Research Paper
Impact Factor: 3.567
Peer Reviewed Journal

IJMDRR
E- ISSN –2395-1885
ISSN -2395-1877

EXPLORING THE FACTORS FOR MID-CAREER TRANSITION: A QUALITATIVE REVIEW

Nupur Gosain* Dr. Chavi Bhargava Sharma ** Dr. N. K Chadha***
**Research Scholar,Manav Rachna International University, Faridabad.*
***Supervisor Manav Rachna International University, Faridabad.*
****Co-Supervisor Manav Rachna International University, Faridabad.*

Abstract
The importance of career is seen in all the field of education and employment. Despite the fact that any career is considered a viable option to sustain and grow, there still exists increasing demands of career change and exploring future opportunities. There has been seen an increase in the awareness and interest of youth to explore the fields in different sectors as important career choices. With youth entering this domain of research and experimenting with the techniques to learn and deliver there has been an increase in career change. Also, with the growing need and requirement, one chooses for an alternate career choice to fulfil the desires of self and family. To analyse and interpret the factors which lays an impact on the mid-career stage of an individual, this paper tries to explore the reasons with the help of a concept note. The paper intends to make use of information collected from secondary data sources.

Keywords*: *Career, Mid-Life, Mid-Career, Mid-Career Transition, Career Development and Planning, Psychological Factors

Introduction

Career may be understood in many aspects and facets of an individual's life. It can be termed as an occupation or a profession that usually involves special training or formal education, and is considered to be an individual's lifework. It is not a milestone, but is seen as a sequence of related jobs usually pursued within a single industry or sector comprising of many milestones. It is related to a range of aspects of an individual's life, learning and work. It also frequently understands to relate only to the working aspects of an individual's life. It is not necessary that a person's career is static to one area, but it may differ as one proceeds to excel and achieve more in the desirable field. Since learning embraces not only formal education, but training, development of skill and knowledge and informal learning too, similarly, work embraces all forms, not only employment, but also self-employment, unpaid work within the home and community etc. Planning one's career is a lifelong process that focuses on making choices to help you manage your work and personal life. To effectively plan one's career it is important to be self-aware, aware of the world we work in, and the commitment we are willing to offer. With advances in technology, there have been changes in the way people work and the world of work. If the process of career planning has been effectively followed, it will enable and prepare one to plan, choose a workforce, and work towards career advancement. It is observed that managing and fulfilling one's needs in a career is not determined by a single factor, but it is an amalgamation and result of various decisions one has made in their lifetime. To maintain a healthy and stress free life, it is important to have a balanced and a fulfilling career/job profile. If your needs are satisfied with the role, it is a greater possibility that you will remain in the same career for a longer period of time. To avoid the situation of job shift, an efficient career planning is utmost important. The issue which arises is that we have shortage of good workforce, and one can't seem to retain them.

Conceptual Framework

"Career", must be redefined considering the current and newer perspective and outlook towards work and life. There is a need to redefine it as the individual's lifelong progression in learning and in work. Career management describes the active and purposeful management of a career by an individual. A key aspect of career management is the ability to research opportunities and then to make career choices. Another is the ability to reflect on their current career and on labor market opportunities and then to make career changes. According to researchers, an individual's decision to join a firm may depend on any of the three factors viz. objective factor, subjective factor and critical contact. The objective factor theory assumes that the applicants are rational. The choice, therefore, is exercised after an objective assessment of the tangible benefits of the job. The factors helping him choose may be the salary, other benefits, location, opportunities for career advancement etc. Subjective factor theory suggests that decision making is dominated by social and psychological factors. The status of the job, reputation of the organization and other similar factors plays an important role and the critical contact theory advances the idea that a candidate's observation's during his interaction with the organization plays a vital role in decision making. These theories assume that candidates have a free choice of employers and careers. In reality the scarcity of jobs and strong competition for desirable jobs severely skews the decision-making process. In many markets employees work particular careers simply because they were forced to accept whatever work was available to them. Career Development is the interaction of psychological, sociological, economic, physical and chance factors that shape the sequence of education, training, occupations or jobs that a person may engage in throughout a lifetime. Careers advisers and trainers involved in

IJMDRR
E- ISSN –2395-1885
ISSN -2395-1877

guidance roles are its technicians. Bureaucracies work well in a relatively static world, but they struggle to cope with change. And change is now endemic: particularly economic change, stemming from the globalization of markets; and technological change, stemming from the pervasive impact of information and communication technologies. The result is that all organizations have to be prepared to change much more regularly and much more rapidly than ever before.

Mid-Career

In Australia, it has been observed that approximately 36% of employed persons are between the ages of 35-54. Many of these individuals are going through a critical life transition period. Longitude studies show that many men and women at midlife feel the need to conduct midlife reviews. With so many individuals at the time of both mid-life and mid-career, and with trends for this group showing that mid-career transitions are becoming more common, understanding the career decisions of this group becomes crucial. The idea of mid-life crisis has been talked about to the point of cliché, yet little theoretical or empirical research exists to describe the process through which mid-life career transitions are made. Mid-career is associated with crisis, break and change. Mid-career employees often question their meaning for work, value for organizations mission, job autonomy, their contribution and relationships. Mid-Career has been defined as the middle phase in an individual's work life (Hall, 1986). It is distinguished from other career stages by the presence of mastery, being established in the role, and feeling engaged in one's career with few thoughts of disengagement and retirement (Hall, 1986). Schein (1978) suggests that mid-career begins with external acknowledgement that a person has reached mastery. Arthur and Kram (1989) added to this that middle career individuals have concerns with personal advancement such that the greatest individual mid-career need is advancement and recognition. Gibson (2003) also found out that while mid-career respondents felt acknowledged as being competent and achieving mastery, they also expressed concerns that career opportunities were constructed and advancement was uncertain. Thus, mid-career can be defined as the middle phase in the sequence of lifetime work experiences characterized by acknowledged role mastery, concern for personal advancement yet greater ambiguity and uncertainty about the possibilities for career advancement.

Career Transition

Career transition was studied by various career development practitioners as early as the 1950s (Super, Crites, Moses, Overstreet, & Warnath, 1957). With the 1960s and 1970s focus on self-fulfillment and individuality (Louis, 1980) as well as an economic downturn in the 1980s (Heppner, 1991; Heppner, Fuller, & Multon, 1998), researchers paid closer attention to the concept of midlife career transition. Certain factors contributed to a successful transition, particularly family support and financial resources (Eby & Buch, 1995). The occurrence of mid-career is dependent on the career pattern. Mid-career is delineated by the midpoint of when an individual begins and ends a career experience. It may occur during the midlife falling between the ages of 40 to 60. Midlife and mid-career are coincident, because of the time required to gain mastery and since most professional careers begins when individuals have completed basic educational qualifications. "A transition can be said to occur if an event or non-event results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behavior and relationships" (Schlossberg, 1981).

The experience occurring over a period of time, in which one considers, pursues, adjusts, and ultimately succeeds in making an occupational change. This assumed that the individual will ultimately succeed in making an occupational change but did not exclude those in the process of considering, pursuing, or adjusting to the new career is known as career transition. In addition, the career transition experience did not end with one securing a position in a new career field. Nor did it continue until they consider themselves successful in their new career field. The experience ended when the individual perceives the transition to have been a success, meaning that they functioned well, both in their new position and their life beyond. Many researchers combined the definition of career transition and career change. "Career change was operationally defined as expressing an intention, as well as taking preliminary action, that is directed toward leaving an enterprising occupation for any of the other five types of occupations, according to Holland's (1973) classification system". Thus, any career change intended to leave one of Holland's occupational fields for another was considered a career change. On the other hand, career transition was operationally defined as any of the following three situations in which these types of career changes were being considered as a possibility: (a) Task change: a shift from one set of tasks to another within the same job and the same location (e.g., a dairy farmer who switches to growing grain), (b) Position change: a shift in jobs, with the same employer or to a different employer or location, but with only a slight shift in job duties (e.g., a secretary moving to a different department within the same company), and (c) Occupation change: a transition from one set of duties to a different set which may include a new work setting (e.g., a farmer becoming a factory worker). As defined by Louis (1980), "A career transition is defined as the period during which an individual is either changing roles (taking on different role) or changing an orientation to a role already held. The duration of the period of transition depends in large part upon the extent of difference the changer experiences between new and old roles or new and old role orientations". Louis' definition was unique in that it incorporated the element of time into the definition, as opposed to viewing career transition as a single event.

Trends within midlife professionals suggest individuals are increasingly seeking opportunities for career transitions (Slay, Taylor & Williamson 2004) and are often searching for careers that are more intrinsically motivated, individually meaningful and self-congruent.

Factors Affecting Career Transition

The following themes emerged when examining the literature on career transition models (Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999; Latack, 1984; Latack, Kinicki & Prussia, 1995; Schlossberg, 1981.):

(a) Transition as a process,
(b) Internal and psychological factors,
(c) External and environmental factors, and
(d) Successful adaptation to the transition

Transition as a Process

Schlossberg (1997) discussed the importance of moving in, moving through, and moving out to describe the transition process. Specifically, the moving in process incorporated the learning and adaptation of one to a new role. While the moving in had particular applications for career transitions, such as learning the job, office etiquette, and industry norms, it also applied to other life roles, such as parent, spouse, student, or neighbor. During the moving through phase, Schlossberg discussed the traps of burning out, competing demands, and experiencing boredom. Again, this phase could be described in relation to the job (i.e., excessive hours/duties with no recognition or appreciation) or in life (i.e., caring for children and parents, as well as on-the-job customers). The moving out phase was described as a loss of identity or a loss of lifestyle. Schlossberg suggested interventions for all of the transition processes described, including the unemployed or those who have "fallen through the cracks".

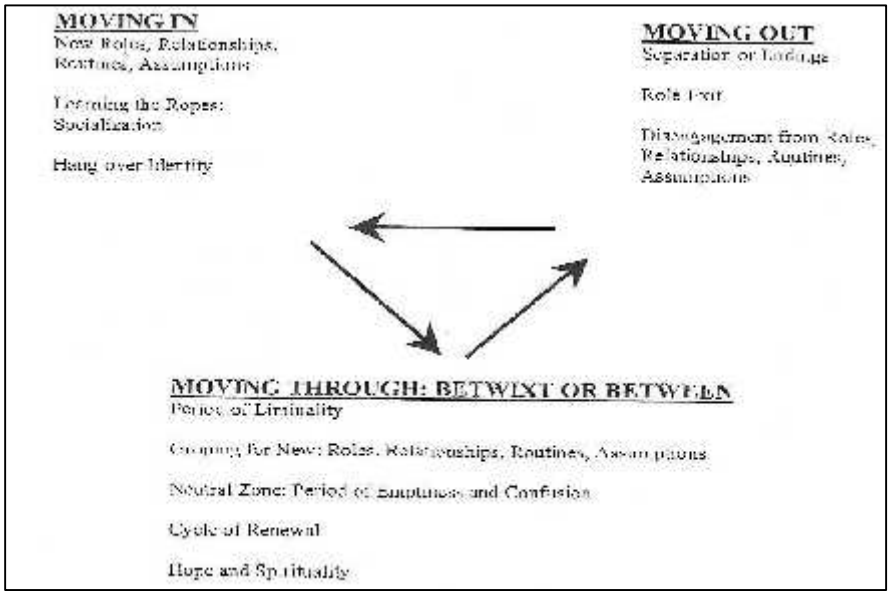

Figure 2.2 Integrative model of the transition process

Few longitudinal studies have examined midlife career issues. The exception was Jepsen and Choudhuri's (2001) 25-year study of 170 rural high school graduates regarding occupational career patterns (OCPs). They found that nearly two-thirds of the participants had "changing occupational career patterns (OCP)". These individuals had changed careers in a manner which would classify a change of Holland's vocational code (i.e., Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Entrepreneurial, and Conventional), as opposed to those with stable OCP's. The researchers noted that those who changed careers often did so after the age of 25, when an individual may be removed from the career guidance support provided by academic institutions. Thus, with little "formal" support, many individuals are forced to manage this transition on their own. Of those with changing OCPs, individuals reported changing for both advancement and exploratory reasons. In addition, individuals with changing OCPs were generally more satisfied with their job and expressed greater satisfaction with their 25-year post high school career (Jepsen & Choudhuri, 2001).

Internal and Psychological Factors

Internal and psychological factors were present in a multitude of terms throughout our career transition models. Latack (1984) and Latack, Kinicki, and Prussia (1995) discussed coping methods as a primary psychological resource. Coping may include action, cognitive reappraisal, and symptom management (Latack, 1984), as well as control, escape or seeking social support (Latack, Kinicki, and Prussia, 1995). Aquilanti and Leroux viewed internal factors as "personal development" and "job seeking skills" (Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999. p. 185), which implied that these factors may be learned or developed. Schlossberg included internal factors throughout her models, such as "personal growth, deterioration, psychological competence, values, movement, and resources/deficits" (Schlossberg, 1981).

Robbins (1987) examined the goal instability, self-esteem, interest patterns, and career indecision of individuals in order to predict a change in career indecision. While he utilized college students in his study as opposed to midlife career changers, his research indicated that age was not a significant predictor in relation to career indecision. Specifically, Robbins stated "people with high goal instability and low self-esteem may be better served in personal counseling before referral for career focused counseling is made". Unfortunately, these outcomes may help to perpetuate the myth that personal concerns should be separate from career concerns.

External and Environmental Factors

External and environmental factors, much like internal and personal factors, were evidenced in several career transition models. Schlossberg included external factors in the areas of "support systems, family, physical setting, and factors of the transition" (Schlossberg, 1981). Latack characterized external factors as feedback from other sources (Latack, Kincki, & Prussia, 1995) and the magnitude of the transition (Latack, 1986). Aquilanti and Leroux (1999) viewed almost all interventions as being external to the client, including "personal development/job search, on-going counselling and support".

Often individuals will report problems at home, with family and with their partners in relation to their career change. Chusid and Cochran (1989) found that family dramas can be re-enacted in the work setting. They stated "the relationship with one's family of origin is on-going and often seems to shift as one changes occupations".

Simmelink (2004) discussed the issue of "lifestyle loss" among those in career transition. She defined lifestyle loss as "an involuntary change in one's personal standard of living due to diminished income and the removal of perceived status" (Simmelink, 2004). Simmelink cautioned practitioners working with those who have been displaced to be aware of stress, embarrassment, and frustration regarding their life circumstances. Often times, reduction of physical resources or amenities may be overwhelming for the individual, as well as one's family. Simmelink encouraged counsellors to recognize the grieving process as identified by Kubler-Ross (1969), including the impact on the family. Individuals and their families may mourn not only their previous comfortable lifestyle but also the loss of identity that is associated with it. Simmelink (2004) recommended a variety of counsellor interventions including working with clients on self-validation, voluntary simplicity, and financial planning. The timing of the job loss in relation to one's professional career may also impact the ability to grow from the experience. Those later in their careers may be less likely to find employment or may not advance once they are reemployed. Those early in their careers may be intimidated and embarrassed by the experience at such a new phase in their lives. Environmental factors, such as sufficient financial means and family support, also enhanced growth opportunities for those experiencing job losses. More importantly, if the termination was handled appropriately by an organization and that individual avoids excessive periods of unemployment, career growth was likely (Latack & Dozier, 1986).

Women face a variety of midlife challenges, not entirely different from their male counterparts, yet unique to the physical characteristics and societal images of women. Saucier (2004) outlined midlife issues for aging women, including body-image and its relation to self-esteem and depression. Midlife women may be cursed with the double-minority status as they face both sexism and ageism in the workplace. Coupled with unrealistic concepts of beauty and a barrage of media images, many midlife women suffer from low self-esteem and depression, which will impact their ability to change or maintain employment.

Adaptation to the Transition and Life Satisfaction

The themes discussed above demonstrate how both internal [i.e. psychological] and external [i.e. environmental] factors, as well as the transition process, influence an individual's career transition. However, as Chusid and Cochran (1989) discussed, the career transition of an individual may also influence the environment and other life roles within their environment. Thus, a successful career transition may not always equate to a satisfying life situation. Successful adaptation to the transition, or persevering through the transition as Schlossberg (1981) describes it, required one to be comfortable with the transition,

including other areas beyond career. As defined by Perrone and Civiletto (2004), the career changer may be seeking "a global feeling of contentment, fulfillment, or happiness with life in general", also known as life satisfaction. Therefore, life satisfaction can be viewed through the lens of successful adaptation to the transition. Studies have shown (Jepsen & Choudhuri, 2001) that those with changing career patterns experienced more satisfaction in their present career than those with stable patterns, which may indicate greater life satisfaction post-transition.

Perone and Civiletto (2004) examined the relationships among life role salience, role strain, coping, and life satisfaction in their research of 125 individuals who were balancing life roles (e.g., worker, student, and parent). The researchers determined that role strain increased along with role salience (i.e., the importance that one places on his/her role). Thus, the individual who possesses multiple roles, many of which are highly valued, is likely to increase his/her role strain. Role strain has the ability to impact one's life satisfaction. However, Perone and Civiletto found that an individual's coping skills can help to minimize role strain and increase life satisfaction under these conditions (2004).

Jepsen and Choudhuri (2001) found that individuals who had more stable occupational career patterns (OCPs) often experienced lower job satisfaction than those who changed career patterns. Regarding mental health implications, individuals with stable careers did not appear to have any more regret than those who changed, indicating that they did not see a need to change careers. However, those with stable career patterns did express less satisfaction in their present position than those who had changed patterns more frequently (Jepsen & Choudhuri, 2001).

The theories, techniques, models and concepts of career transition discussed provided a structure from which midlife career transition can be studied. The concepts, including transition as process, internal/psychological factors, external/environmental factors and adaptation to the transitions, may influence the transition process, as well as one's life satisfaction.

Conclusion

During an individual's lifetime, one chooses a career to achieve their goals of life in order to have a successful life. According to one's interest, pursuing passion, skills, and the mastery of task one decides for a specific job role. When one attains a particular level of expertise in a particular field, the need to attain more isn't fulfilled. One wishes to attain fulfillment towards the role, and the progression towards future path. With respect to the increasing demands and need, one decides to shift their course of action. It has been seen that many that when one attains a plateau in one's particular profile, the satisfaction level is decreased hence forcing an individual to think upon their next suggestive step to uplift and build their career. This concept note has tried to identify what are the reasons which lead to a shift in one's career, and the factors that are prevalent in mid-career transition. The processes and factors explained in the above review will enable the organization to effectively retain their workforce in order to maintain a healthy working environment and retaining their valuable asset of the organization.

References

1. Aquilanti, T. M., & Leroux, J. (1999). An integrated model of outplacement counselling. Journal of Employment Counselling, 37, 177-191.
2. Arthur, M.B., & Kram, K.E. (1989). Reciprocity at work: The separate, yet inseparable possibilities for individual and organizational development. In M.B. Arthur, D.T. Hall, & B.S. Lawrence (Eds.), Handbook of Career Theory. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
3. Chusid, H., & Cochran, L. (1989). Meaning of career change from the perspective of family roles and dramas. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 36, 34-41.
4. Eby, L. T., & Buch, K. (1995). Job loss as career growth: responses to involuntary career transitions. Career Development Quarterly, 44, 26.
5. Gibson, D.E. (2003). Developing the professional self-concept: Role model construals at early, middle and late career stages. Organization Science, 24, 591 610.
6. Hall, D. T 1986, 'Breaking career routines: Midcareer choice and identity development', In D. T. H. Associates (Ed.), Career development in organizations.
7. Heppner, M. J. (1991). The career transitions inventory. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri.
8. Heppner, M. J., Fuller, B. E., & Multon, K. D. (1998). Adults in involuntary career transition: an analysis of the relationship between the psychological and career domains. Journal of Career Assessment, 6, 329-346.
9. Holland, J. L. (Ed.). (1973). Making vocational choices. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
10. Holly S. Slay, M. Susan Taylor and Ian O. Williamson. (2004). "Midlife transition decision processes and career success: The role of identity, networks and shocks". AHRD.

11. Jepsen, D., & Choudhuri, E. (2001). Stability and change in 25-year occupational career patterns. Career Development Quarterly, 50, 3-19.
12. Kubler-Ross, E. (1969). On death and dying. New York: Scridner. Eby, L. T., & Buch, K. (1995). Job loss as career growth: responses to involuntary career transitions. Career Development Quarterly, 44, 26.
13. Latack, J. C. (1984). Career transitions within organizations: an exploratory study of work, non-work, and coping strategies. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 34, 296-322.
14. Latack, J. C., & Dozier, J. V. (1986). After the ax falls: job loss as career transition. Academy of Management Review, 11, 375-392.
15. Latack, J. C., Kinicki, A. J., & Prussia, G. E. (1995). An integrative process model of coping with job loss. Academy of Management Review, 20, 311-342.
16. Levinson, D 1986, 'A conception of adult development', American Psychologist, vol.41, no.1, pp3-13.
17. Louis, M.R. (1980). Career transitions: varieties and commonalities. The Academy of Management Review, 5, 329-340.
18. Perrone, K. M., & Civiletto, C. L. (2004). The impact of life role salience and life satisfaction. Journal of Employment Counseling, 41, 98-104.
19. Robbins, S. (1987). Predicting change in career indecision from a self-psychology perspective. Career Development Quarterly, 35, 288-296.
20. Robbins, S. and Patton, M. (1985). Self-psychology and career development: Construction of the Superiority and Goal Instability Scales. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 32, 220-231.
21. Rosenberg, M. (1979). Convincing the self. New York: Basic Books.
22. Schein, E. H. (1978). Career dynamics: Matching individual and organizational needs. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
23. Schlossberg, N. K. (1985). Adult career development theories: ways to illuminate the adult experience. In L. Leiowitz & H.D. Lea (Eds.), Adult career development (pp. 2-16). Alexandria, VA: National Career Development Association.
24. Schlossberg, N. K. (1997). A model of worklife transitions. In R. Feller and G. Walz (Ed.), Career transitions in turbulent times (3rd ed., pp. 93-104). Greensboro, NC: ERIC/CASS Publications.
25. Schlossberg, N.K. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. Counseling Psychologist, 9, 2-18.
26. Simmelink, M. N. (2004, December 1). Lifestyle loss: an emerging career transition issue. Retrieved December 27, 2004, from National Career Development Association Web Site: http://www.ncda.org.
27. Stryker, S., & Burke, P. J. (2000). The past, present and future of an identity theory. Social Psychology Quarterly, 63, 284-297.
28. Super, D. E., Crites, J. O., Moser, H. P., Overstreet, P. L., & Warnath, C. F. (1957). Vocational development, a framework for research. New York: Teachers College Press.