Organizational Career Management:

Researching at Managerial Philosophy level

GESTION ORGANISATIONNELLE DE CARRIERE :

RECHERCHE AU NIVEAU PHILOSOPHIQUE DE GESTION

Ma Shibin[1]

Abstract The research on organizational career management is much less than career self-management. There are several taxonomies on dividing organizational career management, but lack at Philosophy level. At managerial Philosophy level, the enterprise can accept not only collectivism or individualism but also equilibriumism value. With collectivism or individualism value, what the enterprise develops is non-systematic organizational career management. While with equilibrium value, the enterprise may develop systematic career management.

Key words: Equilibriumism, Career development, Organizational career management

Résumé: Les recherches sur la gestion organisationnelle de carrière sont moins nombreuses que celles sur l'auto-gestion de carrière. Il y a plusieurs catégories de gestion organisationnelle de carrière, mais au niveau philosophique il n'y en a pas. Au niveau philosophique de la gestion, l'entreprise peut accepter non seulement le collectivisme ou l'individualisme, mais aussi la conception de valeur d'équilibrisme. Avec le collectivisme ou l'individualisme, ce que l'entreprise développe est la gestion organisationnelle de carrière non-systématique. Alors avec l'équilibrisme, l'entreprise peut développer la gestion systématique de carrière.

Mots-Clés: équilibrisme, développement de la carrière , gestion organisationnelle de carrière, gestion systématique de carrière, gestion organisationnelle de carrière non-systématique

INTRODUCTION

Boerlijst (1984) claimed that the career as a whole began to receive real attention only in the 70's last century. More systematic study of careers has arisen since. The term career is often used to describe an employee's sequence of experiences and roles in work-related organizations, where career success encompasses subjective and objective aspects of achievement and progress of an individual through an organization or an occupation (Melamed, 1994). Super and Bohn(1970) view a career as a series of jobs or work-related positions during the course of a person's life. Hall(1976) adds the notion of work-related attitudes and behaviors. Van Maanen (1977) viewed career as a series of distinct experiences which may be related and which comprise an individual life. Following from this definition, then, is the notion of career as a series of one's working experiences. Greenhaus (1987) defined career as the pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life. Work-related experiences include objective events or situations such as a series of job positions, job duties or activities, and work-related decisions, and subjective interpretations of work-related events (past, present, or future) such as work aspirations, expectations, values, needs, and feelings about particular work experiences.

Gutteridge and Otte (1983) surveyed 40 organizations and pointed out that organizational career management(OCM) include many practices, such as career planning workshops, career workbooks, career counseling and so on. OCM is concerned with the organization carrying out activities relevant to the career development of its employees. The importance and prominence of OCM has been recognized by many scholars. Despite the unfashionability of organizational careers, it is still important to take the organizational viewpoint into account in understanding career practices in order to put the newer, more individual views into context (Baruch & Peiperl, 2000).

An earlier survey by Walker & Gutteridge (1979) identified 10 OCM activities, although some of these were closer to other aspects of human resource management than to OCM (e.g. recruitment, work-family interface). Some aspects of OCM practices and activities had been discussed by Gutteridge and Otte (1983), they surveyed 40 organizations and pointed out that OCM include many practices: career planning workshops, career workbooks, career counseling/career discussion approaches, job posting, skills inventory, career pathing, succession planning, career resource centers and outplacement counseling.. Perhaps the widest list was that provided by Gutteridge, Leibowitz, & Shore (1993) in their study of OCM in the United States. Their study, however, concentrated on large American business organizations only(the top 1,000 United States corporations) and might thus have been unrepresentative of broader practice.

Very few theoretical OCM models exist. Schein's cone model of career development is perhaps the only prominent example that reflects an individual career development in an organization (Schein, 1978). This model pointed out that one employee has three dimensions career development in an organization, but it didn't compartmentalized career management practices. Baruch & Peiperl(2000) built a framework of five practices activities on OCM(See Figure 1). "Basic" activities include job posting, formal education, pre-retirement programs, and lateral moves. "Active Planning" activities were associated with dynamic, open, and proactive climates, include performance appraisal (by the direct supervisor and by the HR department) and succession planning. "Forman" activities include written personal career planning, supply dual career ladder, career books and/or pamphlets, and common career paths. "Multi-Directional" activities were correlated with open climates and include peer appraisal and upward appraisal. This model can provide an effective practice framework to managers to help employees' career development. "Active Management" cluster include assessment centers, formal mentoring relationships, and career workshops, these activities all focus on knowing as much as possible about the individual and his/her prospects, as well as how the firm's career system works.
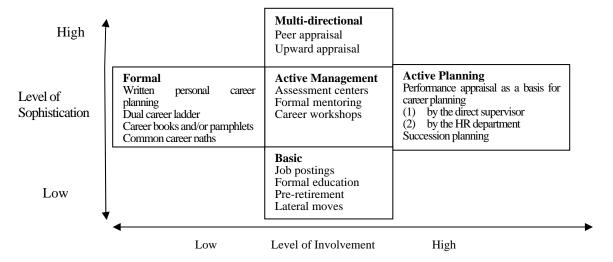

Figure1, Two dimensional model of career management practices
Data from: Baruch Y. & Peiperl M. (2000). Career management practices: an empirical survey and implications. Human resource management, Vol.39 (4):359.

Similarly, Long Li-rong (2002) made an empirical survey on OCM in Chinese enterprises, who claimed that OCM in Chinese enterprises includes four aspects, which are fair promotion, highly-training, accelerating self-development and providing information. Among those aspects, Chinese enterprises mainly focus on fair promotion.

Obviously, the OCM theory or the practice mode that is put forward is quite limited. The cone model made by Schein (1978) can help managers to make muti-dimension developing route on organizational platform. However, Cone's model provides tools for employees more than for managers. In an enterprise which doesn't provide OCM, employees can also widen their own career design with this tool. Baruch & Peiperl and Long's models pointed out how managers help employees to develop their career. However, Baruch's and Long's models don't explain how to orient the enterprises' managerial philosophy, when they provide OCM for employees in order that enterprises can face challenges from inside and outside. Neither of their models provides the relevance between different OCM practice and organizational value. In my opinion, it is not important what kind of ways you choose to help your employees. The most important thing is why you choose them. This article will try to research OCM from managerial philosophy and clarify OCM according to different managerial philosophy orient. This result will

also help to learn the actual relationship between OCM and human resource management.

THE PHILOSOPHY ISSUE ON ORGANIZATIONAL CAREER MANAGEMENT

Managerial philosophy involves some basic questions which the organization must answer. Among them, the basic one is the relationship between the enterprise and its employees. In fact, the relationship between the two is equal to the relationship between the individual and the collective. While on this point there are two representative opinions: collectivism and individualism.

Triandis (1995) describes an individualist as one who views the self as independent of others, focuses on personal goals, acts upon personal beliefs and values, and emphasizes task outcomes. A collectivist, on the other hand, considers the self as an interdependent entity, adopts group goals, acts according to social norms, and stresses good interpersonal relationships. In a word, individualism refers to the tendency to be more concerned with the consequences of one's behavior for one's own needs, interests and goals, whereas collectivism refers to the tendency to be more concerned with the consequences of one's own behavior for in-group members, and to be more willing to sacrifice personal interests for the goal of the collective interest. In individualist societies, values such as autonomy, competitiveness and self-sufficiency are emphasized. In collectivist societies, behavior towards in-group members and values such as interpersonal harmony and group solidarity are emphasized. Collectivist societies are found in Asia, and South America, individualist societies are found in Western Europe and North America, whereas However, recent research does not always support the above traditional sorting method. Some researches found self-reported scores on individualism–collectivism scales revealed relatively small cultural differences, especially between Japanese and Americans (Oyserman, et al., 2002).

The earlier studies (Hofstede, 1980) have generally defined individualism and collectivism as a bipolar, unidimensional variable, and as if they reflected opposite ends of a singular continuum (with individualism on one end and collectivism on the other)and have examined the influence of individualism-collectivism as if it reflected a unidimensional phenomenon. However more and more scholar argued individualistic individuals can act in a collectivistic manner under certain circumstances (Strunk et al., 1999). Some researchers (e.g. Triandis, et al., 1990) have suggested that, at the individual level, individualism-collectivism may be a multidimensional construct. They have suggested that individualism and collectivism are not two opposite poles of a single dimension but rather two separate attributes that can coexist and are simply emphasized more or less in each culture (Triandis, 1993; Oyserman, et al., 2002).Individualism-collectivism is also studied at the organizational level. Although none of the extracted dimensions were interpreted as organizational individualism and collectivism in one performed exploratory factor analysis, Hofstede and Spangenberg(1987) have suggested that individualism and collectivism dimensions can be obtained at the organizational culture level, and they suggest that robust organizational individualism and collectivism factors might be obtained using careful operationalization of the constructs and a confirmatory validation approach. Chatman and Barsade (Chatman, & Barsade, 1995) did an experiment in which participants were randomly assigned to simulated organizations that emphasized either collectivist or individualist values. The authors found that participants' cooperative or individualistic orientation interacted with the simulated organizational culture to predict cooperative behaviors and preferences for certain types of organizational practices, suggesting that person–organization fit along the dimensions of individualism and collectivism might be an important predictor of behaviors and attitudes.

However, at the organizational level, we can't explain clearly all the possible things in real world, if we only consider the two as collectivism and individualism. At least, extreme collectivism and Equilibriumism should be included. In real society, it is very rare although extreme collectivism appeared (e.g during Cultural Revolution in China). It couldn't last long because it ignored personal benefit. It is impossible for the enterprise which insists on such value to supply OCM that is helpful to employees. Therefore what we must actually discuss is only three values: collectivism, individualism and Equilibriumism.

In real society, the most popular value is collectivism in most enterprises, especially in some eastern countries. Because the value of collectivism has great effect on them, they think the collective goal is superior to the personal one. When there are conflicts between the two, they usually take the enterprises' benefits into account first. Thus in these enterprises they either don't develop OCM or only have some activities to meet the needs of the enterprises. These activities are only accessory and some kind of stretch to the activities of human resource management. Only when the enterprises' benefit doesn't suffer loss can they play a part. Just because of this, the OCM in these enterprises is odd and not systematic. It can only provide part activities to help employees develop their career and only help some "key" employees. It is usually non-systematic.

Relatively, in those enterprises which assert "following individualism", things may be complicated. On one hand, managers must respect employees' individual value. On the other hand, they have to defend the enterprises' benefit. When they face the issue of employees' development, they must respect employees' career development with individualism value, at the

same time they are also the agents of the enterprises. So it is difficult for the enterprises to build up real individualistic-oriented systems. In fact, it is just the inter-contradictory between individualism and capitalism. Because of this, the help they provide for employees is not actually different from the one they provide with collectivism value. The help is only non-systematic.

When dealing with the relationship between collectivism and individualism, some enterprises follow Equilibriumism value. (We don't use egalitarianism although it in itself is close to Equilibriumism. It is often used in the research on physics and sociology which stresses the equality (Robert et al., 2002)). Such value is Equilibriumism that the individual and the organization depend on each other. It concerns both goals and

balances both benefits when decisions are made. It stresses two-win and developing together. Even if there is conflict, both sides may give in. It never sacrifices the opposite sides' benefit. Thus in such enterprises OCM is not optional but a must, because the development of both sides is the same. Based on this goal, the enterprises may have systematical organizational career management and may make it a rule.

So with the collectivism or individualism value, the OCM that they develop is called "non-systematic organizational career management"(NSOCM). While with the Equilibriumism value it is called "systematic organizational career management"(SOCM). Differences between the two are as follows (See Table 1.)

Table1. SOCM and NSOCM

item	systematic Organizational career management	non-systematic Organizational career management	
Philosophy orientation	Equilibriumism	Collectivism	individualism
Goals they pursue	Develop together Corporate and two-win	Enterprises develop first. Employees may develop if possible	Both sides develop separately, they don't work together.
Who benefits	All the employees	Only some key employees	Those who want to develop themselves
Ways of settling conflicts	Discuss and both give in	At the expense of the employees development	The same as collectivism(for example, if there is some difficulty, the enterprise may dismiss the employees first not declare insolvency)
The system degree	systematic	Non-systemtic or low-systematic	

CONSULT PRACTICE: MY EXPERIENCE

Many researches(e.g Meyer et al., 1989; Keller, 1997)show career commitment has been found to be positively related to job involvement and to be negatively to job withdrawal and turnover(e.g. Blau, 1985). However, organizational commitment and career commitment have a complicated relationship. Organizational commitment may be the cause of forming career commitment. At the same time it may be the result of career commitment (Goult, 2002).
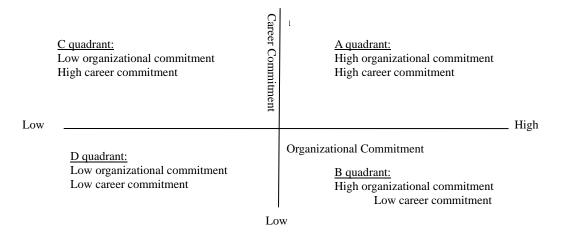
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                              Career Commitment
  C quadrant:                                    A quadrant:
  Low organizational commitment                  High organizational commitment
  High career commitment                         High career commitment

Low ─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────── High

                                    Organizational Commitment
  D quadrant:
  Low organizational commitment                B quadrant:
  Low career commitment                        High organizational commitment
                                               Low career commitment

                              Low
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Figure2. Combinations of Organizational Commitment and Career Commitment

In fact, as two different kinds of commitment, organizational commitment and career commitment have different relationship. According to dichotomy, organizational commitment and career commitment can be divided into two: high and low. Figure2 shows four kinds of possible combinations. A quadrant shows the combination of high organizational commitment and high career commitment. In this quadrant employees are willing to work in the enterprises and are contributors with the need of high achievement. B quadrant shows the combination of high organizational commitment and low career commitment. Although employees are willing to stay in the enterprise, they are contributors with the need of low achievement. C quadrant shows the combination of low organizational commitment and high career commitment. Although employees are those with the need of high achievement, they need to seek new stages for their own development. D quadrant stands for the combination of low organizational commitment and low career commitment. Employees not only have a low need of achievement but also want to have a job-hopping.

Obviously A quadrant shows the best combination to the enterprises. Employees in this quadrant are not only the effective contributors, but also need little stimulation and supervision. Former researches (e.g. Long, 2002) showed (non-systematic) OCM could strengthen the employees' organizational commitment and career commitment.

We can also get further conclusion that SOCM should have better effect than NSOCM on strengthening the relationship between organizational commitment and career commitment. Because NSOCM has a characteristic that it is non-systematic and only is carried out among part employees, its fault of over utilitarian, hypocrisy and unfairness can be seen easily. Thus in some degree it lowers the effects of OCM. Because of this, since 2000 I have promoted SOCM mode based on Equilibriumism value when I help the enterprises introduce organizational career commitment.

For some years, I have given some lectures on SOCM thought for over 20 Chinese enterprises. With my help, 5 enterprises have founded NSOCM mode, 3 enterprises have founded systematic OCM mode, and 1 enterprise is preparing to lead NSOCM. But one enterprise stopped the process because of the personal changes. At present, together with Nan Jing Personnel Ministry, I am researching the possibility of introducing SOCM in the government and the ways to do it under the central government's philosophy----Building up a harmonious society. For some enterprises it's very easy to accept Equilibriumism value. The enterprise authority is willing to change their collectivism value into Equilibriumis value(actually it's only slight collectivism). They would like to introduce SOCM based on Equilibriumism. Among those which accept Equilibriumism value and would like to build SOCM mode, three are state-owned enterprises. One of them is a large corporation.

Considering former collectivism value, former management mode and some other complicated management factors have a continuous effect on the state-owned enterprises; the author suggests that these enterprises divide the introducing process into three steps when introducing SOCM, following the instruction: "go ahead steadily and surely", "advance step by step":

The first step: Preparation. This step aims to prepare all kinds of software and hardware for introducing SOCM mode. When preparing software, what the enterprise should do is to make it known and train the managers in order to get their value changed and learn the significance both to employees and to the enterprises' development. In preparing hardware, the first thing is to prepare necessary information and tools for the employees' career exploration.

The second step: Experiment. The task in this phase is to try the SOCM among the chosen group. Actually it is to carry out "two systems in one enterprise". That is to say, some employees accept the SOCM mode based on Equilibriumism. While others accept the traditional management mode based on collectivism. Usually some employees volunteer and some are asked to take part in the experiment. The following factors are the reasons for the need of experimental period when introducing SOCM: It not only needs time to get the value changed especially for the managers, but also it's better for them

to benefit from the new management mode. It needs to make employees know the real aims of the authority. Employees need to make sure leaders are neither for curiosity, nor only for the enterprises' benefit. In fact, it is of benefit to the employees' development to build SOCM and the effect on the employees who take part in the experiment can be seen. Human resource department and managers can have a chance to accumulate experience for carrying out the new mode. During the experimental phase employees can be divided into some groups according to the enterprises' size and management base.

The third step: Put in practice. After experiment, people gradually accept Equilibriumism value. They don't doubt any longer and the management authority also have the experience to carry out the SOCM. They can carry it out among all the employees or a majority of them in the whole enterprise. Thus the SOCM mode can benefit all the employees so that it can promote their career development and ensure the enterprise can develop continuously with this effective management tool.

At present the three enterprises that founding SOCM mode are in the state of the second step. One of them just began to experiment for the first group half a year ago. Two are doing the second group. The longest of them has been in the second step and has lasted for over three years. Now it is preparing for the third step. In my opinion, the first step needs half a year or one year. The second step needs more than two years. For every experiment group it needs one year and a half to two years. If the enterprise is not large, or the gap between the former management mode and the SOCM mode is not large, only one experiment is enough.

Now I haven't analyzed the enterprises having NSOCM and the SOCM in comparison. Feedback from three enterprises developing the SOCM mode shows that employees have higher go-aheadism than before. The leaving rate obviously goes down. It begins to show helpful to improve both employees' career commitment and organizational commitment.

When I promote the SOCM mode, not all the enterprises are willing to give up their former collectivism value; they are more willing to accept NSOCM. Five enterprises developing NSOCM mode are all state-owned also. They have their collectivism value for a long time and will keep it up. The main reasons for inviting me to help them to introduce NSOCM are as follows: First, lake of stimulating ways. They deeply feel that the traditional ways mainly on wages are having less and less effect, especially on those key employees with higher pay and education. They can't wait to find new stimulating ways. Second, scale new heights. Some enterprises already have effective stimulating system, but they want to attain a yet higher goal. Third, with curiosity. At the beginning the reason why some enterprises want to introduce SOCM is that OCM is a very fresh and a newly-born thing to them. They just want to have a try. When they learn the essence of SOCM, some of them are afraid it may have a contradictory with their former management mode. At last they give it up.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper studies how to divide OCM at managerial philosophy level. It describes the experience that I got from the practice in some enterprises. I'd like to share it with all the readers. Because the practice time is very short, I can neither do empirical research on the difference between SOCM mode and NSOCM one, nor do research on the relationship between individual out variables and enterprises' out variables. In future, we should do the following research: First, Go on researching the process of developing SOCM mode in order to find some more effective technological processes and methods. Second, analyze the differences of the effect of boosting employees' both organizational commitment and career commitment at the same time, try to find how much the effect is on both modes of SOCM and NSOCM.

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THE AUTHOR

Ma Shibin, School of Economics & Management, Nanjing University of Science & technology, Xiaolingwei200, Nanjing, Jiangsu, 210094, P.R. China.

E-mail: msb@sohu.com