Blending the Traditional Career Management with the New Career Management in Organizations

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Abstract: While organizational career management practices have undergone several changes over the past decades, one way to enhance employees' quality of life is planning and managing career paths. Whereas people perceived the career management concept as a long-term contract between the employing organization and the employee (referred to as traditional career management), today there is the idea that it can be a short-term transactional contract, termed new career management. Although organizations may adopt the new career approach, it may not have taken hold for every industry or organization. Within the same organization, there may exist a need to integrate both the traditional career management approach with the new career management approach in dealing with employees, based on the needs of the latter. This paper summarized characteristics of both career models and proposed ways in which organizations can blend both types of career management, using the theory synthesis design.

Keywords: Employees; organizational career management; career path; traditional career model;, new career model.

Introduction

There is a growing emphasis on organizations' corporate social responsibility to include more than external stakeholders' interests and to consider their employees' interests (Low et al., 2017). According to Lombardi et al. (2020), the responsibility of employers includes the enhancement of employees' quality of life. One aspect of such enhancement concerns the planning and management of careers (Low et al., 2017). Organizational career management is an important component of the human resource management initiatives in organizations, whether they belong to the for-profit or to the not-for-profit sectors. From the corporate social responsibility perspective, an organization is responsible for its internal as well as external stakeholders. Internally, the organization can assist employees in various ways to develop their potential and by doing so, empower human capital in its midst. In the process, the organization stands to gain as there is an increase in career satisfaction among employees, and hence, there is more employee retention. One way to enhance career satisfaction in the workforce is through an effective career management system.

The twentieth century brought several changes to the perceptions and practices of career management in the workplace. In the traditional career management system, employees had long-term contracts with their employers, where the former stayed with the organization for many years. The employers are mostly in charge of managing the career of the employees over a fixed vertical career path. The new career management is perceived as being mostly of a transitory nature and the employees are more involved in managing their own career paths (Martin, 2015). There are several proposed reasons to explain the existence of and

need for a new career: globalization, urbanization, rapid development in technology and increase in knowledge-based work (Lyons et al. 2012; Callanan et al., 2017). However, although the new career may have been adopted, it may not have taken hold in every industry or organization (Dries et al., 2011) for various reasons, such as social influence and job design (Hall & Las Heras, 2010; Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Several authors have indicated that new system has not replaced the traditional career management system (Lips-Wiersma & Hall (2007); Gerber et al., (2009); Hirschi & Koen, 2021). Indeed, within the same organization, there may be a need to integrate both types of career management in dealing with employees, based on the needs of the latter (Thite, 2001). However, what are the activities that the organization must undertake to permit the integration of both approaches?

This paper attempted to respond to this question. The paper uses the theory synthesis approach, which summarizes or integrates extant knowledge about a concept or a phenomenon, through literature review. The synthesis approach seeks to unveil "big picture" patterns and connections and present them in new light (Jaakkola, 2020). Such an approach is appropriate for this study because the purpose of this paper is to summarize the concepts of the traditional career and of the new career management and come up with practices that integrate both types of arrangements in organizational settings. To accomplish the goal, the author conducted the review of literature on career and career management, based on available online resources, such as Ebscohost, Science Direct, Google Scholar and Proquest.

Concept of Career

A career is the "pattern of work-related experience that spans the course of a person's life" (Greenhaus et al., 2010, p. 10). Traditionally, career patterns used to be understood as vertical ladders, in which employees are promoted to a hierarchical organizational ladder within a single organization. The "career advancement was commensurate with age, experience and tenure" (Lyons et al., 2012, p.335) and mostly controlled by the employing organization with a relatively minimal input from the employee. According to Hedge and Rineer (2017), careers are developed not in a vacuum but are determined by various factors: employees' skills and interests, past employment history and visions for the future. As organizations change, individuals' perceptions of how to manage their careers also change. In turn, these expectations may bring about changes in an organization's career management activities.

The modern era has brought about several changes in career patterns. The latter are perceived to include multidirectional dimensions, instead of solely a vertical direction, and usually demand a greater involvement of employees (De Vos et al., 2008). Employees may also have less desire to stay with the same organization during their whole work life, but rather to move across organizations; hence, the term "boundaryless career" (Dries et al., 2011). Further, employees are believed to be motivated by external motivations, such as compensation packages and internal motivations, such as self-fulfillment and self-actualization, and are value driven (Cortellazzo et al., 2019).

Organizational Career Management

Career management is a combination of systematic and structured planning of one's professional career (Ball, 1997). While career is owned by employees, the latter need assistance and support to plan its direction (Sturges et al., 2005). Hence, career management is partly the responsibility of the organization and partly the responsibility of the individual. Both parties need to intervene successfully because of the gains involved. Organizational Career Management (OCM) is defined as the set of activities that the organization performs to ensure a sustainable career development for its employees (Baruch & Peiperl, 2000).

From the organizational point of view, career management is important because it heightens the managers' knowledge of aspirations, needs and progress of their workforce. Therefore, the organization is able to plan effectively and retain the skills and talents of those employees who otherwise would leave the organization (Thite, 2001). By successfully engaging in career management, the employing organization will communicate to all the workers that they are valued and that their contribution counts. The result is greater career satisfaction by the workers (Wesarat et al., 2014), which translates into higher employee performance and helps reach the triple bottom line. Employees are the backbone of organizations. The more skilled the organization's workforce is and has the flexibility to meet the demands of the market, the more agile and flexible the organization becomes (Donner & Wheeler, 2001).

On the other hand, the employees gain from the organizational career management activities. They are aware of the trends and employment opportunities available within and without the organization and, consequently, are more open to the employment options available (DiRenzo & Greenhaus, 2011). Building on their awareness of opportunities, employees can expand their skills and knowledge and thus become more employable (Waters et al. 2014). Through an effective career management program, employees can achieve their career goals. Their work takes more meaning and brings fulfilment. As employees gain more confidence, engage in career management activities, and develop more self-efficacy, they increase their employability and overall well-being (Akkermans et al. 2013).

Although the current trend is that individuals are responsible for their career growth, studies show that the organization still plays a role in supporting employees to reach that goal (Antoniu, 2015; Jeevan & Poonam, 2015; Bagdadli & Gianecchini, 2018; De Oliveira et al. 2019;). According to De Vos et al. (2008), there are two perspectives on why organizations should adopt an effective career management system. The first perspective is directed towards the needs of the organization to fill specific vacancies to ensure that it can successfully achieve its strategic goals. It positions itself at an advantage by ensuring that there is a supply of the best human resources without incurring the risk of new hires with the accompanying costs. The human resources department focuses on matching the competencies to be acquired by employees with the job needs of the organization. Furthermore, a well-designed career management system assists in providing a competitive advantage for the organization, as it generates, creates and implements new ideas that contribute to its flexibility and adaptability (Raksnys et al., 2015). The second perspective is directed towards the development of human resources, which are considered human capital. In this case, efforts are geared towards supporting employees in their search for self-development. Employees are provided with the necessary encouragement and feedback on their performance, thus allowing them to improve in view of their future career development (Kwon & Cho, 2019). The organization stands to gain as employees are more satisfied and, as a result, are more productive.

Baruch and Peiperl (2000) found 17 career management activities and programs adopted by organizations and categorized them into five categories: basic activities, active planning activities, active management activities, formal activities and multidimensional activities. Some basic activities, such as job posting and upgrading opportunities, have been adopted by organizations for decades, irrespective of whether they adopted the traditional career management model or have transitioned to the new career management model. Other activities are only suited to new career management model. De Vos and Cambré (2017) pointed out that when it comes to organizational career management, the focus has been more on the traditional approach "including top-down practices and a focus on promotion systems, despite the articulated need for a more developmental and supportive approach that is more in line with the characteristics of the new career" (p. 502). It is clear in light of new developments in the workplace that organizations need to be actively involved in the planning and execution of new career management programs.

Valcour et al., 2007 as cited in Gunz and Peiperl (2007) proposed three elements that distinguished the non-traditional with the traditional career: work time, timing/continuity and employment relationships. In this study, these three elements describe the traditional career model versus new career management.

Traditional Career Model

In the traditional career model, the career path of the employee is a vertical path in which employees move on vertical ladders. This means that within the same occupation, there is a hierarchy of jobs where duties and responsibilities increase in complexity. As employees move on the ladder, they expect better compensation, authority and recognition and they exert efforts to achieve a certain status in the long term.

In terms of work time, the traditional career model follows the standard workweek, which is a relatively fixed schedule of 40 hours (or 35 hours) per week, 8:00 a.m. (or 9 a.m.) to 5:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday or Saturday. A report by the International Labor Organization shows that in many countries, the standard week is still the predominant work schedule pattern (International Labor Organization, 2011). Mas and Pallais (2017) found that many employees seem to prefer the fixed standard schedule as it allows them to better organize the

other aspects of their life. However, there is an acknowledgment that the 'normal' number of working hours per week tends to vary across sectors (Corral & Isusi, 2004). A part-time job can therefore be considered "normal" if it is based on a permanent contract that stipulates fixed and ongoing schedules of work, even though it is not a full 40 hours per week (Krausz et al., 2000).

The timing/continuity element in the traditional career model is characterized by the prospect of lifelong employment with the same employer (Aronsson, 2001). Both employer and employees are bound by an ongoing employment contract. This type of employment pattern usually aims at providing a form of employment stability and security to the employee. Further, the employee expects and receives a stable salary and several compensation entitlements, such as paid leave (Bernhard-Oettel, 2008). The timing/continuity element is related to the employment relationships whereby the employee works exclusively and permanently for one or a small number of employers within an organization. Thus, the organization is a central part of the traditional work model. The individuals bring their expertise and contribute to the organization's success. Furthermore, they derive a sense of identity from their employment.

The New Career Model

There are marked differences between traditional career models and new career models in relation to work time, timing/continuity and employment relationships. In the new career model, the individuals choose not to follow the 8 a.m. to 5 a.m. office hours and 40 hours per week pattern. Some choose to work less than the 40 prescribed hours while others choose to work outside of the set schedule (Persson et al., 2022). Studies show that female employees with young children tend to choose this arrangement (Pullinger, 2014; Arntsen al, 2018). When it comes to the timing and continuity elements, individuals in the new career model interrupt their work life several times. Individuals decide to engage in a certain work and then stop during a certain period of time to fit with their personal life needs. Employment relationships in the new career model imply that individuals do not work exclusively for one organization, but are engaged as independent contractors and work for several employers. Valcour et al., 2007 as cited in Gunz and Peiperl (2007) state that these individuals craft their career out of their own (or their families)

needs, values and preferences and they depart from "the normative expectations regarding work involvement over the life course" (p. 189). They opt for transitional work relationships and want control over how their careers should be constructed. In other words, they have an individual or a self-career-management approach.

New career models are linked to employee self-efficacy. The more confident individuals are about their skills and expertise, the more they are able to construct their career paths. However, self-efficacy develops in the appropriate work environment. In their study, Runhaar et al. (2019) found that when employees perceive that the organization provides space for reflection and discussion about career steps, their level of self-efficacy is enhanced, and so is their career satisfaction.

Blending the Traditional Career Management with the New Career Management

Both the organization and the employees strive to meet their goals and objectives. If the career plans of the employees do not harmonize with those of the employer, both the organization and the employee will adversely be affected. The expectations of both parties must be met for a mutual benefit (Chen et al., 2004; Wesarat et al., 2014). On the one hand, the organizations want to hire employees who are best suited to the organization in terms of skills and motivation to reach the firm's goals. On the other hand, the employees view their career advancement as a way to make higher financial and non-financial benefits, but also for self-realization. Some employees choose to follow the traditional career path (Dries et al., 2011) and depend more on the organization's initiatives to fulfill their career aspirations. Others may opt for a self-career management structure. Valcour et al, 2007 as cited in Gunz and Peiperl (2007) stated that these individuals set their own personal non-traditional career goals and see themselves working for a while for the organization before moving on to another organization or career sooner or later. Hence, there are two broad categories of employees. According to Just (2011), the presence of both groups in the organization is an advantage. The organization can benefit of this "diversity" and create a unique competitive edge. There are opportunities for creativity, constructive tension and dynamism that help create new possibilities that would not exist otherwise (Just,

2011). The following is how organizations can make use of both types of model and retain its employees.

From the onset, there is a need to establish a strong career plan for every employee. According to Antoniu (2015) "career planning aims to identify needs, aspirations and opportunities for individuals' career and the implementation of developing human resources programs to support that career" (p. 16). Dalton et al. (2014) stated that as employees join the organization, their dreams and aspirations are not always clear nor realistic. In such a case, the organization can provide guidance for employees to weigh the options and see the long term effect of their choices. The plans must be supported by organizational policies that would guide the sets of activities to cater for the needs of both categories of workers.

In the case of the traditional career path, the organization provides a clearly defined linear vertical career ladder, communicated to all employees (Baruch, 2004; Parveen & Kaushik, 2011) with an "accompanying 'benchmarked timing' (i.e., a well-developed career stage and duration at each position) tied to each rung on the ladder" (Hedge & Rinner, 2017, p. 2). The information will assist the employees in developing an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and align the latter with their career aspirations (Jeevan & Poonam, 2015) and increase their understanding of the demands of the job at each level. There must be a commitment to provide resources and top management must support the effort to ensure its complete success. Walton and Mallon (2004) stated that when it comes to career development, there should be a win-win situation. Organizations must ensure that the skills set and aspirations harmonize with these needs and organizational strategic goals. On the other hand, employees need to ensure their future employability and can achieve such with the assistance of the employing organization. This implies that the organization can put in place several programs with the aim of motivating the employees to grow in their career. Examples of such programs can take the form of compensated training and educating lower-level workers to enable them to climb the career ladder. Sometimes such upgrading may entail collaboration between the organization and educational centers that provide continuous learning, especially if the higher-level job requires certification (Dill et al., 2014).

For those individuals who opt for a customized career path, the organization must possess a culture of diversity and flexibility, where management intentionally demonstrates to both supervisors and the workers that the customized career path has value (Wesarat et al., 2014). The existence of policies in places that provide flexible schedules helps to facilitate the work models as employees get to understand the conditions and boundaries established by the organization (Kossek et al., 2023). Immediate supervisors need to be trained to bring the necessary support since they are the ones who actually implement the policies on ground. Hence, supervisor career support is an essential element in the new career model (De Oliveira et al. 2019; De Vos & Cambré, 2017). The implication is that the organization's career management structure must allow room for regular, formal and informal communication between managers, supervisors and the employees regarding their performance and their future career goals.

The transitional nature of the contract between the organization and the employee is another element that the employer must manage wisely. As employees grow in their career path, they may feel the need to move on and find other organizations to work for, or to start their own ventures with the knowledge and experience acquired. The move affects the organization in many ways, positively or adversely, and the impact depends on "which types of human or relational capital are transferred and play significant roles when they move between firms" (Mawdsley & Somaya, 2016, p. 87). The willingness of the management to discuss about the models proposed is key. When the employees are highly skilled, the organization stands to gain to retain them, at least for a reasonable amount of time to take advantage of the competitive advantage based on its workforce.

The temporary nature of the employment relationship is another aspect that organizations need to manage in the new career model. As individuals attempt to leave, the organization stands to gain to maintain cordial relationship with them. At first, it seems that the organization registers a loss when the employees leave, as they transfer their skills and expertise to new organizations. But Godart et al., (2014) and Corredoira and Rosenkopf (2010) pointed out to the possibility of a reverse knowledge flow to the source organization. As the employees bring their expertise on board and shares the knowledge with the new organization, they may also call upon the former organization and create possible collaboration and partnership in an

endeavor to merge resources. Indeed, there is the possibility of cooperation between organizations rather than competition (Mawdsley & Somaya, 2016). Thus, rather than hindering the employees to move on, the former organization needs to understand that "mobility facilitates the transfer of knowledge between firms at the frontier of innovation in both directions" (Corredoira & Rosenkopf, 2010, p. 178).

Conclusions and Recommendations

While this study endeavored to describe the role of the organization in developing its human resources, taking into consideration both the traditional career and the new career management approaches, both types or models can and should be accommodated in the organization's career management systems. Thus, both the organization and individual must be considered when it comes to career management systems. Such an approach would no doubt require more investment and flexibility from the organization than if it were to follow only one type of model. In the end, the organization stands to gain by creating a space for both types of employees to thrive and bring their best to help achieve the organization's goals.

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