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Contemporary Career Development for Human Resource Development

การพัฒนาอาชีพยุคร่วมสมัยสำหรับการพัฒนา ทรัพยากรมนุษย์

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บทคัดย่อ

การพัฒนาอาชีพเป็นหนึ่งในสามขอบข่ายของงานการพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์ เนื่องจากผลกระทบของการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสังคมและเศรษฐกิจในยุคนี้ต่อการพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์ ทำให้การพัฒนาอาชีพได้รับความสนใจมากกว่ายุคอื่นที่ปรากฏ บทความชิ้นนี้เสนอบทบาทขององค์การและบุคคลในการพัฒนาอาชีพยุคร่วมสมัย ท่ามกลางความไม่แน่นอนของสภาพแวดล้อมในการทำงาน ทำให้องค์การควรช่วยพนักงานในการพัฒนาอาชีพในด้านความสามารถในการถูกจ้างงาน สัญญาทางใจ และรางวัลภายในและภายนอก นอกจากนี้ เนื่องด้วยธรรมชาติของงานที่ไม่สามารถคาดการณ์ได้ในยุคปัจจุบัน แต่ละบุคคลควรปรับปรุงคุณภาพและทักษะในการทำงานเพื่อบริหารจัดการอาชีพของตนเอง

คำสำคัญ: การพัฒนาอาชีพ การพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์

Abstract

Career development is one of three areas of the Human Resource Development (HRD) field. Due to the effect of social and economic changes on HRD in this era, interest in career development has increased significantly. This paper proposes roles for both organizations and individuals to address contemporary career development issues. In an uncertain work environment, an organization should assist employees in achieving career development in terms of employability, psychological contracts, and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. In addition, the current unexpected nature of careers requires individuals to improve their qualities and skills in order to manage their own careers.

Keywords: Career Development, Human Resource Development

Introduction

“Human resource development (HRD) is the integrated use of training and development, career development, and organizational development to improve individual and organizational effectiveness”

(McLagan, 1989: 53).

Based on the aforementioned definition of HRD, career development is one of three areas of the HRD field to which an organization should pay attention. Although career development is theoretically included in the area of HRD, in practice HRD professionals appear not to give sufficient attention to career development in terms of either research or practice (McDonald and Hite, 2005: 418; Egan, Upton, and Lynham, 2006: 442). However, there is a trend towards an increasing interest in career

development due to economic and social changes. These changes are affecting the nature of work, such as uncertain work conditions, loss of employer and employee loyalty, and job losses (McDonald and Hite, 2005: 418). In addition, the changes in the nature of work are stimulating challenges in addressing modern careers in which “career development is more relevant than ever” (McDonald and Hite, 2005: 418).

Career development consists of activities and processes for career planning and management which require collaboration between employees and organizations. From the traditional perspective of career development, an organization has a responsibility to assist employees in planning and managing their careers within a predictable organizational environment and stable jobs (McDonald and Hite, 2005: 420).

However, because of economic and social changes, the organization's and individual's responsibilities toward career development need to be adjusted. This paper proposes roles for both organizations and individuals to address contemporary career development issues. In an uncertain work environment, an organization should assist employees in achieving career development in terms of employability, psychological contracts, and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. In addition, the current uncertain nature of careers requires individuals to improve their qualities and skills in order to manage their own careers. Finally, examples of Thai companies employing a contemporary career role are discussed.

An Organization's Role in Career Development

Organizations have changed their structures from hierarchical, mechanistic, and bureaucratic to flat and boundaryless, so careers have adapted in response to the changing structure and environment (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994: 307). A boundaryless organization allows information, energy, resources, and ideas to flow through inside and outside the organization (Pang, 2008). Therefore, a boundaryless organization is highly fluid and adaptive by offering interaction and networking (Boundaryless Forum, 2008). Indeed, the presence of

widespread information technologies affects the boundaryless organization, which in turn affects boundaryless careers. With boundaryless careers which no longer offer job security, an organization should actively assist employees to ensure employability, create a psychological contract rather than a formal contract, and focus on a new form of motivation instead of purely monetary. Therefore, in contemporary career development, an organization has a responsibility in response to three issues, employability, psychological contracts, and intrinsic rewards. The details are articulated in the next section.

Employability

With the unpredictable work environment, a permanent job with one employer for the entire span of a person's working life is no longer likely. On the other hand, "boundaryless careers" (Kuijpers and Scheerens, 2006: 304) means that career development goes beyond the boundaries of organizations and concentrates on employability. Boundaryless careers have received increased attention lately. In fact, an organization should help employees to secure skills that create employability rather than jobs security (McDonald and Hite, 2005: 421).

To create employability, an organization should emphasize informal learning, supervisory support, and networking

opportunities. Based on McDonald and Hite (2005: 428), formal learning formed through training classes and workshops is important for traditional career development; however, for modern careers, informal learning is more effective learning. Informal learning includes on-the-job training, working in teams, interactions and meetings with customers, peers, and supervisors (McDonald and Hite, 2005: 427). In addition, McDonald, et al. (ibid) proposes that it is an organization's role to develop an informal learning culture and facilitate the learning process. Supervisory support also provides a vital impact on career development. Supervisors can support employees success in career development through coaching, advocating, providing performance feedback, career planning, and developing career opportunities (McDonald and Hite, 2005: 429). Finally, to promote employees' employability, an organization should provide networking opportunities for employees to help handling work life issues and serve as a resource bank for career information.

Psychological Contracts

Since an organization is no longer able to promise job security to employees due to the uncertain work conditions, loyalty to a single organization is no longer the best choice. In contemporary careers, Baruch (1999: 443) suggests an organization

promote a "psychological contract" as a substitute for loyalty. A psychological contract is a crucial aspect of the new CPM (career planning and management system) for the 2000s (Baruch, 1999: 436). The psychological contract would be the unspoken promise of what the employer gives and what the employees give in return. Indeed, this aspect affects successful organizational changes. When an organization perceives employees' contributions and employees perceive fair treatment in return, they have the potential to engage and have a willingness to take higher demand tasks during organizational change processes. Therefore, the cycle of new career development starts with the establishment of a mutual agreement—a psychological contract between employees and organizations.

According to the aforementioned psychological contract concept, an organization should ensure that it treats its employees fairly. McDonald and Hite (2005: 435) discuss fairness as one of the organizational support mechanisms which are currently critical elements for career development. They suggest that an organization should provide fair career development opportunities and workplace justice for employees at all levels in an organization. In other words, if the employees perceive unfair treatment from their organization, they will likely be less

motivated, loyal, and engaged with their work (Clutterbuck, 2003: 19). Therefore, the employees' perception is an important issue for a psychological contract. The employees' good perception toward their organization can be bolstered by engaging in a work-life balanced policy. McDonald and Hite (2005: 435) argue that taking care of a work-life balance supports fostering employees' fairness perceptions. Indeed, in terms of career development, work-family conflicts play an important role in career choices, aspirations, and patterns—particularly in regards to women's careers (McDonald and Hite, 2005; 426). An organization should promote fair work-life integration in the areas of building networks and structures to socio-emotionally support work-life conflict issues (McDonald and Hite, 2005: 435).

Cutterbuck (2003: 29) states work-life balance can strengthen a psychological contract in terms of a set of values that create a sense of worth, respect and belief. For a sense of worth, work-life balance determines employees' perception of expected rewards such as a good opportunity for career advancement, training, fair benefits, and a reasonable wage. If an organization responds to the above-mentioned employees' expectations, the psychological contract between the employees and the organization will be solid. Regarding a sense of respect, acknowledging that employees have a life

outside their work is a key to creating a psychological contract. Additionally, a sense of respect can be built through recognition, praise, listening to employees' ideas, and accepting individual differences. Finally, an alignment of an organization's policy and procedure and its actual actions demonstrates a sense of belief in a personal set of values. For example, an organization should reward a supervisor who cares about employees and their families under his/her control (Clutterbuck, 2003: 22).

In conclusion, building psychological contracts by fair treatment regarding career opportunities and work-life balance is an important issue in response to career development at present.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards

Besides creating employability and psychological contracts, an organization must ensure that employees are satisfied with their work conditions, including intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. From the traditional view of careers, an organization focuses on motivating employees through extrinsic rewards such as wage, salary, incentives, promotions and advancement. However, from a modern career view, research reveals that employees are no longer interested in advancement or promotion in terms of long term goals within a single organization (Walton and Mallon, 2004: 78). Rather, they

pay more attention to short term goals relating to project achievement that can increase opportunities to access higher-level projects (Walton and Mallon, 2004: 85).

In addition, many recent phenomena in business reveal that people seek intrinsic rewards more than monetary rewards (Tishler, 1999: 273). Indeed, after recent trends toward downsizing, restructuring, layoffs, and 9/11, people feel their lack of job security and are concerned with their general life uncertainty. As a result, employees search for intrinsic rewards such as self-efficacy and meaningfulness rather than position and advancement in their organization.

In terms of self-efficacy, an organization should build employees' self-efficacy paralleling the creation of employability. As previously mentioned, employability is knowledge and skills which employees can transfer to other jobs, but most importantly, an organization should help employees bolster self-efficacy—the belief in their ability to apply their possessed knowledge and skills elsewhere.

According to Schyns (2004: 248), self-efficacy is a determinant of preparedness for occupational change. Preparedness for occupational change is defined as employees' willingness to acquire higher task demands in organizational change processes. Obviously,

preparedness for occupational change plays a vital role in uncertain work conditions and organizational changes in contemporary careers. Schyns (2004: 249) proposes that self-efficacy influences three stages of organizational change. First, prior to the organizational change stage, self-efficacy can motivate employees to learn new tasks and exercise initiative behaviors. Second, during organizational change, employees with high self-efficacy and less persistence have high potential to overcome obstacles appearing in change processes. Last, after an organizational change, employees with high self-efficacy expend more effort on new tasks.

To enhance self-efficacy, learning is the key factor. In fact, individuals who reach the learning level which allows them to integrate the organizational learning experience into both professional and personal aspects of their lives will have greater self-efficacy (McDonald and Hite, 2005: 428).

In addition, an organization should provide leaders with training on how to delegate or empower employees to achieve difficult tasks, how to be successful models as mentors or coaches, and how to be good counselors to support and encourage employees during difficult times in organizational change processes. In addition,

the increased self-efficacy for leaders is an important step to enhance employees' self-efficacy. Luthans and Peterson (2002: 377) provide three specific approaches for how to develop self-efficacy in practicing managers: they are *guided mastery*, *cognitive mastery modeling*, and *self-regulatory competences*. These approaches are adapted from Bandura's effective intervention for personal change (Bandura, 1995: 9). In Bandura's work, *guided mastery* refers to one's experience which assists to bolster his/her self-efficacy through his/her successful performance. Luthans and Peterson (2002: 377) propose that *guided mastery* includes instructive modeling to acquire a skill or competency and transfer the skill back to the job to insure self-directed managerial success. Basically, activities which allow employees the repeated opportunities for success are necessary to encourage guided mastery.

Second, *cognitive mastery modeling* is associated with thinking and learning skills that enhance a manager's efficacy for decision-making and problem-solving. Finally, the development of *self-regulatory competence* significantly involves a variety of interlinked self-referent processes such as self-monitoring, self-efficacy appraisal, personal goal setting, and the use of self-motivation incentives. Bandura (1995: 31) argues that self-regulation requires not only

one's act of will, but training on how to influence personal skills and how to motivate, monitor, and manage them. Besides guided mastery, cognitive mastery, and self-regulation, social influence (Bandura, 1995: 67) should be included as the fourth approach. Human beings' behaviors are shaped by social groups and norms. Positive and negative reaction from other people influences one's behavior. To employ this concept in a work context, an organization should ensure that positive reinforcements are built into a social norm. For example, recognition of employees' successful behavior will reinforce or bolster their self-efficacy.

The meaningfulness of work has received increased attention since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (Cascio and Young, 2005: 49). A sense of meaning implies a fit between a person's values, beliefs, and needs and his/her work role and goals (Biberman and Whitty, 1997: 131). In this case, Wiersma (2001: 497) proposes that spirituality in terms of searching for meaning in life influences career behavior, especially career transition. As a matter of fact, there is a strong connection between meaningful work and possible efficiency in career transition.

An organization should provide opportunities for employees to search for

meaning in their work life through career counseling, spiritual activities and community involvement. Career counseling can help employees to identify how to spend their lives and which projects are worth their time (Wiersma, 2001: 497). Besides career counseling, “spiritual practice”, the practice of the wisdom and technique of philosophical traditions such as Buddhism Meditation and Transcendental Meditation is another means to seek the meaningfulness of work and life (Cacioppe, 1997: 335). Many organizations, such as Ford Motor, AT&T, Chase Manhattan Bank, DuPont, and Apple Computer, create programs to bring spirituality to the workplace. For example, AT&T allows the middle managers off for a three-day training that aims to help the managers better understand themselves and be able to listen to their employees (Cavanagh, 1999: 88). An organization should provide spiritual activities to assist employees in fulfilling their sense of meaning, which influences efficacy in career transition. Lastly, community involvement can help employees search for meaningfulness outside of work lives.

An Individual’s Role in Career Development

With reference to traditional career development, individuals have been responsible for their own careers by creating

personal career goals and plans, and managing their own career paths. Later, the responsibility of career development shifted from the individual to the organization (Baruch, 2004: 59). However, currently career development requires individuals to take care of their careers again (Baruch, 2004: 59). Since the responsibility of career development has shifted to the individual, there are qualities called “intelligent careers” and other skills which individuals should possess in order to manage their own careers in the contemporary world.

Intelligent Careers

According to Baruch (2004: 61), modern careers require individual qualities which are different from those in the past. These qualities are called “intelligent careers” (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994: 308). The intelligent careers are required in terms of career competencies. The new kinds of career competencies are required for a present career context in the areas of multiple changes, restructuring, downsizing, and global markets because they assist employees to be adaptive to the rapid changes in the work environments. DeFillippi and Arthur (1994: 308) propose that intelligent careers consist of six competency elements. They are:

- 1) Know why: knowing values, attitudes, internal needs, identity, and life style;

2) Know how: knowing how to acquire career competencies, skills, and capabilities;

3) Know whom: knowing how to create networking and relationships and how to find the right people for help;

4) Know what: knowing opportunities, threats, and requirements;

5) Know where: knowing where to obtain training and advancement; and

6) Know when: know timing of choices and activities.

The intelligent careers assist individuals to navigate their own careers in this era.

Employees who can integrate their know-why the changes happen, know-how to acquire job knowledge and skills with others, know-whom to enlarge the networks, know-what opportunities for their career advancement, know-where to obtain those career opportunities, and know-when the right time to approach the opportunities will possess a competitive advantage for the contemporary market. Organizations can also assist their employees to acquire these six competencies through creating a flow of communication, implementing training courses related to job-knowledge and skills, encouraging sharing knowledge and information among employees, and facilitating network-building by providing access to available career information.

Skills for Career Opportunities

In modern careers, employees should realize that their jobs are uncertain and insecure with fluctuating work conditions, therefore they should always prepare to address a situation requiring a transfer to a new job. As a result, employability is the most valuable transferable skills which employees should possess in contemporary careers. Employees should take advantages of all programs that an organization provides to enhance employees' learning and create employability. Besides employability, since new models of careers focus on career freedom and independence, employees should be able to set their own personal goals and create their career paths (Walton and Mallon, 2004: 84). In fact, research reveals that for modern career development, individuals need to construct their own career meaning and have work aims and objectives that are more personal (Walton and Mallon, 2004: 84). Equipped with personal objectives, individuals are able to plan their own career paths and have a specific guide to prepare useful skills and knowledge needed in their careers. Consequently, the role of the individual to enhance employability includes acquiring learning and creating their own personal goals.

Additionally, Michell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999: 118) propose five skills which individuals need to recognize in order to prepare for career opportunities. They are:

“1) Curiosity: exploring new learning opportunities,

2) Persistence: exerting effort despite setbacks,

3) Flexibility: changing attitudes and circumstances,

4) Optimism: viewing new opportunities as possible and attainable,

5) Risk taking: taking action in the face of uncertain outcomes.”

Those skills can be advised, taught, and practiced; however, the entry skills can also depend on interpersonal communications, networking, and social support building (Michell, Levin, and Krumboltz, 1999: 118). Nevertheless, the five skills are useful for employees who may possibly face unexpected events and changes in their careers.

Examples of Contemporary Career Development in a Thai Context

This section discusses some examples of Thai organizations who take up an organizational role of contemporary career development. They are the Siam Cement

Group, Asia Precision Company, and Somboon Group.

The Siam Cement Group (SCG), manufacturing and distributing cement, chemicals, paper, and building materials, has a reputation as one of the best companies in Thailand in the area of taking good care of its employees. SCG believes that “employees are the most important and valuable resources” (HR Center, 2008). Its human resource strategies demonstrate the organizational role for contemporary career development in terms of employability, psychological contract, and extrinsic rewards. For employability, The Siam Cement Group invests approximately Bht. 400-500 million baht per year conducting training and development courses. It also concentrates on conducting on the job training and provides financial support for employees’ seminars and short training courses overseas. Additionally, it continuously develops the employees’ competency through significant training and development courses which in turn provide an opportunity for the employees to acquire employability. Beyond that, its interesting philosophy of training is “*Play, Learn, and Plen (Fun)*” (Case Study of Four Hs: A Tool for HR Leading an Organization through Crises, 2008: 37). That means SCG values informal learning, a critical key for the creation of employability.

For a psychological contract, the Siam Cement Group employs a “Merit System” for its human resource processes and procedures which focus on an equal opportunity and competency in recruiting and promoting the excellent and good persons (HR Center, 2008). The merit system is opposite to patronage/spoiled system which is based on favoritism. Indeed, the company engages in fair treatment in terms of promotion, recognition, and career advancement. Obviously, these practices create a strong psychological contract between the organization and its employees.

Finally, intrinsic rewards are recognized in the Siam Cement Group. It conducts a program like “Basic Competency for SCG Young Talent” which focuses on team learning, innovation, transferred knowledge, and achievement. This program provides an opportunity for the young employees to succeed in their career which in turn builds their self-efficacy through experiences in this program.

Besides this organization role, the Siam Cement Group assists employees to exercise their individual roles by possessing intelligent careers of know-why, how, whom, what, where, and when through a program like “Manager Self Service Function (MSS)” (HR Center, 2008). This program provides access for career information and the employees’ personal files through “e-Profile,

e-Compensation, e-Performance, e-Development, e-Recruit, and Salary Planning,” which further allows them to control and manage their career path.

Another Thai company which can be considered a role model for creating a psychological contract is Asia Precision Co. Ltd., a mold design and production business. Based on an Academic Seminar 2008, ‘HR leading an Organization through crises,’ conducted by the College of Human Resource Development, NIDA, Bangkok, Thailand, Mr. Karoonkonsakul, a manager of the Asia Precision company articulated that “...to teach our employees to be givers to the company and society, we need to be a giver role model by demonstrating giving back to our employees” (Case Study of Four Hs: A Tool for HR Leading an Organization through Crises, 2008: 37). That creates an alignment of the company’s policy and its actual actions which in turn address employees’ expectation and builds a psychological contract. Additionally, Asia Precision company focuses on “fair treatment” (Case Study of Four Hs: A Tool for HR Leading an Organization through Crises, 2008: 37). Indeed, the fair benefits are provided for employees in terms of monetary and non-monetary.

Finally, Somboon Group, from the automotive parts manufacturing industry, believes that “*human beings are the most*

valuable asset for an organization" (HR Center, 2008). This company treats its employees as members of a family. The program that encourages a psychological contract includes Quality of Work Life (QWL). QWL aims to create happiness and well being for the employees' in the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual areas (HR Center, 2008). Additionally, some activities such as a school in a factory, competency management, a learning center, team-based learning, and knowledge management, boost employability.

Conclusion

In uncertain work environments, career development should be considered as a core area of HRD through which organizations can assist employees in achieving success in their modern careers. The role of organizations in career development includes addressing three issues: employability, psychological contracts, and rewards, both intrinsic and extrinsic. In addition, individuals should consider possessing new qualities regarding intelligent careers and new skills in terms of employability and the five skills for career opportunities. The collaboration between an organization and employees assists both in succeeding in contemporary career development.

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