Influences of career concept changes in organisational and individual career management practices

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Formal Research Proposal

Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) has somewhat special position in business. It is acknowledged to be one of the most important competencies in an organisation but due to its characteristics it seems not to be as valued as some more capital oriented areas. When people talk about increasing profits, investing, gaining capital, etc. it is noted but often when people talk about people it will not gain so much attention.

Nevertheless I am interested in people and their behaviour. This fact has formed the basis of my thinking when I have been trying to form the topic for this dissertation.

Topic definition

I started to plan the topic for my dissertation basing on my interest in human resource management and psychology. I wanted to find out how companies could learn about their employees from psychological tests and whether a company could gain efficiency by appointing people to the jobs that match with their characteristics and way of thinking. To some extent this kind of thinking exists in companies when they use psychological testing in the recruitment process.

When talking about people's behaviour it is important to remember psychology and what contributions psychological issues bring to the subject. People are often considered 'just' to be one part of business operations and psychology might not seem that relevant, although it brings many important aspects to people management. As a result, this research will concentrate on psychological issues that arise in the context of human resource management.

I have been looking at some basic publications of work/organisational psychology but as the topic is really broad I want to address only some relevant areas. Psychometric testing is highly acknowledged in the world of recruitment and selection. I would like to concentrate on a relatively more unfamiliar subject. There is still many fields of HRM I need to look at more precisely in order to decide on the

final scope of my research but my current plan is to concentrate more on personal development during one's career (not in the beginning of it).

Training employees is one factor that can build more efficient personnel. With long term perspectives a manager would offer training for employees so that they can bring more skills to the company. If training were based on the people's own interests this would also increase motivation.

Furthermore I want to highlight that the concentration and interest shown should be on all employees and not just on the most powerful ones. One must take into account all possible employees who potentially want to educate themselves and create careers. The theories applicable to my research include presentation of some basic topics of HRM, theory of work psychology and psychometric testing, learning theories and motivation theories. Also personal development is one area of possible concentration.

Rationale

In addition to my own interest, I believe the topic is relevant to businesses that want to improve their human resource strategy. Human resource management needs to be tied to the overall strategy of the organization. Working together with all other aspects the most can be gained from it in order to create competitive advantage.

A well planned and thought appointing of people will increase the efficiency of all companies as employees are motivated to fulfil their tasks. Moreover, efficient personnel may sometimes decrease the need of hiring new employees. Nevertheless the size, the business area, location, history etc. make each business unique and hence make it impossible to say which human resource strategy should be used and should psychology be used or not.

Project design

Current literature always forms a basis of a new research. What have others said or written about the subject and what they have not noticed are the most vital questions. I will start to search information on my stated subject area and find an area that has not been the subject of many former researches.

Proper literature review helps me to build my own insights and also to decide on methodology of the research. Also I will be able to present the relevant theoretical aspects. After finding a particular subject and forming a research question I will write my own conclusions about this subject. I will also try to spot the gaps for further research.

Research Plan

I am actively continuing my research during the following three months. I want to take full advantage of the secondary data sources offered by the University and I am hoping to find still more relevant information. Issue of psychology in job satisfaction is one possible addition and also the outsourcing or HRM practices could be linked in to my subject.

My research is only secondary. I will search information from relevant books, journals, magazines and internet sites. By reading information from various sources I will have firm understanding of the topic which helps me to analyse and criticise it to make the work broad, interesting and meaningful. Doing this during a longer period of time gives me the possibility to process the data in my head enough to come up with new points of view and more analytical perspectives. During this time I try to continuously search for relevant material in all situations and discussions. I believe this is the best way to produce a comprehensive and firm piece of work.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to research elements of career management theory and practice since there have been quite radical changes in career structures during the last three decades. The biggest issue is the shift from stable *organisational* careers developed in only one organisation to *boundaryless* careers characterised by short-term contracts, working in several organisations and self-management. The influences of these changes are discussed and also criticism of the recent implications is brought up. Furthermore psychology is discussed in the context of linking personality and career success. This is a qualitative study where secondary data has been collected from the resources of University of Wolverhampton during spring 2009. The study concludes that in career management practices both organisations and individuals still play a significant role. It has been found that the new career structures create some inequalities. Another issue is that some further theoretical development is necessary.

Keywords: Careers, career self-management, organisational career management, boundaryless career, work psychology, personality psychology

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study concentrates on career management topics, the changes that have quite recently taken place in this subject area and the influences of the changes to individuals and organisations. Also work psychology is discussed and how psychological theories and concepts affect in career development. Some critical viewpoints are also put forward. The larger subject area is human resource management.

Careers, career management and development are subjects that have been going through changes, developments and discussions during the last three decades as some radical changes in the internal and external environments have created new career structures. In this work basic concepts and perspectives from relevant literature on the subject area are presented and followed by recent empirical evidence. In the journal articles also critical points are shown and psychological viewpoints are connected to the subject.

The interest towards the subject evoked from the elements of human resource management to which psychology can be linked. In the economic world human resources and its importance have been topics under discussion recently (e.g. Breitfelder and Wademan Dowling, 2008). Some say that people are the most important asset and others feel the opposite (e.g. Donkin, 2005; Moules, 2007). Nevertheless, people are essential and always contribute to successes of businesses. And with people, psychology is relevant as behaviours, attitudes and feelings influence in work. The new career structures create more responsibilities to individuals as more short-term working contracts are decreasing the amount of organisational career management. Hence, psychological concepts from for example personality psychology and social psychology can be linked to the subject.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The study presents current research evidence on how new career structures influence in organisational and individual level. The main issues include the opposing areas in career management where the traditional organisational careers are challenged by changing boundaries and flexible

contracts that arise with the new, boundaryless career concept. Also criticism is relevant in order to discuss whether the influences of the new shifts really are as fundamental as the literature states.

1.2 Justification for the study

This study critically assesses and contrasts the academic viewpoints of career management. The changes in the subject area have provoked several discussions considering the impacts of the career changes to organisational and individual parties. This study looks at the subject from several perspectives and presents conclusions on the issues. The researches found all look at the issues a little differently, the studies have been conducted in various countries and several methods have been used. This work aims to comprehensively connect all the relevant elements and come to certain conclusions.

1.3 Research aims

The aim of this research is to compare and contrast recent research points with relevant literature. The particular aims are:

- To research some implications presented for organisations and individuals on career management practices in the new unstable world of work. Also suggestions on how individuals and organisations should act are presented.
- To present and evaluate the criticism that the boundaryless career concept has received.
- To introduce and discuss recent studies of how personality influences in career success.

1.4 Scope of the study

The scope of the study is in the area of human resource management and more particularly career management. Issues of career management and development, new career concepts, individual and organisational career management and work psychology will be discussed.

There has been a limited time frame to conduct this study which creates certain boundaries. Due to the limitations on time and other resources only secondary research has been conducted. This makes the study quantitative in manner. Also information sources were somewhat limited. The time was also

an influential factor when bordering the subject as only narrow area could be looked at. Human

resource management is a large subject area and it was necessary to only study one particular

subject under that heading. Nevertheless the journal articles touch the subject with a somewhat wider

concentration.

1.5 Summary

This chapter has introduced this study, presented the background, research problem and aims and

justified the study. Also limitations and methodology of the study has been clarified. It is notable that

career management and the elements arising from the subject are interesting and influential issues in

the current work environments and as human resource management topics. External and internal

factors have restructured perceptions of careers and brought new challenges to human resource

managers. The following chapters present the relevant issues in more detail. Chapter 2 introduces

theories and concepts from literature sources considering topics of human resource management,

work psychology and career management. Chapter 3 demonstrates more current viewpoints by

presenting academic journal articles that discuss more practical elements of career management

relevant for organisations and individuals. Also criticism of the literature is revealed. Chapter 4

presents comments of the studies and recommendations for future practitioners and researchers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This study investigates the changes in the area of careers and career management that have been

seen during the last three decades. It is acknowledged in the literature that the career patterns are

changing as careers become more self-managed by the employees. Working in the same company for

a lifetime is no longer the normal career path as people educate and change companies and roles

more frequently (e.g. Hall, 1996; Maund, 2001; Callanan and Greenhaus, 1999).

Career management is a human resource management (HRM) subject and hence this review of

theories will first look at perspectives and elements of HRM. Also relevant concepts of organisational

psychology, personality psychology and career management will be looked at. In the next section

more recent publications on the subject area will be discussed by contrasting various viewpoints.

2.2 Perspectives on human resource management

Roots of people management are in the era of industrial revolution in the 19th century (Bratton and

Gold, 2003). As an acknowledged part of organisational management, human resource management

(HRM) can be said to have existed since the mid 20th century as the demand for personnel specialists

increased due to the Second World War. Nevertheless it was only in the 1960s when relevant laws

were established and personnel management function grew. Unhappiness of employees, inequality

and employment standards were issues thriving HRM in the 1960s and -70s. During the 1980s and -

90s HRM went through quite radical changes. The general political movement also leaded in new

views of people management. Two schools of thought were developed; soft ('human') and hard

('resource') approaches to HRM. The debate of the importance of human resource function is to some

extent still going on. (Bratton and Gold, 2003)

Bratton and Gold (2003) discuss the development of the study area from personnel management to

human resource management. They state that HRM is included in strategic planning whereas

personnel management only concerns the legal working contract and not so much the psychological

one. HRM is more interested in the development and learning of an individual employee than personnel management. Furthermore in HRM performance management is highlighted and how it can influence in the overall performance of the organisation. It is mentioned also that the main point is to make the human capital appreciated by managers as potential value adding function in the organisation. (Bratton and Gold, 2003)

According to Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2005) HRM as a business function (and as a term) is concerned with more traditional personnel management as well as more general management of employees (as an organisational asset). The authors further point out that the main objectives of HRM function concern staffing (recruiting and retaining the best), performance (motivation, training and development, rewards), change-management, and administration (legal aspect, pure data and records) issues of the personnel.

Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2005) point out that the first and more practical side of HRM (i.e. personnel management) is the earlier established one and only during the last three decades the "new wave" of HRM has been promoted. In the latter human resource management is seen more as a resource and it is considered to be about relationships and not just pure workforce. The writers further state that in human resource management the employees are seen as an important asset to the company and that asset must be managed like all other competences of the firm. Hence it is more about managing the culture and not just practical people management.

Armstrong (2006) states that the terms 'human resource management' and 'human resources' have principally replaced the term 'personnel management'. The author defines HRM as "a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets" (p. 3) and he also mentions that the workforce plays a part in achieving organisational goals. In human capital management (HCM) human capital is the people, the human factor that can and should be developed and which intellectuality and skills create an essential organisational asset (Armstrong, 2006). This asset needs to be invested in to be able to make the organisation successful. Human resource management is the function that ensures that people stay motivated and committed to their work. Armstrong (2006) presents several areas of HRM that are meant to fulfil this goal; for example actions

of recruitment, learning and development, talent management and performance management. Armstrong (2006) considers these activities to be part of human capital management which is defined to concentrate on measurement of human resources more whereas HRM is concerned with the overall people management and strategies of that. HCM sees people as a factor creating competitive edge and adding value.

2.2.1 Key elements of HRM

According to Bratton and Gold (2003) human resource functions include planning, staffing, developing, motivating, maintaining, managing relationships, managing change and evaluating the workers. Dessler (2008) states that HRM consists of the process of acquiring, training, appraising, and compensating employees and also attending to employees' labour relations, health and safety, and fairness concerns are relevant. Armstrong (2006) presents the HRM activities to be resourcing, HR development, reward management, employee relations and some organisational factors.

Several of these areas can be linked to career management. It is mostly concerned with development as personal and career development of the employee. If careers are discussed internally in an organisation then maintaining the employees is a key factor. Evaluating is another element as in career management it is essential to know one's strengths and weaknesses. Also training is an important part of one's career.

2.2.2 Strategic human resource management

For example Dessler (2008) brings up strategic management in the context of HRM. Increasingly HRM is taken into the strategic planning of organisations. Dessler (2008) also presents that effective human resource management (for example initial screening, training, rewards etc.) can create competitive advantage to a company. All in all strategic human resource management refers to the HR actions and policies that are necessary in achieving the company's strategic goals.

2.3 Psychology and work

Ribeaux and Poppleton (1978) define that psychology is about people's behaviour, mind, personality and way of thinking and being. The authors also point out that there have been arguments about the main concentration of the science, mostly between the behaviourists and psychodynamicists where the first group is emphasizing the behaviour of people and the latter the minds of people as corner stones of psychological research. Later on more traditions in the area have been developed and for example Arnold (2005) presents five different theoretical viewpoints of psychology which all emphasize people's psychological characteristics (e.g. behaviours, experiences, consciousness…) a little differently.

Psychology is divided into five distinctive sub-categories and all areas are somewhat relevant in work psychology (Arnold, 2005). For this study the most relevant are developmental psychology and personality psychology. In the aspect of career management psychology of personality and how it can affect in career success is an interesting area of studies and will be later looked at.

2.3.1 Industrial/Organisational (I/O) psychology

According to Arnold (2005) work psychology is an area of applied psychology so that theories and concepts are integrated from basic psychology to the world of work. All applied psychologies look at the psychological theories in more practical manner. Work psychology has its roots in the 20th century when also HRM became more popular subject for studies and for the wars it was important to create screening and selection methods to choose only suitable men for certain posts. (Arnold, 2005)

Arnold (2005) also presents how various issues from psychology are used in the work place. The most common and acknowledged is probably the recruitment process and the psychometric tests used in the process but there are various other occasions where psychology is relevant. The relevant areas include training, performance appraisal, career management, organisational development, personal development, employee relations and motivation, human-machine interaction and health and safety issues.

The original term used when discussing psychological issues of work has been industrial psychology. Later it has developed to be industrial/organisational (I/O) psychology or (in the UK) occupational psychology. Also work or organisational psychology is commonly used. (Arnold, 2005) When it comes to sub-categories and larger subject areas more terminology occurs but in this context I/O psychology will be used as a general term.

2.3.2 Personality

According to Ribeaux and Poppleton (1978) personality is a large concept concerning the whole individual and all relevant psychological concepts. Several theories of personality have been concluded by psychologists. Personality is something affecting our everyday lives as we make judgements of our own and others' personalities (Ribeaux and Poppleton, 1978). This is relevant in for example interviews that are conducted quite often in the world of work. What are the ways in which personality traits are measured and what methodology is used is essential when discussing psychology at work. Personality does have an influence in career development especially now that careers are becoming more self-managed and one must retain high self-identity (Callanan and Greenhaus, 1999).

Matthews and Deary (1998) write about various theories and models of personality psychology. They describe the five factor model (or 'The Big Five') which is very commonly applied to other study areas, including industrial/organisational psychology. Personality trait measures are used by organisations in career counselling as well as in recruitment, selection, training and development (Matthews and Deary, 1998). The model was developed by Costa and McRae (1992, in Matthews and Deary, 1998) and provides a personality measurement scale. The five dimensions are neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness and special questionnaires are used to measure personality with the model. How personal characteristics and the five factor model influence in career management will be looked at later in this study.

2.4 Career management

The word career can be defined in several ways. According to Arnold (2005) it is traditionally thought

to be about promotions, about moving upwards in an organisation as skills and experiences develop.

Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989) define it to be "the evolving sequence of a person's work

experiences over time" (p. 8). Arthur and Rousseau (1996) state that "everyone who works has a

career" (p. 3). Inkson (2007) points out that nowadays the word career is quite commonly used and

can be associated with almost all professions whereas before it was used more rarely. Inkson (2007)

also writes how the word career has several characteristics. Each person usually has just one career

(even if it includes various occupations), also careers develop and evolve, there is inclusion of

experiences from other areas of life also that affect in career development and career is a long-term

path.

According to Brown and Brooks (1996) the first signs of help offered in choosing careers can be found

as far as the 15th century but the first theories of career development appeared only in the 20th

century. Callanan and Greenhaus (1999) write that rise in careers happened after the Second World

War as demand for human capital increased. This created the concept of organisational career which

meant a lifelong working pattern in only one organisation. At that time also an unwritten psychological

contract between the employee and employer was born (Callanan and Greenhaus, 1999). This implied

the obligations the individual felt towards the organisation and vice versa.

Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989) discuss the issues of career theory. They emphasize that linking

theory and practice is essential. Several theoretical views can be linked to career concept and no one

science can wholly present the theory of careers. Psychology is one large contributor completed with

sociology and other social sciences. It is also highlighted that both individuals and institutions need to

be considered in the studies of careers. As careers are featured as emergent it is important to note the

time factors in career discussions. Also looking at careers according to social space dimensions is

essential. (Arthur, Hall and Lawrence, 1989)

Traditionally careers were seen as long-term contracts between the employees and organisations. This offered security for both the worker and the employer. Callanan and Greenhaus (1999) point out issues of stability (in the individual's working environment) and movement (mostly upwards inside the organisation). This system seemed ultimate for both the organisation and the employee. Nevertheless the writers state, and as will be presented in the next sections, careers as they have been traditionally perceived no longer exist. The fast moving environment has created a world of more and more short-term contracts and quick changes (Callanan and Greenhaus, 1999). It is also emphasized that the issues of career management are now in the hands of the individuals who need to set goals, make strategies and demand feedback in order to successfully develop themselves and manage their careers.

2.4.1 Career choice

Arnold (2005) presents a career choice theory of Holland (1997) where vocational personality types are defined to help in career choice and counselling. The six personality types are realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional (Holland, 1997 in Arnold, 2005). The theory implies that no single dimension describes a person but people usually resemble three of them more than the others (e.g. an ISE (investigative, social, enterprising) -type personality). Also occupations have been given 'codes' according to the personality types of people holding the jobs. According to Holland (1997 in Arnold, 2005) the idea is based on the fact that people feel more satisfied when their working environments match with their personality and in that case also perform well in the job. If the environment and personality do not match, people can change their behaviour or search for new environments. Also the environment can expel unsuitable people or change. It is argued though that an occupation cannot describe person's satisfaction as every day working situations differ even with same occupations (Spokane et.al., 2000 in Arnold, 2005).

2.4.2 Recent changes in career patterns

Several authors mention that the world of careers has changed from the early stages (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Maund, 2001; Callanan and Greenhaus, 1999; Hall, 1996). One used to build a life-long career in just one organization but now it is more common to develop a career gradually in many

firms. "The average European will change jobs seven times and careers three times during his/her actual working life." (Maund, 2001, p. 544). Maund also points out that managers must be able to help individuals in their career development in a different way; it is not the most important thing to retain employees but to show them how they can develop towards their own goals.

Maund (2001) mentions as well that managers must remember that they can further advantage from the increasing mobility as the organisation can gain more diversity and creativity among its employees. Nowadays education and training is offered and gained in many parts of the career which increases not only knowledge but also motivation.

Hall (1996) states that career as its steady and secure form has died. Nevertheless as a personal learning path and lifelong work related experience career will always exist. Hall and Mirvis (1996) further discuss the new career forms and they use the term 'protean career' which implies that career is managed by the individual and covers education and work in several organisation. It is also stated that career can be redefined to meet the needs of the person.

Furthermore Callanan and Greenhaus (1999) discuss this matter and state that the psychological working contract has been broken as more downsizing has been taking place but on the other hand more flexibility can be seen in the field as for example the increase of entrepreneurial careers indicates. The authors also show what issues individuals need to be aware of in order to develop careers in this unstable era. This suggests that careers need to be more self-managed as other authors (e.g. Maund, 2001; Bolles, 1988 in Bell and Staw, 1989) have concluded also.

Callanan and Greenhaus (1999) also present the main reasons why all the change has been necessary and what changes have happened in the world. In the late 20th century there were many jobs lost due to shifts in employment. Organisations also started to improve efficiency and cut costs by decreasing the amount of employees, especially from the middle level management. This showed that job security had gone far down from the levels people were used to. One trend that started in the 1990s was just-in-time management which increased the demand for temporary employees. During this time also the workforce has become more diverse which contributes to the issues. Also matters of

balancing work and personal life or family are quite recent concerns in the world of work. (Callanan and Greenhaus, 1999)

According to Arnold (2005) one reason for people taking control of their own careers is the unsettled status of the labour markets. It is also mentioned that career is not anymore a straightforward thing as it is seen more as part of one's life than a separate factor and now there are bigger decisions involved when choosing a line of work. Importantly, the author mentions that nowadays more and more attention is shown to managing careers by both individuals and organisations.

2.4.3 The boundaryless career

In 1970s companies faced new pressures for example the increasing competition and companies needed to find new ways of cutting costs (Frohman and Johnson, 1993 in Currie, Tempest and Starkey, 2006). The biggest changes included the mid-level managers who were largely downsized in order to 'cut the fat' from companies (Peters, 1987 in Currie, Tempest and Starkey, 2006). Peters and Waterman (1982) state that many successful companies have relatively low amount of employees in the company headquarters. The boundaryless career concept was defined by Arthur and Rousseau (1996) and it implies that individuals need to be less bounded in one organisation and develop career strategies that involve working in several companies.

Arthur and Rousseau (1996) state that the new economy is dynamic and flexible in nature but also one where insecurity and uncertainty exist. The external changes have created the need for new models of work and life and the boundaryless career is one result. The authors refer to a "new organisational era" (p. 4) where future innovations and events are unpredictable. The boundaryless career promotes several possible career forms compared to just one that exists in the organisational career. A lifelong career cannot be promised by organisations anymore and stable working environments have changed to more dynamic employment and created the boundaryless career. (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996)

Arthur and Rousseau (1996) define the main characteristics of the new concept to be independence from organisations and crossing the boundaries of only one employer. Other elements include broken

hierarchical structures and active external networking. One other new factor is that one can due to for example personal reasons reject career opportunities.

2.4.4 Career self-management

As stated above, the current environment has created more mobility and less loyalty in the world of work. Arthur and Rousseau (1996) write that in the new era people should take responsibility for their careers and for example build networks with for example different firms. Callanan and Greenhaus (1999) mention how organisational short-term goals demand more self-reliant workers. The issues that the writers mention are all emphasizing the fact that flexibility and adaptability is required from the employees. Various skills and competencies are needed so that one employee can adapt to several different working environments. The authors highlight that it is essential to be able to market oneself so one needs to have flexible competencies, one should be learning more continuously and build a good reputation. It is important to be able work in teams and have good collaboration skills as it increases the ability to work in various environments. (Callanan and Greenhaus, 1999)

According to Callanan and Greenhaus (1999) also individual development is important and one must be proactive with career management. One factor is that individuals need to be aware of their own interests and preferences in life and adapt the career to them. Simultaneously one needs to stay in track on the changes in the working environment, internally in the workplace and externally by for example having networks that can help in the case of changes. (Callanan and Greenhaus, 1999) Another thing is to set career goals and strategy and evaluate the success of those.

Hall and Mirvis (1996) present some new demands for the development of employees. All starts from the flexibility and adaptability that is needed from the employees. The writers state that employees must be self-directive as well as be able to assess themselves and their identities. When talking about identities it is easy to see the psychological side that becomes more relevant.

2.4.5 Career management on organisational perspective

Callanan and Greenhaus (1999) state that the role of organisations in career management activities has decreased as individual responsibilities are increasing. Due to the uncertainty of the future organisations no longer see it meaningful to help in individual career management. The authors present some new organisational activities to be exploited with the new shifts in careers.

Callanan and Greenhaus (1999) introduce several areas where organisations can participate in career management of the employees. For example learning and development should be a big part of individual and organisational management as more knowledge in the company creates a competitive advantage. Another issue is that organisations need to help employees in balancing work and family-life. Examples include more flexible working hours, child-care centres and working from home. Another factor the writers mention is that expectations of workers and employers' career management goals should be in consistency. Also overall HR processes should support the career management of individual workers. Moreover Kahn (1994 in Hall and Mirvis, 1996) suggests that companies need to offer caring working environments for people as well as offer developmental opportunities and challenges.

2.4.6 Career development, identity and psychological success

Hall and Mirvis (1996) write that to have a successful protean career one must develop a career identity. The authors define that one's identity is constructed of 'subidentities' which are various social roles the person sees oneself in (for example mother, father, worker). With career development one's career subidentity grows and new sides of self are discovered. Also according to Callanan and Greenhaus (1999) one needs to have clear self-identity in order to be able to build a successful career path.

Hall and Mirvis (1996) also write about psychological success in one's career. Psychological success experience happens when a person works for a goal that has value to the person and he or she is responsible individually in achieving that goal and that goal is achieved. Psychological success is the pride that the person feels after carrying out the task successfully (Hall and Mirvis, 1996). The authors

state that this improves career identity as the psychological success increases self-esteem and the feeling of competency. This experience also encourages one to choose more challenging tasks for the future and hence increases motivation. "Thus the cycle is repeated, and success breeds success. In this way, self-esteem is both an outcome of psychological success and a cause or motivator of future career task activity." (Hall and Mirvis, 1996, p. 26)

How does personality and different characteristics influence in career success and what kind of competencies create career success have been researched lately and relevant articles will be looked at in the next chapter.

2.5 Summary

This literature review has introduced the basic theoretical concepts on which this work is built. The areas of human resource management that are specifically relevant when discussing career management issues have been presented. Some basic psychological elements were brought up to deepen the understanding of psychological issues presented in the next chapter. The main theme has been career management and the concept of boundaryless career. Individual and organisational career management elements were raised and those areas are further discussed in the next chapter. All in all the next chapter looks at academic journal articles which base on the submitted theories and bring up some practical implications and criticism towards the subject. After that chapter 4 discusses and comments the issues further.

Chapter 3: Empirical Evidence

As the new career concepts and new working practises have arisen the subject has become popular among several authors. As a result various researchers have conducted studies in the area. The new boundaryless career concept has been criticised and also personality and its influences in careers have been researched even more as it relates with the increasing self-management of careers. Some empirical evidence from recent academic journals is now presented. Three areas are covered: implications for organisations and individuals, criticism and psychological linkages.

3.1 New career boundaries – implications for individuals and organisations

Three studies are introduced which all describe some practical suggestions for organisations and individuals in career management. All studies are different as the methodology, aims and findings vary. De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens (2009) present a study considering the relationship between career self-management and organisational career management. The aim is to see how relevant those functions are in for example career success and commitment. Becker and Haunschild (2003) have studied how the boundaryless career concept influences in organisational decision making. The paper introduces practical guidelines for organisations. Furthermore Currie, Tempest and Starkey (2006) write about the problems and challenges occurring to individuals and organisations with boundaryless career structures. The writers argue that with the new structures there are some winners but also losers among both the employees and employers.

3.1.1 The relationship between organisational and individual career management

De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens (2009) have studied the relationship between career self-management and organisational career management. The outcome of these processes were researched and compared and the results evaluated for example affective commitment and career success of the employees. The sample of the quantitative research included 491 employees from six

big organisations and four different industries in Belgium. Also their supervisors (69 altogether) provided information on career management support offered by the organisation. A questionnaire was sent to the respondents by post.

Several gaps in this area of studies have been found and the integration of both career self-management and organisational career management in one study is one of them. It is stated to be valuable information for both parties whether self-managing careers replaces the need for organisational aid or increases it. (De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens, 2009) In this study also the expectations of employees on organisational career management practises are revealed. It is stated that organisational and self-management of careers should be complementing each other and not treated as two totally separate functions.

The results of the study indicate that career self-management does not replace organisational assistance but it is expected by employees (De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens, 2009). These two factors are positively correlated. Furthermore, employee commitment to the organisation can be explained by organisational and individual career management practices. This issue is contradictory to the boundaryless career literature. Interestingly, although the new era of changing boundaries and contracts is acknowledged, career self-management affects positively in affective commitment. On the other hand, according to the results career self-management did not seem to lead to career progress. It was also found that organisational career management practises relates positively to objective career success whereas career self-management forms the basis of subjective career success. This suggests that organisational career support does not make employees see their careers as successful and career success feelings arise from personal actions. One contradictory (at least to the authors) result was found in the relationship between organisational career management, career self-management and perceived career success. The case is that the employees that are highly involved in career management did not need organisational help in perceiving career success but for employees who engage poorly in career self-management organisational assistance had a positive influence in perceived career success. So the factors seem to be substitutive and employees who are individually active in career management seem to be less dependent on organisational aid. (De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens, 2009) Further research is needed on this issue.

De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens (2009) want to bring up that although the current literature emphasizes the self-management of careers this study proves that providing career management support is still an important human resource management function.

3.1.2 Organisational decision making in the boundaryless career era

Becker and Haunschild (2003) have studied the effects of boundaryless career to organisational decision making. The authors present a theoretical framework for organisations to aid them in the new career management challenges. The study refers to Luhmann's (1995 and 2000 in Becker and Haunschild, 2003) theories of sociology, including theories of social systems and organisations and is hence a qualitative study basing the conclusions on relevant theoretical frameworks. The study discusses the evaluative power of careers so how a person can be evaluated based on his/her career and how by the evaluation organisational (HR) decisions can be made. With the new career concepts these tools (e.g. internal information) are lacking and organisations' future capability is questioned. The study concentrates on organisational functioning and moreover on organisational decision making and does not just offer general guidelines for organisations.

Becker and Haunschild (2003) offer five distinctive propositions for organisations on how to defeat the challenges arising from the boundaryless career concept. The authors state that organisations should try to increase employee commitment and try to restrict the boundaryless career from spreading. The practical improvements include job enrichment programmes and developing continuous learning environment. Another suggestion is to try to find external information on possible employees (e.g. about their reputation, awards, certifications) as internal information no longer exists. Also using psychological tests and assessment centres is recommended so that characteristics of future employees can be evaluated without observing one's career. Motives of employees can be improved by compensation schemes. Furthermore, in personnel assignments contingent working contracts is stated to compensate the lack of knowledge about persons. Finally, some changes could be done to decision making and communication routines which would decrease the need for knowledge about persons and their motives. (Becker and Haunschild, 2003)

3.1.3 The boundaryless career creates winners and losers

Currie, Tempest and Starkey (2006) present that the boundaryless career can also create restrictions to some employees as only the most skilful and knowledgeable workers benefit and others are unwillingly forced to move on. From the employers' side it is stated that the decrease of the internal labour market creates a loss of workers who have knowledge on the organisation and who by their skills and abilities could be appointed to suitable tasks inside the organisation. The authors base their research on to these issues and study the impacts of changing career structures upon middle level employees and their employers as well as the responses of both of these groups. For human resource management the new career boundaries bring new challenges in for example employability issues. The research was done by comparing two different case studies from companies of which one is highly inclusive with the concept of boundaryless career and other which is still rehearsing the more traditional career management style. In the quantitative research, the employees were interviewed from both organisations.

The study conducted by Currie, Tempest and Starkey (2006) concludes that pressures for both the boundaryless career and more boundaried career exist and overall boundaries are re-shaped. Still some elements of the traditional career remain. The writers admit that the organisational career has died but they point out that occupational boundaries are now more powerful which also was the case with traditional organisational career. These boundaries are becoming very influential and occupational orientation is high as for example individual know-how and inter-organisational networks become essential in career success. The authors also point out that the influences of the new boundaries vary according to the individual the main division being between the employees with fewer skills or with easily replaceable skills who are restricted with the new boundaries and the very skilled workers who can advantage of the new boundaries. These effects also vary between generations as older workers demand stability and younger are more flexible. The authors also state that several other factors influence in career development of individuals; for example some professional norms, group communities and orientations (towards employer or occupation).

According to Currie, Tempest and Starkey (2006) organisations need to take larger role in career development in order to ascertain that the skills and knowledge of their workers ensure the company's

competitive edge also in the future. The authors highlight that organisations need to have long-term goals with new employee engagement and development and also internal labour markets are essential.

3.2 Boundaryless career –criticism

The concept of boundaryless career has been noted to be very popular among several writers and practitioners (Pringle and Mallon, 2003). As a result, some authors present critiques of the model and discuss whether it really is as dominant as people state. Here three critical points of view are brought up.

3.2.1 Boundaryless career concept is theoretically undeveloped

Pringle and Mallon (2003) present empirical research evidence stating that the concept of boundaryless career is theoretically undeveloped. The authors state that there is a danger the theory becomes only applicable to certain groups of people. They mention that the theoretical and empirical evidence is not strong enough and so the explanatory potential decreases. Pringle and Mallon (2003) want to raise questions about who gets studied and what is meant with 'boundaryless'. The authors point out that for example national context is not taken into consideration in the current theory of the protean career although career is usually developed in certain political and economic environment. The study of Pringle and Mallon (2003) is concentrated in the national context of New Zealand. It is noted that in this environment small businesses have been more common and as a result the traditional career concept has not been so built in as in for example the UK and the USA.

Pringle and Mallon (2003) concentrate on two areas which they believe need to be more thoroughly included in boundaryless career theories. They emphasize the boundary of gender and women's career issues such as integrating family and work. Another factor is ethnicity and experiences of people from ethnic minorities which show some limitations in boundaryless career theories. Also culture is one concern as it may be a strong factor in structuring one's life where often areas of work and career do not play a significant role. The writers want to remark that as these groups (among others) have not been studied it presents limitations, 'boundaries' to the boundaryless career concept.

The authors have also found evidence that employees often still see their careers in the traditional perspective. (Pringle and Mallon, 2003)

In the end Pringle and Mallon (2003) introduce three concepts that need to be considered in further development of the boundaryless career concept. One factor is the name boundaryless which is stated to give wrong impression of the theory. Suggestion is made to rather say that boundaries are shifting and becoming more complex. It is also mentioned that boundaries are necessary in all areas of life and should be seen as positive features. Another concern is the social structures that maintain. For example social inequality is still an issue and hence career as a concept cannot be totally boundaryless. The differences in for example power relations need to be acknowledged in order to possess a respectful theory. Finally, the authors bring up that some social relationships ought to be further recognised. These include for example gender, race and culture. Also the individual's role is stated to be too large as the wider social world is always an influencing factor. It is concluded that the boundaryless career theory needs to be expanded.

3.2.2 Individual's power is limited

Dany (2003) argues that the changes in careers and in the role of the individual presented in the relevant literature are not as radical in reality. The freedom of individuals in career development and invention is questioned. The author states that external factors still have great influence in careers. The study is based on French insights and it is stated that boundaryless careers do exist also in France. The evidence shows that since 1971 career structures have not changed fundamentally in France nor have the amount of inter-firm mobility. What was also found was that over half of the employees did not feel they held control over their own careers.

The quantitative research was conducted among 279 cadres (experienced workers) who attended semi-structured interviews. The study includes three series from years 1990, 1992 and 1997 and the purpose was to identify cadres' perceptions of careers. The research shows that the power of the individual over one's career is limited and the decrease of the traditional career form does not necessarily lead to more choice for the worker. Another notion is that the competition between employees has increased as it is no longer obvious to be promoted to a certain job (as certain

hierarchies are gone). This creates a feeling of discrimination. All in all the most dominant feeling

among the cadres seems to be uncertainty and employees seem to be getting pressures of the

competition that now surrounds them.

One issue Dany (2003) presents is the power relations. The cadres feel that they are dependent on

certain managers holding the power of for example promotion decisions. It leads to competition among

workers and the recipients admit that selling oneself is essential. Dany (2003) states that one reason

for the limitations lies in the inequalities of power and personal competencies are not related to the

issue. The main factor is to be able to compete and to stay in favour of the bosses or the possible

future bosses. Dany's (2003) results also indicate that for all people flexibility and freedom are not the

most important factors as it depends on the situations in life outside work. Employees seem to want to

have stability (characteristic of the traditional career) and they try to move carefully through their

careers to avoid wrong decisions and 'dead ends'.

3.2.3 Employability - organisations' ethical responsibility

Van Buren (2003) criticizes the role of organisations in the boundaryless career concept and

concentrates on employability issues. Employability is defined to be the promise of the employer to

expand the skills and competences of the worker so that he/she stays competitive and has options for

future employment. The writer discusses the ethical responsibility that organisations should have

towards employees. It is mentioned that with short-term working contracts employers are less

interested in developing employees' skills. The study is based on empirical evidence and hence is

qualitative in nature.

Van Buren (2003) also argues that boundaryless career creates social harm as the employees' level

of skills decreases. For employees it is unfair that they need to develop transferable skills for the

external labour market and also firm-specific skills for the organisation – even if the employment

contract is only short-term. According to Van Buren (2003) the problem is that most often the

employees have a weaker position when discussing the employment and hence they are practically

forced to agree to the employers' conditions. This refers to the protection and benefits that could be

offered by employers. It is mentioned that the problems mostly concern the employees who do not

hold unique and valuable skills. The employees with replaceable skills will feel the negative effects of the boundaryless career and they do not hold bargaining power over the employers (whereas the employees with unique skills do) when it comes to for example salaries and benefits. One issue is that organisations are not obliged (by law) to offer information of internal and external labour markets or skills development possibilities. (Van Buren, 2003)

As a result, the author points out that the obligation towards these issues is moral rather than legal. As the employees need to possess various skills but still are not rewarded with long-term employment the risk to the employee increases with the boundaryless career compared to the traditional career form. (Van Buren, 2003) For fairness and risk sharing in the employment contract employability duty is an ethical requirement for organisations. It is stated that in the current circumstances it is difficult to be able to have working contracts (especially for short-term employees) that would bind employers to secure employees' employability. According to Van Buren (2003) employers benefit more than employees in the boundaryless career application, especially when it comes to older employees and people with families who usually prefer stability in their careers.

3.3 Linkages between personality and career success

Three different studies are discussed here which all consider personality and how different traits influence in career success. Kuijpers, Schyns and Scheerens (2006) researched career competencies, Bozionelos (2004) based the research on the five factor model of personality and Seibert, Kraimer and Crant (2001) studied the influences of proactive personality.

3.3.1 Career competencies and career success

Kuijpers, Schyns and Scheerens (2006) conducted a study which researches the competencies of employees and how they affect in career self-management and career success. It was a quantitative study where a self-assessment questionnaire was sent to 3086 Dutch employees and 1579 replies were gained. Based on the results a regression analysis was formed. The authors mention that career competencies are linked with career self-management as the active role of employees in personal career management is acknowledged.

The authors divide career success into two categories. Intrinsic success means how the person him/herself perceives and appreciates the career success. Extrinsic success includes external factors and appreciation like for example salary and promotion. (Kuijpers, Schyns and Scheerens, 2006) In the study six career competencies are researched and it is assumed that they all relate to career success. The competencies are career-actualization-ability (realising personal goals), career reflection (reviewing competencies), motivation reflection (own desires and values), work exploration (matching one's identity with work), career control (planning, learning), and networking.

The results indicate that career-actualization-ability, career control and networking are the most influential factors in intrinsic career success. On the other hand motivation reflection correlated negatively with both intrinsic and extrinsic career success. Interestingly the result suggests that if an individual examines his/her job as how it matches with personal values it leads to less career success. This realisation might be more relevant for the ones who are dissatisfied in their work, are less interested in engaging in career management and hence less successful. It is also mentioned that the ones whose work matches with their personal values are not concerned of external appraisal. For professionals offering career counselling the authors advise to concentrate on career control and networking. (Kuijpers, Schyns and Scheerens, 2006)

The researchers also included some situational variables in the study. The most essential conclusion was that career support at work influenced positively in career success. Organisations can affect in career success by offering opportunities and support in career management (Kuijpers, Schyns and Scheerens, 2006). The authors highlight that planning one's own career (and receiving help from the workplace) is essential in this world of changing environments and tasks.

3.3.2 Personality traits and career success

Also Bozionelos (2004) has studied the relations of personality traits and intrinsic/extrinsic career success. The author uses the five factor model of personality traits and studies how different personality factors influence in career success. In the quantitative study 308 English white-collar full-

time employees were interviewed by questionnaires sent by e-mail. The aim of the study was to find a linkage between dispositional characteristics and career success in UK work environment. The author states that career success have not been that much researched in the light of dispositional characteristics although the influences of personality have been noticed in the context of career development. Bozionelos (2004) wants to study the organisation-specific career success and account intrinsic career success more thoroughly in the context. It is acknowledged that both indirect and direct relationships between different personality traits and career success are relevant in the results in this context.

The findings of Bozionelos (2004) indicate that intrinsic career success is highly linked with personality which is not the case with extrinsic career success. There is a connection between extrinsic success and personality also but mental ability and experiential factors are highly influential in that matter. It is stated that personality has an influence in both eventual career success as well as career success in one specific organisation. Furthermore, it is concluded that neuroticism and agreeableness prevent both eventual extrinsic and organisation-specific career success. More specifically the low confidence and pessimism are traits that create the negative results of neurotic employees and for agreeable people the characteristics are altruism, self-sacrifice and modesty. With intrinsic career success agreeableness brings positive effects when neuroticism relates negatively with it. This suggests that neurotic individuals see and feel their career prospects negatively as well as receive negative extrinsic evaluations. On the other hand, agreeable people individually evaluate their career success positively despite of the poor extrinsic evaluations. (Bozionelos, 2004)

The relationships between conscientiousness and career success, and extraversion and extrinsic career success brought up concerns and contradictory results. It is stated that further research is necessary on these issues.

3.3.3 Proactive personality and career success

Furthermore, Seibert, Kraimer and Crant (2001) conducted a study linking proactive personality and career success. The authors created a model where four behavioural and cognitive mediators were

used to evaluate this linkage. The quantitative, longitudinal study researched a sample of 180 full-time employees and their supervisors during a period of two years. The rationale for the study comes from the several statements which emphasize that individuals need to manage their own careers so in other words need to be proactive in career management. The authors wanted to find out why it is that proactive people are more successful in career management and what influences does proactive personality have in career development over time.

The study was conducted in two stages where proactive personality scale was sent to the respondents first which formed an outline for the research. Two years later a follow-up survey was sent to the same group of people and in this one the four mediators were used to evaluate career success of the respondents. The four mediators included innovation, political knowledge, career initiative and voice. The supervisors were asked to evaluate the employees whereas the employees were asked about their career progression (i.e. salary rises changes and promotions) and personal career satisfaction.

Interestingly the results of the study are not straightforward. The authors state that proactive personality does not automatically lead to career success but there are several indirect processes in between. It is the innovation, political intelligence and initiative of the proactive people that create career success. It is mentioned that this all relates to the importance of self-management of careers as the behaviour of the individual can clearly affect in career success. For example showing initiative and new ideas at work as well as actively managing one's career are factors improving career development.

3.4 Summary

All studies demonstrated have offered diverse viewpoints on career related issues. It seems clear that the new career structures bring challenges for both organisations and individuals and both parties need to be active in the management of careers. Nevertheless elements of the traditional career forms still remain. Some (skill based) inequalities have been noticed among employees. It is criticised that the power over one's career and freedom of choice of individuals does not necessarily increase. The next chapter discusses these issues further and presents some conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

The studies presented bring up some practical viewpoints arising from career concept changes. Also criticism of the literature has been displayed. Nevertheless each research has studied the subject from a separate viewpoint and the results differ accordingly. Now some of those issues are discussed and also further recommendations for both practitioners and researchers are offered.

4.1 Conclusions

Following sections present some comments and conclusions that are formed on the basis of the empirical evidence. The perspectives are contrasted and compared with some theoretical views.

4.1.1 Comments on implications for organisations and individuals

One differentiating point in the studies is the country where the researches are conducted in. In the study of De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens (2009) some very important points were indicated and the sample was quite large but it only concentrated on Belgium companies. For Europe these results can be considered to be relevant still. On the other hand Becker and Haunschild (2003) only used theoretical evidence in the study.

Interestingly it is pointed out that organisational and individual career management are positively correlated (De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens, 2009) which means that totally self-managed careers would not be as successful as the ones who have been aided by the organisation. Still the ones more active in self-management were not so dependent on organisations than the less active employees.

The most essential finding that is agreed by all three studies is that organisational support in career management is still necessary. Becker and Haunschild (2003) provide concrete examples how organisations should act even to prevent the boundaryless career. Currie, Tempest and Starkey (2006) emphasize that it is important in order to improve the knowledge in the company. De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens (2009) highlight that organisational support is expected by employees. Furthermore Kuijpers, Schyns and Scheerens (2006) support this case and state that by offering

support in career management organisations can aid in career success. Another notion has been made by Dany (2003) that employees in practice have not adopted the new career concepts in such a large scale than the new career literature implies. So although several authors discuss the boundaryless career in a very positive light, it seems that in practice at least some elements of the traditional career are still alive.

4.1.2 Comments on the boundaryless career criticism

All three critical points discussed have separate arguments to present. Pringle and Mallon's (2003) viewpoint can be seen as the most comprehensive one and it can be concluded that the theory of boundaryless career should be developed further and there is a need for more comprehensive view. For example inclusion of different social groups is essential. Chen (2003) offers some suggestions that can be relevant here. The author argues that several theories could be integrated to career theory and practice. Chen (2003) concentrates on objectivist/positivistic and constructivist viewpoints and presents three theoretical concepts including career as self-realization, growing experiences and context conceptualization. These integrations are flexible and supposed to work in supportive and interactive manner. They can also be advantageous in career development in practice.

Dany (2003) and Van Buren (2003) agree to some extent that individual's power over career decisions decreases with the boundaryless career. Furthermore Dany's (2003) view that the new career concepts are more available to some individuals than to others and some barriers remain is supported by Pringle and Mallon (2003) and Currie, Tempest and Starkey (2006). From organisations' point of view the negative effect is the loss of internal labour market.

Van Buren's (2003) point is also interesting especially when compared to Becker and Haunschild (2003). The first one states that employers benefit more from the new boundaryless concept as they have more power in the employment issues. The latter states that organisational decision making becomes more difficult and organisations should try to prevent the spreading of the new career concepts.

One factor is the disappearing of the long-term working contract which happened due to the short-term or 'just-in-time' management that increasingly became part of the organisational goals (Callanan and Greenhaus, 1999). This would imply that the new career types mostly serve the needs of organisations, or at least that is what started the whole shift. This argument is highly supported by Van Buren (2003).

4.1.3 Comments on the influences of personality in career success

The study of Kuijpers, Schyns and Scheerens (2006) is very comprehensive with more than 1500 respondents and although it is a Dutch study the results are notable. As Bozionelos' (2004) sample was only 308 employees there is a difference in the reliability of the studies. Seibert, Kraimer and Crant (2001) did a longitudinal study and also included the supervisors in the research which makes the study more wide-ranging.

When seeing the results altogether there is one clear conclusion; personality does affect. Overall especially intrinsic career success is linked with personality. For example realizing personal goals and planning one's career is essential in gaining career success (Kuijpers, Schyns and Scheerens, 2006). Although proactive personality did not directly create career success it is still certain personal characteristics that do so.

The studies that researched the influences of personality in career success obviously are based on the assumption that individuals are more responsible for their careers. All studies conclude that individual behaviour, for example showing initiative helps in career success. Here organisation's role is not so much discussed.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 For practitioners

Several suggestions for organisations and individuals have been given in this study. Organisations still need to engage in career management by for example offering development and learning opportunities for employees (Callanan and Greenhaus, 1999). Another issue is to help workers

balance work and family life. Individuals are advised to be more active in career self-management. One needs to have clear identity as well as goals for the future. Also adaptability and flexibility are important assets. All in all self-management of careers should go hand in hand with organisational support (e.g. De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens; 2009; Currie, Tempest and Starkey, 2006).

4.2.2 For future researchers

For future researchers also several suggestions can be presented. For example Pringle and Mallon (2003) imply that more theory is needed to support the case of boundaryless career and also they point out particular areas that need improvements (for example social issues). These factors could be looked at in more detail. Also bigger studies could be conducted to find out the practical influences and perceptions of people of the new career concepts. For example the importance of occupational boundaries mentioned by Currie, Tempest and Starkey (2006) can be one study area. Furthermore, only few national environments have been studied so far. There are still possibilities in psychology as well and more studies can be concluded linking personality and careers. More through advises could be offered for individuals for example.

4.3 Summary

This work has discussed several theories of careers and also looked at recent academic journal articles that examine the subject area. The quite recent changes in career structures make this an interesting topic as new arguments arise all the time. The journal articles have introduced several different points and hence provided a comprehensive picture of the subject. Still various options for future research and practical improvements remain. The boundaryless career concept has provoked several critical discussions. This can imply that traditional career forms are not easy to get rid of. All people, whether individuals or organisational parties, should be aware of the changes and their effects and also a bit precautious about what is coming next. And with inequalities raise one's voice. The amount of studies discussed here is relatively low and opposing conclusions might be made from another sample of studies.

All in all it looks like Currie, Tempest and Starkey (2006) have the most correct impressions of the state of careers today when they conclude that there are both winners and losers among both organisations and individuals. Surely opinions of this statement vary and it will be interesting to see what types of arguments are raised next.

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