

Toward an Integrated Model of People Engagement in Boundaryless Career

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework for determining factors that inspire people to engage in boundaryless career. While many of the key influencing factors have already been researched, the above propositions aim to show that there are still many neglected expatriation drivers that influence boundaryless career decisions. It would be stress-free to draw up a bulky variety of further intentions. However, the key argument is not to get lost in ever smaller detail but to make a conscious decision to develop a broad view of boundaryless global career decisions that factors in self-efficacy, networking, mentoring, and the macro-context of specific locations.

Key words: *Boundaryless career, self-efficacy, networking, mentoring, macro-context*

INTRODUCTION

The recent scenario poses a borderless career as a phenomenon that has become a dominant concept in the field of careers. This concept provides a career development model that offers a number of advantages over traditional job models or organizations. In this moving world, it stimulates flexibility, mobility, science and networking development, and takes responsibility for their own careers. Career engagement indefinitely according to current trends also plays an effective role in organizational structure and employee know-how. It also helps in developing a new agenda of career research world [1].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Boundaryless Career:

The boundaryless career concept term has been linked to discussions involving overseas careers. For a deeper understanding, it is best to refer to the definition by Arthur and Rousseau [2] which has been used by other scholar for their research purposes [3, 4]. Arthur and Rousseau described a boundaryless career as being characterized by six specific meanings: first, moving across the boundaries of separate employers, second, drawing validation and marketability from outside the present employer, third, being sustained by external

networks or information, fourth, breaking traditional organizational assumptions about hierarchy and career advancement, fifth, rejecting existing career opportunities for personal or family reasons, and sixth, perceiving a boundaryless future regardless of structural constraints. In this paper, the term “boundaryless career” is used exclusively to refer to the theoretical concept, as defined by Arthur and Rousseau [2]. In this paper, we will be taking a similar approach to that adopted in previous research in classifying predictors

Even though, the boundaryless career approach is one of the key theoretical approaches within global mobility [5] but can also be used to analyse within country mobility and “bounded” careers and moving across international borders for work is more complex and multifaceted with an array of new and different global career patterns and configurations surfacing [6] and yet it’s considered as nothing new. The growing use of these alternative assignments has been driven, in large, by an increasing shortage of, and demand for, cross-border talent as well as a focus on containing the cost of international assignees [7]. There are those who move initiated by an organisation [6], and those who move in response to forces beyond their control [8]. Furthermore, the movement of people can be permanent, short-lived or temporary and involves the skilled as well as the unskilled.

In the literature such individuals who involved in boundaryless career have been called “flexpatriates” [9], “international assignees” [10], “international business travellers” [11], “frequent flyers” [12] and even “global virtual team member”

[14]. By referring to Table 1, the number of the international assignees still increasing since 2008 and majority of them believed that international assignment is important to optimize their careers.

Table 1: The International Assignee Population

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- 88% of global mobility professionals representing 143 companies expect their international assignment population to either increase or stay the same for the coming year.
 - 57% of the international assignment population is being relocated either to or from the headquarters country
 - 59% of the survey respondents indicate that the quantity and breadth of mobility program related analytics expected from their senior leadership has increased in recent years
 - Nearly 80% of companies don't formally assess the adaptability of international assignment candidates and only 29% use some type of self-assessment tool.
 - 61% of the survey respondents say their company has communicated to employees that taking an international assignment is important to optimize their careers.
 - In fact, those companies have double the percentage of international assignees who are 20-29 years old and nearly 10% fewer international assignees in the range of 40-49 years old.
 - Most common reasons for assignment refusal are family concerns (38%), spouse/ partner career/ income (18%) and candidate uncertain reward is worth move (16%).
 - 48% are unsure whether their international assignee attrition rate is greater than that of their overall employee attrition rate.
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Source: Adapted from 2015 Global Relocation Trends Survey report [14]

Social Cognitive Career Theory:

We identified social cognitive career theory (SCCT) [15] to clarify the complication scenario of people engagement in boundaryless career. SCCT incorporates the influences of personal, environmental, learning experiences and reciprocal interactions of both individual factors and external fundamentals in influencing career conducts. SCCT also addresses the importance of context in which the individual engaged with. In this case, the context relevant to the people who involved in boundaryless career. According to Lent and Brown [15], the model is a base for unifying existing career theories and for conceptualizing developmental and remedial career interventions. Hence, it provides a useful model for understanding the phenomenon of boundaryless career.

By using the SCCT framework, we identified four sets of factors that have been frequently used as predictors of people engagement in boundaryless career. These factors are:

- individual characteristics;
- organizational factors;
- learning experiences, which shape an individual's competencies; and
- reciprocal person-environment interactions

Conventionally, individual characteristics such as demographic variables and organizational factors such as organization's culture have been applied to examine people career path. As an

employee of certain organizations, we believe that they are tied by economic, political and religious conditions of the public sector culture, and therefore the impact of organizational variables should be incorporated. These organizational environments affect an employee's engagement by communicating what kind of behaviour is observed as right and tolerable, and vice versa and at the same time what kind of support platform provided by organization in order to boost their employees' career. Subsequently, learning experiences which profile their managerial competencies have been used to examine their engagement in boundaryless career based on the behavioral approach.

Other than that, individuals who involve proactively in learning experiences will be most likely to possess managerial competencies such as networking skill which are valuable for their future career engagement. Previous studies did not include the person-environment interactions as a factor in one of these boundaryless career approaches. Furthermore, it does not appear to be more closely allied to one perspective than to the other. Nonetheless, we include person-environment interaction, known as “macro contextual” because it has been examined in previous research on career study [16].

For the following discussion we identified four variables which are self-efficacy, networking, mentoring, and macro contextual. Past studies have showed that all these variables are significantly correlated with boundaryless career:

- Self-efficacy (individual characteristics)
- Mentoring (organizational factors)
- Networking (learning experiences)

- Macro contextual (reciprocal person-environment interactions)

The next section elaborates the effects of the four key factors on boundaryless career engagement, and provide empirical evidence relating to the factors. Finally, we offer summary hypotheses on each of the four key factors.

Self-efficacy:

The idea of self-efficacy has extensively been used in domestic employee performance and might be similarly appropriate in the context of expatriate's performance. Claus, Lungu, and Bhattacharjee [17] argue that individuals with low self-efficacy lead to poor performance, absenteeism, and high intention to search for another job, whereas individuals with high self-efficacy lead to better performance and high organizational commitment. Only a few studies examine the effects of self-efficacy on job performance at domestic level and none of them examined this relationship for expatriate or international assignment [17]. Expatriates with a high self-efficacy level may take initiatives to solve problems and handle critical situations during international assignment, which may help them to adjust in the host country and improve their performance. In addition, Bandura [18] explains that individuals high on self-efficacy have a tendency to, more, to initiate tasks, be reliable in their efforts to achieve tasks and continue with problems in the face of failure.

According to Schyns and Sczesny [19], indicate that for people who already work in an organization self-efficacy can enhance within or between organization employability. With respect to occupational self-efficacy for a future job, we would expect a similar result, that is, that occupational self-efficacy for a future job is related to employability. Indeed, seeking value in a current job makes an individual more valuable in a future job [20]. Expectedly, this should lead to taking meaningful self-directed actions to realize career goals, ultimately influencing and shaping an individual disposition to other aspects of new career orientations such as go for boundaryless career.

Thus, based on these arguments, we predict:

H1: Self-efficacy has significant positive relationships with boundaryless career.

Mentoring:

Previously, the self-efficacy and networking emphasize individual attributes, then, one of the ways that can be used by employees for the advance and impact on boundaryless career is by involved mentoring. Mentoring is a close, developmental

relationship between two people in which a partner willingly avails him/herself of the full range of superior experience, knowledge, skills or status of the other partner in all spheres of human endeavor [21]. The traditional understanding of mentoring has changed a lot because of the increasing boundarylessness in careers across organizations [22] and studies of the effects of mentoring on the boundaryless career are still needed because it can be formal or informal and its relations differ in terms of the series and quality of mentor support that protégé's receive [23].

Thus, the protégé's become better able to tolerate the inconveniences of work and career [21] as engaging them addresses personal concerns and boost self-efficacy. Importantly, improvement in self-efficacy could make protégé's advance understandings into their own internal values and how this should performance out in their upcoming career. Definitely, looking for value in a current job makes an individual more valuable in a future job [20]. This gives protégé's more motivation to advance their careers beyond the boundary and to be active members of their profession, often with a willingness to involve in organizational citizenship behavior. Sure, this should lead to taking meaningful self-directed actions to comprehend career goals, eventually persuading and determining a protégé's character to other parts of new career alignments.

Another major support of mentors is career functions such as sponsorship and promoting visibility [24]. These forms of support enhance a protégé's exposure to professional colleagues which should have positive effects on their career. For instance, it affords a protégé' an opportunity to broaden the horizons of his or her career experience, leading to greater professional development and chances of becoming eminent and successful in a given career. Mentors may involve in the public support of their protégé's among organizational members and within their network of relationships. There has been a growing interest in career-related mentoring in managerial and supervisory domains [25]. Thus, mentoring is a potential valuable social capital for the protégé which was defined in the theory of individual network connections career as socially useful in accessing network resources. Meanwhile networking and vision is a source of information on current career opportunities or future in the labor market and continued employment of individuals [26], mentor to encourage boundaryless career, especially when the network goes beyond.

Based on the discussion, we hypothesize:

H2: Mentoring has significant positive relationships with boundaryless career.

Networking:

Variations in the biosphere of work, from organizational to boundaryless, have strengthened the importance of interpersonal relations in managing one's career. Individuals increasingly promote relationships as part of their career strategy [27] which is networking. Networking is a goal-directed behaviour which happens both inside and outside of an organization, focused on creating, cultivating, and utilizing interpersonal relationships [28]. According to Mohd Rasdi, Garavan, and Ismail [29], networking is defined as individual behaviour used to build and maintain contacts that enhance career success. It is held to be of great professional value for ambitious individuals and organizations [28] and it was important for all participants [30].

Networking as goal-directed behavior which occurs both inside and outside of an organization, focused on creating, cultivating, and utilizing interpersonal relationships. Gibson et al. [28] proposed model that networking is influenced by a variety of individual, job, and organizational level factors and leads to increased visibility and power, job performance, organizational access to strategic information, and career success. The results of studies that have been done by Mohd Rasdi et al. [29] found out that knowledge of the value of networking and demonstrate that the relationships found in Western organizations also assault in Asian organizations and cultures and in public as well as private sector organizations.

Even, networking has many benefits, including support for better performance [31], career success [29], access opportunities [32] and expatriate adjustment [33], as a tactics and strategies used by workers to move up in an organization [34] and to meet the challenges of the competitive global market, managers need to understand the importance of networking behaviours and develop their networking behaviours [29]. Knowledge of what contributes to effective networking is important because it allows individuals to understand why efforts to connect with others might or might not lead to the anticipated consequences. It also helps individuals analyze their situation and decide whether or not to pursue networking efforts, which take considerable amounts of time [35].

Thus, we propose:

H3: Networking has significant positive relationships with boundaryless career.

Macro contextual:

Other than self-efficacy, networking, and mentoring been some drivers for people to work abroad is macro environment contextual factor.

According to Dickmann and Cerdin [16], there are many macro-contextual factors such as day-to-day regulatory stability and transparency, economic growth, friendliness and meritocracy, safety and a good, clean environment – were seen as attractive by all three groups. People who had left the city raised some specific criticism regarding the vibrancy, freedom and creativity of thought. It does little to illuminate the exact drivers and barriers associated with specific locations and more particularly, with particular cities. There are surveys within the professional literature that look at city attractiveness [36]. These surveys tend to be focused on several broad contextual issues such as purchasing power, education opportunities, local work regulations, etc. to the detriment of more individual drivers such as personal drivers and at times, career development considerations. In addition, they concentrate on expatriates without surveying local citizens.

There has been little recognizable academic research about individual drivers to work abroad in a specific city but most prominently investigated are London and Vienna for city attractiveness. In Dickmann's [37] research into why foreign-born individuals go to work in London, career considerations are most important. In addition, location factors such as the reputation of London as a global centre for business, multi-culturalism and the desire to live in the British capital, have a strong impact on individuals' willingness to move to London [38]. Al Ariss, Koall, Ozbilgin, and Suutari [39] suggest a promising extension in that their framework includes a multi-level perspective with a focus on individual, organizational, history and macro-context levels.

Due to their very nature, the impact of macro contextual on boundaryless career is significant and persistent. Thus, we propose:

H4: Macro contextual has significant positive relationships with boundaryless career.

Conceptual Framework:

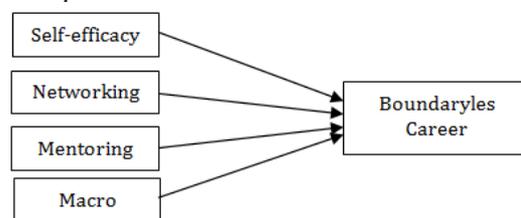


Fig. 1: Proposed conceptual framework for measuring people engagement in boundaryless career.

This study has aimed to develop a conceptual framework for measuring boundaryless career engagement. The study concludes that the four key

factors (i.e. self-efficacy, networking, mentoring, and macro contextual factor) have predictive potential for people to engage in boundaryless career (see Figure 1). By referring to the figure, the authors clearly identify boundaryless career as the Independent variable (IV), self-efficacy, networking, mentoring, and macro contextual factors indicated as dependent variables. (DV). The central belief of all key factors is individual and organizational learning, with emphasis on individual development and performance. The domains of learning and performance are in line with the core threads of HRD, where most see them as partners in a formula for engagement in boundaryless career.

CONCLUSION

In a globalized world it would be fascinating to understand the attractiveness of a range of major cities. The authors believe it is time to combine the self-efficacy, networking, mentoring and macro-contextual perspectives to explore boundaryless career in more depth. The authors further conclude that the literature review can benefit HR managers to gain a better understanding of different mobility preferences among diverse groups of employees, which could lead to the expansion and execution of more advanced reward systems and career development practices in organizations. Knowing individual career orientations might be helpful for organizations to anticipate future workforce mobility, particularly in the high technology industry where there is a lack of understanding regarding individuals' career orientations and corresponding career transitions. It would allow HR managers to create more opportunities and surveillance roles both internally and externally to provide their staff with high performance or critical skills without actually losing them as employees thereby enhancing their firms' technology capability rather than diminishing it.

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