Protean Career Development: Exploring the Individuals, Organizational and Job-related Factors

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Abstract

Due to dynamics on both external and internal business environments, new forms of career management and career progression are increasingly being adopted at the individual level to maximize career success. Employees are now more inclined to setup their own career agendas and establish benchmarks in measuring career success in a new trend as emphasized in protean career. Based on the SCCT and JCM models, the study provides a theoretical framework that examines the predictive potential of the individual, organizational and job-related factors in explaining protean career among professional employees. The study is exploratory on the grounds of literature review. Professional employees may gain insights of the importance of protean career in career development process. Practical interventions for HRD professionals are suggested to assist individuals and organisations towards protean career management. Future research could provide a more holistic view of protean career and develop additional propositions.

Keywords: career development, protean career, professional employees, social cognitive career theory, career management

1. Introduction

Changes in economic, social and technological spheres are affecting organizational flexibility and responsiveness in meeting competitive global market requirements. In an effort to trim cost and improve efficiency, organizations are now downsizing, restructuring and delayering their workforce. As such, employment insecurity and career discontinuity are increasingly being felt by employees at all levels (Park & Rothwell, 2009). These changes have led to the gradual transformation of the employment contract from being long term relational understanding to short term transactional relationships (Rousseau, 1995; Hall & Chandler, 2005). Such changes in employment psychological contract and career landscape have prompted individuals to be more proactively in taking charge of their individual career development rather leaving it to their respective organizations. Hall and Mirvis (1996) contended that protean career is a particularly well-suited adaptation to current career landscapes. De Vos and Seons (2008) added that wide range of terms were used to explain protean career such as career self-management, proactive career behavior, and individual career management (Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefooghe, 2005; King, 2004). The notion of proactivity is vital to develop protean careers.

Protean career is defined as a career where the individual is experiencing greater responsibility for their career choices and career opportunities. The core values of protean career are freedom and growth, and subjective career success is recognized as the main success criteria (Hall, 1976). This study aims to develop a theoretical framework for measuring professionals' protean careers. Specifically, the study attempts to identify the predictors of professionals' protean career. Previous empirical studies have explored the relationship between protean career and career related outcomes such as career decision, career satisfaction and career advancement. Mixed results were found as the studies were conducted in different environmental contexts and sample population (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006; Enache, Sallan, Simo, & Fernandez, 2011). Moreover, the previous literatures have mainly focused on protean career as a predictor of career-related outcomes, whereas, there is lack of protean career literature studies that examines theoretically based variables to predict the protean career (Gubler, Arnold, & Coombs, 2013). To the individual, the findings of this study highlight critical personal

attributes for protean career management. Whereas at organizational level, the study stresses on the important role of organizational in influencing the individual career. To human resource practitioners, they stand to benefit in accessing a broader spectrum of perspectives and tools in developing effective human resource programs.

The paper is organized as follows: First, we begin by reviewing the definition of protean career which is a contemporary career approach. Later, we discuss an analysis of different approaches of operationalization on protean career. Third, we explain Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Job Characteristic Model (JCM) as the theoretical background explaining the phenomenon of protean career. The last section derives the study's implication to HRD, conclusion and limitations as well as suggestions for future research directions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Protean Career

The word "protean" is derived after "Proteus", the Greek sea-god who could change and transform in many shapes or substances at will (Hall, 1976). The protean individuals value individual freedom and self-growth; and define career success in term of psychological factors, such as the degree of job satisfaction, self-actualization, personal accomplishment and sense of self-fulfillment (Hall & Chandler, 2005). In a similar vein, Briscoe and Hall (2006) explained that a protean career emphasizes two important dimensions, which are value driven and self-directedness. Value driven attitude refers to "a person's internal values that provide the guidance and measurement of success for individual career" (Briscoe & Hall, 2006, p. 8). The latter refers to "one who is adaptive in terms of performance and learning demands" (Briscoe & Hall, 2006, p. 8). The notion of protean career is to emphasize that individuals take charge to manage their career. In addition, the protean career individual is continuously learning and anticipates work challenges in pursuing career paths (Briscoe & Hall, 2006).

In making career choices, Park and Rothwell (2009) believe that protean career is important for individuals subjective career success, where pride and personal accomplishment is valued more than position and remunerations. They further revealed that proactive individuals who initiate in developing their careers always experienced a more satisfying level of career success.

In 1996, Hall (p. 10) claimed that "...the path to the top has been replaced by the path with a heart". Individuals should have a strong internal "compass", capability and resources in taking charge of their careers. The responsibility of career development has shifted from organization to individuals. As Hall (2002, p.34) has observed that protean career is "with the self and one work", the individual is more inclined to set their own career agenda and determine the benchmark for his or her career success. It has modified and replaced the long term psychological contract between employer and employees to short term and transactional basis. The new psychological contract stresses on continuous learning opportunities, self-awareness, and personal autonomy. As such, loyalty and commitment to an organization is less important. Since organizations pursue more transactional relationships with their employees, employees are expected to pursue more self-interest careers (Maguire, 2002).

The concept of protean career relates to the boundaryless career to a certain extent. The boundaryless career explains individual's physical and psychological mobility between different occupations and organizations. Individuals could be independent, driven by inner-directed choices and crossing organizational boundaries in employment mobility. However, protean career and boundaryless career have distinct differences (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). The following sections explain the operationalization of protean career utilized by different researchers in previous studies.

2.2 The Operationalization of Protean Career

In the 1950s and 1960s, the emphasis of a traditional career was based on hierarchical and rigid organizational structures. The organizational hierarchy was the ladder to climb to achieve career success. Stability of structure and clarity of career ladders implied clear career paths to employees. In the 1970s, the social environmental context was post war cohort, with baby boomers just starting out on their careers. They want freedom, personal choice and value expression in their work. Career development concepts stressed on developing self-concepts, relating occupational information to self-information, self-interest and aspirations (Pietrofesa & Splete, 1975; Hoyt, 1977; Bachhuber & Harwood, 1978). Thus, a new career concept of protean career was introduced by Hall in 1976 to explain the interactions between individual's self-directedness, core values of freedom and growth as well as subjective career success.

The 1980s signaled the start of a recession with a looming Middle East oil embargo in 1979 and the world economy in financial crisis. Together with the advent of globalization and technology advancement, the employment landscape saw rapid restructuring, downsizing and delayering in the corporate organization where

measures were taken to reduce operational cost and improve efficiency. These environmental pressures and constraints inevitably influence protean career development. The working individual's began to heighten self-awareness, exploration and sensitivity towards these external changes. Behavioral actions included information exchanges, experiences of self-feelings, mastering competency skills and achieving satisfaction both in work and life are the focus for protean career. In turn, some organizations started to have human resource development practices assist employees in their career development and aligned individual career development and organizational career management. This aimed to achieve an optimal match and 'fit' between individuals and organizational needs which is vital for protean career development (Peterson, 1984; Domkowski, 1984; McLagan, 1989).

The restructuring trend continued in the 1990s and 2000s with immense outsourcing and increase workforce diversification activities. This prompted prominent changes in the employment relationship and psychological contract between employers and employees. Self-concepts, career self-agent and proactive career self-management orientation became a holistic approach in pursuing career development (Orpen, 1994; Ball, 1997; Crant, 2000; King, 2003; Baruch, 2004; McDonald, Brown, & Bradley, 2005; Yamamoto, 2005; Granrose & Baccili, 2006; Bridgstock, 2007)

For the recent past decade, employees continue to acquire and demonstrate the necessary skills and attend training for employment seeking (e.g., employability) (Gubler et al., 2013). A series of career management decisions were developed and implemented for guiding purpose or direction in one's work life. This turned on the spotlight to protean career development and was viewed as an important career orientation in assisting employees to achieve their subjective career objectives for work-life balance and self-fulfillment (Hall, 2004; Hall & Chandler, 2005; Fernandez & Enache, 2008; Cabrera, 2009, Park, 2009).

In view of different environmental contexts, researchers have struggled to find agreement on a generally accepted definition for the construct of different operationalization of terms employed for protean career (Ball, 1997; Orpen, 1994; Kossek, Roberts, Fisher, & DeMarr, 1998; Sturges, Conway, & Davey, 2002; King, 2004; De Vos & Seons, 2008). Some researchers ensuing characterizations of protean career have focused on the development of self (e.g., self-concept, self-image, self-awareness and individual agency). Individuals are capable to gather relevant information in order to form accurate perceptions, and to change one's concept accordingly and subsequently influence career decision making, outcome expectation and career exploratory (Betz & Voyten,1997; King, 2003; Hall, 2004). Crant (2000) also added that proactive personality, personal initiative, role breadth self-efficacy and taking charge are factors in explaining individual who engaged in self-directedness and value driven dimension of protean career. Others suggested high integration between work and family/ life values (Hall, 2002; Sargent & Domberger, 2007; Park, 2009).

Table 1. displays a synthesis of operationalization of protean career by previous researchers. It revealed that protean career reflects a framework of beliefs, desires and tendencies that predispose individuals to engage their context in distinct ways.

Table 1. Operationalizations of protean career in previous studies

Author(s)	Attributes	Sample Construct of Study/ Focus of Research
Gubler et al. (2013)	Protean career orientation Protean path	To reassess protean career concept, empirical findings, conceptual components & measurement
Cabrera (2009)	Career self-agent	Female graduates of international business school,USA/ To study protean organization, reshape work and career to retain female talent
Park (2009)	Self-directed career management	Employees of Korean financial service companies/ To examine predictors of self-directed career management
Fernandez & Enache (2008)	Intrinsic motivation to explore and learn, and attainment of ideals	Working students from business courses/ To explore the relationship between protean and boundaryless career attitude and affective commitment
De Vos & Seons (2008)	Proactive career self-management behavior	Belgian employees involved in career counseling/ To examine protean attitude and career success and mediating role of self-management
Bridgstock (2007)	Strong internal motivation, Self-direction, proactivity Resilience and adaptability, Openness to career opportunities, Positive interpersonal orientation	Professional Artist and art graduates in Australia/ To examine the success of protean career
Sargent & Domberger	Work/ life values	Final semester undergraduates involved in graduate

(2007)		recruitment/ To explore the development of protean career orientation
Kerno (2008)	Spiral and Transitory career	Engineers from US based companies/ To examine protean professionalism and career development
Granrose & Baccili (2006)	Self-fulfillment, intrinsic value	Employees from aerospace/ To examine psychological contract of boundaryless and protean career
Briscoe & Hall (2006)	Attitudes based on personal values Transformational career actor	To examine eight types of career profiles based on combination of protean career and boundaryless career
Yamamoto (2005)	Inter-organizational career Orientation (IOCO), self- standard	Employees from private enterprise in Japan/ To study the interaction between employees' IOCO and job involvement, goal commitment on career strategies
McDonald, Brown & Bradley (2005)	Continuous learning Self-focused, subjective career success, opportunities for skill enhancement	Employees from Australian Government agency/ To examine traditional career paths given way to protean career
Hall & Chandler (2005)	Sense of calling in his/her work, Psychological success	To develop a calling model of psychological success related to protean career
King (2003)	Career self-management Individual agency Career decision	To explain the nature, causes and consequences of career self-management
Baruch (2004)	Contract between one and the self, New psychological contract	To study transforming career: from linear to multidirectional career paths from organizational and individuals perspectives
Crant (2000)	Proactive personality Personal initiative Role breadth self-efficacy Take charge	To investigate proactive behavior and career management
Betz & Voyten (1997)	Career decision making Outcome expectation	Undergraduates from psychology courses/ To study efficacy and outcome expectation on career exploration and decision
Ball (1997)	Optimizing situation Career planning Personal development Work life balance	To study individual perspectives on career management competences
Orpen (1994)	Individual career management, Career planning, Career tactics	Employees from private and public sectors/ To study the effect of organizational/individual career management on career success
McLagan (1989)	Individual career planning	To study optimal match between individual career planning and organization career management
Peterson (1984)	Learning process to master skills Career decision making Satisfaction with jobs and life	To master skills for career decision making and career satisfaction
Domkowski (1984)	Individual planning	To explain career development is the result of self- planning, action and managed
Bachhuber & Harwood (1978)	Career interest and inspirations	To examine career alignment between individual interests, abilities and aspirations.
Hoyt (1977)	Self-concept	To develop self-concept and relate information regarding self and occupations
Pietrofesa & Splete (1975)	Self-concept	To develop and implement self-concept as a life cycle of earning and living

The underlying cause of the divergence in conceptualization is that the previous researchers inherently took multi-dimensional views of the career explanation based on different contextual factors. Based on our reviews, we summarize that protean career underlines the dimensions of flexibility, competencies, proactiveness, self-awareness and autonomy in individual career development. Since the individual and contextual elements have been discussed extensively in previous studies, this study attempts to identify the potential factors influencing protean career using the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994). The following section discusses on the underlying theory of SCCT.

2.3 Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

Reviews of growing literatures on protean career development have suggested that individual elements and external environmental elements affect individual career management. These elements are likely to affect learning experiences and eventually influencing career management and decision. Based on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, learning occurs when individual is integrated fully with the environment and others. It also acknowledges that individual and environmental elements are two different entities which are inseparable from one another.

SCCT considers the importance of personal agency in career decision making process and the influence of both internal (dynamic aspects of self-behavior) and external factors (contextual) on personal agency to achieve career goals. SCCT outlines a conceptual framework to explain the interaction mechanism between person and environmental variables to a certain extent, and thus may affect individual's career interest and behavior (Figure 1). They addressed three distinct and yet interlocking models as: (i) career interest development, (ii) choice (intentions/goals for activity involvement, activity selection and practice), and (iii) performance attainment. In essence, these three diverse models are interwoven to influence career development with the assumption that interaction exists between individual-related factors and situational context (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994).
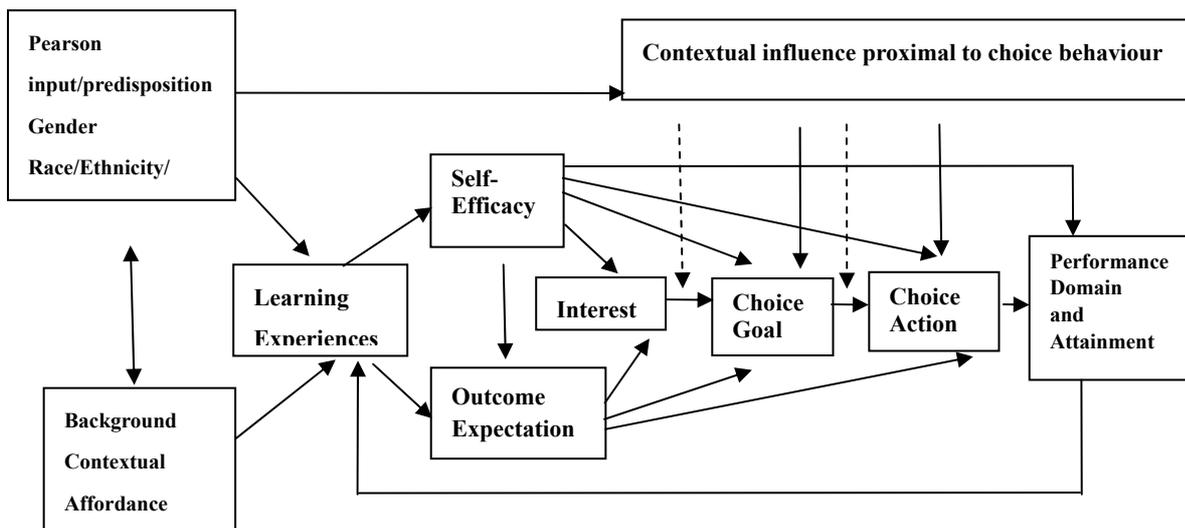

Figure 1. Social cognitive career theory showing social cognitive influence on career choice behaviors
Source: Lent et al. (1994, p. 93)

2.3.1 Individual-Related Factors

SCCT highlights that self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal orientation are three socio-mechanisms that influence career choice action. Both self-efficacy and outcome expectation affect the formation of career interest. Individuals who are efficacious and able to expect positive outcomes are more likely to develop career interest. The model explains that evolving interest leads to development of goal settings activities and implementation of certain actions (practices) to achieve the desired goals. Individuals proactively implement necessary career actions to achieve career goals if they perceive positive outcomes which stemmed from strong self-efficacy (De Vos & Soens, 2008). Thus, self-efficacy explain individual's capabilities to perform certain task in order to attain career goals. It is a crucial factor in determining protean career and how individuals builds confidence and perceives their abilities in career management (Leung & Clegg, 2001; King, 2004; Quigley & Tymon, 2006; Ballout, 2007).

Outcome expectation is viewed as an important element in SCCT. The model outlines the relationships between outcome expectations and action due to the belief that choice action is dependent on the expected outcomes (Lent et al., 1994). Individuals would involve themselves proactively in protean career if they anticipate positive outcomes from a given course of action. Bandura (1986) further categorized different categories of outcome expectations, such as physical (e.g., monetary rewards), social (e.g., recognition and approval), self-evaluation (e.g., self-satisfaction) which would have certain degree of influence to individual's career action.

Similarly, goal orientation is explained as another important socio-cognitive mechanism in self-regulatory behavior (Lent et al., 1994). Goals are developed through individual's self-evaluation on their behavior which relates to internal standard of performance. A specific career goal can create tunnel vision that leads individuals to commit to a particular course of action (Bandura, 1986, Greenhaus et al., 2010). Lent et al.'s SCCT (1994) emphasizes the interrelated relationship among self-efficacy, outcome expectation, goal orientation and career actions, whereby the higher the value of perceived outcome, the higher the likelihood that individual will embrace particular career goals and action to accomplish the goals (behavior). Thus, self-efficacy, outcome

expectation and goal orientation are viewed as individual-related variables explaining the dimensions of protean career, i.e., self-directedness and value-driven.

2.3.2 Organizational-Related Factors

Lent et al. (1994) identified that contextual factors may exert direct or potential impact on career action (i.e., protean career). These contextual elements are described as (i) more distal in nature that precede and influence interests and self-cognitions (e.g., organizational environment that influence task and role model exposure), and (ii) proximal influences on career actions. Lent et al. (1994) further emphasized that organizational contextual serve to facilitate, restrict and shape individual's career path (p. 107). It is important to highlight that individuals are more likely to take actions to achieve their goals if they have accessed to organizational support and resources to pursue the goals (Lent & Brown, 2006; Cummings, 2008).

Hall (1976, 2002) acknowledged the important role of organizations for individual careers even though he introduced the protean career concept which stresses on the individual factors such as self-awareness and adaptability dimensions. Orpen's (1994) study supported that employees' career success is more significant in organizations with formal policies for managing careers than in those without any policies or merely informal policies. For instance, employees felt that they have better careers in organization which provided comprehensive career information, even though they do not perceived such organizations to be any better than organization which fails to provide such information. Employees are more likely to be more successful in career when organizations provide the necessary "infrastructure" which is typically beyond their control such as providing appropriate career opportunities and designing the relevant training and development programs to the employees. They can achieve intrinsic career success rather than only lead to salary increments and extra promotion. Notably to stress that organizational context may has significant impacts on employees' subjective career success as emphasized in protean career (Orpen, 1994).
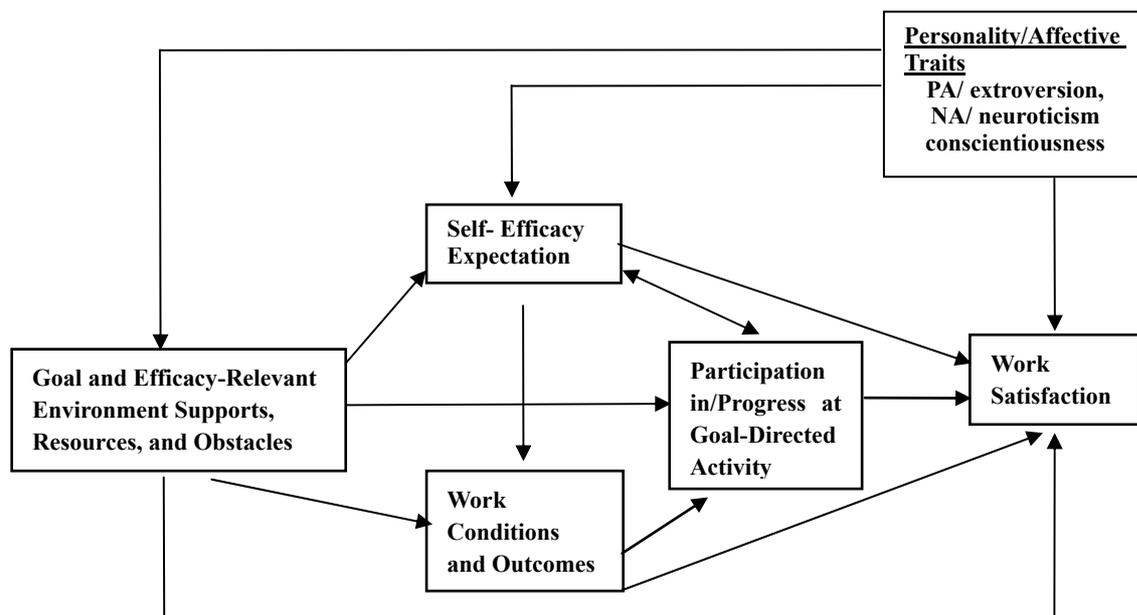
2.3.3 Job-Related Factors

Figure 2. A process model of work satisfaction that highlights theorized interrelations among personality, cognitive behavioral and environmental variables
Source: Lent and Brown (2006, p. 241)

In 2006, Lent and Brown explained the extended SCCT model by including work conditions (e.g., job characteristics) element in the existing model. Noting this revised approach, they clarified that work conditions is more likely to affect individual's participation in/progress at goal-directed activity (i.e., protean career), and to promote job satisfaction as shown in Figure 2. Based on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive framework, SCCT originally consists of three segmental models of career interest development, choice, and performance attainment.

Nonetheless, Lent and Brown (2006) continued to focus on work-related contextual variables to fashion a fourth model of work satisfaction.

In regard to occupational conditions, Hall and Las (2010) viewed jobs as building blocks of career. Both the terms career and job are related to an individual's work. They further suggested that a career is a sequence of jobs or positions occupied by an individual during a course of time. Career is determined by job choices that people make over time (Hall & Las, 2010). Therefore, under this conception of career, the specific job characteristics will influence individual's protean career development.. For instance, job nature with high job autonomy allows individuals to be more independent and responsible in performing their task, subsequently leads them to be more confident in protean career development (Park, 2009).

In this regard, McMurtrey, Grover, Teng and Lightner (2002) supported the argument that individual's career orientation is derived from job characteristics. Career orientation (DeLong, 1982) refers as self-perceived needs, values and talents (internal driven) that shape individual career decisions. The good fit between career orientation and job characteristics is vital to influence individual's career action. Thus, Park and Rothwell (2009) depicted current job characteristics may help individuals to understand the appropriate actions in developing their career. In accord with the above discussion, job characteristics model (JCM) (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) was employed to further explain and support the relationship between job-related factors and protean career in next section.

2.4 Job Characteristics Model (JCM)

The extended SCCT model highlights the potential influence of work conditions on career action. Job characteristics model (JCM) (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) was employed to describe the association between job characteristics and career action. JCM theorizes that job characteristics may affect cognitive, psychological and emotional condition of job incumbent. Job characteristics is the degree to which jobs are designed to improve internal work motivation of job incumbents, which can directly affect employee's career and work behaviors (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

There are five job dimensions of JCM that lead to beneficial personal and work outcomes. Skill variety is the degree to which a job requires a mix of activities and involves the use of different skills and talents. Task identity is the degree to which the job requires a completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work. It is doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome. Task significances is the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives of other people, whether in the same organization or in the external environment. Autonomy is the degree to which the job gives the worker freedom, independence, and discretion in scheduling the work and determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out. Job feedbackis the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job provides the individual with direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) .

JCM predicts certain positive effects on employees' psychological state. Skill variety, task identity and task significance affects the individual's experience meaningfulness of work. Individual believes that the work to be important, valuable and worthwhile. A high rating in the autonomy dimension leads to the employee's feeling of personally responsible and accountable for the results of the work. In addition,, a high rating in the job feedback dimension is an indication that the employee has knowledge of results, an understanding of how effectively he or she is performing the job. The three psychological states namely (i) experienced meaningfulness of the work, (ii) experienced responsibility for outcomes of the work, and (iii) knowledge of the actual results of work activities must be experienced by an individual if desirable outcomes are to emerge (e.g., job satisfaction, career satisfaction and career growth). These desirable outcomes are characterized as internal guides and motivations for career action. Particularly, such internal values is one of the dimension of protean career (De Vos & Soens, 2008).

JCM proposes that the job itself should be designed to possess certain characteristics that create condition for high job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is multidimensional psychological responses to one's present job and career satisfaction as satisfaction with one's career as a whole. Career satisfaction is one of the "intrinsic" elements of subjective career success. It is a broader construct than job satisfaction because it encompasses all the jobs that an individual has worked (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995). Williamson, Pemberton and Lounsbury's (2005) study found that job satisfaction is significantly correlated with career satisfaction and career development.

Mediators

Job Characteristics

Task Characteristics
Task Significance
Task Identity
Task Variety
Autonomy
Feedback

Knowledge Characteristics
Job Complexity
Information Processing
Problem Solving
Skill Variety
Specialization

Social Characteristics
Social support
Interdependence
Interaction outside
Organization
And Contact with
Beneficiaries
Feedback from others

Physical Characteristics
Work Conditions
(Environment, Health,
Safety)
Ergonomics
Physical Demands
Workload and Activity
Levels
Equipment Tools

Additional Characteristics
Workday Cycles
Time Pressure
Temporal Horizon
Virtual Work
Skill and Ability
Requirement

Experienced Meaning
Experienced
Responsibility
Knowledge of Results
Role-Breadth
Self-efficacy
Perceived Impact
Social Worth

Proactive Behaviors
Job Crafting
Role Expansion
(e.g. proactive career
behavior)

Proximal
Motivation
Satisfaction
Learning

Distal
Performance
Withdrawal
(Absenteeism
and Turnover)
Creativity
Stress, Health,
Well-being

Culture
Power Distance
Individual/ Differences
Big 5 Personality Traits
Affective Disposition
Values and Gender
Knowledge, Skills,
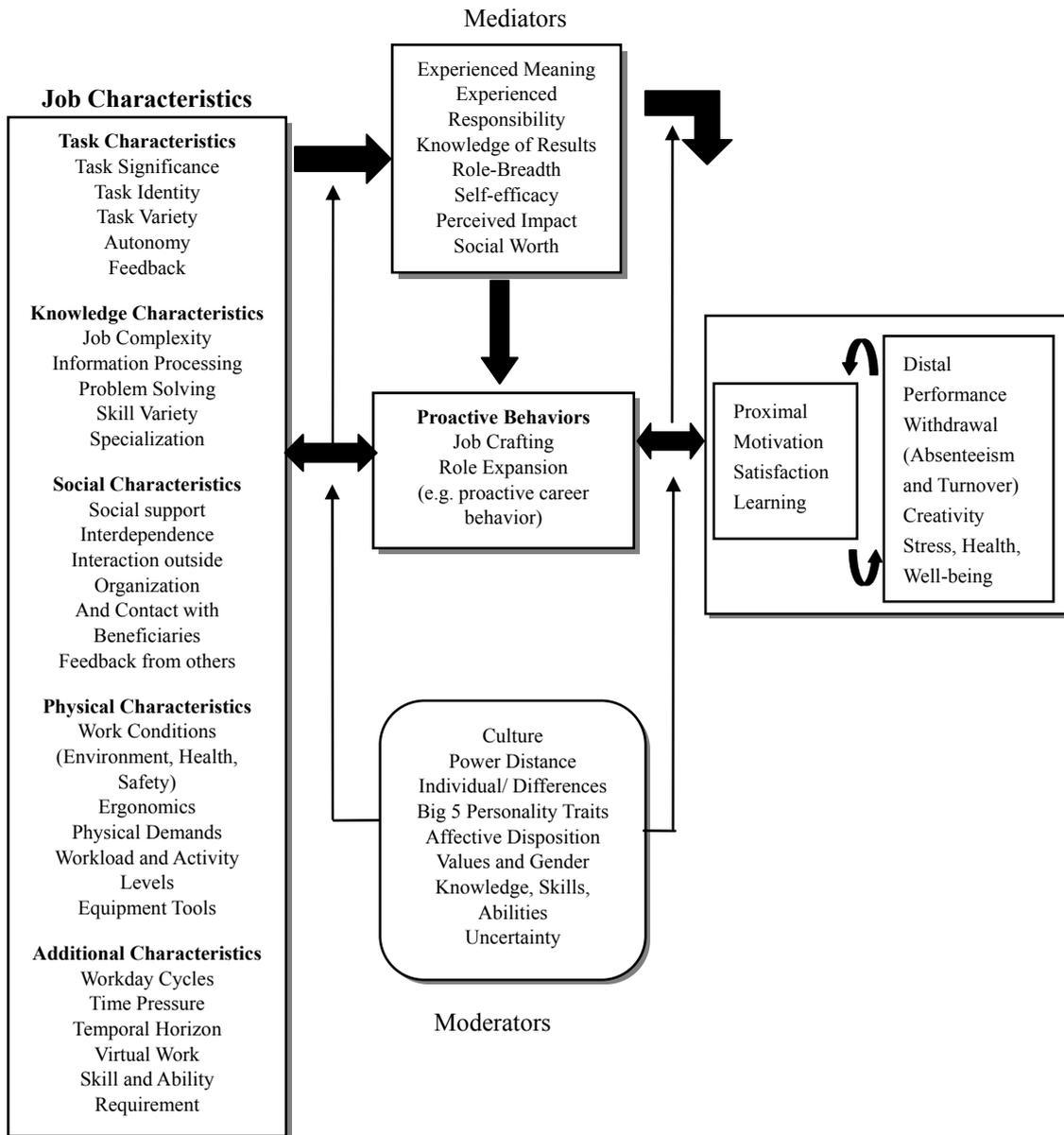Abilities
Uncertainty

Moderators

Figure 3. An integrative model of job design and proactive behavior
Source: Grant et al. (2010, p. 427).

In 2010, Grant, Fried and Juillerat introduced an integrative model of job characteristics (i.e., job design) and the proactive behavior in Figure 3. Hall and Las (2010) further supported that the relationship between job characteristics and career-related variables especially autonomy affect individual's protean career (particularly the self-directed dimension). On the other hand, Parker, Wall and Jackson (1997) asserted that as organizational structure becoming flatter in business environment nowadays, employees are provided with more autonomy and attitude to change their own jobs and expand their own roles. Similarly, task significance might trigger value driven component of protean career. In the subsequent research, Parker (2000; 2007) explained how jobs can be designed with specific characteristics to stimulate adaptive and proactive behaviors. Job incumbents found that autonomy always triggers proactive behavior due to the feeling of capable or taking on a broader, more proactive set of responsibilities included proactive career behavior (i.e., self-directed in nature).

Hall and Las (2010) stressed that "smart jobs" stimulates individual to learn and growth. To be more specific, smart jobs are those job characteristics create meta-competences of self-awareness and adaptability in protean career. Individuals would take action to acquire the skills and knowledge for long term career development. As explained, careers are determined by the job choices over time. Thus, job characteristics are crucial for career

because when individual make career decision at different points in their career, they always prioritizing certain job characteristics that lead to feeling of psychological success. Individuals who are self-directed and values driven are more likely to seek jobs that provide autonomy, that they can craft careers which fulfill their values. Hence, job characteristics are likely to be influential in developing protean career.

3. Protean Career Model

Based on the theories and theoretical model discussed above, individual, organizational and job-related factors are employed to explain protean career as in Figure 4. The model attempts to explain the dynamic interaction between the individual and contextual factors (i.e., organizational and job-related factors) could embrace employees' protean career separately yet rely on the organization background contextual affordance and foster their career development. This interaction process will influence the individual career interest development, which in turn affect the career goal choice and the pursuit of choice action in a pro-active manner and attitudinal reactions. Subsequently leads to high performance and work satisfaction attainment. As postulated in Figure 4, the three factors of individual, organizational and job constantly influence each other.

Correspondingly, the model acknowledges the reciprocal interaction between individual and organizational/job-related factors in order to achieve person-environment (P-E) fit in determining protean career development (Lent et al., 1994). Both the organizational and job-related environments provide opportunities and supports which may enhance an individual's behaviour change. Pajares (2002) supported the argument that such dynamic interaction of individual and the environment always caused behaviour change. We believe that person-environment interaction plays an essential role in determining individual's protean career development. The changes either an increase in one skill's or changes in term of action taken. As the process occurs reciprocally and continuously, one's skill and behaviour are reinforced until they are fully developed to pursue career choice action.

To conclude, the theories and models discussed above namely SCCT, extended SCCT, JCM, integrative model of job design and proactive behavior model provide the integrative and dynamic theoretical framework (Figure 4) to explain the protean career. Specifically, these theories emphasize the significant relationship between individual-related, organizational-related and job- related variables in examining protean career.
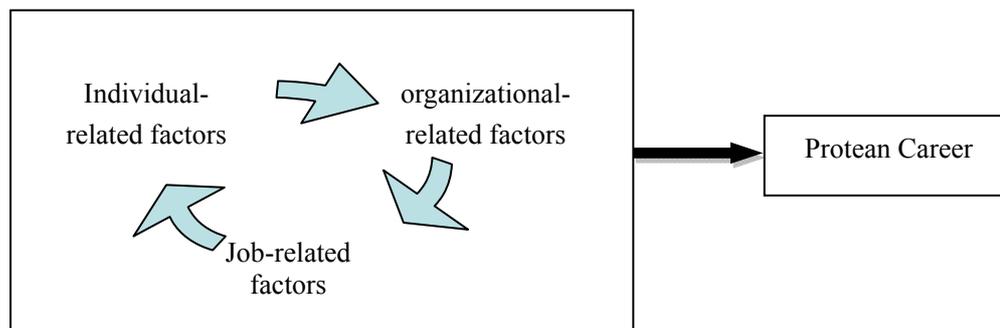

Figure 4. Integrative model to predict protean career

4. Discussion and Implication for Human Resource Development

This article aimed to develop a theoretical framework describing the predicting variables of protean career. The article concludes that individual, organizational and job-related factors have predictive potential on professional employee's protean career. The domain of career management is in line with the core threads of HRD, which is important to develop employees' skills and knowledge along their career path (Swanson & Holton, 2001). The main tenet of all these factors is related to proactive behavior in individual career development. Tseng and McLean (2008) found that instilling more strategic HRD practices via learning organizational may enhance employee's skills, knowledge and readiness to take charge of own career development.

The present framework suggests specific individual, organizational and job-related variables that can lead to protean career. Having strong self-efficacy, outcome expectation, goal orientation, organizational support programs and specific job characteristics that employees can emphasize in order to develop protean career. Hence, it is recommended that HRD practitioners take consideration of the existence of protean career as new career trends among professional employees. They should acknowledge its unique characteristics of

self-directedness and value driven dimensions of protean career. Therefore, HRD practitioners should facilitate and support employees to take individual responsibility in managing career.

HRD practitioners particularly need to pay attention to the outcomes of the influence of individual-related factors on protean career. As discussed earlier, the fact that the influences of individual characteristics on protean career is consistent with following one's "path with a heart". It is the best approach to foster individual's self-directed action in career management. Career counselor or HRD practitioners may consider training interventions that employees could engage in to increase their sense of control over their career paths and be more responsible for their career planning and choice. Subsequently, individuals will be more confident that the self-managed career is depend on their own improved competencies, skills and knowledge instead of external forces such as luck, fate or chances.

This study offers implications of environmental situation on protean career. The present framework suggests that organizational support programs and job characteristics can affect employees' protean career. Organizational support programs such as mentoring and employability culture are crucial to encourage employees in continuous learning and skills enhancement in order to assist employees in their future career decisions and career path. It could be assumed that the more organizations take an active interest and provide assistance in their employees' career development, the more benefits can be obtained by the organizations because they are able to increase employees' commitment and reduce turnover rate accordingly (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009).

Besides, the respective department managers also ought to be aware of the potential connection between job characteristics and protean career. The study provides managers a starting point for HRM strategies and application via job characteristics and job designs. However, this does not require every job to be redesigned, but an assessment of job features by the incumbent may enhance the job meaningfulness. Hall and Las (2010) demonstrated that individuals make career decisions by prioritizing particular jobs characteristics over others. Those job characteristics will be instrumental in psychological career success of protean career. For instance, by providing job autonomy could substantially increase employees' self-efficacy and be proactive in career management.

5. Conclusions

In sum, this study helps HRD practitioners to understand how employees view career development from the perspective of protean career. It provides insight about the influence of individual, organizational and job-related factors on protean career. In addition, in the era of globalization and dynamic business environment, the study may add knowledge to HRD practitioners and managers to assist employees in career management process and align work performance goals with career goals and accomplishment.

We further conclude that individual and organization should take into account the importance of fit between individual and environment context in protean career decision. Accordingly, management should assess various types of job design and organizational support programs and examine to what extent this fits affect individuals career action.

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