

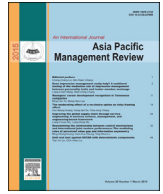
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Managers' career development recognition in Taiwanese companies

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate how the interplay between organizational and individual career development (ICD) recognition may have impact on affective commitment. The theoretical framework was proposed according to the social cognitive career theory. Data were collected from 285 benchmark companies' managers in Taiwan using a questionnaire. The paper used structural equation modeling and the results showed that when organizations and individuals share responsibility for the careers of managers and have a good succession planning, the managers are likely to have more successful careers in this global economy. The paper shows the mediating role that succession planning may play in linking cognition of organizational career scripts and ICD to affective commitment. It is original and makes a unique contribution because it combines the individualistic and organizational perspectives concerning the career development with regard to senior managers.

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1. Introduction

Career changes are rapid since the late 1980s and the globalization is not only a context for organizational strategic action, but also provides opportunities for career development to managers (Cappellen & Janssens, 2010). As dictated by technological advancement, occupational life cycles have become shorter, and some occupations have become less stable and less predictable (Hesketh, 2001; Vondracek, 2001). Careers are said to be *boundaryless*, requiring an individual to take responsibility for their own management (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Thus, individual career development (ICD) means managers have to utilize opportunities that are available for them to pursue their career goals (Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefoghe, 2005), such as by undergoing self-management programs, setting career-related goals, and formulating appropriate strategies to achieve them (Noe, 1996).

Meanwhile, according to social cognitive career theory, many explicit contextual organizational influences are integrated and influence an individual's career choice behavior (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Organizational career script (OCS) indicates that the organization will consider the institutional environment to design individual career policies and global career development

projects. This practice can manage and improve the effectiveness of an individual's career, and can satisfy the individual's career path choice (CPC; Cappellen & Janssens, 2010; Orpen, 1994). OCS can provide individual counseling and career discussions between managers and their supervisors, and help to choose career development tools consisting of skills, education, experiences as well as behavioral modification and refinement techniques (Cappellen & Janssens, 2010; Noe, 1996). Therefore, OCS allows individuals to work better and to add value to the company.

Furthermore, high-potential managers are those the company believes are capable of being successful in higher-level managerial positions (Ballinger & Marcel, 2010). Thus, CPC is an individual's decision as to what specific work sequence he or she wants for himself or herself, which will give him or her the chance for the promotion based on individual desires (Baruch, 2004). It usually includes a plan for career path change and support for succession planning (Gutteridge, Leibowitz, & Shore, 1993b). Some studies have shown that there exists a close and reciprocal relationship between OCS, ICD, and affective commitment (London, 1993; Sturges et al., 2005). Scholars and practitioners are particularly interested in understanding how to enhance employees' affective commitment (Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008; Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004; Shepherd, Patzelt, & Wolfe, 2011). Making talent sourcing and career development is a strategic priority to ensure the success of a company (Gunz & Jalland, 1996; Guthridge, Komm, & Lawson, 2008; Jenkins, 2008). However, only limited studies are available that focus on the need to balance OCS and ICD, as well as on the need for CPC for managers in Taiwanese business firms.

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Given this backdrop, this study will establish a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical model among OCS, ICD, CPC, and affective commitment. The results are presented along with a discussion of their implications for organizations.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

2.1. Social cognitive career theory

A career development system links organizational needs with individual career needs, and is directed at personal and organizational goals. The key issue is how managers develop their skills in such a way that their personal effectiveness and satisfaction means helping the organization achieve its own strategic objectives (Gutteridge et al., 1993b). The implication of the social cognitive career theory is that many explicit contextual influences are integrated and influence career choice behavior, such as the strength of support and obstacles in the career choice process (Gushue & Whitson, 2006; Lent et al., 1994; Schultheiss, 2009). A person's career choice is the dynamic process of interaction with the environment. Either support or barriers from the environment will lead to a change in choice (Bennett, 2008). Career development activities involve the process of helping individuals plan their careers in concert with an organization's business strategies.

Therefore, learning experiences, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations could be applied to conceptual discussions of the manager's CPC process (Lent et al., 1994; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000; Wright & Perrone, 2008). If managers have good learning experience and establish good career self-management strategies, self-efficacy would increase. Then it is even more encouraged to develop a succession plan, in the belief that they can achieve the expected outcomes. Social cognitive career theory proposed that career choice behavior (for instance, CPC) and career objective choice will be affected by contextual variables (such as OCS) and individual variables (such as ICD in this article; Lent et al., 1994; Rogers & Creed, 2011). Thus, it is appropriate for us to draw on the social cognitive career theory to develop a research framework, which fits in with the research objectives.

2.2. OCSs and CPC

OCS should make managers more aware of their marketable characteristics and possible career paths (Cappellen & Janssens, 2010; Trevor & Nyberg, 2008). Managers are more likely to be motivated to engage in career development activities when their supervisor encourages discussions related to development and career issues, is willing to identify resources to help them with specific problems, and assists them in setting performance and career goals (Noe, 1996).

Accordingly, there are a number of positive environmental conditions, such as practical support for activities or emotional support. These conditions will increase a person's choice (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). By contrast, a nonsupportive environment will limit options (Lent, 2005; Lent et al., 2000; Lent & Brown, 1996). Managers anticipate some kind of career development advice from their supervisors (Sturges, Guest, & Davey, 2000). Organizations may want to design their career development systems in accordance with managers' career orientations and allow the managers to adjust their career paths (Bower, 2007). Organizational career planning will affect career behavior and attitudes (Aryee & Debrah, 1993). Thus, an organization-centered career development will influence corporate succession planning. We therefore hypothesize.

Hypothesis 1: OCS has a significant positive association with CPC

2.3. OCSs and affective commitment

Trevor and Nyberg (2008) argued that in the postdownsizing environment of decaying commitment and satisfaction, career development practices should do more to enhance the utility of alternative employment than to improve current employment utility. London (1993) also proposes that organizational assistance and commitment to career development activities can be instrumental in building long-term attachments of managers to their jobs, and building organizational identification. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that managers will interpret organizational development and training actions as indications of the personified organization's commitment to their progress, and they will reciprocate accordingly by showing an increased level of loyalty (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Hausknecht, Hiller, & Vance, 2008; Lee & Bruvold, 2003; Shepherd et al., 2011).

A number of studies have emphasized the importance of early experiences in the organization, including provision of training and development, for the establishment of affective commitment (Shepherd et al., 2011; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1991). In other words, career development and training activities provided by the organization have been identified as the kinds of "positive" experiences that engender affective commitment during the early years at work. Organizational career growth (career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, and remuneration growth) will affect the occupational commitment (Weng, McElroy, Morrow, & Liu, 2010; Weng & McElroy, 2012). Thus, we hypothesize.

Hypothesis 2: OCS has a significant positive association with affective commitment

2.4. ICD and CPC

Trevor and Nyberg (2008) indicated that at higher levels of ICD that enhance the search for opportunities, such as establishing career resource centers or allowing formal manager assessment, development opportunities may indeed be identified. Thus, managers should enjoy the ease of movement in the job market that alternative employment options bring, and they should be sufficiently responsible to recognize their personal needs, biases, and motives. Knowledge of one's own values and beliefs can serve as a basis for future career decisions and for the development of appropriate career strategies (Aryee, Chay, & Tan, 1994).

Having completed ICD, managers will provide great support to the company's engagements in transferring position planning for a potential employee in order to succeed to higher managerial positions (Power & Rothausen, 2003). Moreover, career planning is an ongoing process whereby an individual has salient career-related beliefs, personal growth initiative, and sets career goals (Eddleston, Baldrige, & Veiga, 2004; Robitschek & Cook, 1999). Finally, individuals identify the means to achieve goals and eventually the career success (Eddleston et al., 2004). The major focus of CPC should be on matching personal goals and opportunities that are realistically available, including planning for career path changes (Trevor & Nyberg, 2008). Thus, we hypothesize.

Hypothesis 3: ICD has a significant positive association with CPC

2.5. ICD and affective commitment

Managers' perceptions of the career opportunities available to them within organizations predict affective commitment (Morris,

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