Chapter 4
Career Paths: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract Fundamental changes in the composition and functions of organisations have led to blurring of organisational boundaries and changing employment relationships. The notion of a career path has become increasingly ambiguous, with individuals taking increased responsibility for managing their own careers. Furthermore, the growing individualisation of employment policies and non-traditional employment has implications for the management of people at work, particularly the planning and management of employee careers. Career paths benefit both employee and employer. They can strengthen the psychological contract between employer and employee, ensure the employee is not restricted to a particular job, career path or organisation, as well as ensuring employees have the skills needed both now and in the future to contribute to organisational success. This chapter draws together relevant theories on how organisations treat the notion of career paths and how they implement strategies that will engender employee loyalty, create genuine career development and meet organisational objectives.

Introduction

Since the mid-1980s there have been fundamental changes in the way work, employment relations and career paths are organised (Chudzikowski 2011). The effects of globalisation, organisational restructures, outsourcing, increased and intense competition for market share, and rapidly improving information technologies have focused attention on the importance of human capital in maintaining competitive advantage (Zoogah 2010). Such factors combined with the trend towards the individualisation of employment policies and the decline in the influence of collective organisations such as trade unions have engendered a new psychological contract between employee

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and employer, which has shifted the responsibility for professional development, learning and career development from the organisation to the employee.

This new paradigm encompasses permanent or 'core' employees with ongoing and secure employment contracts on the one hand and an array of non-traditional, 'peripheral' employees including part-time and casual employees and those with international careers, who move between jobs, organisations and countries (Suutari et al. 2012). Research has paid particular attention to this latter cohort because organisations often find it difficult to keep highly skilled, in-demand contract staff, including expatriates, after their assignment is completed.

In this chapter we draw together relevant theories on contemporary career development, how organisations treat the notion of career paths and how they implement strategies to engender employee loyalty, create genuine career development and meet organisational objectives. We will also raise several important questions. Firstly, whether the notion of career paths remains a viable concept in all but large organisations and for certain types of employment, given the growth in the peripheral workforce and insecure employment; and secondly, with career development becoming the responsibility of the employee (regardless of employment status) how employees might best prepare for this assumed active autonomy.

We will first provide a snapshot of the current employment relationships available to most Australian workers and consider what effect these relationships have had on the notion of career paths. We will also summarise the most salient theories relevant to contemporary career development. Finally, we will seek strategies from the literature on how employees and employers might support career development within this new paradigm. While there has been some research into the effects of job insecurity and flexible work arrangements on occupational health and safety (LaMontagne et al. 2012; Lipsig-Mumme 2005) there has been less into the effects on career path opportunities. We also question the notion of career paths within many contemporary organisations and also the discourse that suggests most individuals have the capacities to negotiate career paths across organisations.

This chapter is structured to examine the macro-situation in terms of the socioeconomic-political reality of employment in developed economies, the meso-situation in terms of what happens in organisations around work practices and the micro-situation of the individual employee. Open systems theory and common sense indicate that all are related and can be interdependent.

The Contemporary Employment Environment

All careers are embedded within a context of broad socio-cultural, economic and political factors which may either enable or constrain career opportunities (Lawrence 2011). In Australia, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) indicates a trend towards non-traditional employment, or employment that is not full-time and ongoing in someone else's business (Waite and Will 2002). The nature of employment in Australia has become more diverse, with a growth in forms of employment other than the 'traditional' arrangement of a full-time, ongoing wage or salary job, with

regular hours and paid leave (ABS 2012). Flexible working arrangements include negotiated part-time work, working from home, flexitime, job sharing or periods of approved leave such as annual, parental or sick leave, as well as casual employment, temporary, fixed-term contracts or annual fixed-hour contracts. Kramar (2012) found that in 2008–2009 more than 50 % of the Australian workforce was subject to flexible work arrangements. In that period the use of weekend work and annual hours contracts increased dramatically and declines were reported in the use of flexitime, job sharing and working from home.

While the increase in temporary work appears to be a global trend (Connelly et al. 2007; Hevenstone 2010), the growth in Australia is more evident than in the US and most EU countries (LaMontagne et al. 2012). For example, in the OECD Australia ranks second only to the Netherlands in the rate of part-time employment (McDonald et al. 2008) and after Spain, has the highest rate of temporary work (Evans 2013).

Core and Peripheral Employees

In response to the demands of a dynamic, competitive and global labour market organisations have developed structures that facilitate flexible patterns of work, in part as a way to retain 'core' employees. Termed the 'flexible firm model' (Holland et al. 2002), this approach replaces the traditional hierarchical model of an organisation and redefines the organisation into 'core' and 'peripheral' employees. The core employees reflect the need of an organisation to have a permanent, highly skilled group of employees with internal career paths and the peripheral workforce provide the organisation qualitative or numerical flexibility (Holland et al. 2002).

The core employees experience a high degree of job security and professional development and will benefit most from policies generally referred to as 'high commitment management' (Guest 1987, cited in Deery and Jago 2002) including access to the internal labour market, which refers to the institutional rules and procedures, such as recruitment, training, promotional opportunities, pay and job security, that govern the employment relationship.

In contrast, the peripheral workforce is generally used for day-to-day activities that are important but not critical to the organisation, to meet high demand or special projects. This 'numerical flexibility' is said to offer financial savings to organisations (Deery and Jago 2002) by allowing them to adjust labour in response to market fluctuations and service requirements while shielding their core or permanent workers from job instability (Capelli and Neumark 2004). Peripheral employment can be summarised as non-standard forms of work (such as part-time, fixed term and casual employment) conceptualised as secondary labour market employment (Deery and Jago 2002), characterised by precariousness, low pay, lack of opportunities for training and career advancement, lack of protections, and social and economic vulnerability (LaMontagne et al. 2012).

Part-Time

During periods of economic downturn, demand for labour changes, with full-time employment tending to fall and part-time employment tending to grow (ABS 2012). This pattern was experienced in the early 1990s, 2001–2002, and again in the period 2008–2010 (ABS 2012). The proportion of employed people who were working part-time rose from 22 % in 1990–1991 to 30 % in 2010–2011 with females accounting for approximately 70 % of all part-time workers (ABS 2012). Part-time work has always been dominated by women: the ABS (2012) observed that close to three quarters of all part-timers in August 2011 were women. However, in recent years there has been an increase in the proportion of men working part-time, typically at the start or end of their working lives. Many younger men combine work with study, while those in their late 50s or older may be in transition to retirement (ABS 2012).

Fixed Term Employment

While scrutiny of ABS data does not allow us to determine whether or not fixed-term employment is becoming more common, Waite and Will (2002) in a report commissioned by the Productivity Commission asserted that at least 3.3 % of employed persons worked as fixed-term employees in 2000. According to the ABS (2012) the majority of fixed-term contract employees (72 %) expected that their contract would be renewed, indicating that many may have a longer tenure than their employment arrangement would suggest. Unlike casual employees who are hired on a needs basis with termination possible at any time and without any requirement for advance notice, those employed on fixed-term contracts have a relatively high degree of certainty of tenure (Waite and Will 2002). There are a number of reasons for the increasing popularity of flexible working arrangements. From an employer perspective, they enable employers to respond to market fluctuations and service requirements, to reduce labour costs and for some act as a buffer for permanent employees from job loss (Connelly et al. 2007). While fixed-term contracts may be offered up as an opportunity for an organisation to contain costs, from a labour management perspective using a fixed-term contract to fill a genuinely permanent position is likely to exclude a large and possibly high-quality portion of the candidate pool including those who are unlikely to leave a permanent (or continuing) position or contractors accustomed to high hourly rates for a fixed-term appointment (Connelly et al. 2007).

Casual Employment

The majority of new jobs created in Australia throughout the 1990s and 2000s were casual jobs (Watson 2013). Casual work is either portrayed as a 'bridge' into permanent employment or a 'trap' keeping individuals locked into ongoing casualised work or even joblessness through cycles of 'job churning' (Watson 2013). Some view the growth in casualised employment as a positive indicator of a flexible labour market

that is responsive to the needs of employers and a global economy. Others regard the phenomena as less than desirable, seeing a growing polarisation in the labour market between 'good' jobs—those with permanency—and 'bad' jobs—those seen as insecure, poorly paid and with few long-term prospects for career development and advancement (Watson 2013).

While flexible employment arrangements such as those described above may be sought by some employees in order to balance work with family, study or other non-work activities, many employees may find themselves in employment arrangements that do not satisfy their needs or ambitions, and they may be disadvantaged because they do not enjoy the same level of career opportunities as full-time ongoing employ-ees. While the periphery workforce is not homogenous there is general agreement that it consists of mainly women in low-skilled, casual jobs which, while central to the core business of the organisation, offer no job security (Deery and Jago 2002). It appears that part-time, fixed-term, casual and other forms of precarious employment suit the needs of management rather than the employees.

Watson's (2013) research on the effect of age on fixed-term and casual workers paints a sobering picture. He found that movement into permanent jobs falls with age, especially when workers reach their mid-40s. For casual male workers the fall is modest until the mid-40s and then drops sharply. For female casual workers the situation is more precarious, with a steady downhill decline that according to Watson (2013) begins in a woman's mid-20s. Similarly, male fixed-term workers tend to stay in fixed-term work over the life course with little evident decline. This is in contrast to women, whose fixed-term destinations start to decline once they reach their 50s. Finally, the research confirmed that, while male fixed-term workers do not typically move into casual work, female fixed-term workers move increasingly to casualised employment towards the end of their working lives.

The growth of temporary employment has alarmed many observers in Australia. Recently, the Greens in the House of Representatives introduced a private members bill to amend the *Fair Work Act* seeking improvements for Australian workers affected by insecure employment. The Fair Work Amendment (Tackling Job Insecurity) Bill 2012 would provide a mechanism for workers employed as casuals or on rolling or fixed-term contracts to move to either full-time or part-time ongoing employment. While recognising the genuine needs of some businesses to use arrangements that are not characterised as secure employment, the sentiment behind the bill is that the *Fair Work Act* should be amended to incorporate a 'secure employment principle' for modern awards and agreements that enshrines ongoing employment as the 'norm' (Evans 2013). Similarly, the Australian Council of Trade Unions has recently called on the Australian government to introduce a portable leave scheme to enable workers to maintain and move their annual and sick leave entitlements from employer to employer as is currently the case in the Australian building and construction sector (Evans 2013).

The Ageing Population

In future years the ageing population will increase as the baby boomer generation enters older age (ABS 2012). Over the last 20 years there has been a considerable increase in women's labour force participation, with the largest increases being the participation of older women. Between 1990–1991 and 2010–2011, the participation rate of women aged 55–64 years increased by 29 % and for women aged 45–54 years by 16 % (ABS 2012). Participation rates for men declined between 1990–1991 and 2010–2011 for most age groups. The exceptions were for those aged 55–64 years (63 to 72 %) and those aged 65 years and over (9 to 16 %) (ABS 2012).

As the age of employees increases, so too does an appreciation for generational differences, including career development preferences (Gentry et al. 2009). Much of the research on generational differences in the work context suggests differences between generations including their beliefs about the nature of careers, career development and the psychological contract between employers and employees (Gentry et al. 2009; Vance 2006). However others observe more similarities than differences between the generations (Hole et al. 2010; Clarke 2013), suggesting that older workers do not have any less desire to be developed than younger employees, and that certain opportunities for development are desired by employees regardless of their generation. Muffels and Luijkx (2008) found that, as young people move through important life stages, their preference for a traditional, linear career grows. Smola and Sutton (2002) found that work values are more influenced by generational experiences (for example, social perspectives and changing workplace structures) than by age and maturation and reflected a trend where work is perceived as a lower priority than in the past, which may be a result of the lack of commitment shown to employees by organisations.

Theoretical Perspective: Contemporary Career Progression

Careers are important not only for the component job but because for many people they are a large part of their identity (Inkson 2007). A career is now often described broadly as the unfolding sequence of an individual's work experience over time (Hoekstra 2011, p. 159) or 'the sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person' (Arnold 1997 cited in Gunz et al. 2011, p. 1616). Career development theory has developed over the past 100 years and stems from four main disciplines: differential psychology, personality, sociology and developmental psychology.

While cognitive-based theories in particular recognise the reciprocal influence of person and environment and emphasise the effects of social context, they do not adequately explain contemporary career paths. The core concepts of twentieth-century career theories are based on assumptions of environmental stability and a concept of careers as a fixed sequence of stages. Generally, there is consensus in the career development literature that occupational prospects today seem less definable

and less predictable and job transitions are more frequent. The notion of a career path has become increasingly ambiguous. While traditional 'big company' career paths still exist, they are no longer the only routes to career success and typically individuals are now expected to self-manage their career paths rather than rely on organisational direction (Ballout 2009; Berntson et al. 2006; Briscoe et al. 2012; Zoogah 2010). Indeed, new careers are more likely to take place outside of large organisations (or across them) and can be typically described as 'disorderly paths that unfold across multiple organisational, occupational and cultural settings' (Chudzikowski 2011, p. 300, cited in Baruch and Sullivan 2009).

Contemporary career progression is variously described as 'boundaryless' or 'protean' While the terms are sometimes lumped together, there are some distinctions. Boundaryless careers break traditional hierarchical structures and are characterised by different levels of physical and psychological movement beyond organisational boundaries, while protean careers emphasise a self-directed approach in which individuals reshape themselves in response to changing work environments. These and other career development theories are interrelated and are all trying to bridge the gap between the traditional theories around career path development and those that attempt to accommodate the flexible nature of organisational and individual life (Baruch 2001). Similarly, Dries and Pepermans (2008) suggested that organisational career management and career self-management theories should be considered as complementary rather than supplementary.

While these theories have dominated the career literature for some years, career theory has been criticised for overemphasising individual agency while neglecting contextual issues including the large-scale economic and organisational changes that impact directly and indirectly on careers (Dries 2011). Indeed, Gunz et al. (2011) asserted that there is little evidence for structural boundarylessness and considerable evidence for the persistence of bounded or traditional careers. They argued that it might be more useful to investigate existing structural factors and boundaries to understand them more as influencers and shapers of careers.

Notwithstanding, in times of economic uncertainty and career unpredictability employees may define career success more broadly than simply upward advancement (Dries 2011). However, hierarchical advancement within an organisation is still found to be desired and remains associated with success (Dries 2011; Clarke 2013). Our, as yet unpublished, research in public rail organisations has found certain professions including engineering, accounting and human resources reflect generally linear careers where all entrants began at the bottom as graduates and work their way up through a series of well-defined jobs undertaken in strict order. This trend was also observed in non-professional job families including trades, technicians and train drivers. Similarly, Clarke (2013) found that managers and many professionals continue their careers over many years in a single organisation including bureaucratic structures such as the public service and large financial institutions where career patterns are still primarily characterised by long-term employment and linear career progression. Employees in occupations in high demand are more likely to enjoy career paths, opportunities for professional development and even job security. Based on the current Australian Skilled Occupations List (Department of Immigration and

Citizenship 2013), occupations in all fields of medicine and health, engineering and accounting might be expected to include career path opportunities. While it is often assumed that younger people tend to boundaryless or protean careers, Clarke (2013) found that recent graduates still considered developing a career within a single organisation highly desirable because it fosters a sense of mutual investment; this is the traditional psychological contract.

Career Paths: Organisational Perspective

Principally, organisations invest in employees' careers because of the value specific careers hold for the organisation. They are also an important transmitter of organisational culture and retain critical organisational skills and knowledge (Clarke 2013). Hoekstra (2011) asserted that career development is crucial to organisations because it enables the development of two values—continuity and effective change—that determine how adaptive an organisation is in response to its environment and which rely on the loyalty of workers making careers in their organisations.

Organisations also play an important role in socialising perceptions of career success. For example, by establishing standardised career paths, organisations implicitly define success and failure within their structures and organisations. Corporate career discourse contributes to the devaluation and obstruction of alternative career models including part-time roles (Dries 2011) and other less visible careers. Within the organisational context, atypical career types including those who do not progress up are generally perceived as less successful in terms of career (Dries 2011).

The literature is consistent in describing career paths as benefiting employees and employers (McLean 2007; Delahaye 2011; Rowold and Schilling 2006). Career pathways can enhance an individual's capabilities, ensuring the employee is not restricted to a particular job, career path or organisation. For the employer career pathways can strengthen the psychological contract between employer and employee and ensure employees have the skills needed both now and in the future to contribute to organisational success. Explicit career pathway frameworks can also be used to attract, develop, engage and retain employees. In their work on organisational support for career development and career satisfaction, Barnett and Bradley (2007) found that those organisations adopting strategies to enhance their employees' career satisfaction also increased their ability to attract and retain employees. In similar research McLean (2007) found that career paths can enable employers to gear their employees' individual career goals into strategic planning and build a strong, committed workforce.

Organisational research has included studies of power relations and the potential for HR practices to be manipulative (Inkson 2008; De Gama et al. 2012). Similarly research has focused on critical ethical approaches and 'macro' critiques of HRM (Islam 2012), including the potential for HRM to reduce employees to material or financial resources through psychological contracts that are increasingly transactional. HRM is essentially the administration of human action, motivation and relationships

at work and as such has the potential for unethical HR practices that range from the allocation of rewards (such as access to development or promotional opportunities) and promulgating 'false' promises of structured career paths to potential employees in order to attract and then control them.

Career Path Management and the Psychological Contract: Bridging the Gap

Psychological contract theory is informed by social exchange theory, suggesting a series of actions that generate obligations between employer and employee (Baxter-Tomkins and Wallace 2012). Herriot has linked the psychological contract to career paths by defining an organisational career as the sequence of 'renegotiation of the psychological contract, which the individual and the organisation conduct during the period of his/her employment' (cited in Atkinson 2002, p. 15). This focus on the psychological contract emphasises the importance of balancing the needs and concerns of both individual and organisation around career paths. Atkinson (2002) defined the psychological contract as the reasonable set of practical and emotional expectations of benefits that employers and employees can have of each other which is premised on the notions of trust, fairness and 'delivery of deal'. Simply put, a psychological contract is the 'reciprocal obligations held by employees and employers' (Barnett and Bradley 2007, p. 618), typically including career development opportunities.

The psychological contract essentially bridges the gap between the organisation and the individual and can be either 'relational' or 'transactional'. A relational contract aligns with the traditional psychological contract and is based on emotional involvement as well as financial rewards and employment security. It tends to be long-term and involve significant investment by both the employer and employee, including skills development, and is most often present in occupations that involve extensive training. Transactional contracts have a strong economic focus, where employee benefits rather than organisational citizenship drive the contract (Holland et al. 2002; Baxter-Tomkins and Wallace 2012).

Traditionally, a psychological contract was seen as an exchange of loyalty for security. However, ongoing changes in the economic, technological and business environments have established a new psychological contract that is no longer based on the traditional drivers of employee motivation: job security, salary increases and career progression. Instead, employees are just as likely to be in casual, part-time or contract employment and, at least for valued employees (regardless of employment status), employers are more likely to offer competitive rewards and continuous development of transferable skills in exchange for an employee's high performance and flexibility. Employers are now facilitators, coaches, advisors and enablers for the career development of their employees. In other words, organisations are expected to provide their employees with development opportunities so they are best placed to obtain work if they are no longer needed (Crawshaw and Brodbeck 2010). This is sometimes referred to as 'employability'.

The Psychological Contract, Career Paths and Employability

The concept of 'employability' has been argued to be a solution to the need to balance the new psychological contract (Atkinson 2002; Barnett and Bradley 2007) in which the employee becomes a 'self-reliant worker' and the organisation develops a 'career-resilient' workforce. Some question this claim, observing that many organisations in the past were already providing their employees with employability and commitment (Baruch 2001) and that now it is the commitment that has been removed. Indeed, as Baruch (2001) observed, it would be inconceivable to offer employability explicitly as a replacement for the traditional long-term employment relationship and career progression.

Holland et al. (2002) highlighted another benefit of promoting employability. For technology-driven organisations dependent on intellectual capital and the capacity of their employees to innovate, the ability to attract and retain those labelled 'gold-collar workers' and manage intellectual capital is becoming a major HR issue. They assert that it is in the employers' interest to ensure that key employees be assisted in moving to new employment in the hope they will join other information networks in their new role and can channel new information to the old network. Holland et al. (2002) also agreed that future organisations will need to strike a balance between maintaining their stock of intellectual capital and creating external networks (including ex-staff) where information is exchanged.

It is generally accepted that employees must become career entrepreneurs. However, Crawshaw and Brodbeck (2010) cautioned that such personal responsibility may increase careerist orientations to work, where career goals are pursued at the expense of organisational goals and job responsibilities. It is theorised that careerist orientations to work develop when an individual's trust in their employer is lost (Farndale et al. 2011). The new psychological contract and organisational emphasis on employability raise challenges for the employer in minimising the potential emergence of a careerist-orientated workforce. It is critical that the organisation maintains trust with employees through fair organisational career management practices. Farndale et al. (2011) also found that the link between employee experiences of management practices including career opportunities and levels of commitment is strongly mediated by perceptions of organisational justice.

Global Mobility

International mobility is a salient fact of the world economy. International assignments are becoming increasingly complex and they create new roles and career paths for expatriates including self-initiated expatriates who are hired on contract and take charge of their career trajectory without the direct support of an organisation (Selmer and Lauring 2011). Obtaining data on global mobility is difficult, although there are references to the self-initiated as an important asset in the global market (Doherty et al. 2011). International careers have been presented as a paradigm

of the boundaryless career, and the literature observes that expatriates move across borders on assignments, frequently change jobs due to the periodical nature of assignment contracts and do not seem committed to a particular organisation (Suutari et al. 2012).

In terms of the psychological contract, McNulty and De Cieri (2011) found that differences in the purpose of an expatriate assignment influence employee expectations of the psychological contract. Developmental assignments require stronger psychological contract support than that required for shorter technical/skills transfer assignments of limited duration. They also found that career development is likely to be a key benefit expected from long-term assignments.

Organisational Support for Career Development

Organisational support for career development (OSCD) refers to the programs, processes and assistance provided by organisations to enhance the career success of employees (Barnett and Bradley 2007), ranging from formal strategies such as career planning and training and development interventions to informal support such as mentoring and networking opportunities. Barnett and Bradley's (2007) research into the relationship between organisational support for career development and employees' career satisfaction found that OSCD is likely to be an important predictor of career satisfaction. Based on an extended model of social cognitive theory and proactive behaviour, they proposed that career management behaviours would mediate the relationship between OSCD and career satisfaction. The model below integrates some of the predictions of the extended model including variables of career satisfaction, organisational support for career development, proactive personality and career management behaviours.

To better manage career development, organisations need to consider career paths as a strategic market differentiator including for those in flexible arrangements such as part-time and fixed-term contracts. They must have effective and transparent policies and procedures to support employee career path activities. Obviously, career path frameworks need to consider the fit between what the employee requires and what the organisation can offer, particularly if the organisation is attempting to get employees to shift from career dependence to career resilience and to think of employability rather than employment (Baruch 2001).

Baruch (2001) recommended a two-fold level of integration: 'internal' integration, referring to practices designed to enhance the career paths of employees, and 'external' integration between the career path system and organisational culture and strategy. At an individual level career path management should focus less on the development of formal career plans and more on the development of attitudes and behaviours appropriate to contemporary employment relationships and that enable employees to be more flexible, adaptable and creative in identifying the next job. This may mean implementing initiatives including short-term projects, rotations or
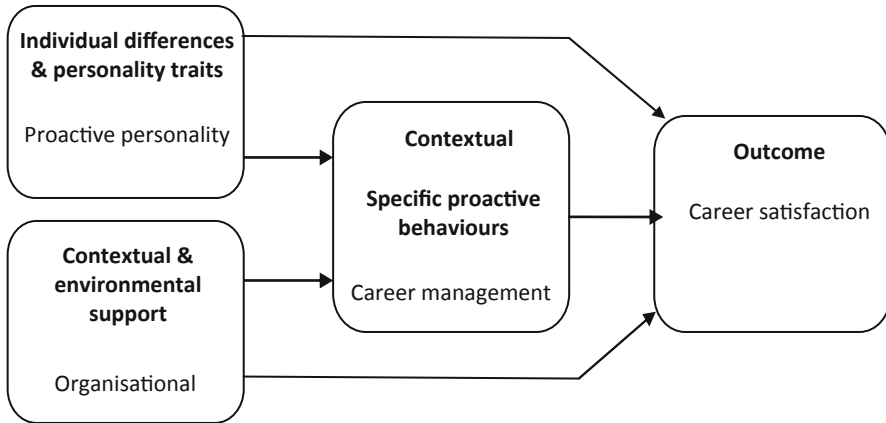
Fig. 4.1 Predictors of career satisfaction. (Barnett and Bradley 2007, p. 621)

secondments that provide opportunities to network internally and outside the organisation. The framework should help the employee understand the employer–employee relationship and encourage the employee to take responsibility for their role in the partnership by staying informed, engaged and making career development a continuous process (McLean 2007). At the organisational level, the framework needs to recognise the relationship between the employer and employee in the struggle to stay competitive. McLean (2007) recommended providing timely, useful labour market information, career guidance or counselling services and support for employees pursuing career path development plans.

Relational approaches to career development such as career networking and mentoring are also important (Hall 2004; Atkinson 2002; Barnett and Bradley 2007) and frameworks should factor in opportunities to use relational influences. Organisations can perform a supportive rather than directive role in enabling career path success by ensuring that employees are not hindered by a lack of career path information and career opportunities.

According to organisational support theory, organisations that promote continuous learning and espouse the belief that development is important for employees (regardless of their employment status) are likely to improve their performance as well as their retention of employees. Career development of employees should support business objectives while developing the individuals involved. Rather than implementing large and complex development systems that are long-term in nature, organisations could promote learning and career growth through work activities that can be done quickly and at a low cost, use existing organisational resources, and can be recognised and remembered as career development experiences (Hall 2002). Rather than formal approaches, organisations should consider naturally occurring workplace events as a way to meet development needs including challenging assignments (e.g. committees, taskforces), authentic feedback (e.g. 360-degree performance review), developmental relationships (e.g. mentoring) and skills building coaching. Many of

these events are spontaneous, everyday-type activities that are more easily integrated by the employee through personal reflection and planning than by the organisation.

Developmental Mentoring Relationships and the New Workplace Realities

Mentoring has long been espoused as a way for professionals to improve their career advancement. With more complex work arrangements and boundaryless career environments, sequential and simultaneous relationships are replacing the more traditional approach of single dyadic relationships (Baugh and Sullivan 2009). Traditionally, mentoring has assumed that both mentors and mentees are pursuing linear careers where the employee may only work for a small number of organisations and remain in the workforce for extended periods. Typically, these mentoring relationships were intense and dyadic where a single individual may have mentored a person over many years. However, Baugh and Sullivan (2009) argued that employees engaging in non-traditional career paths benefit more from mentoring networks because they will need a network of mentors to guide and support their development. They acknowledged that some careers may enact more traditional career paths, and that those employees operating in unstable work and life contexts will more likely require a greater number of mentors.

Individual Career Success

Seibert and Kraimer described career success in terms of 'positive psychological and work-related outcomes accumulated as a result of one's work experience' (2001, p. 2). Career satisfaction can also be defined as the extent to which individuals believe their career progress is consistent with their own goals, values and preferences (Barnett and Bradley 2007). Barnett and Bradley (2007) found that career success can be measured by both extrinsic (work experience outcomes including status, promotions and salary) and intrinsic (personal evaluation of their career progress and accomplishments) criteria. This focus on the subjective indicators of career success reflects the general trend towards individuals self-managing their careers rather than relying on organisational direction.

Individual personality traits and behaviours appear to influence career success. Ballout (2009) referred to a set of personal skills and competencies including continuous learning, tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, autonomy, self-awareness and self-efficacy. The term 'career resilience' can be used to describe these attributes (Atkinson 2002). Barnett and Bradley (2007) referred to the 'proactive personality', which is linked closely to both career path management behaviours and career satisfaction. People with proactive personalities tend to identify and act on career enhancement opportunities. These behaviours typically include career exploration,

planned or structured skills development and self-promotion (Barnett and Bradley 2007; Siebert and Kraimer 2001). There also appear to be causal outcomes associated with proactive behaviour and more successful and rewarding careers. Siebert and Kraimer (2001) and Barnett and Bradley (2007) found employees with high proactive behaviours experienced greater career satisfaction than those with lower proactive behaviours.

Rowold and Schilling (2006) found the level of identification or involvement an employee has with his/her work, self-need for improvement and career insight are important personal determinants. In particular, they highlighted the practice of 'career exploration', arguing that the extent to which an employee acquires information in a systematic or intended way is likely to yield a better understanding of personal development needs. Similarly, Sargent and Domberger (2007) found that young adults categorised as having a protean orientation also engaged in critical reassessment of their careers and that this distinguished them from others in the research who exhibited a more traditional career orientation. Hall and Chandler (2005) referred to two 'meta-competencies' required for learning how to learn, adaptability and self-awareness, which they argue allow individuals to learn from experience and develop new competencies independently of the employer.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief about his or her 'ability to mobilise requisite motivation, cognitions and actions to successfully complete a specific task' (Kellet et al. 2009, p. 535). It is important in helping an individual make decisions regarding career paths (Lent et al. 1994). In their research on 'high potentials' Dries and Pepermans (2008) found participants admitted to continuously passing on information regarding personal career goals to management and believed they owed their successful careers mainly to their assertiveness. In the extreme this level of self-efficacy may lead to a 'careerist orientation' as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Those with high self-efficacy are likely to set higher career goals, expend more effort and pursue career strategies to achieve their goals and ultimately career success. Briscoe et al. (2012) conducted research into the efficacy of protean and boundaryless career attitudes and associated coping mechanisms during economic recessions and concluded that such attitudes may help employees develop career skills to cope with uncertain career environments.

Visibility in the Workplace

While employees may have greater access to flexible working arrangements, and indeed this is often encouraged by employers, such arrangements often mean an employee is less visible to colleagues and management. McDonald et al. (2008)

explored the effect 'temporary invisibility' has on career success. They found that workplace absences including part-time employment, telework, flexi-time, job sharing and periods of approved leave such as parental or study leave resulted in what they termed 'career penalties'. McDonald et al. (2008) also reported on the allocation of fewer organisational rewards, including promotions, for employees who utilised family-friendly policies because of a basic assumption that being an effective parent is incongruent with being a committed worker. Employees on relatively short-term contracts suggested that they did not take leave because they perceived that invisibility in the organisation jeopardised the possibility of permanent employment (McDonald et al. 2008).

Conclusion

The academic literature appears to support the assumption that the traditional or organisational career has increasingly been replaced by more flexible, individualised notions of career development where the responsibility for professional development, learning and career development has shifted from the organisation to the employee. The research also suggests that learning and development and career path opportunities are increasingly likely to be restricted to certain sectors of the workforce. Those workers who are most likely to access career opportunities are those considered core workers (as opposed to peripheral), with high-demand professional or managerial skills sets and who work in large institutions or bureaucracies. They would also typically have the self-efficacy and vocational personalities to be adaptive and mobile. In contrast, those not considered core and with low self-efficacy are often restricted to relatively precarious work arrangements including part-time, fixed-term and casual work conditions where development and career path opportunities are unlikely to be part of the psychological contract regardless of the size of the organisation.

Undoubtedly, flexible arrangements are sought by some individuals in order to balance work and non-work activities. In addition, some employees want the freedom to make their own career choices free from the constraints of traditional career hierarchies. However, it would be simplistic to claim the traditional or organisational career is irrelevant or dead. Recent career development literature confirms that organisational careers are still desirable and that many employees want something more than a transactional relationship with their employer. Such employees will seek out organisations that value relational psychological contracts and which are more likely to provide opportunities for career growth. Regardless of age or gender, there are many who continue to seek job stability even if only for as long as they choose to stay, identifiable career paths and support from their employers in managing and developing their careers.

Our research for this chapter confirms that, regardless of economic fluctuations, organisations still have a role to play in the career development of their staff simply to support the continuation of an organisation's strategic plan and because staff capacity is central to the present and future viability of an organisation. Organisations that promote flexibility in their workforce for financial reasons and focus on employability

over employment security may find that it is a double-edged sword as they lose this creative capital as well as employee loyalty.

In this chapter we have attempted to shed some light on a subject that is of critical importance not only to employees and HRM practitioners but to organisations, some of whom are still seeking loyalty and commitment from their employees while withholding attributes of the psychological contract most employees would consider fair and reasonable—employment security and career development opportunities.

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