Understanding career planning: A literature review

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Abstract

**Purpose:** This study tries to explore and elaborate the role of career planning in routine life activities.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Detailed literature support was added to explain the vivid concept of career planning comprising of its impact over job commitment and performance of employee.

**Conclusion:** The study after detailed discussion reveals that career planning encompasses minor and major aspects of career of one’s life as it starts from adolescents and concludes at experienced life

**Keywords:** Career Planning, Job Commitment, Employee Performance, Academic Contribution

**JEL Classification:** O15, J24, J28

Introduction

Different authors’ views defining Career Planning:

Hanis et al., (2012) in a group presentation has defined career planning in these words:

- Career is defined as person’s course or progress through life.
- Career planning is continues life long process of developmental experiences.
- Activities and action that an employee takes to achieve their individual career goals in career development.
- Career planning and development is the process of managing life, learning and work.
- It is an approach to match employee goal.
- It is a learning process.

Career Planning is an on-going process where:

- Explore and know the interests and abilities
- Strategically plan for career goals
- Create future work success

They also defined the various purposes of career planning and career development
Through proper planning of one’s career a management can enjoy the healthy support of more develop and goal oriented employees and consistently looking deeply into employees concerns can enable them to enhance their job performance and to take advantage from future opportunities. It is only possible when they are entertained with full management support for securing their job and status.

Career Planning has been defined in different terms by Antariksa, Y. (2007).

1. Career planning is the process of setting individual career objectives and creatively developing activities that will be achieved by them.
2. Career Planning is the employee’s counterpart to the organization’s overall human resource planning activity.

It can also be seen as a personal process consisting of three criteria:

I. Broad Life Planning
II. Development Planning
III. Performance Planning

Employees are ultimately responsible for the development of their own career. It creates the awareness in them that they are responsible for their own career and this awareness compel to construct plans that will enable them to accomplish goals, analyze potential career areas, and determine if they possess the skills competencies and knowledge necessary to be considered serious candidates for such positions ( Antariksa, Y. 2007).
Karen Pagsoligan, (2012) has defined Career Planning as:

It is the deliberate process of knowing who you are so that you can be sure of where you want to go or what you want to be at different point in the future.

He has also defined five steps of Career Planning. (In sequence):

- Self-Assessment
- Explore work/Career Options
- Narrow down list of work/career options
- Decide or choose the best options
- Set a career goal

A study by (Dodand Hooley, 2015) argue that though career guidance is primarily concerned with the individual it also offers major social and economic benefits and these benefits justify the public investment in the area. Careerguidance and planning is primarily concerned with realizing the aspirations and potential of the individuals. Career guidance/planning contribute to a range of outcomes of individual efforts which influence number of primary and secondary outcomes which ultimately lead to *macroeconomic benefits*.
The evidence clearly shows that career guidance/planning can have substantial benefits for the economy by supporting individuals to enhance their capacities which in turn contribute enhanced job, skills and growth. So, all the Public and Private sector organizations should deeply see into the importance of Career guidance/planning in order to be entertained with above mentioned macro-economic benefits.

Rehmdil, (2012) in his one report on career development has used the term of Career management for Career planning and he defined it as the process for enabling employees to better understand and develop their career skills and interests and to use these skills and interests more effectively. He defined career planning in the report as, an intentional process through which someone becomes aware of personal skills, interests, knowledge, motivation and other characteristics: and establishes action plans to attain specific goals. The basics of career management are:

![Diagram of career management](image)

We can also consider all of them the constructs of career management. Career planning and management is least possible without considering these characteristics. Educating those work and environment practices, clarifying their goals, keeping in front long term achievement plans, work required skills and the work and department of their interest will ultimately develop their competencies and they will happily prolong their stay with their job (Hirsh, 1996; Merchant, Jr. 2010). Practices have been consistently changing over the time for guiding the employees regarding their career and preparing them to understand the need of the persistently changing environment with respect to inside and outside of their workplace. Basically there are three paths which highlight the methods which have been adopted for dealing with employees’ career. These
paths are the comparison of modifications made on three different levels (Historical, Organizational & Behavioral).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Three Types of Career Path</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Historical</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Past patterns of career progression; how the incumbents got where they are</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actual paths created by the past movement of employees among management jobs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perpetuates the change: way careers have always been</td>
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<tr>
<td>Used as basis for promotions and transfers</td>
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<td>Basis is informal, traditional</td>
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**Literature Review**

Career planning through consistent career management assures the transformation of the career. It is very much clear from the career management equation

\[
\text{Effective Career Management} + \text{Strategic Leadership} = \text{Career Transformation}
\]

Management of any workplace when supported by effective plans and policies constructed by true support of organizational leader it smoothly transforms their skills into their followers and convert them from weak to effective status with developed skills and new ways of performing their tasks (Gikopoulou, 2008). It secures them from getting unemployed in the near future, (Mikacic., M.T, 2015)

Various purposes of the work environment are fulfilled through proper career planning. Consistence planning for employee’s career yields their development and assures their stay with work place in the long run (Johnson, 2009). It also sweeps away the barriers which are stake for
employee’s intentions of prolonging their stay with their job. It also prepares them to cash the future opportunities as with wide range of support for their development, they are encouraged to provide their potentials for the organizational efforts of achievement of their goals. Career Planning assures the organizational intent of securing the jobs of their employees and the secured employees are the more committed and active performers. This is one of the core responsibilities of the management of one place that it should consistently work out to plan for securing their employee through securing theirs job. In current tedious and competitive global situation one need to develop their workforce to prepare them to stand along global competition and challenges (Antoniou, E. 2010; Leung, 2008).

**Career Planning and Job Commitment**

Every organization aims to produce the high momentum in their routine tasks and increase the acceleration of adopting more professional ways of concluding their tasks and projects (Cohen and Soto, 2007). Number of organizations seek after the outputs rather the quality of input provided. Employees are the true asset of any work place. Therefore, organization who care most and are conscious about their importance in their environment, they always work out to nourish their satisfaction and commitment with the job through monotonous caring about their career and providing security against their jobs (Jandaghi et al., 2011). These organizations not only tend to hire good employees but they rather emphasize on developing the career and encouraging the commitment with the job of existing employees (Kaur & Sandhu, 2010). Employees who are more cared they are more motivated and satisfied and hence they are willing to stay and more committed with the organization (Riveros, A.M., & Tsai, T.S. 2011). Organizations work for sorting the troubles of their employees by sharing their grievances and try to prepare even weak performers by encouraging their efforts and maintaining the balance between their abilities and job requirements. In order to maintain the employees’ job and performance they must feel or realize security against their job (Bockerman et al., 2011). Employees who are much cared, guided and supported by their supervisor regarding their career they tend to be affectively committed with their tasks and responsibilities and hence, carry the potential to accomplish the challenging assignments (Chang, E. 1999). It prepares them to be encouraged and to develop in them the sense of their responsibilities and value of their existence in any work place.

Employees get emotionally attached with the organization when they realize that management is protecting their positions by making them worthy through properly planning for their career
which encourages their attachment with their work place (Gantasala & Padmakumar, 2011; Adekola, 2011). Professionals in few organizations like IT carry bulk of responsibilities on their shoulders. They have to render their hours more than their obligatory duty hours and to sacrifice their after the job period. In such cases they are unable to participate actively in their family matters which does generate work life conflicts. So, in order to maintain the balance between their work life and off the job routines, management should try to find out the affective solution for making them remain attached and more committed with the organization (Bashir and Ramay, 2008). Employee career planning also reduces their turnover intentions and absenteeism. It is the result of management realization of their workforce through persistently nourishing and polishing their skills and lying down policies which work for providing them affective guidelines regarding improvement in their career (Bimrose et al., 2005). Only those employees are committed to stay and show their interest in the management requirements who are much satisfied with them, their supervisors and their colleagues. Employees commitment to their profession also strengthen their commitment with the organization (Rahman & Hanafiah, 2002). They not only show their interest in their work but also try to show their efforts to elevate the organizational position among others. It clearly indicates that if employees are keenly interested in their assigned tasks than they are actually strengthening the position of their institution (Kiyani et al., 2011).

Job satisfaction has positive relation with the work environment and career support. Noordin et al, 2007 investigated that different teachers of educational institutions specially high level are emotionally attached with their job as most of them have high identity about their career owing to long practical experience and much reliable and respectable profession. This identity prepares them to realize the sense of their job security and get highly involved in their job (Morrison et al., 2005). They therefore, they are able to create strong ties of their career with the requirements of their institution. Outputs of the employees does reflect their level of interest in their tasks and ability of performing and accomplishing them fruitfully. Their success lies behind their achievements and production of extraordinary results. It is the only way which create congruence between organizational targets and employees strength of performing their tasks (Cohen, 2007).

If they are not regularly generating the positive results than, it indicates their lack of satisfaction with the work environment or the management. Career planning is not only the after job process but rather it should be before the starting of any job. Specially, students at university level most of the times are not provided with proper career counselling and due to lack of such support they
are unable to plan regarding selection of their area of interest (Cohen, 2003; Chuang et al., 2009). Ultimately, such selections come heavily upon them in the future when their abilities are unable to cope with the field of their specialization. By the hook or crook if they are able to get the job then they are unable to contribute in it affectively.

So, if planning is made at the start of employees’ career than it prepares them to be more satisfied with their job as they are propelled in right direction. It is the only way that they can be more committed and in result more healthy performers of an institution.

**Career Planning and Employee Performance**

Employees are the valuable assets of the firm and it cannot be wasted in vain and they should not be left on their own intentionally. Every employee in the firm or organization is not well equipped with all sorts of strengths and capabilities of finishing every task up to mark. Letting them to carry on for every tasks is to put their employment at stake which is destructive and harsh not only for the employee himself but also for the environment in which they work (Hughes & Karp, 2004). Some fresh or junior employees who are least aware of the techniques of performing their job and settling themselves in their work environment, they need care, support and proper planning at the start of their career to provide healthy nourishment to their on-going job (Witko et al., 2004). Every employee should be made aware of importance of their existence among any team or group of the firm and if, their realization of such sense does not approach to the management then level of their skills and abilities cannot be improved through proper management response. The better a firm can render to its employees is the environment of learning, cooperation among members, committed supervision, timely fulfilling training needs, job security, appreciation on better performances and professional and effective planning for their career. Employees career planning acts as a tool of strengthening the employment relationship between employer and employee indicating the fruitful sensation for all the levels and groups of employees. It also assures the employability of an employee when they are consistently learning and applying learned and more developed skills (Watts, 2006).

Organizational level goals achievement relies on professional and satisfied workforce. Employees who are satisfied, they tend to perform efficiently and effectively as they realize the importance of healthy input they give into accomplishing their tasks. It consequently can bring appreciation and reward for them. They will ultimately be motivated through it and they will work with more diligence and commitment, Hameed & Waheed, (2011) further highlighted this
sense and they argue that most organization focus only on their goals achievement but they care very less about the means through which their achievement is possible (e.g. employees). Employee career planning and development are the tools, which can mould the useless employees into useful shape for any institution. It indicates that employee career planning is very much necessary and must be practiced on professional basis by every work environment.

Effective career planning of employees is dependent on effective performance management, where management considers communication and integration as a source of keeping employees steadily on their way to goals achievement. The intervention of true management support in the employees’ routine activities elevates their courage and polishes their capabilities to bring down the barriers in the way to their career and organizational success (Thessaloniki, 2007). Hence, they direct their efforts to approach and achieve the goals. In consequence of meeting the defined targets they are able to gain appreciation and importance in the eyes of management and, management tries to prolong their stay with them through better planning and recommendations for their career. Same idea is reflected by (Strandberg, C., 2009; Marwat et al., 2006) while he says that: some HR managers realize and understand the importance of Career planning specially for individuals who perform extraordinary. Such employees are included in advancing their career during their stay in an organization and they are very much motivated, productive and happily prolong their stay with their organization. In the later discussion we would like discuss the importance of career planning for the critical positions of any workplace. Succession planning through keeping an eye over the need of that position and making availability of that before the incumbent takes the charge. It will not only keep up their momentum of previous performance but it will encourage them not only to develop their own skills but also to transfer them to their juniors (Oracle White paper, 2012).

**Literature wise role/contribution of Career Planning in Academic arena (A brief History)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>Role/Contribution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Joan Bloxom, 2002</td>
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<td>Hughes &amp; Karp, 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bimrose <em>et al.</em>, 2005</td>
<td>A Systematic Literature Review of Research into Career related interventions for Higher Education</td>
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Conclusions

In current and modern era Career Planning has been the focus of the many researchers and they targeted various aspects where it can bring the change to create the difference from monotonous old and least productive methods. In the literature covering number of aspects relevant to it we have analyzed that all the contributions made to it still have a room to add more important concepts elaborating and explaining its contribution to more fields of life. People from around the globe are consistently working and flourishing the concept of career planning and broadening and spreading its concepts and values.

In literature contributing to work life environment it has overwhelming impact on strengthening employee’s commitment not only with his/her own job but also with the whole environment in their surroundings; hence, they share and contribute their experience with everyone. Their Commitment brings employees closer and they collectively and effectively support each other. In turn they not only change or modify the shape of their routine outputs or achievements but also contribute with others to accomplish their tasks with the same passion. Career Planning has an overwhelming influence over the academic institutions and their activities as it starts from adolescents and continue till work life experience. If it continues its contribution than within a few coming years every single of this world who will be capitalizing it will be able to achieve their goals and emerging needs.
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