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Developing a strategic career development model on organizational climate, career adaptability and career intentions

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ABSTRACT

Managing career development across various industries constantly changes to address varying employees' needs and it became more difficult with the career disruptions caused by the demands to deal with the environmental conditions, globalization, and output expectations. To keep up with these challenges, this article aims to discuss the methodologies involve in the development of a strategic career development model that will address the need to come up with a framework that will guide human resource management practitioners in identifying appropriate activities that will cater to the interest of employees.

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Introduction

Cultivating an organizational climate plays an important role to institutions to become adaptive to uncertainties and rapidly changing working environment caused by economic, political, and cultural changes. New conditions and trends push organizations to explore and capitalize on its human resource to develop and maintain competitive advantage (Wright et al., 2018). Various interventions have been identified to manage and help employees cope and respond to work as they are the ones greatly affected by the unpredictability of work context, career roles, and job expectations (Simosi et al., 2015).

With the recent COVID-19 pandemic, one facet of human resource management that has been greatly affected is the career development. The Career Development in a Pandemic Survey conducted by Doodle (2020) reported that forty-one percent (41%) of the respondents indicated that their career development was stalled while nine percent (9%) believed that their careers have regressed. Similarly, the July 2020 Labor Force Survey of Philippine Statistics Authority shows that 17.3% or 7.1 million employees are stated to be underemployed, which refers to persons who desire to work for additional hours, additional job or to have a new job to support their needs.

According to Wright et al. (2018), the models, methods, and theories on career development have not kept pace with the new conditions characterized by flexible work arrangements, career disruptions, and career options and expectations, which should have guided the organizations today. This poses challenges on how to mitigate impact of changing work conditions particularly the employees as they are susceptible to career shift and disruption due to lack of knowledge, opportunities, and resources to support basic needs.

Acting on these concerns, this article aims to discuss the methodologies involved in the development of a strategic career development model that will serve as a framework to enable human resource managers to align human resource initiatives to organizational objectives that will benefit both the employer and its employees. The researcher posits that when the organization cultivates an

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environment for growth and development, employees will develop high level of career adaptability that will keep them resilient to career disruptions and aim for bigger responsibilities and higher career in the organization.

Conceptual Background

Organizational Climate

Organizational climate was defined in the early literature as a subjective interpretation of the organizational characteristics and conditions (Denison, 1996; Hellriegel & Slocum, 1974). Distinctively, this construct under the discipline of psychology uses surface-level manifestations as data to employ comparative analysis to examine organizational behavior and characteristics. Through qualitative methods, climate researchers focused their studies on the perceptual measure of the effectiveness of individual and organizational practices, procedures and initiatives on the dimensions such as organizational structure, responsibility, rewards and recognition, risk management, warmth, organizational support, standards, conflict management, employee identity, among others.

Career Intentions

Career intentions is defined as the individual's desire to aim higher career in the organization (Li & Huang, 2017). It is driven by individual's personal values, psychological needs, perceived career success, and work environment (Kessler et al., 2019; Chan et al., 2013; Mignonac & Herrbach, 2003). Recent studies tackle a wider perspective on career intentions in terms of gender profile as they focus on work values, preferences, and perception about oneself.

Career Adaptability

Career adaptability was introduced by Savickas (1997) as a proposed central construct to replace career maturity in Donald Super's life-space theory on career development. He defined it as an ability and readiness of a person to adjust and respond to unpredictable changes in the work transitions and working conditions. The career abilities have four subscales namely concern, control, curiosity and confidence. These subscales were evaluated to improve and provide relevant insights to introduce various career models to address changes on work conditions, developmental tasks, and career transitions (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012).

Career Development Model

Many scholars agree that establishing a system on managing employees' career and professional development is a strategic approach to attract and retain talents in the organization. While designing a career and professional development plan for employee has been a practice for quite a long time, several concerns on its implementation were still being raised across various organizations (Graham & Nafukho, 2004).

Studies were conducted on career and professional development to maximize the technical workforce of different industry types and sizes, its workforce demographic profile particularly age, gender, and job position. It was found out the career stages vary when gender and age are to be considered. Women tend to enjoy more the quality experiences in both work and family domains compared with men (Koekemoer & Crafford, 2019). When in late career stage, it was observed that the need to be true to themselves and their values is increasing while its importance decline for men. However, the need to participate in intrinsically motivating work decline as both gender progress through their late careers. Men, on the other hand, follow a linear career but has evolved to have a recent preference on project-based work (Heslin & Ashford, 2020). Workplace diversity, particularly on the different employee generations, shows the need for a customized framework on career and professional development that will cater the unique and changing demands of the workforce. In a study conducted by (Koekemoer & Crafford, 2019), generation Y employees from an IT company are attracted to companies that provide opportunities for learning and development, job varieties and career opportunities, and competitive salaries.

A Proposed Research and Analysis

This article presents the exploratory sequence of a descriptive-correlational research to establish and develop a proposed career development model. Specifically, this methodology will determine the relationships between organizational climate, career adaptability and career intention. The numerical data will be utilized to establish the mediating role of career adaptability and moderating role of organizational climate. The proposed data gathering procedure is consists of five stages:

1. Planning. This stage aims to identify the factors that may influence the employees' career intention Utilizing organizational data such as organizational climate aligns various human resource programs and initiatives strategically on the attainment of organizational objective. Hedge and Reneer (2017) emphasized the importance of developing models that focus on organizational factors such as employee diversity, career performance behavior, and organizational support to employee career advancement.
2. Development. Refers to the development of instruments on organizational climate and career intention through a semi-structured interview with the Heads of Departments and key officers in-charge of career development of target participants' organization. This phase is a strategic approach to capture organizations' objectives through its organizational climate and align it with the career opportunities in the organization. Conducting interview with Heads of Departments and key officers in-charge of career development ensures the link of organizations' objectives and priorities and the proposed career

development model. Result of the interview will undergo thematic analysis to determine key points in the development of instruments on organizational climate and career intentions.

3. **Validation.** This stage ensures that the developed and adapted instruments are reliable and valid. The questionnaires, prior the implementation, will undergo construct validity where subject matter experts evaluate the items whether it measure the constructs that it intends to measure. The questionnaire will then be subjected to a pilot run for the reliability test. Cronbach's alpha coefficient will be used to test internal reliability of the questionnaires.
4. **Data Gathering.** This stage involves the deployment of survey questionnaire to target participants to determine their perception of organization climate, level of career adaptability, and their career intention. The questionnaires on organizational climate, career intentions and the adapted career adaptability from Porfeli & Savickas (2012) shall be deployed to target participants.
5. **Model Development.** In this stage, the numerical data will be analyzed to determine the significant relationships between organizational climate, career adaptability and career intentions. Results are essential inputs on developing a strategic career development model that will address organization's unique requirements.

The data gathered will be presented in tables, graphs, and figures. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, standard deviation, and percentage will be utilized to present the participants' profile in terms of: demographic, level of perceived organizational climate, career adaptability, and career intentions.

To analyze the data and test the hypothesized relationships in the study, Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling will be utilized using the WarpPLS software. These analyses will enable to establish the mediating role of career adaptability between organizational climate and career intentions and the moderating role of organizational climate between career adaptability and career intentions.

Proposed Career Development Model

Designing an effective career and professional plan requires certain criteria. According to Heupt (2017), career development plan should be intentional, intelligent and incremental. It is important that factors such as ownership, direction and priority, and experience will facilitate development in the profession. There are three major components of career planning - self-insight, organizational information and goal setting, action planning, and plan implementation. These components will help employees to set attainable goals and monitor their progress to advance on their careers (Niles, 2011).

Figure 1: Proposed Career Development Model

The result of the statistical analysis will serve as relevant inputs in the development of the strategic career development model. Figure 1 provides a glimpse of a career development model that may serve as framework by following the proposed methodology. The model presents the interplay between the demographic profile, organizational climate, and employee behavior (career adaptability and career intentions). The model may be supported by several theories such as Donald Super's Career Developmental Stages, Field Theory and Social Cognitive Theory. The interplay of two separate agents: organizational factors and employee behavior constitutes the formation of the organizational climate. The environment that the interaction cultivates contribute on the employees' development of career goals/intentions and career choices. Hence, the amount of support they receive from the environment (e.g. organization, family) including the factor on demographic profile (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity) determine the employees' positive or negative perception of career orientation and opportunities.

The proposed methodology will allow human resource practitioners and other researches to test the proposed methodology to come up with a strategic career model that will address the unique requirements of their organization. The methodology may also be utilized using other human resource analytics and development new insights on the organizational level data as it relates with human resource practices.

Conclusion

Employees are faced with various career choices such as accepting various tasks, training and development, and promotion offers without proper guidance and planning which sometimes result to career shift, stagnation, and disruption. Developing a strategic career development will be most beneficial for the institution and the employees as it will both address their needs. Clear career goals and objectives promotes employees' strong career identity. While on the other hand, the institution with a career development framework aligned to address their objectives will boost organizational efficiency.

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