

Modern Career Concepts: A Review

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Abstract- The main focus of this article is to explore and critically evaluate the concept protean career orientation (PCO) along with other modern career concepts in focus. Through the literature survey it is found that there are diverse novel career management concepts such as protean, boundaryless, post-corporate, kaleidoscope career and the academic career model which are based on the behaviours of the modern career oriented professionals.

Index Terms- protean, boundaryless, post-corporate, kaleidoscope career and the academic career model.

I. THE CONCEPT OF CAREER

The concept of 'Career' has been recognised by Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence (1989) as the series of a person's work experiences which have unfolded over time. Major view point highlighted in this definition is that one's career is more related to the time rather than the view of work arrangements. This would view one's career success as based on the upward mobility of within a single organisation rather than mobility possibilities between organisations, industries, or national contexts (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). Hence, this is in line with the traditional career concepts. Baruch and Rosenstein (1992, p. 478), defined career as "a process of development of the employee along a path of experience and jobs in one or more organisations", which identified a novel view of career dynamics. Baruch (2004) stated that, traditional careers were practiced in the past due to availability of the hierarchical highly organised and rigid organisational structures. Career advancements (promotions) were awarded based on linear directions and employees were obliged to go in line with the organisational hierarchy in order to climb the career ladder (Baruch, 2004). However, Sullivan (1999) claimed that due to the elimination of managerial layers, these hierarchical career paths have become blurred which has led to the search of different types of careers to achieve career success. Hence, new models of career systems were in demand which would change according to the organisational change with the environments.

From the mid 1990's, the concept of 'New Career' gained greater momentum and relevance in identifying the employee behaviour in organisations and also due to the change in expectations companies had towards employees (Rousseau, 1995). Even though the careers were once built within the confines of one or two organisations, workers today are breaking through organisational obstacles and building careers through numerous organisations, divisions, locations, and even industries (Sullivan, 1999). This was greatly affected by the recent economic, technological, and social changes had on organisational structures and the psychological contract had

between organisations and employees (Arthur, 1994). With this dynamic career landscape, the concept protean career (Hall, 1976, 1996; Briscoe & Hall, 2006) since 1976, the boundaryless career concept since 1994 (Arthur, 1994) and the post-corporate career (Peiperl & Baruch, 1997) have been introduced. These new models of careers involved of a variety of options, many possible directions of growth which enabled employees to define their own careers / change careers irrespective of organisational barriers which was identified as "multi-directional" career paths (Baruch, 2004). Table 01 clarifies the transition from traditional career concepts to transformational.

The protean career concept had been useful in identifying the career orientation of modern employees' (both men and women) and this has also been particularly useful for understanding women's careers (Cabrera, 2009). The protean career (Hall, 1976, 2002) was conceptualised as an individualised, self-directed career guided by personal values and subjective measures of success.

While the protean career concept looked at changes in the individual experiences, Peiperl and Baruch's (1997) 'post-corporate career' concept was focussing on changes in the organisational structures. This concept identified in particular how the general system has changed, and its impact on complexity and flexibility of careers.

With the requirement for newer ways of managing people (by the end of 1970s), Schein (1978) argued for the need of a model for cross-sectional and functional movements of employees within the organisation rather than having linear career movements. This proved to be an innovative way in career development dimension of an organisation (Baruch, 2004). Taking this concept as the foundation, in late 1990s Peiperl and Baruch (1997) "offer a much richer perspective of the options and directions of career moves people can opt for, as opposed to options that the organisation only can offer as a single employer" (Baruch, 2004, p. 64). The diverse organisational career options identified by these researchers (Peiperl & Baruch, 1997) included self-employment, outsourcing, professional partnerships, start-up ventures, buyouts, deal making and secondments. It could be noted that, these anticipations and directions tend to be quite accurate in today's career processes (Baruch, 2004).

In a similar manner, Sullivan, Forret, Carraher and Mainiero's (2009), "kaleidoscope career model" (KCM) described the emphasis given to create careers by employees as they make decision based on factors such as challenge, balance, and authenticity across their lifetime. This was relatively a newer career theory than protean/boundaryless. According to this model, individuals evaluate the choices and options available through the lens of the kaleidoscope to assess the best fit among work demands, constraints, and opportunities as well as relationships and personal values and interests (Sullivan et al.,

2009). The three parameters identified by the researchers in decision making were: (1) authenticity, whereby the individual's inner values are associated with his/her external behaviours as well as of the values of the employing organization; (2) balance, whereby the individual strives for work- life (non-work) balance (e.g. family, friends, elderly relatives, personal interests) demands, and (3) Challenge, which is the desire for autonomy and responsibility, as well as an interest in learning and growing. These factors would play different roles or take priorities in different points of time of one's career. Just as one turns a kaleidoscope to see new patterns, so do career patterns evolve in response to changing life priorities (Cabrera, 2009).

Table 01 Transition

Aspect	Traditional deal	Transformed deal
Environment characteristic	Stability	Dynamism
Career choice being made	Ones, at an early career age	Repeated, sometimes cyclical, at different age stages
Main career responsibility lies with	Organisation	Individual
Career horizon (workplace)	One organisation	Several organisations
Career horizon (time)	Long	Short
Scope of change	Incremental	Transformational
Employer expect/employee give	Loyalty and commitment	Long time working hours
Employer give/employee expect	Job security	Investment in employability
Progress criteria	Advance according to tenure	Advances according to results and knowledge
Success means	Winning the tournament i.e. progress on the hierarchy ladder	Inner feeling of achievement
Training	Formal programmes, generalist	On-the-job, company specific
Essence of career direction	Linear	Multidirectional

Source: Baruch (2004)

Apart from these models, Baruch and Hall (2004) proposed to consider a new model, "the academic career model" assuming that it would benefit employee career development. The major features of this model which led to this conclusion were: flat structure, professionally based (even though it tend to be quite rigid). Individually led lateral and even downwards movement which are accepted (e.g. when a Head of the department (HOD) returns back to serve as a professor, conducting lectures and

researches, does not mean demoted). Limited upward mobility, which sometimes might be less desired by the individual (Taking the HOD position might restrict the academic works of the scholar). Availability of cross organisational moves (but not cross functional) (e.g. scholar in commerce can move to another university, but will not move within the same university to a different section, say to arts). Availability of sabbaticals are part of the career. This model enables the individuals to build up networks within and across different organisations but the features of academic model might be different based on regional and national boundaries (Baruch, 2004)

The concept of Protean Career Orientation & Boundaryless Career

According to Briscoe & Hall (2006), the word "protean" is taken from the Greek word "Proteus" which symbolizes a Greek myth in which Proteus had a strange ability to change shapes to avoid threats. Likewise, employees with protean career attitudes tend to make themselves employable through a series of self-management activities accordingly set goals so as to achieve career success (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). The protean career (Hall, 1976) is a self-directed orientation to the career that implies independence from external career influences. Briscoe, Hall and De Muth (2006) more specifically identified a values-driven (one's own values) approach and self-directed career management behaviours (when identifying career success) as two conceptually distinct but related components of the protean career (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009). Originally, the protean career was defined by Hall (1976) as a process which is managed by the person and not by the organisation. Hence, it is not what would happen to the employee by staying in an organisation. Emphasising the significance of this concept Briscoe et al. (2006) mentioned that even though this concept had been researched for more than 30 years, comprehensive empirical study has not been fully developed. Hence, it could be understood that, still there are many arenas to discuss under protean career orientation.

According to Hall (2002), a protean career is one that is managed proactively by individuals (self-directed) according to their own personal values (values driven), rather than by organisational rewards. Core protean values are freedom and growth (Hall, 2004), and the main criteria of success are subjective (intrinsic/psychological success) and not objective (extrinsic/material). The protean career characterised as "frequent change and self-invention, autonomy, and self-direction driven by the needs of the person rather than the organisation" (Hall, 2002, p. 04). In other words, the protean career gives employees independence in their new career contract as they shift from the organisational career to the individual career. Hence, the outline of all these writings highlight the fact that the career concepts have gained more individualistic orientation (self-identity) rather than having an organisational focus.

Based on the research findings, it could be argued that these new career concepts have been born basically due to the desire of individual employees to be successful in their careers. Therefore, the "career success orientation" may be described as the way people identify their success at work and that, individual values, attitudes and motivation with respect to both work and life are reflected through individual perceptions of career success (Derr,

1986 as cited in Agrawala, 2008). Based on the previous research findings, Agrawala (2008) identified two types of career orientations as protean (new career orientation) and conventional (traditional organisational orientation). A conventional career orientation defined career success in terms of measurable objective factors such as salary, recognition, or number of promotions within the same organisation (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988) where protean career orientation is focussed on individual career advancement irrespective of organisational/national limits (Hall, 2002).

Out of the new career concepts, "boundaryless career concept" also received greater recognition for being a related concept to protean career. Both were concerned with how individuals might adapt to the new career environment. Boundaryless career defined as "moving away from one single, externally determined view which defined what a good career is" (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996, p. 370) toward "independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional organisational career arrangements" (p. 15). This explained that, one's career success would be depended on his/her marketability and employability than progressing up the hierarchy of one specific organisation. Hence, in order to adopt to this novel career orientation employees required to be multi skilled, multi purposed, flexible, and self-directed to pass the job market requirements. Hence the "lifelong career concept" has been dismissed by the boundaryless career theorists.

Even though protean and boundaryless careers and their associated attitudes and behaviours shared similarities, there were distinct differences as to the focus of their attention (Lips-Wiersma & Mcmorland, 2006). As Baruch (1998 as cited in Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009) suggested, a protean or self-directed career approach would work well in a boundaryless career environment. However, "one could be protean even in a bounded environment, and one could be boundaryless (e.g. as a "free-agent" or a mercenary) but not necessarily values-driven in a protean mode" (Briscoe and Hall, 2006; 2009, p. 244). According to Lips-Wiersma and Mcmorland (2006), boundaryless career primarily identifies the career environment and the career competencies one should have in that environment while the protean career is somewhat more concerned with adaptableness and identity. However, according to protean career theorists, this adaptability identity needs to be fulfilled in a way which would lead to psychological success instead of just employability. Further, Hall and Mirvis (1996) also stated that individual goal achievement needs to be personally meaningful to the individual, rather than achieving those set by parents, peers, an organization, or society for individuals to be identified as having protean career attitudes (Lips-Wiersma & Mcmorland, 2006).

Moreover, to present the distinctiveness but the relatedness of these two career concepts, based on the protean and boundaryless literature, Briscoe et al. (2006) created two scales related to protean career attitudes and two scales related to boundaryless career attitudes. The two dimensions of protean career; the values-driven career orientation and self-directed career management were measured using two protean career scales while, the two boundaryless scales measured boundaryless mind set (tendency and fondness for working with other people and organisations across one's own organisational boundaries)

and organisational mobility preference (aspiration to work for several organisations, not just one employer) (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009). Therefore, it could be certain that, protean and boundaryless career concepts are related but separate concepts as argued by Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009).

As mentioned above, protean career orientation consists with two dimensions as self-directed career management and values-driven career orientation. According to Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), self-directed career management identified to be driving the career through independent career management strategies rather than relying on others, including the employer organisation).

Furthermore, in order to understand the concept in descriptive manner understanding its underlying conceptual assumptions are of necessary (Park, 2009). Accordingly, Park (2009) states that, the individual's responsibility regarding his/her own career may be critical in managing own protean career. According to Hall (1996,) the modern career should be protean – driven by the individual, not the organisation. Hall and Moss (1999) further confirmed this by stating that shift from organisational career to individual career give the employees the freedom to make decisions regarding their own careers. In other words, the protean career gave employees autonomy in their new career contract as they shift from the organizational career to the individual career (Hall & Moss, 1998).

Second, the protean career approach was based on continuous learning (Park, 2009). If one aims to have career development in this rapidly changing modern career context, continuous learning would be the main strategy to adopt (Hall & Mirvis, 1996). Hall (2004) regarded the modern career as made up of a lifelong series of short learning stages. The researcher further stressed that, in order to learn how to learn the individual must develop two competencies, i.e., identity and adaptability.

Third, underlying assumption related to protean career would be that, the protean career required to achieve psychological success. According to Hall and Mirvis (1996) psychological success considered as the feeling of achievement that comes with the understanding that you have achieved something. As the protean career contract represents an agreement with one's self and one's work (Hall, 2002), the individual's vision and values identified as the criteria for career success. Hence, if one needed to achieve career success, he/she needed to be psychological motivated since, the concept highlight the individual aspects rather than the organisational motivational aspects. Hence, based on the above assumptions it could be argued that self-directed career management can be considered as a major dimension which is essential for an employee to be protean career oriented (Park, 2009).

The next dimension of protean career was values driven career management. According to Briscoe et al. (2009), generating and evaluating career goals based on one's internal values rather than others' preferences can be identified as being values driven. A value can be defined as "an enduring belief that a specific mode or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite mode of conduct or end state of existence" (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5). Examples of values (which are also culture dependent) are social recognition, inner harmony, meaning in life and sense of belonging (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). According to Malach-Pines, Ozbilgin , Burke, Vigoda-

Gadot and Grimland (2008) values considered a dominant force in people's lives. As Sagiv and Schwartz (2000) noted, values are desirable goals which vary in their importance when serving as guiding principles in human lives. Moreover, values had been found to predict career fit, and individuals seek careers that are consistent with their value systems (Beutell & Brenner, 1986). This viewpoint highlighted the fact that, individuals tend to be motivated by their important personal values and act accordingly (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). Further, values such as, achievement, tradition and security found to be correlated to subjective wellbeing. Hence, it could be argued that, values and employee career choice might be mutually correlated (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). This was in line with what explained by Hall (2004) stating that, graduates' protean career choices were guided by the personal values pursued before the extrinsic values. According to Sargent and Domberger (2007), the employee personal values can be categorised into two themes; work that made a social contribution, and the achievement of a work-life balance. Based on the research findings, work contribution has been identified based on the person interviews with graduates as preferred work which would have an influence on something broader than their own life or their immediate family. On the other hand, pursuit of work life balance was considered by major portion of graduates to be a guiding value throughout their careers where the demands of the job were weighted carefully as to how they would influence their personal lives (Sargent & Domberger, 2007).

Factors affecting Protean Career Orientation

There were many factors which affect the career choices of employees. An individual's choice of career would be likely to be influenced by several factors, including personal and cultural values, family background, career expectations, etc. several studies have been conducted in different cultural contexts to identify the factors that influenced students/ graduates in making career choices (O'zbilgin et al., 2005; Ozkale et al., 2004 as cited by Agrawala, 2008). Changes in organisational structures have also influenced the nature of careers (Brousseau, Driver, Eneroth, & Larsson, 1996; Kelly, Brannick, Hulpke, Levine, & To, 2003 as cited by Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 1997). But this ideology contrasted with the recent new career choice concerns such as protean career and boundaryless career where career choices of employees are less affected by the organisational management practices. Extrinsic factors such as new economic reforms, technological changes and downsizing practices have affected the boundaryless career choices (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996).

Effects of Protean Career Orientation

Though protean career concept is newer, its effects tend to be greater on personal and work lives of employees. According to the study conducted by Cao, Hirschi and Deller (2013), protean career attitude tends to be positively related to self-initiated expatriates' (SIE) career satisfaction, life satisfaction, and intention to stay in the host country. Further, "protean career attitude would drive SIEs in their intercultural career management in the host country by translating this attitude into proactive and concrete actions" (Cao et al., 2013, p. 71). Moreover, existing literature indicated that as "protean careers are guided by self-directedness and self-awareness, they are more

effective in a dynamic and individually managed career environment which would lead to greater career satisfaction than other career choices (Baruch & Quick, 2007; Hall, 1996). This was further approved by their study on SIEs where it was confirmed that a protean career attitude provides motivation for proactively define and direct their own career paths, further contributing significantly to their career and life satisfaction, cross cultural adjustment, general well-being and intention to stay in the host country, which were strong indications of satisfaction with and integration into the host country. Further, a protean career attitude may facilitate the adaptability, flexibility and adjustment needed at a personal level in this dynamic and volatile business environment (Cao et al., 2013).

Cabera (2009) in her study on women career orientation identified that women were self-directed in managing their careers, rejecting the traditional corporate careers. Further, it was identified that their decisions were driven by personal values being inline with protean career attitudes. Being protean career oriented enabled them to obtain more balance between their work and family lives enabling them to be have flexible work schedules that were convenient to them (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). In the study conducted by Robinson and Rousseau's (1994) found that, if the employees tend to be greater careerist oriented, resulted in a stronger negative relationship between contract violation and trust in one's employer. Hence, it could be argued that, at least a percentage of boundaryless employees may be less likely to commit to their organisations when a psychological contract violation (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009).

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