

Reconsideration of adaptability to contemporary career development theories in Japan

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Abstract

Recent years, the relationship of employment in Japan becomes more flexible and uncertain. The term career gets into the limelight. As far most theories, models proposed to facilitate the development of career. Nevertheless, numberless phrases related to career development had been introduce to Japanese society. Previous studies on career focus on vocational choice by matching the characteristics of the environment and person. Recent works on career argue the responsibility and initiative of the employee's career development between the organization and individual. The concern of this paper is to clarify the potential of Western-style career development in Japan. First, we will discuss the definition of career. Second, we will review the contemporary literature of career. Third, we will discuss the application of those models on the ground of Japan to facilitate the future empirical research.

Ambiguous career

The root of career derives from Latin "carrus", "cursus" and "curriculum". The term "carrus" means a kind of four-wheeled baggage wagon. The word "cursus" signifies a running or rapid motion as well as "curriculum" indicates a running or a contest in running (Lewis, 1980). Nowadays, the term career becomes ambiguous. Surplus meanings of career in both popular and social science literature could be found. It perceives as the highlight of one's human capital acquired by Becker (1975), from an economic perspective. Meanwhile most psychologists viewed career as a vocation emphasizing trait-and-factor fit (e.g., Parsons, 1909; Holland, 1973), a synchronous combination of life roles with life stages (Super, 1980). After an exhaustive review of prior studies, Adamson, Doherty and Viney (1998) justified that career primarily belongs to the person, and then the organization is no more a dominated factor that people concerned in the new era (pp. 257-258). Some (e.g., Wakabayashi & Itou, 1985; Hall, 2002) recognized career as a concatenation of promotions, an enduring sequence of jobs, professional workers, the synchronous combination of roles throughout the whole life.

Koike (1977) defined the career as an in-house progression relying upon efficient on-the-job training ¹(p. 4). In Japan, work has a propensity to fill up male employee's life, an individual career will blend with the company's personnel strategy and, almost fully, integrated into an organizational career (Wakabayashi., Gallagher., & Graen, 1988, p. 1). It appeared on the employment with massive new graduate in April without asking their inherent knowledge, abilities and skills. A comprehensive conception of career, including training, job rotation, advancement or whatever, will be totally controlled by HR department of Japanese firms.

Career anchor & dynamics theory: Edgar H. Schein

Schein, an expert of psychology and organization science, expanded his research based on Super's work, such as the notion of self-concept, career stage etc. He (1990) extracted major life stages, i.e. including growth, fantasy and exploration, education and training, entry into the world of work, basic training and socialization, gaining of membership, gaining of tenure and permanent membership, mid-career crisis and reassessment, maintaining momentum, regaining it, or leveling off, disengagement and the last one, retirement from Super's composition. The idea about movement and relationship became an initial concept of later three-dimension model of the organizational career.

Schein began his longitudinal study to understand how managerial careers have been develop and how people undertook the organizational learning about the values and procedures within the organization since 1961. These interviews, based on a sequence of researches of the MIT alumni in various career stages within 12 years, unveiled the problems when MBA students graduated from school to work. He, at first, identified respondents into five anchors: autonomy and independence, security and stability, technical and functional competence, general management competence, entrepreneurial creativity in the mid-1970s, and then three additional categories, service and dedication to a cause, pure challenge, lifestyle incorporated in the 1980. Schein (1978) defined the career anchor as follows:

"1. self-perceived talents and abilities (based on actual success in a variety of work settings); 2. self-perceived motives and needs (based on opportunities for self-tests and self-diagnosis in real situations and on feedback from others); 3. self-perceived attitudes and values (based on actual encounters between self and the norms and values of the employing organization and work setting)" (p. 125).

¹ Koike (1977) asserted, that he initially created the notion of career under the present condition in Japan (p. 4). Nonetheless, others, such as Nomura (2003) criticized for its uncertain definition of career engaged without a scientific research, the term has been even adopted by Koike himself with various meanings in different occasions far withdrew from the original description (pp. 111-116).

The metaphor of anchor, a growing understanding and learning about oneself reflected throughout the development of one's career and determined by one's talents, motives and values, have been discovered in kinds of vocations and applied equally to variety of workers. The fundamental assumption of Schein's construct is, each given individual has the alternative career anchor that would not be abandoned (1987, p. 158), and it surely would become sharper if one had enough life experience (1990, p. 34). Ironically, by using Schein's empirical data, Feldman and Bolino (1996) argue the possibility of coexisting both or multiple career anchors (p. 99).

The organization and individual have been acquainted with each other through learning experiences and new job changes. Viewing relationship between the organization and individual as well as focusing on their interaction over time that Schein approached the career is a critical distinction from the viewpoint of other career theorists. To complete his dual-perspective of career development, he (1978) then proposed a three-dimensional model representing one's movement within the organization (pp. 37-38) after the construct of career anchor that described by the characteristics and experiences of the given individual had been established.

Early work on career (e.g., Parsons, 1909; Holland, 1973) emphasized the significance of the individual's vocational choice. In other words, a job or a workplace should be elaborate selected, based on characteristics of both environment and the person. In contrast, Schein admitted that various jobs and career paths might be involved within the organization. The career regulated through both individual's career anchor and work experiences in real association. Directions of movement divided into three types, vertical, radical and circumferential, Schein contemplated. Most organizational persons engaged in the given organization might advance along a hierarchical dimension during their career course, move to inner side within a specific department or the core of the occupation, shift to different section to acquire blend of talents and skills.

Protean & boundaryless career construct: Hall, Douglas T., & Arthur, Michael B.

By removing restrictions of employment, approving diversification of working patterns, labor market becomes more flexible and offer more job opportunities². To be competitive, firms get to be themselves smaller and swifter by downsizing and outsourcing. These make the individual's career

² Although job offer and fringe benefits usually are usually less than those available to so-called standard or regular employees (Purcell, Purcell & Tailby, 2004, p. 706). Another, Kapstein uses the term "beggar-thy-labor" to describe the challenges workers confronted (Kapstein, Ethan B., 1999)

mobility. In addition, the employee had been forced to be more adaptive and flexible to meet the demand of employment relationship and economic condition on a globe scale. Hirsch (1987) described that a request or a good prospect of getting promotion might be taken over from a dismissal notice unexpectedly (p. 46), and the career no longer remained safety, even those high talents providing professional, technical and managerial services (Sullivan, 1999) as the labor market becomes fluid. Specialist on career predicted that the prevailing traditional careers would be diminished gradually, in turn, the career will become more protean and boundaryless (e.g., Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996b). In particular, Hall (1996b) affirmed that organizational career is dead and will be replaced by the protean career.

Hall (1996a) believed the protean career is driven by the person, not the organization. It was composed of one's experiences in education, training and work in several organizations. Moreover reinvention of the career would be accompanied when the individual and the environment changed. In the new career era, the benchmark of career success have been one's self-fulfillment, family happiness, or other important goals in his or her life, not the traditional view of success emphasizing upward mobility, advancement and the like (p. 8). In opposition to the generally accepted perspective of career success which the fundamental objective was climbing to the top of the corporation or becoming one of the richest. Hall and Moss (1998) propound the term of psychological success to describe success in terms of one's own goal (p. 30), unique vision and core values in life (Shepard, 1984).

It is noteworthy that the organization has been played what kind of role if the individual pursues his or her career regardless of organizational demand. Hall hasn't left us an explicit explanation but an uncertain metaphor by dividing the firms and their employees into three types. Although there were misunderstandings and stretches far from its real meaning of the term protean career, Hall recognized (1996a, p. 10). We even suspect it as an accompaniment of inarticulate protean career. In Japan, more and more employers anticipated that the employee has to do more for his or her future career while the employer bears lesser responsibility. In addition, Hall (1996a) stated that necessity of employment security will be on the decrease and in turn, people will turn to seek for their employability (p. 10). In fact, long-term employment³ has been replaced by kinds of contingent work in Japan where is famed for its employment security.

It becomes an issue of more employees revealed that the responsibility of career development

³ It has only existed in certain corporations with relative stable internal labor markets after World War Two.

should on the employee's shoulders with a fine excuse that the organization could not afford enough resource of training and education for their employees due to the rising personnel cost and the labor share after the collapse of the bubble economy in the early 1990s. Annual expenditure for training per capital exhibited the new low at ¥47322 in Japan, comparing the investment of human capital with ¥85870 in Canada, ¥95285 in the U.S. and ¥99235 in the EU countries by a cross-nation survey (Sanno Institute of Management, 2000, p. 51). According to the labor statistics, the rate of implementing off-job-training showed flat moving, however, the rate of training participation greatly declined from 75.0% in 1990 to 26.6% in 2003 (MHLW, Annual).

The climate of advocating employability has been also favorable to the employer in Japan. Lack of employability becomes a magnificent reason for making a person transfer or leave, paradoxically, firms are prone to hire new graduate who are in need of skills and abilities. Kariya (2007) noted that one's career path represents as the formation of human capital within the organization on the basis of long-term employment, but the course of career varies from one to another by the grade of university one graduated from (pp. 35-36). Therefore, it is not difficult to interpret the employer's desire to urge or encourage people taking charge of their employability as a method for exhausting redundant workers since the structure of organization is usually like a pyramid.

Noer (1995) explained that the relationship between the labor and management under the protean career contract becomes more equal and task-focused (pp. 176-177). The organization that Hall and Moss (1998, p. 26) mentioned as forward-thinking companies, where providing resources and opportunities for the employee's continuous learning would be an ideal picture. However, how could task-focused organizations, like temporary work agencies, maintain a stable, long-term relationship of employment? Moreover, some scholars proved that firm, steady link between both sides of employment gain the benefit of firm-specific skills (Williamson, 1981; Becker, 1975), incentives in the long run (Baker, Gibbs & Holmstrom, 1994; Pfeffer, 1998), while there were not any career ladders, promise of pay increase accompanying with the advancement left for contingent workers (Fernandez-Mateo, 2005, p. 3). In most companies of Japan, labor force are broadly divided into two categories of core and periphery employees. Core employees' career has been still managed by the department of personnel. Although the periphery employees, like the protean workers, have the initiative on their career, most have assigned to work as external, seasonal, supplemental manpower. Enhancing their career profile and employability becomes a significant issue.

Another, a high level of self-awareness and personal responsibility has been the essential feature striving for the protean career (Hall & Moss, 1998, p. 30). The career that Super (1980), a developmental psychologists, though is a lifelong series of developmental stages linking with chronological age, however, Hall (1996a) regarded the protean career as a sequences of learning stages (p. 9), enhancing people's self-knowledge and adaptability (Hall & Moss, 1998, p. 31). Hall (1996b) insisted that to encourage the employee's continuous learning, what the organization could do for the person is to provide a series of alternative tasks and varied relationship.

The concept of boundaryless career derives from the term 'boundaryless organization' used by Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric. The meaning of it has been the antonym of the bounded or organizational career, also the mainstream of career studies in decades (Arthur, 1994, p. 296). Differs from the dominated organization-bound career theories focusing on the matching between the environment and the person (e.g., Parson, 1909; Holland, 1973), a synchronous combination of life roles with life stages (Super, 1980), that assumed to have the career within specific organization, boundaryless career cumulated with career competencies across organization.

Contrast with the traditional career that supposed to develop in a stable hierarchy from one job to another, Arthur (1994) showed the independent potentials of the boundaryless career workers, such as the typical IT workers in Silicon Valley or people with profession could capitalize their skills at an advantage externally among organizations (p. 296). Besides, pursuing the boundaryless career require know-why competency, know how and know-whom competencies that distinctly differed from the viewpoint of existing career theories (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994, pp. 308-310). Although these career competencies are similar to Hall's (1996a) concepts as adaptability to work challenges, learning how to learn, and relationship learning.

The common concern about the coverage of the boundaryless career, its advantage and disadvantage has been usually discussed (e.g., Baker & Aldrich, 1996; Periperl, Arthur, Goffee & Morris, 2000). Most believe the effort to be the boundaryless career worker would facilitate the possibility of survival in the fluid and uncertain labor market. However, Baker and Aldrich (1996) remind that the boundaryless career is not suitable for everyone (pp. 146-147). The term career that theorists (e.g., Arthur, 1994) defined are focusing on the technical, professional careers in which people could benefit from multi-organizations, regardless of the absolute majority lacks the opportunity for training and learning to have their own boundaryless career life coexisted in the

same world. These people with insufficient competence and talent for developing their career have been ignored in recent researches of career.

Not only to stress on the application of the boundaryless career in employment practice, but some scholars also argue the risk of rising transitional cost, the uncertainty the individual affected (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996, pp. 229-231), the substantial loss of the employee's benefits, like health care, pension plan (Perrow, 1996, pp. 298-299). Finally, a crucial defect of most career studies often occurred is lack of investigated materials. Take the book "The boundaryless career", which collected 22 papers clarifying related concepts with the same title as above, for an example, only about one-fourths propositions based on empirical research.

Disadvantage in career development

The reshuffle of the personnel, one of the distinct characteristics of employment practices in Japan, makes the employee engaging in various jobs that entailed different skills, extended their personal relationship through assignments, almost totally, had made by the organization. In Schein's model of career, he asserts that a stable career could be formed through one's career anchor and work experiences in various paths of three-dimensional movable organization, and focuses on the interaction between the association and person. On the other hand, Hall and Arthur emphasize the importance of learning opportunities providing by the organization, and work challenges, networks related to their jobs, however, both of them insist on the initiative of the employee, not the employer. There is a smooth scheme for the prospective new graduate to be employed as future new employee in Japan, while most applicants have mere chance to choose their jobs, but the association. After entering a given company, most of them still do not know the requirement of their jobs, the criterion for deciding their future career. So far all what they are supposed to do is working hard and following the arrangement for organizational career. The term career anchor, protean and boundaryless career seem popular phrases used by the career practitioners, or so-called career counselor, still not an issue in employment practice.

These showed that the organization in Japan is still keen to drill in-house training into the employees through reallocation of personnel. According to a recent survey (JILPT, 2007) on listed companies of Tokyo Stock Exchange, it indicates that only 11.6% of companies set up kinds of career development program (p. 14) as well as approximate one-thirds corporations provided limited open job posting system for their employees (pp. 31-32). It tells getting a new job might be an easier

way to achieve one's protean career, rather than taking ownership of one's career within the organization. But, shall they?

The ratio of employees ran self-development training to those who did not is one to three (MHLW, annual). Besides, the effect of self-development training on pay rise is not outstanding. By the contrast, education executed by the organization contributes the marked increase in the wage to the employee (Kurosawa, 2001). Agata (1998) found that it was an ineffective method taking qualifications issued by ministries and central government offices to gain higher earnings and credibility in a given profession for male employees in Japan depended on the national survey of Social Stratification and Mobility (p. 80). An upsurge in taking some certifications on one's initiative and its over-evaluated fruits should be reconsidered.

The employee's self-oriented learning, even the outcome of the national qualification, seem not supportive of career development. The alternative to accept the career path that the organization directed or controlled, if there were neither open job posting system nor career consultation applicable to the protean, boundaryless career worker, is to quit. It is never an easy determination to leave a job and find another one if available. The data listed below would make many career theorists and practitioners confused and disappointed. According to the data of the Basic Survey on Wage Structure (MHLW, 2006), people choose to start their career at another organization or even more could not avoid to suffer the loss of earnings at approximately 15% at the point of time under 35-year-old comparing with their fellow workers who chose not to move, as well as their counterparts at average disadvantage of 20%, 25% when quit under 45, 55 at the base of the year 2005 (p. 233).

Discussion

It is noteworthy that the Western-style career theories, constructs could take root in the different climate of Japan. Schein emphasizes the importance of interaction between the organization and individual has been accommodated to the value of Japanese society, however, it still meet many difficulties in building the employee's career regard of his or her career anchor in the reality. Hall and Arthur offered a vision of the protean, boundaryless career for Japan's labor market. Although the opportunities of continuous learning is declined within the organization, the effort toward employee's self-development training, national qualifications issuing is also not general evaluated and the loss of turnover is still so high, these encourage us to investigate the

present condition of the employee's career development in the field of Japan.

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論文審査報告書

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題 名 Reconsideration of Adaptability to Contemporary
Career Development Theories in Japan

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審査結果

本論文は、労働市場の流動性が高まる状況を視野に入れて、労働者個人にとって重要かつ深刻な問題となるキャリア形成問題を真正面から捉えて、代表的な幾つかの学説における論点を抽出し、これに批判的な検討を加えている。

筆者によって検討されている学説の中には、職業心理学のスーパー（super）、労働経済学の小池和男、産業心理学のエドガー・シェイン（Edger Schein）、企業経済学のウィリアムソン（Williamson）なども含まれており、検討対象とされている学説は実に多彩である。

諸学説を再検討している前半部分には、論理展開の抽象さにおいて不十分さを感じる箇所がない訳ではないが、しかし、企業経済学、労働経済学、人的資本論等の学説を検討している本論文の後半部分では、ダウンサイジング、訓練投資を含む企業人件費の抑制、個人主導の能力開発への移行等が視野に入っており、筆者の批判的な視点と労働市場の現実に即した批判的な見解が示されている。

諸個人の心理的満足や組織行動パターン類型にキャリア形成問題を解消させる傾向があるこの研究分野において、本論に示された筆者のこのような研究姿勢は、筆者の問題意識の明確さ、英語文献を読みぬく持続的な努力、研究力量の相対的高さを示すものであり、今後の研究活動が大いに期待されるところである。

以上のような理由から、本論文は十分に掲載に値する論文である、と判定する次第である。

以上