Defining Career Success and Career Resources: Analytical Essay

Success in any career is the main prospect where everything takes off. In this research. Success is termed as the “accomplishment of an aim or purpose”, but when we study the psychological subjectivities in inside the mind of an employee working in an organization, the whole meaning of the word success becomes a conundrum. Success has transitioned from a traditional career development model to a no boundaries career development model (Defillippi & Arthur, 2006).

Subjective career success can be understood in two ways. First, it’s better to have an integral subjective assessment for career success which includes the career satisfaction, overall perception of success by an individual; the second explanation for subjective career success is apart from objective factors which include the accomplishments which are objectively observable like income of a person or the authority which that person holds that require additional subjective assessments which is determined by the psychological approach by an individual towards success (Shockley & Ureksoy, 2015).

Career success is a mix where an employee observes, realize, measure and verify everything in his/her nature and then directly applies it to experience. The nature of the employee defines four major things in his psychology that have indirect contact with career success. Four dimensions of subjective success are measured by: fulfilling work, financial rewards, recognition, and authority. To conceptualize and evaluate career success, one must be first self-aware of realization goals, self-identity and perceived opportunities for promotion (Heslin, 2005).

Individuals with a strong sense of career commitment and increased levels of career expectations may make significant investments in their careers (Srikanth & Israel, 2012). The psychological assumption set by any culture towards any niche of career has a direct impact on an individual's perception of a successful career. The regional factor plays an important role in the expectation of an individual leading to career success.

1.1 Defining Career and Career Success

“Career is actually the unfolding of an employee working experience over time in a sequence on which his/her success stands” (Arthur, Hall, & Lawrence, 1989). It can be defined in two fundamentally different ways also. One is subjective career and the other is an objective career. Subjective career is the individuals own sense of his/her career and what is it becoming over time (Stebbins, 1970), on the other hand it is the objective career where the success criteria is measured by the public observation of one’s status, position and situations ‘that serve as landmarks for gauging a person’s movement through the social milieu’ (Barley, 1989).

Shockley (2015) described career as “the individually-perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of a person’s life.” This definition allows us to consider work-related experiences in contemporary society, where individuals are becoming less bound to a single organization (Shockley & Ureksoy,

2015).

Career success is an outcome of a person's own career experiences. As the experience grows with the passage of time, so does the success rate increases? It is work-related from both the viewpoint of an employee and also the public. Success is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary in two manners i.e. 'the attainment of an object according to one's desire', and 'the prosperous achievement of something attempted'. In career success, this definition depicts that an employee when starts his/her career, as per their set of goals is also determined. The achievement of those goals can be said to be their particular career success.

Subjective career success may be defined as the individual's internal apprehension and evaluation of his or her career, across any dimensions that are important to that individual (Van Maanen, 1977). Every employee has his/her own aspirations based on the location of work, an environment suitable for productive work, the importance of work in relation to personal and family time, status, access to learning, etc. Based on the fulfillment of these an employee can achieve subjective career success.

In contrast to this, objective career success may be defined as an external perspective that delineates more or less tangible indicators of an individual's career situation. These may involve occupation, family situation, mobility, task attributes, income, and job level (Van Maanen, 1977). The objective career is publicly accessible and concerned with social role and official position. Writers who see career success from this perspective view it in structural terms (Wilensky, 1961) and emphasize people's propensity to organize around status differences (Nicholson, 1998). An objective career is concerned mostly with the social prospect of employee career and less with personal attributes.

1.1.1 Concern of Organization

Career success is not only a concern of an individual but also to the organization, if an employee is successful at his/her career it will automatically result in the success of the organization. Subjective-Objective career success of an individual interrelates over time with each other. Career success being the psychological and work-related outcomes of an individuals' career over time with experience, it comprises of both objective successes such as salary or hierarchy position in an organization and subjective successes such as the evaluation of an individual's career by himself/herself (Abele & Spurk 2009).

1.2 Career Resources as Correlates of Career Success

The psychological career resources for an employee's success in his/her career can be defined by the concept of consciousness they may possess. According to Coetzee (2009), the concept of consciousness is career-related cognitions i.e. holding a perception of career success, awareness of oneself and self-evaluation of their respective careers. These psychological correlates, help an individual to realize their career goals and develop an attitude that supports and eventually transforms into a career resource for their career success.

A research conducted by Emmerling and Cherniss (2003) indicated that the relations at work with other employees and the emotional aspects triggered at a psychological level of an individual during career decision-making process plays an important role as a career resource.

The amount of self-exploration that one does determines the pathway at which he/she is going to find the best career option for themselves.

Hirschi (2017) during his research of assessing the key predictors for career success concluded that career resources are the key stepping stones to predict one's career success in their career. The key predictors that were highlighted are as below:

1.2.1 Human Capital Career Resources

1.2.1.1 Occupational Expertise

The initial assessed career resource is the occupational expertise that an individual possesses. It is the extent to which knowledge and expertise regarding their occupation are held by an employee. The criteria set by the employers for employability may vary in space, time and employers across the globe, they prefer individuals who have a greater level of understanding regarding their specific field of expertise along with the knowledge that is possessed by them, these individuals rank higher for employability than the individuals with lower level of occupational expertise (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005).

1.2.1.2 Job Market Knowledge

An individual with a job market knowledge of the employment trends is much more self-aware of their psychological well-being. With the growing sector of technology and ever-changing economical weather of organizations at corporate levels, the adaptability for a career requires to cope with these variations and use their job market up-to-date knowledge as a career resource to success (Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, & Schneider, 2012).

1.2.1.3 Soft Skills

The broader the range of skills that are with the recent times and are presently reliable for moving ahead not just at an individual level but also at an organizational level can create competencies that are relevant to a broader range of occupation (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005).

1.2.2 Environmental Career Resources

1.2.2.1 Career Opportunities

Career opportunities are skill development, sponsorship, and promotions in an organization. All the interesting set of opportunities provided by an organization can attract a high level of individuals who are willing to work harder for the attainment of these prospects. The relationship between human capital and organizational opportunities can create an environment which is more suitable for progression. Gender plays an important role, the correlation is higher in women than in men. (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005)

1.2.2.2 Organizational Career Support

It is the support provided by an organization to an employee for career development purposes. Conservation of resources perspective on career hurdles and salary attainment set by an organization can create success which is directly related to employee’s success along with the

organization. The conservation of resources theory guides us towards better organizational support for developing an environment which will remove the conventional hurdle in achieving success (Ng et al, 2014a).

1.2.2.3 Job Challenge

The extent to which an employee can develop valued skills and perform at a higher level than the previous version of themselves creates a much more challenging environment for doing their respective jobs. It is a self-related degree to assess at which level the job itself is interesting. Employees view their work environments as unfavorable when they are deprived of new job challenges and fair treatment thus creating high levels of stress and job insecurity (Ng et al, 2014b).

1.2.2.4 Social Career Support

The environmental impact of social nature can have both a positive and negative effect on an individual's career. If an employee feels supported by their social presence which includes organizational activities, management theories in place, attitude of their fellow employee’s and the support than an organization shows when an employee is doing good by awarding bonuses, salary increases and promotions, it will indicate a healthy satisfaction level as the individual will feel supported in their career (Ng et al, 2005; Ng et al, 2014a; Ng et al, 2014b).

1.2.3 Motivational Career Resources

1.2.3.1 Career Involvement

Cooper (2005) compiled the construct of work commitment and tested it among the employees in the corporate sector. He concluded that the best work commitment was shown by those employees who were completely involved in their work. Individuals who show professional commitment, occupational commitment, career salience, career involvement, professionalism, affective occupational commitment, continuance occupational commitment, normative occupational commitment have a higher rate of success than those who are not involved in their work at a psychological level. The interaction between job involvement of an employee and organizational commitment towards establishing a motivational environment can be a key predictor of career success and can be identified as a career resource (Cooper-Hakim et al, 2005).

1.2.3.2 Career Confidence

The individual's positive state of psychology can be characterized by the confidence i.e. self-efficacy showed by an individual during challenging tasks as the necessary effort to achieve those goals depicts the confidence one has to adapt under certain circumstances for career success. The belief of developing a successful career regardless of any occupation is termed as career confidence. According to mentoring theory, a mentor can help through psychological support in developing the competence, confidence, and self-esteem of an employee within an organization (Savickas et al, 2012; Day et al, 2004).

1.2.3.3 Career Clarity

The clarity in one's career comes through career insight with is a part of career motivation. Career motivation through mentoring can create an insight about an employee's goals they might want to achieve in that organization. It helps them get realistic about their career and consists of establishing clear, feasible career goals and realizing their strengths and weaknesses. Career Competencies Indicator (CCI) used to assess career competencies (CCs) suggests that career guidance is very necessary to jointly predict both subjective and objective career success. (Day et al, 2004; Francis-Smythe, Haase, Thomas et al, 2013)

1.2.4 Career Management Behaviors

1.2.4.1 Networking

It is the extent to which social contacts are built, maintained, and utilized to promote one's career development. Knowing the dimensions of career-related networks and the different ways an individual can use their networks can mold their approach towards their careers. Networking involves setting up contacts that are relevant to one's career. (Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer, Huibers et al, 2012)

1.2.4.2 Career Exploration

Work exploration refers to an orientation toward aligning one's own identity and competencies with the values and competencies required in a specific work situation. It is the extent to which when an individual will turn towards all career options at an informational level. It can be said that career exploration is "actively exploring and searching for work-related and career-related opportunities on the internal and external labor market" (Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer, Huibers et al, 2012).

1.2.4.3 Learning

The facilities are provided by the organization to support the weight of its growth with ever-changing the world at a global level for learning. Learning activities set-up by an organization can lead to career development purposes. Employees who are encouraged to manage their learning work have a greater level of relevant knowledge, skills and are up-to-date at all times (Kuijpers et al, 2006).

1.3 Proactive Personality

Proactive personality suggests an active mental inclination towards work and tendency to improve given work methods and criteria along with constructing personal faculties to meet future work demands (Frese, Kring, Soose et al, 1996). It includes behaviors like taking initiatives and taking hold (Phelps et al, 1999) and is directly associated with the understanding of the task (Parker Jackson et al, 1997). Proactive personality comprises of thirst for knowledge likelihood and indulgence in the learning activities. Based on a strong theoretical rationale, it suggests adding proactive personality into the variables that determine career success.

Proactive personality is positively associated with both self-reported subjective and objective indicators of career success. Proactive people transform their organization's mission into something which is bigger, they take it upon themselves to find and solve problems, and they

have an urging need to have an impact on the world around them. Less proactive people are passive and reactive, they tend to adapt to the circumstances than to change them (Seibert et al, 1999).