a result of the flexibility embedded in career agility through the broadening and building of self-regulatory career self-management capabilities that help individuals navigate their careers and career transitions within and across the future fit career fields.

## 7.6   Career Self-management Capability

Career self-management refers to the proactive, self-regulatory nature of career capabilities. The capability approach to people's career management and wellbeing assumes that people are able to learn and develop the capabilities they need to be able to engage in behaviour that help them accomplish important and valued goals, and sustain a state of optimum psychological functioning (Lussier & Hartmann, 2017; Robertson & Egdell, 2018). People's wellbeing is promoted through fostering their personal agency and self-efficacy in managing their career development (Lent et al., 2018; Robertson & Egdell, 2018). In this chapter, the focus is on those career self-management capabilities that facilitate goal-directed career behaviours. It is assumed that self-regulatory career management behaviours enable the successful attainment of important career goals, and that the satisfactory accomplishment of career goals fosters general career wellbeing through positive states of mind about the career-life. The digital era calls for highly adaptive capabilities such as self-regulation which allows individuals to intentionally alter their responses, including thoughts, actions, emotions and behaviours (Maranges & Baumeister, 2017).

The objective of the chapter is to present a critical review of the value of the positive psychosocial career resources embedded in future fit self-regulatory career self-management capabilities, and the manner in which these resources may help enhance the career wellbeing of individuals in contemporary and future career

contexts. Taking a capability approach in helping individuals become future-fit (i.e. functioning psychologically optimal in terms of their career development), has the benefit of designing interventions that help individuals recognise their career capabilities and how to broaden and build these as important psychosocial career wellbeing resources (Robertson & Egdell, 2018). Psychosocial career resources represent individuals' self-beliefs of their ability to control and impact upon the environment. Personal resources are expected to increase individuals' potential to become flexible, agile careerists who can proactively respond to the demands of digital work environments and jobs regardless of the organisational and occupational context conditions of a future-fit career field (Gawke et al., 2017; Lent, 2018).

## 7.7 Method

### 7.7.1 Study Design

The critical review of the research literature entailed a broad systematic review (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006) of contemporary research on the theme of career self-management capabilities in relation to career wellbeing. This approach allowed the author to evaluate documented research on future fit career self-management capabilities in terms of its relevance for inclusion in the database.

### 7.7.2 Study Eligibility Criteria

The boundary of the systematic review was defined to include only documented contemporary research on career self-management capabilities published from 2015 to 2018. A search was done by means of an on-line information technology service, including search engines such as EBSCOhost/Academic Search Premier, PsycINFO, Scopus database, and Google Scholar academic databases. The terms (keywords) career self-management, self-directed career management competencies and capabilities, and career wellbeing were used in the search. The full texts of publications were downloaded from the databases in order to ascertain which articles to include or exclude from the systematic review. The more rigorous inclusion criteria involved choosing only articles published in academic and peer-reviewed journals. Only studies that explored individuals' career self-management competencies in terms of capabilities, enabling behaviours and wellbeing in contemporary and Industry 4.0 contexts were included in the systematic review. This review methodology enabled the author to reduce potential biases in data collection (Chan, Cheung, & Lee, 2017; Suh & Prophet, 2018).

### 7.7.3   Data Analysis

A qualitative, inductive approach, anchored in grounded theory, was followed in identifying core themes of career self-management competencies/capabilities and their link with career wellbeing. In the first stage the author read the studies carefully to gain an overall impression of the link between type of career self-management competencies/capabilities and career wellbeing, using free line-by-line coding and theme categorisation. The categorisation process entailed going through the sources of data manually, line by line to identify the dominant themes, and clustering them into categories of career self-management capabilities that relate to career wellbeing. In the next stage, the author used the descriptive themes in the interpretation of a new thematic synthesis that went beyond the original studies. Fifteen key studies relevant to the digital era were identified in the systematic search for research published between 2015 and 2018 in the following electronic databases: EBSCOhost/Academic Search Premier, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Google Scholar Academic database. Publications were evaluated for quality, and a thematic analysis was performed by using the normative social cognitive model of wellbeing and career self-management, and the broaden-and-build theory, as theoretical lenses.

### 7.7.4   Strategies Used to Ensure Data Quality and Thematic Synthesis

Qualitative systematic reviews imply a reasonable degree of freedom and creativity in the interpretation of data, and the resultant personal construction of inferred meaning (Barnard & Fourie, 2007; Patton, 2002). Considerations were made in terms of potential publication bias (i.e. the assumption that all research on the topic may not have been published), trustworthiness or credibility, true value and quality, appropriateness, and reflection on the research endeavour in its entirety, as well as best practice. The theme sorting, labelling and categorisation process concerned searching for the underlying meanings embedded in the included studies. The emerging themes were reexamined to ensure trustworthiness. The author attempted to avoid bias by not focusing on one study at the expense of another in order to enhance objectivity and trustworthiness of the systematic review and synthesis of data (Holm & Severinsson, 2013). Value and quality were assured by reviewing each article in terms of scientific and methodological rigour in assessing links between self-regulatory career self-management capabilities and wellbeing. The aim, design, and analysis used in the included studies were assessed in terms of their appropriateness for helping individuals enhance their career wellbeing in contemporary and future employment contexts. All data were retained for possible future scrutiny.

## 7.8   Findings of the Thematic Review

As shown in Table 7.1, the inductive analysis yielded five core themes that seem to dominate the 2015 to 2018 literature on future-fit career self-management capability: (1) capacity for psychological adaptation, (2) career adaptability, (3) work self-efficacy, (4) intrapreneurial self-capital, and (5) relational career capital. The five themes were evaluated in terms of their value as self-regulatory psychosocial resources for career self-management that could be broadened (i.e. developed) in order to positively influence individuals' career wellbeing.

### 7.8.1   Capacity for Psychological Adaptation

Individuals' capacity to psychologically adapt to changing work and occupational contexts help them to be future-fit by means of their ability to adjust in the long run without comprising their own needs and desires (Hirschi, 2018; Lent, 2018). Previous research by Van Dam et al. (2015) shows positive links between the capacity for psychological adaptation and positive, optimistic, affective-emotional and cognitive states of wellbeing.

### 7.8.2   Career Adaptability

Career adaptability represents an important self-regulatory career self-management resource for coping with, and adapting to changeable and unpredictable environments, as well as for solving the problematic challenges presented by occupational transitions and work-career related traumas. Broadening and building the career adaptabilities of career concern (i.e. ability to plan future career moves); career control (i.e. taking responsibility for building a career, and negotiating occupational transitions through self-discipline, effort and persistence); career curiosity (i.e. actively exploring the world of work and seeking information about occupational requirements); and career confidence (i.e. demonstrating self-efficacy in attaining career goals and pursuing vocational aspirations), are associated with career wellbeing-related adaptation results such as career satisfaction, life satisfaction, positive affect, and career optimism (Hirschi, 2018; Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016; Rudolp, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017; Van Dam et al., 2015).

Career adaptability through especially the capability of career control empowers people for taking agency in governing and shaping their career. Research generally suggests that the presence of a repertoire of career adaptability resources facilitates the psychological availability to engage in proactive career self-management behaviours which contribute to individuals' career wellbeing and success (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018). The career control capability reflects mastery over the domain

**Table 7.1** Core themes: future fit self-regulatory career self-management capabilities

| Theme | Description (capability for self-regulatory career self-management) | Link with career wellbeing | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| Capacity for psychological adaptation | Help organisms adjust to a changing and/or demanding environment in the long-run without compromising own needs and desires; affective-emotional and cognitive-evaluative wellbeing | Enhances in the long-run employee health, motivation, human capital and career opportunities; lower stress, higher psychological wellbeing; optimism | Hirschi (2018), Lent (2016, 2018), Van Dam et al. (2015) |
| Career adaptability | Modifying career behaviour and competencies to achieve better person-environment congruence; psychosocial resources for coping with changes affecting the career; resources for coping with career tasks and implement identities in a work role | Positive links with career and job satisfaction, wellbeing, proactive personality, career optimism, career success; psychological availability for career self-management behaviours | Coetzee and Schreuder (2018), Hirschi, (2018), Nilforooshan and Salimi (2016), Rudolph et al. (2017), Van Dam et al. (2015) |
| Intrapreneurial self-capital | Psychosocial resources in the form of core positive self-beliefs (i.e. self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, absence of pessimism), hardiness, and self-efficacy regarding the ability to solve problems creatively | Contributes to mental health and wellbeing | Coetzee and Schreuder (2018), Di Fabio et al. (2017), Lent et al. (2018) |
| Work self-efficacy | Perceived capability to manage and cope with different situations in the search for a job (enterprising exploration; proactive career planning; relational integration) | Enhances career adaptability; frustration coping | Bocciardi et al. (2017), Coetzee & Schreuder (2018), Lent (2016), Lent et al. (2018), Nicholas (2018) |

**Table 7.1** (continued)

| Theme | Description (capability for self-regulatory career self-management) | Link with career wellbeing | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| Relational career capital | Social-emotional competencies invested in broadening/building career-relevant social networks relevant to the future-fit career | Enhances psychological wellbeing, and the constructive use of technology in digital-mediated social interactions | Dickmann et al., 2018, Gurbuz et al. (2016), Latzke et al. (2015), Nasaescu et al. (2018), Sultana et al. (2016), Spurk et al. (2015) |

in which the career is enacted. Career curiosity denotes the capability to investigate one's surroundings, seeking opportunities to grow, and valuing broadening one's horizons by exploring different vocational possibilities. Career confidence reflects agency beliefs in the ability to solve problems and successfully overcome career barriers. Research generally shows that career adaptability resources may foster positive appraisals of work changes, which in turn lead to positive affective states and attitudes (Rudolph et al., 2017). The modern notion of career agility also seems to benefit from career adaptability resources (Konstant, 2017; Tirard, 2017). However, empirical research on the phenomenon of career agility is lacking.

### 7.8.3 Work Self-efficacy

Previous studies show that individuals' career adaptability could be sustained through the development of self-efficacy at work or in the search of work in a career field (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018; Lent, 2016; Lent et al., 2018; Nicholas, 2018). Searching for work self-efficacy is the capability to manage and cope with different situations in the search for a job through enterprising exploration and proactive career planning. Work self-efficacy is the perceived ability to relate to others and being committed to one's work tasks in a career field (Bocciardi, Caputo, Fregonese, Langher, & Sartori, 2017).

### 7.8.4 Intrapreneurial Self-capital

Intrapreneurial self-capital is a relatively new construct that denotes psychosocial resources in the form of core positive self-beliefs (i.e. self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, absence of pessimism), hardiness, and self-efficacy regarding the ability to solve problems creatively (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018; Fabio, Palazzeschi, & Bucci, 2017). These psychosocial resources are seen to enhance the

health and wellbeing of individuals in the emerging future-fit career. Research shows positive links between intrapreneurial self-capital and eudaimonic wellbeing in terms of social and psychological prosperity and wellbeing in areas such as relationships, presence of purpose, and optimism (Fabio et al., 2017).

### 7.8.5 Relational Career Capital

Relational career capital denotes social-emotional competencies invested in broadening and building career-relevant social networks relevant to the future-fit career. These networks may include inter-firm communication, relationships with key customers and suppliers, support network structures with family, friends and colleagues that help to gather career-relevant information, and build new contacts that are beneficial to one's work and career. Relational career capital has positive links to perceived internal and external marketability and career success (Dickmann et al., 2018; Latzke et al., 2015). Relational interactions benefit from social and emotional competencies.

Digital workspaces involve interpersonal interactions through smart information and communication technology. Research shows associations between high levels of social and emotional competencies, psychological wellbeing, and the constructive use of technology in digital-mediated social interactions (Nasaescu et al., 2018). Social and emotional competence refers to the self-regulatory ability to apply knowledge, attitudes and skills to understand and manage one's own and others' emotions, showing empathy, initiating and maintaining desirable interpersonal relationships, and responsible decision making (Nasaescu et al., 2018). Research shows positive links between emotional intelligence, creative metacognition, career adaptability, stress management, and career wellbeing (Gurbuz, Ergun, & Teraman, 2016; Sultana, Yousaf, Khan, & Saeed, 2016).

## 7.9 Discussion of the Thematic Synthesis

The objective of the chapter was to present a critical review of the value of the positive psychosocial career resources embedded in future fit self-regulatory career self-management capabilities, and the manner in which these resources may help enhance the career wellbeing of individuals in contemporary and future career contexts. The five themes of career self-management capabilities all point to the importance of individual self-regulation. Self-regulation in terms of career self-management refers to mindful, intentional, proactive, thoughtful behaviour that is personally initiated and monitored, and aimed at accomplishing valued, long-term goals in a particular environment (Van Dam et al., 2015). The overarching principle of self-regulatory career self-management represented by the capabilities that emerged from the research literature alludes to the
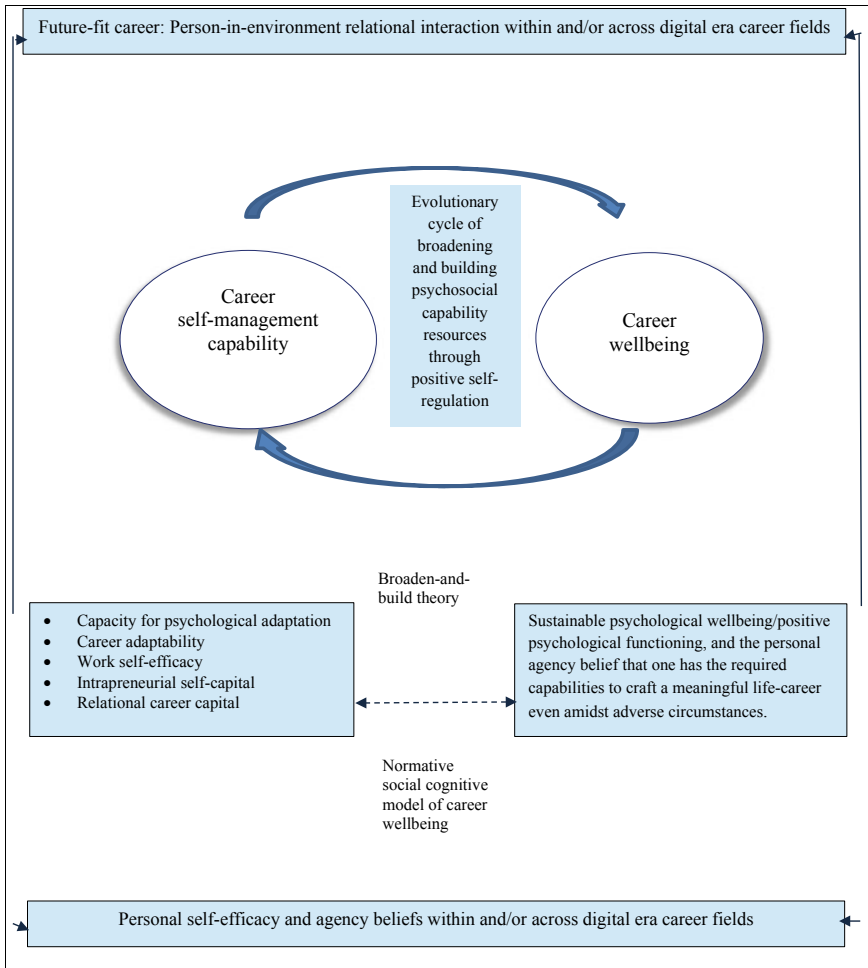
**Fig. 7.1** Conceptual framework of the thematic synthesis (*Source: Author's own work*)

person-in-environment perceived control belief system. As a general-purpose belief system, perceived control functions as a vital resource which facilitates psychological adaptation and adjustment to major life events and changing context conditions that challenge people's psychological functioning (wellbeing) over the life course (Infurna, Gerstorf, Ram, Schupp, Wagner, & Heckhausen, 2016).

As shown in Fig. 7.1, the five themes of career self-management capabilities seem to allude to individuals' personal self-efficacy and agency beliefs which the research literature showed to be an important precondition for self-regulatory career self-management capability (Bocciardi et al., 2017; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018; Fabio et al., 2017; Lent, 2016; Robertson, 2015). Self-efficacy refers to the ability to manage vocational tasks with the confidence needed in goal-directed career

exploration, decision-making, flexibility, and adjustment across diverse occupational tasks. Self-efficacious goal-directedness and personal agency beliefs are core elements of the intrinsic motivational state of competence demonstration (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018; Lent et al, 2018). Previous research shows that capabilities which require individuals to exert their self-motivating potential lead to positive affective-motivational and wellbeing states (Brauchli, Schaufeli, Jenny, Füllemann, & Bauer, 2013; Lent et al., 2018).

The research literature further points to the bi-directional interface between self-regulatory career self-management capabilities and states of wellbeing. Drawing from the broaden-and-build theory (Frederickson, 2001; Frederickson & Branigan, 2005), career self-management capabilities broadened in the short-run, and the self-efficacy developed in the long-run, seem to function as important antecedents of optimal psychological functioning and career wellbeing. On the other hand, the broadening of individuals' cognitive-affective state of career wellbeing in the short-run, may potentially in the long-run support the cultivation of self-efficacy and agency beliefs for proactively regulating, building and demonstrating the career self-management capabilities needed for successful career goal attainment.

Building on the basic premises of broaden-and-build theory (Frederickson & Branigan, 2005) and the social cognitive model of wellbeing (Lent et al, 2018), positive states broaden individuals' thought-action repertoires. The broadened repertoire enables them to draw flexibly on wider-than-usual ranges of self-motivating percepts, ideas, and actions. Individuals' broadened cognition and self-beliefs create behavioural flexibility that over time builds the psychosocial resources inherent to career self-management capability. Research generally shows that positive states, over time, build durable personal resources. When people experience positive cognitive-psychological states of wellbeing consistently, these states help them to build their psychosocial resources over the long term (Frederickson & Branigan, 2005).

Unifying the theoretical premises of the two theories, the proposition is made that the incremental accrual of psychosocial capability resources broadened and built through positive self-regulation, creates a positive evolutionary cycle which enables individuals to flexibly adapt and adjust to changing context conditions and demands through enhanced self-efficacy beliefs. Unlike the transient nature of cognitive-psychological states of career wellbeing, individuals' psychosocial resources of self-regulatory career self-management capability are durable and worthy of investment for sustainable future fit career agility and success. When people experience positive cognitive-psychological states of wellbeing consistently, these states help them to build their psychosocial resources over the long term (Frederickson & Branigan, 2005). In essence, it appears from the thematic synthesis that when people are functioning optimally in terms of their careers, they become increasingly confident, innovative, adaptable, and flexible in their future fit career self-management capability.

## 7.10   Implications for Practice

The thematic review and synthesis revealed new insights that are important for future-fit career wellbeing practices. Organisations and career counselors who want individuals to attain career success and wellbeing in the digital era, should pay attention to enabling interventions that help individuals develop self-regulatory future fit career self-management capabilities. Managers and counselors need to know how people's self-efficacy in the demonstration of self-management capability can be developed and sustained. Moreover, managers and counselors must take note of the value of developing and broadening individuals' self-regulatory career self-management capabilities both in the short-run and in the long-run because of their positive influence on individuals' state of psychological functioning. Creating a work climate that supports individuals' career development through frequent career discussions, career coaching and counseling on career goals and plans, may help to foster the positive states of mind associated with career wellbeing, which in turn may help to generate the motivation and self-efficacy needed to take agency in managing one's career development in changing digital-driven contexts.

## 7.11   Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The literature review was limited to research published only between 2015 and 2018 which could imply that not all research on career self-management capabilities and career wellbeing is necessarily covered in the thematic review. Researchers and practitioners should note that the number of published studies on the themes relevant to this chapter is continuously increasing. Career research continues to evolve with the requirements and dynamics of career development in the digital era becoming clearer. Therefore, career self-management capabilities and other attributes beyond those identified in this chapter will continue to emerge. As a result, the search strategy for a qualitative review of the research literature could always be either too broad or too narrow, and the possibility of excluding relevant studies is ever present. New evidence could change the relevance of the present themes that emerged from the literature review in terms of the concept of dependability (i.e., the stability of data and conditions over time may influence the outcome of future studies). The culture reflected in the studies may vary between west and east, and in African contexts. The different views and experiences of career wellbeing and career self-management capabilities all over the world, in all continents, must be taken into account in future studies. Continuous studies are recommended in order to strengthen the trustworthiness of the themes that emerged from this study.

## 7.12   Conclusion

Notwithstanding the limitations of the qualitative study on future fit career self-management capabilities and career wellbeing, the chapter makes a novel contribution to the study of ways to future proof individuals' career wellbeing in the digital era. Career wellbeing remains an understudied and complex phenomenon that deserves more attention in the fast technological-evolutionary employment contexts of the digital era. This chapter contributed new insights that hopefully will stimulate further research on the challenge of future proofing individuals for attaining career success in Industry 4.0.

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