Managing Careers in Selected Multinational Companies

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the subsisting career management practices of selected multinational companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain as basis for career development program. It contrasted the extent of use of career management tools like, career analysis, career strategy, career planning, job execution, and career support. Mean was applied for descriptive analysis, whereas one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized to establish if significant difference existed between the extent of use of career management tools among the selected multinational companies classified as small, medium, and large. The study exposed that the extent of use of career management tools such as, career analysis, career strategy, career planning, job execution, and career support was Very Great Extent. Notwithstanding the classification, the selected multinational companies, in managing employee careers, are made aware on the significance of the conduct of career analysis, career strategy, career planning, job execution, and provision of career support. Employers of multinational companies are fully aware of the importance of their role in the career management process. Significant difference however was determined in the extent of use of career support between large and medium when the selected companies were categorized as large, medium, and small, by computing the Least Significant Difference (LSD) in multiple comparisons.

Keywords: Career analysis, career strategy, career planning, job execution, career support

1. Introduction

With the world's economic globalization, organizations transact business abroad. The world is accessible from any point of destination, and same with business organizations to the people and vice versa (Anto, 2013). In general, multinational companies staff their subsidiaries with local or host country nationals (Scullion and Collings, 2006). Consequently, parent company has to deploy managerial or technical employees to its subsidiaries to solve staff shortages or develop management talent. The high cost in relocating employees abroad is wasted if the expatriate fails to pursue a career in one's own company, and the experience gained in a foreign country cannot be accumulated within a firm or across firms if the employee does not consider permanent expatriation as a career. Developing and retaining local talent is a major concern for multinationals, particularly in emerging markets where there is often a scarcity of managerial talent (Sparrow, 1999a). Indeed, the process of global leadership development increasingly begins with the selection of high potentials whose senior management identify as having the potential to become future leaders of the company (Black, et al., 1992).

Multinationals have begun to experience complexity in drawing managers to allow deployment abroad. One of the contributing factors in this unwillingness for international deployment is the uncertainty that envelopes the executive's career on repatriation. Just as multinationals have recognized the need to train executives for international assignments, they must also develop a plan for facilitating the re-entry of executives into domestic operations.

This paper therefore undertakes a thorough evaluation on the career management tools of multinational companies whilst having their career management practices for their employees, so they can have a basis in formulating a valuable career development program.

2. Literature Review

Customarily, people looked at careers as a ladder from job to job, for always, not with just one or, at most a few organizations. Nowadays, mergers, outsourcings, consolidations, and nonstop economizing has modified the rules for most people. Many people do still move up from job to job, but more often they find themselves having to re-invent themselves (Dessler, 2008).

Whether or not the employer has a career development program, the individual manager can do several things to support his subordinate's career development goals. All or most of the employer's human resources activities can support career management efforts, such as job postings, training programs, performance appraisal for career planning, expatriation/repatriation, and the like.

The article on "The New Focus for Career Development Programs in Business and Industry" provides information and strategies employees can utilize to think of more responsibilities for achieving their own career (Schmidt, 1994). The ongoing call to deal with technological change and boost economic uncertainty has had a blow on career management programs in business and industry. This impact has transferred the focus from a shared outlook of facilitating both the individual and the organization achieved their goals to one of enhanced focus on achieving organizational needs. The transition in focus has resulted more pressure on the person to

boost his own career development. Career development programs were initially crafted after the recessions of 1979 and 1982 as a means of breeding career strength and prospect for individuals as well as recognizing potential managers to achieve organizational needs. The large population of Baby Boomers going through the work force required to offer new motivation for growth and enhanced productivity for both the individual and the organization. The career development programs offered options for employees while managing human resource needs at the same time.

The article entitled "The Family-Career Connection: A New Component for Career Development Program" also discusses the relationship between the roles of family and **career (**Miller, 1985**)**. Developing a clearer understanding of these changes, of the nature of family and **career** roles, and of strategies for assisting all family members in planning for both **career** and family roles can increase the satisfaction of all family members and improve family functioning. Too often **career** planning is viewed as an individual activity, and **career** decisions tend to be made without an understanding of the interrelationships between the family and work roles. The joint analysis of family and **career development** argues that in some stages of both family and **career development** it is particularly demanding to combine **career** and family roles.

The article in Harvard Management Update discusses the importance of implementing **career development program** in an organization (Field, 2008). It cites the **career development program** of Deloitte Consulting LLP for its employees to boost their **career** plans through reaching out and an open conversation between heads of the organization and employees. It asserts that **career development** process supplies **career** planning resources that can facilitate the parties establish **career** goals and formulate **career** plans.

Likewise, the necessity for proper and detailed career development and education programs persists to shoot up. Remarkably, despite the cultural differences and educational structures, many countries look on same questions when formulating and administering career development programs. Adjusting to career development interventions and techniques cross-culturally seem to be feasible strategies for administering or improving programs, provided the concepts and materials are shaped to the countries' distinct characteristics (**Feller, et. al, 2005).**

In the study on "Exploring the Antecedents and Outcomes of Career Development Initiatives: Empirical Evidence from Singaporean Employees", it deals with relation between career planning and career management as background of career development and job satisfaction, and career commitment as its result (Puah, P. & Ananthram, S., 2006). A sample of 505 employees of a primary international Singaporean hotel disclosed the major connection between the factors of career planning and career management, and career development, and in turn, with job satisfaction and career commitment.

Another thing established is the disparity between career development programs and career needs, and its ensuing effect on job satisfaction levels among research and development (R&D) personnel. The study discloses that R&D personnel have varied career needs at different phases of their career, and that job satisfaction levels among this group are specifically influenced by the disparity between career needs and career development plans depending upon which stage of their career they have arrived at. Obviously for R&D personnel in particular, that not only is the disparity between career development programs and career needs a significant factor of job satisfaction, other than that there are significantly increasing turnover levels among researchers in the high-tech industry in Taiwan than the average level for industry in general. Hence, from a practical point of view, it is important to recommend effective career development programs geared at satisfying the career needs of R&D personnel in order to enhance the level of job satisfaction in this group (Chen, T., et. al, 2003).

The article on Career Mapping Done Right presents information on **career** mapping, or pathing, which originated in the field of human resources (**Pratt, 2012).** It is stated to be especially important to larger organizations that are trying to institutionalize in their **career** management **programs** and improve their workforce **development**. A **career** map can include some elements like historical plotting, a directory of hopes, and a skills-gap analysis.

3. Methodology

This is a descriptive study using survey questionnaire in which validity measures were established. To test the hypothesis, a survey on selected multinational companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain was conducted in 2014 in which the subjects were categorized as large, medium, and small. By total enumeration, the selected multinational companies were sent questionnaires for the survey. Respondents of the survey were the HR officers representing each category.

Mean was employed for descriptive analysis, whereas one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized to establish if significant difference occurred between the extent of use of career management tools among the selected multinational companies classified as large, medium, and small.

4. Results and Discussions

The first objective of this study was to establish the extent of use of career management tools of selected multinational companies. Table 1 presents the extent of use of the career management tools of selected multinational companies as observed by the HR officers.

Table 1: Extent of Use of Career Management Tools of Selected Multinational Companies as Observed by the HR Officers.

	Small		Medium		Large		Weighted	
	Mean	Intrpr'n	Mean	Intrpr'n	Mean	Intrpr'n	Mean	Intrpr'n
Career Analysis	4.0	Great extent	4.0	Great extent	5.0	Very Great Extent	4.3	Very Great Extent
Career Strategy	4.4	Very Great Extent	4.1	Very Great Extent	5.0	Very Great Extent	4.5	Very Great Extent
Career Planning	4.3	Very Great Extent	4.0	Very Great Extent	4.6	Very Great Extent	4.3	Very Great Extent
Job Execution	4.3	Very Great Extent	4.3	Very Great Extent	5.0	Very Great Extent	4.5	Very Great Extent
Career Support	4.4	Very Great Extent	3.9	Great extent	4.9	Very Great Extent	4.4	Very Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.3	Very Great Extent	4.1	Very Great Extent	4.9	Very Great Extent	4.4	Very Great Extent

It can be noticed on the table that one hundred percent (100%) of the selected multinational companies, notwithstanding the classification, provided employees with the necessary elements in career management process: (a) career analysis, (b) career strategy, (c) career planning, (d) job execution, and (e) career support. This supports to the article in Harvard Management Update which discusses the importance of implementing **career development program** in an organization (Field, 2008). It cites the **career development program** of Deloitte Consulting LLP for its employees to boost their **career** plans through reaching out and an open conversation between heads of the organization and employees. It asserts that **career development** process supplies **career** planning resources that can facilitate the parties establish **career** goals and formulate **career** plans.

The table which shows that the selected multinational companies have a very great extent in the implementation of their career management tools makes the employees more committed to their jobs. The results justified the study on "Exploring the Antecedents and Outcomes of Career Development Initiatives: Empirical Evidence from Singaporean Employees", which emphasizes the relation between career planning and career management as background of career development and job satisfaction, and career commitment as its result (Puah and Ananthram, 2006).

The results further negates to the statement of Dessler when he said that customarily people looked at careers as a ladder from job to job, for always, not with just one or, at most a few organizations. Many people do still move up from job to job, but more often they find themselves having to re-invent themselves (Dessler, 2008).

On the second objective of this study which was to contrast the extent of use of career management tools when the selected multinational companies were categorized as large, medium, and small, Table 3 utilized the one-way ANOVA and multiple comparisons. A significant difference of **.05,** as exposed on the table, was observed in the extent of use of career management tool in the aspect of career support between the large and medium multinational companies.

Table 2: Difference in the Extent of Use of Career Management Tools When the Selected Multinational Companies were Categorized as Large, Medium, and Small.

a)   ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Career Analysis	Between Groups	2.000	2	1.000	2.700	.146	Not Statistically significant
	Within Groups	2.222	6	.370			
	Total	4.222	8				
Career Strategy	Between Groups	1.210	2	.605	2.882	.133	Not Statistically significant
	Within Groups	1.259	6	.210			
	Total	2.469	8				
Career Planning	Between Groups	.469	2	.235	.864	.468	Not Statistically significant
	Within Groups	1.630	6	.272			
	Total	2.099	8				
Job Execution	Between Groups	.889	2	.444	1.500	.296	Not Statistically significant
	Within Groups	1.778	6	.296			
	Total	2.667	8				
Career Support	Between Groups	1.506	2	.753	6.778	.029*	Statistically significant
	Within Groups	.667	6	.111			
	Total	2.173	8				

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 2 presents the differences of the respondents' extent of the use of their career management tools when compared according to their classification. In terms of career analysis, career strategy, career planning, and job execution, there has no significant difference, because the level of significance is greater than .05.

The table which shows no significant difference in the aspect of career analysis, career strategy, career planning, and job execution, regardless of the size, sustains the article on "The New Focus for Career Development Programs in Business and Industry" which provides information employees can utilize to think of further responsibilities for achieving their career (Schmidt, 1994). It further supports the article in Harvard Management Update which discusses the importance of implementing **career development program** in an organization (Field, 2008). It cites the **career development program** of Deloitte Consulting LLP for its employees to boost their **career** plans through reaching out and an open conversation between heads of the organization and employees. It asserts that **career development** process supplies **career** planning resources that can facilitate the parties establish **career** goals and formulate **career** plans.

Also, the result of this study holds up the necessity for proper and detailed career development and education programs. Remarkably, despite the cultural differences and educational structures, many countries look on same questions when formulating and administering career development programs. Adjusting to career development interventions and techniques cross-culturally seem to be feasible strategies for administering or improving programs, provided the concepts and materials are shaped to the countries' distinct characteristics **(Feller, 2005).**

However, the outcomes of ANOVA show that significant difference is observed in Career Support *(p-value=.029)*. This is proven by the yielded p-value which are noted to be lesser than .05. This suggests that at least a pair among the classification compared differs.

b)   Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable	(I) GROUP	(J) GROUP	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	Interpretation
Career Support	Large	medium	1.0000	.010*	Statistically significant

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

To find out which among the respondents grouped according to the classification differ from each other in their tools where significant differences are noted, multiple comparison, using Least Significant Difference (LSD) was computed.

Gleaned in the table is the result of multiple comparisons using LSD of respondents' tools grouped according to the classification. The large multinational companies differ significantly from the medium in terms of career support.

This significant difference supported the study of Chen on "The study of **career** needs, **career development programs** and job satisfaction levels of R&D personnel: the case of Taiwan" which established

the disparity amidst career development programs and career needs, and its ensuing effect on job satisfaction levels among R&D personnel. The study discloses that these personnel have varied career needs at different phases, and that job satisfaction levels of this group are specifically influenced by the disparity among career needs and career development plans depending upon which stage of their career they have arrived at (Puah and Ananthram, 2006). Obviously for these personnel in particular, that not only is the disparity amid career development programs and career needs a significant factor of job satisfaction, other than that there are significantly increasing turnover levels of researchers in the advanced industry in Taiwan than the average level for industry in general. From a practical point of view, it is therefore important to recommend valuable career development programs geared at meeting with the career needs of R&D personnel so as to enhance the level of job satisfaction in this group (Chen, 2003 and **Pratt,2012).**

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

In managing employee careers, notwithstanding the category, all selected multinational companies acknowledged the significance of the conduct of career analysis, career strategy, career planning, job execution, and provision of career support. Employers of multinational companies are fully aware of the importance of their role in the career management process in facilitating employees to develop their career goals, thus enhance their commitment to their employer.

The multinational companies, being fully cognizant of the lifelong process of career planning, should regularly review their career management process to continually ensure the employee's journey through life and work. To enable the employee to develop the career plans and skills he will need to move on to the next step in his career, the employer's career development program should emphasize on career analysis, career strategy, career planning, job execution, and provision of career support such as having a mentor in furthering an employee's career.

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