

Career Development in Organizations

Unit 4 – Related Career Concepts

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Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define key career concepts
- Provide examples of each career concept



Career Self Exploration

- Values, interests, personality and abilities interrelated
 - Maybe convenient to separate above constructs
 - Need to be appreciated as coherent whole
 - Concept of career anchor
 - Different forms of orientation toward work



Career Anchors

- Exploration of career dynamics (Edgar Schein)
 - Identified five different 'anchors'
 - Fundamental drivers
 - Key drivers in choices of jobs and careers.
- People usually have only one primary anchor
 - Can have other anchors in close support
- Anchors are relatively stable
 - Life events
 - People re-evaluate their purpose
 - Hence change primary anchors



Career Anchors

- **Definition**
 - Perceived abilities, value, attitudes and motives people have which determine their career aspirations and direction
- Serve to guide, constrain, stabilize, reinforce and develop people's careers
- Provide basis for career choice
 - Person likely to make job and organizational selections consistent with self image



Career Anchors

- Only through work experience and reality tests
 - A person can clarify and understand his/her career anchor through
 - Abilities and talents
 - What they are good at and what they are not good at
 - Motives and needs
 - What they ultimately seek in their careers (good income, security, interesting work)
 - Values
 - What kind of company, work environment, product or service they want to be associated with



Career Anchors

Original 5 (Schein, 1978)

- Technical competencies
- Managerial competencies
- Security and stability
- Entrepreneurship/
Creativity
- Autonomy/independence

Additional three (Schein, 1985)

- Dedication to a cause
(e.g. service)
- Pure challenge
- Life style



Security and stability

- Important to many that
 - Jobs offer a degree of security and stability in lives
 - Natural and plays to basic needs for safety.
- Central importance to others
 - Will often avoid jobs that offer promotion and more money
 - But less stable and include greater risk of losing the job
 - Example - in an unstable industry or perhaps where 'insufficient performance' is likely to lead to the person being sacked.



- Risk aversion is likely to be significant
- Idea of a quiet life more attractive than excitement and interest of the new
- Money represents safety and likely to save it carefully
 - Having a nest-egg makes them feel good.
- People may fall into this category when
 - Want the organization to take responsibility for their life, acting perhaps as surrogate parents
 - Thus happy in an institutionalized cocoon



Autonomy and independence

- Being at somebody else's back and call a fundamentally grating experience
- Hate being told what to do, and particularly in any form of directive micro-management
- Find any form of rules to be constricting
 - Will rail and rebel against any attempt to control their lives
- Money is valued in the ability it gives the person to do their own thing
 - May dream of wealth that enables them to indulge in whatever they choose
 - Free from the necessities of normal working life



- One way to find independence
 - Becoming an expert in their field, often through long study for professional qualification
 - Driven in the effort required for this learning by the golden thought of ultimate autonomy
- May also seek jobs that have a natural freedom and authority, such as teaching or consulting
- Management often holds an allure for them as they see themselves being the controllers, and not the controlled
 - Though in practice, they may find this is not quite the case



Creativity and entrepreneurship

- Driven by the need to create
- Find great satisfaction in designing and constructing things
 - Range from products to whole businesses
- An arch-builder - creating and developing organizations that fulfill their dreams
- Not like 'ordinary' people in that they have the courage and commitment to put their whole lives into their work, rather than it being just a 'job'



- Money is both a necessary evil and a measure of success
 - Will do what it takes to get the finance, including mortgaging their house and maxing out their credit card -- anything to get their business idea going and make it successful
 - Revenues gained both indicate the degree of success and possibility of what can be built next
- Either stay in traditional businesses only long enough to learn the ropes before breaking out on their own
- Alternative approach (particularly if they also have a need for safety)
 - Have a traditional job but to channel their passions into a business 'on the side'.



Technical/functional competence

- Have greater talent and interest in some particular areas
- Home in on these areas
 - Develop into a whole career or specialist
 - May include long study, both in initial qualification and long-term study
 - Turn the person into a significant expert.



- Money important as indicator of success and status
 - Greatest accolade such people can receive is recognition from their peers
- In work – seek out latest projects
 - Challenge and help develop expertise
 - Reaching and staying on leading edge of profession.



- Frustration for specialists that career path is limited
 - To progress within a company means moving into management.
- Great engineers can make terrible and unhappy managers
 - Often happens as viewed as the only available career path
 - Part of the problem - keep trying to get back to area of interest
 - Including 'micro-managing' people still doing job
 - Experts make poor people managers



Managerial competence

- Some people find management a great pleasure
 - Early in career - move into managing people and businesses.
- Often generalists in scope
 - Preference of broad understanding of business and market to a narrow specialism
 - Love responsibility and broad challenge
 - Take pride in achieving great things for company
 - Typically good at sizing up complex situations and people
 - Enjoy making decisions



- **Service/Dedication anchor**
 - Primary concern – to achieve some valued outcome
 - Examples – improving the lives of others by working in a “helping” profession
- **Pure Challenge anchor**
 - Primary work demands – involve seemingly unsolvable problems or surmounting difficult obstacles
 - Seek novelty, variety and challenge in work
- **Lifestyle integration anchor**
 - Dominant theme – achieving balance in all major sectors of one’s life
 - Want harmonious integration of family and career activities



Career Success

- There are two tragedies in life. One is to lose your heart's desire. The other is to gain it. (G.B. Shaw)
- There are two things to aim at in this life; first get what you want, and after that, to enjoy it. Only the wisest of mankind achieve the second. (Logan Pearsall Smith)



- Different people view the meaning of career success differently.
- Components of career success
 - Objective indicators
 - Total compensation, number of promotions etc.
 - Subjective indicators
 - Perceived career success indicators
 - Feelings of satisfaction
 - Feelings of accomplishments
 - Perceived internal marketability (beliefs that one is valuable to his/her current employer)
 - Perceived external marketability (beliefs that one is valuable to other employers)



Definitions

- Career Success
 - Positive psychological or work related outcomes or achievements that the individual accumulates as a result of work experiences (Seibert et al, 1999)
- Subjective Career Success
 - Individual's internal apprehension and evaluation of own career across any dimensions that are important to the individual (van Maanen, 1977)
- Objective Career Success
 - An external perspective that delineates more or less tangible indicators of an individual's career situation (van Maanen, 1977)



Subjective-objective Duality

- Mistake to assume that all members of same social category would share same subjective career orientations (Bailey, 1989)
- Objective career
 - Publicly accessible
 - Concerned with social role and official position
 - Reflect social understanding NOT distinctive individual understanding
- Inherent “two-sidedness” of career concept (Goffman, 1961)



Interdependence of subjective & objective

- Classical example
 - Adaptation of inner-city schoolteachers to relatively disadvantaged situations
 - Instead of seeing themselves as unsuccessful because of the low-status schools in which they were employed
 - Teachers found subjective career success by seeing their work as socially useful
 - Found objective career success through ‘positions of influence and prestige in the informal colleague structure’ (Becker, 1952, p. 474)



- Interdependence occurs when individuals continually interpreting and reinterpreting the work experiences and career success they have had
- Independence occurs over time
 - People experience
 - Objective reality
 - Create understandings about what constitutes career success
 - Individually act on those understandings, regardless of their predictive accuracy

- The process whereby a person
 - (a) joins an organization
 - (b) socializes with peers
 - (c) participates in developing a shared understanding about age norms
 - (d) internalizes that shared understanding in the subjective career
 - (e) experiences the eventual objective career experience of either receiving a promotion or not
- Sequential process
- Can only be observed over time



Derr's (1986) framework

- Dynamic interplay between work, relationships and self development
- 5 measures for career success orientations
- Getting ahead
 - Desire for upward mobility
- Getting secure
 - Career success as the achievement of long-term job security, good benefits for dedication, loyalty, and service
- Getting high
 - Need for excitement, action, and total engagement in the process and content of the work
- Getting free - seek freedom
- Getting balanced
 - Balance three forces of the career triangle: work, relationships, and self-development.



Measures of career success

Traditional concepts	The “New Careerist”	Contemporary - Individual	Contemporary - Organization
Formal education	Getting ahead	Self-development competencies	Empowerment
Lifelong employment, job security	Getting secure	Employability	Investment in people
Up the ladder	Getting high	Lateral transitions; spiral movements	New career paths to replace the traditional pyramid
	Getting free	Self-management; entrepreneurship	Flexibility
	Getting balanced	Quality of life; work-family balance	Alternative working arrangements* and work-family policies
		New psychological contract	
		Search for spiritual meaning based on individual consciousness	True, open partnership



Career Motivation

- Definition :
 - The set of individual characteristics and associated career decisions and behaviors that reflect the person's career identity, insight into factors affecting his or her career, and resilience in the face of unfavorable career conditions (London, 1983)



- Motivation
 - Direction, arousal, amplitude & persistence of an individual's behavior

(Campbell & Pritchard, 1976)
- Career motivation
 - Work motivation and managerial motivation
 - Includes motivation associated with a wide range of career decisions and behaviors.



Components of Career Motivation

- **Individual characteristics** → needs, interests, and personality variables relevant to a person's career
 - **3 domains** → **career identity**, **career insight**, and **career resilience**
- Career identity
 - Direction of career motivation.
- Career insight
 - Arousal and strength of career motivation
- Career resilience
 - Persistence of career motivation



Career Identity

- How central one's career is to one's identity.
- 2 sub domains
 - Work involvement and desire for up-ward mobility.
- Individuals high on career identity
 - Likely to find career satisfaction to be more important than satisfaction from other areas of life
 - Primacy of work



Career Insight

- Extent to which the person has realistic perceptions of him or herself and the organization
 - Relates these perceptions to career goals.
- Goal flexibility and need change
 - Inversely related to career insight.



Career Resilience

- A person's resistance to career disruption in a less than optimal environment.
- Opposite of career resilience
 - Career vulnerability.
- Being high on career resilience (low on career vulnerability)
 - Does not mean that the person is insensitive to such environmental conditions
 - Rather he/she will be able to cope more effectively with a negative work situation.



Career Resilience

- 3 sub domains
 - self-efficacy,
 - risk taking,
 - Dependency
- Individuals will be more resilient
 - Higher on the self-efficacy and risk taking dimensions
 - Lower on the dependency dimension



Career Resilience

- Low on career resilience
 - Likely to be motivated to avoid risk
 - Be dependent on others
 - Seek structure
 - Avoid situations where outcomes contingent on their behavior.
- High on career resilience
- Likely to do the reverse
 - Take risks
 - Be independent of others
 - Create their own structure
 - Thrive on situations where outcomes contingent on their behavior.



Career plateau

Definitions:

- “A plateau is defined as the point in a career where the likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is low” (Ference, Stoner and Warren, 1976)
- “ as the point at which future career mobility, including both upward and lateral moves, is in reasonable doubt because the length of time in the present position has been unduly prolonged” (Viega, 1981, p. 566)



Career plateau

- Not a new phenomenon but there is a worrying situation about the rate at which it is becoming increasingly widespread in various organizations (Yamamoto, 2006; Lee, 2003)
- Used as antecedent to many undesirable work outcomes such as low satisfaction, high stress, poor performance and other withdrawal symptoms.



Causes of career plateau

- Main causes
 - Business re-engineering, downsizing and spin-off-activities
 - Makes further advancement within organization becomes more unlikely
- Employees serve in the same position longer than expected.
- Other factors
 - Inappropriate skills and abilities to perform the job
 - Low need for career mobility
 - Slow company growth



Causes of career plateau

- Baby boomers holding positions longer
- Mergers and takeovers causing layoffs
 - Fewer available positions but competitive



Characteristics of plateau

- Career plateau has a negative tone
 - Suggesting failure and defeat
 - “shelf sitters”, “dead enders”, “deadwood”
- But nothing inherently negative about the notion career plateau (FERENCE *et al*, 1976)
- Does not reflect one’ job performance, morale, ambition
- Simply describes that individual’s current career status within a particular organization.



Types of career plateau

- **Organizationally plateaued**

- Although having the ability to perform well in higher level jobs because lack of openings (narrowing pyramid)

- **Personally plateaued**

- Seen by the organization either as lacking in ability for higher level jobs, or as not desiring a higher level job



Source of organizational plateauing

- Narrowing pyramid
- Competition
- Age
- Organizational needs



Source of personally plateauing

- Lack of technical and managerial skills
- Lack of career skills
- Lack of sufficient desire



Strategies in managing career plateau

- Job rotation
- Move to flatter structure in organization – employees to take more responsibilities
- Employees be appraised objectively and given feedback on an agreed timeframe
- Create an environment whereby employees are allowed to further their careers
- Provide lateral assignments, not necessarily through promotion.



Thank you

