CONCEPTUAL WORK ON CAREER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FROM AN ORGANIZATION PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Organizational career management refers to the policies and practices deliberately designed by the organizations in order to enhance the career effectiveness of their employees. This study is proposed to cover the career management strategies from an organizational perspective, and identifies the importance of career management from an organizational perspective or organizational involvement in career strategies, and organizational support for employees' career management. And also reviews the concepts of career management, career management, and organizational career management. This paper helps to study the career management strategies from an organizational perspective.

Keywords: Career Management, Career Management Strategies, Organizational career management, Organizational Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

Researches carried out in organizational behavior have viewed careers broadly at individual and at the organizational levels. There is a wide range of challenge that the organizations face to coordinate business on a worldwide scale, trying the integrate activities that are taking place in various countries (Galbraith, 2000). The main reason for the growing interest in the area of career management is the organization have felt that it cannot sustain by providing the traditional career advancement and they need to find ways to encourage talented employees to remain within the organization. (Gratton & Hope Hailey, 1999; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995). It is also suggested that employees are changing their values and priorities, are more willing to take control of their own careers and welcome the idea of the boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Previous researches emphasized on the literature of organizational initiatives on career management such as employee workshops, job rotation, job enrichment, and career progression ladders and like organizationally planned programs or developmental stage theories (Feldman, 1989; Levinson, 1978; London and Stumpf, 1982; Super, 1957). Present researchers are focusing on the reality that a typical career involves multiple organizations and often dissimilar roles in those organizations, in large part the reason is globalization and advances in technology that have created a turbulent environmental context (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Hall and Moss, 1998; Mirvis and Hall, 1994; Osterman, 1996; Sullivan, 1999). King (2004) proposed that if the nature of organizational life is turning from predictable to unpredictable or even chaotic as many have argued, self-management of one's career may be the only way to move and cope through a turbulent world.

Career Management

According to Ball, B. (1997) Career management is combination of structured planning and the active management choice of one's own professional career. Arnold 1997 proposed that career development is the way a person's career develops and progresses over time. It starts from an entry level position and goes to a senior manager. Successful career management is characterized by the activity of personal fulfillment, work/life balance, goal achievement and financial assurity. Career management definition according to Arnold 1997 are "the attempts that is made to influence the career development of one of more people" and the formal activities of providing training, mentoring and careers advice. Career management is important to an organization which helps it to secure the skills and knowledge for its future and needs (Adamson

et al., 1998; Martin et al., 2001). Recruitment at entry-level, planned process of employee growth that is managed by effective training and development, promotion based on performance, succession management and job rotation based on a logical sequence of work positions creates an overall career structure are the strategies by which organizations can maintain and develop the needed talent to satisfy organizational future needs. Most of the human resource professionals have explained the use of career management and development systems for enhancing employees' career motivation and commitment since there is a link between career management, performance, developmental behavior, and participation in development activities. (e.g. Hall and Associates, 1986; Leibowitz and Schlossberg, 1981; London and Mone, 1987). Gutteridge and Leibowitz (1993), has proposed that the desire from within to get promoted and the deficit of promotable talent are the two main forces of organizational career development efforts. Career management practices are effectively useful in several situations where productivity depends only on the application of knowledge rather than physical energy, and hence employee loyalty forms the important factor for long-term retention and productivity (Baron and Kreps, 1999a; Gunz, 1989; Hall, 2002; Lawler, 2008). Many researches in the area of career management view that career support leads to increased organizational commitment (Gaertner and Nollen, 1989; Kidd and Smewig, 2001; Meyer and Smith, 2000; Anantharaman and Paul, 2004; Sturges et al., 2001; Sturges et al., 2010). Meyer and Smith (2000) have proposed that career development practices were the best predictors of affective and normative commitment of employees. Perceptions of career development related employment practices such as internal mobility, training and employment security are significantly related to psychological commitment more than other factors of workplace characteristics such as participation, communication and supervisory relations (Gaertner and Nollen, 1989). Career development has gained its acceptance from an individual and organizational point of view (Baruch, 2003, 2006). It plays an equal role in both of them. Employees have the responsibility of assessing themselves and planning their career to meet their career needs, and the organization play the role of providing tools, resources and structure to help the employees to assess and develop themselves and create their career plans based on the organizations needs and realities. With high organization and high line manager support employees will be highly motivated to manage their careers effectively within the organization (Sturges et al., 2010). This new concept of career management differs in its meanings for both the individual and the organization (Baruch, 2006; Buckley, Beu, Novicevic,

& Sigerstad 2001), thus giving birth to two approaches to career management, individual career management and organizational career management. This paper tries throws light on organizational career management approach.

Organizational Career Management

"Lent and Brown" (2006) has defined organizational support for career development (OSCD),is also called " organizational career management" or "organizational sponsorship" and as the programs, processes and assistance that the organizations provide to support and enhance their employee's career success (Ng et al., 2005; Orpen,1994). Career management from an organization view point is more of supportive and enables role rather than "command and control" as it was considered in past (Baruch, 2006). There are many definitions of career management in the past. One definition states that career management is "usually referred to the policies and practices deliberately designed by the organizations in order to enhance the career effectiveness of their employees" Pazy (1988) (p. 313). "The other definition as given by Orpen (1994) is organizational career management (OCM) is usually the various policies and practices, deliberately established by organizations to improve the career effectiveness of their employees." The definition of management according to "organizational career management is concerned with the organization carrying out activities relevant to the career development of its employees" Baruch and Peiperl (2000) (p. 349). Crawshaw (2006) notes that the important key characteristics of organizational career management that it is largely planned and managed by the organizations.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF CAREER MANAGEMENT FROM AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Career Management is an important process not only for the individual employee but also for the organization. Organizational career management is the process by which the organization manages the career of its employees (Orpen, 1994). According to Stumpf (1988, p. 33) organization is the collection of "activities and opportunities that organizations provide to help the employee to ensure they will meet or exceed their future human resource requirements." Career planning, career paths, employee training and development, job postings, career counseling, outplacement counseling, and mentoring are some of the activities that are used in organizational career management programs. Organizational and individual career management are not separate from each other, but rather interdependent and complementary (Sturges et al.,

2002; Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefooghe 2005). An individual depends on organizations for career guidance within the organization, where as organizations depend on the knowledge and employees available with them to achieve and carry out the organization's strategy (Thite, 2001). Research by Verbruggen and colleagues (2007) brings out the interdependence, of these two factors. It has shown that employees who practice individual career management are more likely to receive career management support from the organization than those who do not. The basic difficulty with career management is the changing expectations of employees and their organizations with regard to who is responsible for career management. According to Thite (2001), says total change has occurred in the framework of the career which has resulted in changes in expectations of career management activities. It is increasing important to understand the changes that have evolved in the career to understand the expectations of career management process. Organizational career management can provide many benefits to employees as well as organizations. It provides opportunities for the individual to develop his or her career, and it supports the organization to maintain the culture and talent within the organization. A study by Zaleska and de Menezes (2007), describes organizational career development activities such as job challenge, external training, and coaching and mentoring, increase individual's commitment towards the organization to all employees. These results are more in line with prior research by Orpen (1994) who found that employees who receive less career support from their organizations have lower career satisfaction. Sturges and colleagues (2005) emphasize that organizational career management is an important tool to organizational feasibility in that helps it to fulfillment of the psychological contract.

CAREER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES OR INVOLVEMENT FROM AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The organizational career management strategy in this article mainly tries to explain the employee's understanding to the career management measures of the organization instead of the specific management measures. Feldman explains organizational career management strategy is closely linked with employee's external career success, while individual career management strategy is highly linked with employee's internal career success (D. C. Feldman and W. H. Thomas (2007).

Organization career management strategy refers to process in which the employees' capabilities, interests and values are combined with the organization development process to set

career developmental goals that are acceptable to both organizations itself and its employees. Simultaneously, the organization will develop a series of human resource management activities, like recruiting, training and motivation, to enhance the performance of the individual and organization continuously so that the goal of mutual development can be achieved. Organizational career management process includes 1. Formal mentoring program, 2. Job rotation, 3. Employee development plans, 4. Internal promotion schemes, 5. Occupational skill assessment and 6. A variety of training programs (Y. Baruch, and M. Peiperl (2000). Eby supports that organization career management will improve and increase organization's human resources management strategy, because it supports that the organization is valuing its employees, by investing for the development of employees by creating opportunities for employees' development. Thus organization career management strategy can produce a positive impact on the employees' attitude towards the organization L. T. Eby, and T. D. Allen (2005).

Career goal setting: A career goal can provide an employee clear picture of his or her future, and the target that guides his/her actions towards the fulfillment of their important needs. Similarly, from the organization's perspective, a career goal is considered to promote effective job performance and can form the basis of effective human resource planning. It is only because of this, career planning programmes include career goal setting as an important activity.

Employees who are capable of setting their career goals in a vigilant manner – which is based on thorough knowledge of themselves and the various alternatives and also a balanced approach towards their present and their future, would have the greatest likelihood for productive and satisfying careers. Organizations in an effort to provide some pay back for employees, are moving more towards the concept of ensuring employability, by providing greater opportunities for development and continuous learning to update their skills current in the marketplace, in return for the high performance and productivity Jeffrey H. Greenhaus, Gerard A. Callanan and Eileen Kaplan (1995).

Organizations support the activity of its employees when they are setting realistic career goals for themselves because it provides them with some tangible benefits. One major benefit for an organization to encourage career goal setting is that their employees learn to take responsibility for their careers. A second benefit is that when employees highly involve themselves in career goal setting they are more likely to become highly skilled and highly useful to the organization. Moreover, many career goal-setting programmes include thorough analyses

of employees' skills by the individuals themselves and also by their superiors and/or peers. It creates an understanding of how others view their strengths and weaknesses and it further encourages employees to improve, particularly when these views do not act as a threat to their self-concept. Having a clear picture of one's career goal it is easy for the organization in determining the types of training and development activities are needed. These activities should be viewed as a positive impact as they frequently result in more highly skilled employees. And even in the worst case of downsizing, the employee has a "skills portfolio" to take along to another job or organization. These are the reasons why career goal setting is being the important process from both the employee and organization point of view. Though it creates certain risk to the individual (e.g. disappointment) and the organization (the potential loss of talented individuals), it is always the advantages that out plays the risks. Like any other development programme, support from the organization's top management is necessary for its success. Similarly it is important that the organization creates a work climate in which individuals feels safe and fully involve themselves in the process of career goal setting (Jeffrey H. Greenhaus, Gerard A. Callanan and Eileen Kaplan (1995).

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Orpen (1994) has given two approaches of organizational career support. The first approach is "employee career development" which covers the extent to which employees feel that the organization provides them the support, actions, and climate that helps the employees to realize their potential in the organization. The second approach is "career information", it is the degree to which the organization is able to provide the exact and comprehensive data about the present opportunities and future plans to employees.

There are various practices of support that can be provided for employee career development but the focus always on those practices that help to develop the employee career within the present organization. The various practices followed by the organization can be classified under five variables (e.g. Baruch and Peiperl, 2000; Baruch and Budhwar, 2006; Orpen, 1994; Pazy, 1988), they are 1. career counseling, 2. succession planning, 3. socialization, 4. training support and 5. career related information sharing. These variables are not confined only to individual practices but include a broader set of career management practices. For instance, the variable "career counseling" includes more than just having a formal career

counselor but also covers a larger perspective formal mentoring and counseling by the supervisor. Similarly, the variable "career related information sharing" covers not just the practice of internal job postings, but takes a larger context of providing information on manpower plans, upcoming training programs and available career paths.

Career Counseling: Career counseling addresses both individual and organizational concerns. It has been considered as one of the major tool for career development activities (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000; Gutteridge and Leibowitz, 1993). Individual concerns are related to advancements to greater responsibility or pay, positions, lateral movement that are highly desirable or problem solving in nature associated with the present job. Many organizations do not have formal career counseling and workshops, the most counseling is provided by the supervisor. Various support provide by the organizations may be in the form of career guidance, performance feedback, challenging work assignments and work opportunities that promote employee development and visibility. The supportive relationship between the employees and the supervisors improves the managers' careers (Baird and Kram, 1983; Kidd and Smewig, 2001). Mentoring creates a developmental relationship that an experienced organizational member tries to enhance the career opportunities of the junior person (Kram, 1985).

Formalized Process of Succession Management: Having a wider knowledge or networks all through the organization are valuable and it helps in gaining promotion form within using a system of managerial succession (Baron and Kreps, 1999a). For the position of higher level organization includes coordinating the actions of many subordinates and making decisions span larger pieces of the organization, employees, it requires than the employees have a grearer identification of those roles and have a wider base of experience within the organization. Succession plan is the tool that is used by the organization for identifying the pool of potential candidates to be promoted from within. This is the common practice of the organization that emphasize on internal development of employees (Baron and Kreps, 1999a). The main components of a succession plan are identifying key positions, creating and assessing candidates, and selecting people (Huang, 2001).

Institutionalized socialization: All the movement that an individual makes across organizational boundaries right from entry, hierarchical progression and moving to other functions, or movement to inner circle requires adjustment, are made easier through the process of socialization (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). The most theoretically well-developed models

of socialization is Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) typology of socialization tactics. Van Maanen and Schein have given that organizations uses six tactics to structure and socialize the newcomers. Each tactic consists of a bipolar continuum. The tactic of collective socialization is the process where the newcomers are grouped and put them through a common set of experiences vs. individual socialization which treats each newcomer as an independent and leave them through more or less unique experiences. Formal socialization refers to separating a newcomer from the other experienced members for a specified period where as informal does not provide the separation of a newcomer from others. The sequential and random tactic is a set of progression steps leading to the assumption of the role, changing sequence of steps. Fixed socialization provides a set timetable for the assumption of the role, and a variable process does not. In a serial process, the newcomer is socialized by an experienced member, and in disjunctive process where a role model is not used. At last, investiture affirms the incoming identity and attributes of the newcomer and divestiture deny and strip them away. Adding on with Van Maanen and Schein (1979), Jones (1986) proposes that these six tactics form a gestalt that he terms as institutionalized socialization. According to Jones, these tactics namely collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics helps the newcomers to accept established roles, thereby reproducing the status quo. The other opposite end of the socialization tactics - the individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture tactics induce the newcomers to question the status quo and to bring out their own approaches to their roles. Jones points out this end of the tactics as individualized socialization. Another research by Ashforth et al. (1998) have found that collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics related with the structured program of socialization that are experienced by newcomers in an organization. Therefore the institutionalized socialization helps the organization to maintain a control over newcomer experiences and the instructions that newcomers get from them. This tactics will help the organization more when it wishes to develop and retain employees. Therefore an organization which relies on collective, formal, sequential, fixed and serial tactics as the institutionalized socialization tactics are more likely to have a high employee advancement orientation.

Training and development support: Extensive training is highly emphasized in various research literature that talk about internal labour market & high commitment work systems (Baron and Kreps, 1999a; Osterman, 1994). High commitment work systems requires an

complete effort from the employees and employees need to be develop their skills & knowledge to be effective in their task, the organization they work for, what it aims to do, and how it does things (Baron and Kreps, 1999a). Training not only provides the specific knowledge that the employees need for their promotion it also helps them in achieving lateral extensive training movement within the organization. This is possible through extensive training either on-the-job or off the job. Research also support that the training activity would develop the skills that the employees need for future. It is also an important tool for career growth and this activity has to be aligned with the business strategy. It also supports that the formal training activity and the development policies are a highly motivating factor that creates long-term growth of the employee within the organization.

Career related information sharing: Career related information sharing deals with the extent to which there is complete information relating to present job opportunities, upcoming training programs and future manpower plans in the organization. It has been found as an important factor for progression of employees within the organization (Cappelli, 2008; Pazy, 1988). Some of the processes for career related information sharing are 1. internal job postings, 2. information on future talent requirement, 3. sharing information on training and development programs.

These information will help the employees in further exploration of their work preferences and their own suitability (fit) for jobs that are emerging in highly adaptive and multi skilled organizations.

Conclusion

In this conceptual paper the researcher has attempted to collate the various research studies relating to study on career management from an organizational perspective. In the process the researcher has conceptually defined some of the important terms related to the area of research investigation namely organizational career management. Through this paper the researcher has also identified some of the important variables that contribute to importance of career management strategies from the organizational perspective. This paper has enabled the researcher to identify the importance of career management, especially from the context of organizational career management.

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