THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS WITH CAREER DEVELOPMENT AT UMLAND BERHAD, SOUTHERN REGION

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This is for you daddy, for always being there for me, even at times when I didn't know I needed someone. Thank you, and I miss you dy, … always, everyday.

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ABSTRACT

This study is focused on identifying the relationship between the employees' career planning, social learning, family's needs and expectations, and gender equity with career development in UMLand, southern region. The researcher also intends to determine the difference in perception on career development, based on gender, age, level of education, job position, functional discipline of job, years of experience and years of service in the current company. A total of 159 employees were included in this parameter of study. The respondents were working across a wide spectrum of jobs which ranged from managerial functions to non-executive duties. The researcher used the total population survey method as the sampling method. Sources of data for this research are gathered through questionnaires and secondary data through library research, journals, company documents etc. Data was analysed using the SPSS 16.0 software and using statistical method (t-Test, Anova, Pearson Correlation and Multiple Regression) to answer the objectives of the study. t-Test and Anova showed that there no significant relationship between age and gender with career development while there is a relationship between level of education, job position, functional discipline of job, years of experience and years of service in the current company with career development in UMLand. Pearson Correlation showed that all four independent variables ie. career planning, social learning, family's needs and expectations, and gender equity are significantly related with career development in UMLand. Meanwhile Multiple Regression method identified family's needs and expectations to be the most dominant factor among the four that affects career development in UMLand.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan mengenalpasti hubungan di antara perancangan kerjaya, pembelajaran sosial, keperluan dan tanggungjawab terhadap keluarga, dan kesamarataan di antara jantina dengan pembangunan kerjaya dalam Umland, bahagian selatan. Penyelidik juga ingin mengkaji perbezaan dari segi persepsi terhadap pembangunan kerjaya, berdasarkan jantina, umur, tahap pendidikan, kedudukan pekerjaan, disiplin dan fungsi pekerjaan, tempoh pengalaman bekerja dan tempoh perkhidmatan dalam syarikat semasa. Seramai 159 kakitangan telah termasuk dalam parameter kajian ini. Responden bekerja di pelbagai spektrum dari pengurusan sehinggalah tugas bukan eksekutif. Pengkaji menggunakan kaedah tinjauan populasi keseluruhan sebagai kaedah persampelan. Sumber data untuk kajian ini dikumpulkan melalui soal selidik dan data sekunder melalui penyelidikan perpustakaan, jurnal, dan lain-lain dokumen syarikat Data telah dianalisis dengan menggunakan perisian SPSS 16.0 dan menggunakan kaedah statistik (t-Test, Anova, Korelasi Pearson dan regresi berganda) untuk menjawab objektif kajian. t-Test dan ANOVA menunjukkan tiada hubungan yang signifikan antara umur dan jantina dengan perkembangan kerjaya manakala terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara tahap pendidikan, jawatan kerja, disiplin fungsi pekerjaan, tahun pengalaman dan tahun perkhidmatan dalam syarikat semasa dengan pembangunan kerjaya dalam Umland. Korelasi Pearson menunjukkan bahawa keempat-empat pembolehubah bebas iaitu perancangan kerjaya, pembelajaran sosial, keperluan dan tanggungjawab terhadap keluarga, dan kesamarataan di antara jantina mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan pembangunan kerjaya dalam Umland. Sementara itu faktor keperluan dan tanggungjawab terhadap keluarga telah dikenalpasti sebagai faktor yang paling dominan di kalangan empat yang mempengaruhi pembangunan kerjaya dalam Umland melalui kaedah regresi berganda.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ABB	
MEF	Malaysian Employers Federation
MOHR	Ministry of Human Resource
SAP	Seri Alam Properties Sdn. Bhd.
DVSB	Dynasty View Sdn. Bhd.
HRM	Human Resource Management
HR	Human Resource
WFC	Work Life Conflict

CHAPTER 1

PREFACE

1.1 Introduction

In today's competitive world where every organization is on the lookout for high performing employees, there's an abundant array of opportunities offered by organizations to attract these employees. Hence, for an organization to retain their competent employees has become very challenging. For employees who know their worth and value, sticking with an organization with an orthodox view of keeping their performing employees under constant pressure to prove themselves (of being worthy to be in the said organization) might no longer be a necessity. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the organization to identify and retain their top performing employees as its Human Capital by coming up with attractive strategies. One of the strategies that employees nowadays are seeking is a clear career development strategy that helps them in their career progression within the organization. An in depth career development plan that is line with employees' career goals and needs is the catalyst that creates a longer term association between the employees and the organization, generating in turn a healthier relationship between both (Baron et al.,1990). According to Newstorm (2007) the commitment of the employees to remain with the organization is stronger and longer when they experience their own success.

In the past, organizations were characterized by rigid hierarchical structures and they operated within a stable environment. Baruch (2004) noted that back then even though career was the property of the employees but being an employed staff, their career was planned and managed by the organizations. Since the 1980s market changes and increased competition have induced organizational transformations (Baruch, 2006) and traditional notion of career has shifted towards a career guided by the individuals themselves (Baruch, 2004 ; Kuijpers et al., 2006). Boundaries within organizations and beyond started to fade (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994) and today the term career is more broadly applied and is commonly considered to be the lifelong sequence of role-related experiences of individuals (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Hall, 2002). Current organizational and environmental systems are highly dynamic and fluid making careers more unpredictable, vulnerable, and multidirectional within (Baruch, 2006). These recent changes in the context of careers also include the accumulation of skills and knowledge and work-life balance (Arnold and Cohen, 2008) which are currently deemed important in the changing landscape. Reardon et al. (2006) further explained that according to career development theories, employees needed to be proactive to facilitate their career success for example through planning their career, networking, information seeking and furthering their education.

New career concepts, such as the ‘boundaryless’ career (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005; McMahon, Patton and Tatham, 2003; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994) which is pursuing a career across traditional boundaries, such as across organizations (i.e. not within a single organisation), or being multidirectional whereby advancement of careers happen within, between and outside organizations, occupations and paid employment (Baruch, 2004) are characterized by higher levels of complexity and flexibility (Baruch, 2006) rendering individuals vulnerable in an employment which is no longer secure (Rousseau, 1995). These modern career concepts state that careers are two fold, comprising of objective and subjective elements and they portray the change career have undergone where now individuals are expected to self-manage their own careers rather than rely on the organization. Savickas (2002) noted that an individual’s career decision-making and work behaviors have been influenced by a number of variables namely personal characteristics, age, gender, and physical, cultural, and social environments.

In this context individuals are supposed to lead an intelligent (Arthur, Claman & DeFillippi, 1995) or protean career (Hall, 2002; 2004). While the intelligent career (Arthur, Claman & DeFillippi, 1995) emphasizes the qualities required for successful management of one‘s own career, the protean career concept offers a broader perspective as “a process which the person, not the organization, is managing. It consists of the entire person's varied experience in education, training, work in several organizations, changes in occupational field, etc. The protean person's own personal career choices and search for self-fulfillment are the unifying or integrative elements in his or her life (Hall, 2002; 2004).

Patton (2001) described career development as “the process of managing learning and work over the lifespan.” Increasingly there has been acknowledgement that career development is a lifespan process where paid employment is embedded in the complex systems that represent the lives of people (Patton & McMahon , 2001). For example, paid employment influences and is influenced by education, family considerations and needs, personal values, organizational change and government policy. Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk (2000) felt that career development revolves around the individual whereby they defined career development as an ongoing process by which individuals progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterized by a relatively unique set of issues, themes, and tasks. Van der Sluis and Poell (2003) suggested that career development occurs when there is an influence of an outside source, describing it as “a process of professional growth brought about by work-related learning”

With the ever expanding awareness of individuals of the current global trends in career development, employees have high expectations for their career development plans in their organizations where the said organizations, including in Malaysia are catering to in order to provide them with opportunities to excel. Companies like those listed in http://devel.malaysiandigest.com/ as the top 10 best companies to work for in Malaysia such as Shell Malaysia, Intel Malaysia, DHL Malaysia and Petronas, to name a few, have their own career development scheme for their employees to ensure that their people grow with them and achieve their career goals. As part of the management, they are there to support their employees and at the same time believed that career is an individual adventure. Individuals drive their own career development plan while the management assists and coaches, mentor and provide a framework with the tools and resources needed to succeed.

This is in line with one of the targets of the Malaysia’s Ministry of Human Resource (MOHR) Strategic Plan 2011 – 2015 which is to develop a highly skilled, competent and competitive Human Capital. Two of the ten main ideas outlines in the strategy are to provide a conducive work environment and to nourish, attract and retain talent. In doing this, MOHR aims to coordinate and monitor training and development programs provided by the government itself and by employers in the private sectors.

1.2 Background of Case Study

As the focus of career development has evolved from being primarily organizationally based to being individually driven, the traditionally implied contract upon which it was based (i.e., preparation for future service to the organization, advancement as reward for enhanced skills) has crumbled. Doyle (2000) restates the interdependence of employers and employees in the career development process, noting that individual careers are influenced by organizational structures and that employer success depends in part on linking organizational goals with individual aspirations.

Undeniably, the link between individual development and the strategic goals of the organization is key to gaining systemic support for career development and for meeting the needs of both employee and employer (Simonsen, 1997). The strategic connection should also be used to advocate equity, regardless of gender or race, to access career development, because broadening the base of career development recipients will yield a better prepared workforce to fulfill organizational goals (McDonald & Hite, 2005).

The current reality of boundaryless careers have paved way for more research on what encompasses career success and satisfaction, and how organizations should evaluate career development outcomes for organizations and individuals, including financial return on investment and perceptions of the process (Boudreaux, 2001). Similarly, more empirical studies focused on dynamic learning opportunities are needed, to explore their effectiveness in enhancing both performance and development (Powell et al., 2001; van Dijk, 2004). This is due to the fact that learning experiences that incorporate day to day operations into career development can benefit organizations of any size (Kuchinke, 2003). Other factors influencing career opportunities and career development relates to the fairness and equity aspect of career development for a more diverse workforce (McDonald & Hite, 2005) and work-family issues (Martins et al., 2002).

According to UMLand Annual Report (2013), one of the top priorities in the company is career development. It is felt as part and parcel of the management's responsibility to provide career development opportunities in terms of promotion, knowledge and skills as well as job satisfaction in assurance of its human capital. Among the activities carried as part of the organization's support for its human capital, career planning and training and development have been the two core elements. UMLand deals with property development and alongside of being listed on the Main Market of Bursa Malaysia, it is a recognised and established property developer in Malaysia.

In view of fast growing projects in hand, UMLand sees the urgency to recruit and retain talents in all areas including projects, sales and marketing, finance and credit control, corporate communication and customer care, township management as well as human resources and administration. UMLand Group Human Resource also faces the challenge of managing its people through effective human resource management (HRM) through the five main domain areas of staffing, human resource development, compensation and benefits, safety and health, and employee and labour relations. They have to ensure the company takes care of the employees in terms of salary, promotion, benefits and welfare to enable staff to feel a sense of job security, satisfaction and loyalty towards UMLand. The company has invested in career development efforts like management training, succession planning as well as training and development. However, an average of 10% of staff resigned each year to join other companies. This makes finding the right people and retaining talents a challenging task for UMLand.

1.3 Problem Statement

Organizations everywhere have to be able to respond more effectively to the career development needs of all their employees because, through an effective, well laid out career development plan they are able to differentiate themselves from their competitors. However, the effectiveness and success of the career development plan does not solely fall on the shoulders of the organizations rather the onus is more on the employees' shoulder. Although individuals are initially employed by a company mainly to maximize the potential of the company, they nevertheless enter the company with their own distinctive career plans in mind, and, as such, can be attracted to a company, and retained within it, on the basis of whether or not the company adopts specific practices capable of satisfying their individual career needs. This implies that personal career attitudes and planning can affect the overall attitudes of individuals towards a company. In human resource management, career planning aims to identify needs, aspirations and opportunities for individuals' career and the implementation of developing human resources programs to support that career. These trends lead employees to become more mobile.

According to UMLand's HR & Admin manager of the Southern region who's overseeing UMLands operations and human capital in the Southern region, UMLand, in Johor particularly, is facing the problem of recruiting and retaining talents due to competition from other developers and companies since there are various job opportunities cropping up and so the employees tend to decide to move around to more attractive companies. At the same time, working in Singapore is also a tempting thought to job seekers and job hoppers. Finding the right people and convincing them that UMLand provides better remuneration package and working environment is not easy especially when companies in Singapore can provide the advantage of higher salary in terms of currency conversion. Local companies also strive to match the package Singapore companies could offer in effort to recruit staff. People now have more choices in terms of job opportunities where they can choose to work with the companies with more attractive package and career development opportunities in Kuala Lumpur or Singapore. In other words, competition in staffing is particularly tough in Johor. This is also discussed and acknowledged by the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) and Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) Johor (MEF, 2013; FMM, 2013). The topics have been constantly discussed in the members meeting where employers expressed their disappointment in the current recruitment situation. Nevertheless, MEF (2013) and FMM (2013) do provide platforms for discussions and networking in facing this challenge. As a result of the mobile nature of selecting jobs, employee turnover in UMLand in Johor is 10% on average each year. Losing around 15-20 employees annually cost the company lost revenue in the rehiring and retraining process of new employees. According to previous research (e.g. Schnake et al. , 2007 ; Huselid ,1995 ; Chen et al., 2004) the implementation of career development strategies aligned with the employees needs leads to a lower level of employees' job turnover which may help retain valued employees.

Jan (2010) highlighted several issues in career development which includes changing scenario of market demands with respect to HR, improper career planning, lack of development opportunities, need of long term commitment, differential learning capabilities of individuals, shortage of competent career counselors, lack of sufficient information and requirement of continuous monitoring. From the information gained through interviewing the UMLand's HR & Admin manager of the Southern region, staffs who resigned claimed that they could not see their career developing with UMLand. They explained that even though they like the working environment in UMLand, the promotion scheme is relatively slow as compared to job offers that come with promotion. The fast promotion offered to them by other companies makes it difficult for them to resist. They also mentioned that training and development was selective in nature and there was no career planning exercise in UMLand and that they had to rely on themselves to ensure they are progressing in their career. In this research, one of the foci is to examine how far the employees' career planning influences their career development. Antoniu (2010) maintains that the career planning system benefits the company by helping to retain employees and thus reduces the needed time to fill the vacancies.

According to the HR manager too, there are staffs who only deliver as per their job description and who never go that extra mile citing time constraint and not wanting to shoulder the extra workload due to their commitment at home, namely their family. This is turn creates an image to the management that those particular staff are not fully committed to the company and hence it could influence their career development opportunities and thus hamper their career advancements chances.

Family commitment indirectly brings forth the issue of whether one's gender affects one's career development opportunities. Studies (eg, Nath, 2001; Mavin, 2001; Abidin et. al, 2009; Akpinar-Sposito, 2011) have shown that women place more stress on family commitment (as they are more involved with managing the household) as compared to their male counterparts. Studies (eg. Koshal et. al., 1998; Nath, 2000; Merrell and James, 2001; Cordano, 2002) have also shown that the ‘glass ceiling’ concept is still in place today in various organizations, curtailing a woman’s career progress either in an upward mode or laterally. This is consistent with the information gathered from the interview with the HR manager who stated that there had been complaints from her staff who felt they that they had to work twice as hard and perform twice as better from their counterparts of the opposite gender in order to be recognised by the company.

In light of the current trend, previous studies (as mentioned in chapter 2) and previous research (Abbas, 2013) done in UMLand and UMLand experience itself, the researcher aims to further study the career development in UMLand by delving into variables concerning individual and social factors as the previous study did not cover those variables which are acknowledged by UMLand management to be significant. The researcher would like to determine the relationship between individual and social factors with career development. In particular, the researcher would like to understand if UMLand employees’ career planning and their gender have any effect on their career development and whether the environment which promotes social learning and the employees’ family’s needs and expectations affect their career development.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Is there any difference in perception on career development, based on demographical factors such as gender, age, level of education, job position, functional discipline of job, years of experience and years of service at UMLand?
2. What is the relationship between employees’ career planning with career development?
3. What is the relationship between social learning with career development?
4. What is the relationship between family’s needs and expectations with career development?
5. What is the relationship between gender equity with career development?
6. What is the most dominant factor that influences career development at UMLand?

1.5 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the factors that correlate with career development in UMLand and in general. Based on the interview with UMLand’s HR & Admin manager of the Southern region, issues stemming from employees’ career planning, family commitment, disparity due to gender and the ongoing learning environment appears to affect the employees’ career development. It is hoped that through the findings of the study, career development strategies in UMLand can be improved and efforts to achieve performance and retention of talents in the company would be enhanced.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the difference in perception on career development, based on demographical factors such as gender, age, level of education, job position, functional discipline of job, years of experience and years of service at UMLand.
2. To examine the relationship between employees’ career planning with career development.
3. To examine the relationship between social learning with career development.
4. To examine the relationship between family’s needs and expectations with career development.
5. To examine the relationship between gender equity with career development.
6. To identify the most dominant factor that influences career development at UMLand.

1.7 Importance of the Study

The study contributes to current understanding of the career development issues experienced by employees in UMLand. It is hoped to benefit the academic world by giving insights on factors influencing career development. It could also provide opportunity to the management of UMLand to be aware of the current situation at UMLand and thus improve its support system to help individuals achieve their career target.

1.7.1 To the Academic World

This study provides insight of the issues in career development. Numerous literature has been written on individual factors and social factors influencing career development. Hence, this study attempts to further analyze the selected factors and find out if absence of career development resulted in no career advancement, low quality of work life and these in turn fail to bring forth the full potential of their employees' as people or workers.

1.7.2 To UMLand

Specifically, it is hoped that the findings are able to benefit UMLand management to understand further about career development and the factors facilitating their employees' careers. Moreover, through revelations of the findings, improvements can be made especially relating to career development programs and efforts to achieve performance and retention of talents in the company.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This is a social science case study on employees' career development in business environment setting. The study was conducted in UMLand subsidiaries in Johor namely Seri Alam Properties Sdn. Bhd. (SAPSB) and Dynasty View Sdn. Bhd. (DVSB). UMLand management provided the list of employees from which the respondents of the study were selected. The composition was from various departments and making it significantly worthy as the foundation to explain the issues of career development among the employees in UMLand. A total of 159 employees were included in this parameter of study. The respondents were working across a wide spectrum of jobs which ranged from managerial functions to non-executive duties (e.g. sales and marketing, township management, project management and financial activity) but excluding general workers; security guards and housekeepers. However, 15 questionnaires were distributed earlier as pilot test, leaving 145 questionnaires distributed for data analysis.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The research is designed for a case study. Since this is a case study, the findings are limited to the UMLand subsidiaries in Johor only. Hence, it is not applicable to other subsidiaries of UMLand in other part of Malaysia. The sampling number is also limited to 159 respondents only. Should there be more respondents, which may be including other UMLand subsidiaries in Bangi and Kuala Lumpur, the analysis would be more reflective. Furthermore, time constraint to complete the study is also a limitation. The study could be done in more detail and more in depth should more time is allocated. Last but not least, the accuracy or honesty of answering questionnaires is also a challenge for getting the true picture of career development in UMLand. Time constraint and bias could hinder respondents from giving a more well thought and reflective answers.

1.10 Concept Definitions

1.10.1 Career

'Career' is a multifaceted concept which defines its meaning, sense of purpose and direction (Cedefop, 2008). It also includes ideas of progression and development both at work and at a personal level and embraces ideas about lifelong learning as well as skill development. Career concerns with people's futures – the skills they want to develop, what they want to achieve at work and as a person – as well as their future employability in a rapidly changing labor market.

Hall and Associates (2002) defined career as a lifelong process made up of a sequence of activities and related attitudes or behaviours that take place in a person’s work life. Meanwhile, Greenhaus, et al (2000) viewed career as a pattern of work-related experiences, such as job positions, job duties or activities, work-related decisions; and subjective interpretation of work-related events, such as work aspirations, expectations, values, needs and feelings about particular work experience, that span the course of a person’s life. These definitions show that career is not just a job but is a process, attitude, behaviour and situation in an individual’s life to achieve goals and objectives.

1.10.2 Career Development

As explained by Puah and Ananthram (2006), career development is about the development of employees that is beneficial to both the individual and organization. This is supported by Gilley, Eggland, and Gilley (2002) who suggest that career development is a collaborative effort involving both the individuals and the organizations to come up with strategies enhancing the employees’ knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitudes which is required for their current and future job assignments.

1.10.3 Social Learning

Social learning is learning that takes place at a wider scale than individual or group learning, up to a societal scale, through social interaction between peers. As Hoyrup and Elkjaer (2006) note, the most important sources of learning in a workplace are the challenges of work itself, the organisation of work and the social interactions at work. According to Livingston (2002), learning which is not organized by programs or courses but which occurs in everyday life, either with or without mentors constitutes as social learning or informal learning. Employees continuously learn as they try new things, observe others in the workplace and engage in problem solving. Learning can occur in various ways such as self-directed learning, networking, coaching, mentoring and performance planning that include opportunities to understand one’s learning and development needs (Marsick & Walkins, 2001).

Learning is also considered a social process and requires interaction with others (Marsick & Walkins, 2001). Learning is influenced by the individuals and their interactions which is mediated by the negotiation of power within the vertical, horizontal, external and liberal dimensions (Poell *et al.,* 2000). Individuals are more proactive as well as independent in devising their own learning strategies to aid their performances and personal agendas (Marsick et al., 2008). Similarly, Krumboltz (1996) and Lent, Brown & Hackett (1994) believed that an individual’s learning experiences about work and perceived ability to perform particular tasks necessary to succeed in a certain career are vital for decision making.

1.10.4 Gender Equity

Historically, much of the career and adult development theory has been based on research with men, even though the majority of women are now employed (Betz, 2005). There is little clear information to help determine if and how the career values of men and women may differ. As women engage more fully in the work role it is important to understand what career values are important to them and to explore if the career values they express are different from those expressed by men.

Dynamic theories of career development, such as Super‘s (1990) life-span model, place career development in a social and societal context. Career Construction Theory also emphasizes the importance of life roles, social context, and societal norms and expectations in the creation of vocational identity (Savickas, 2002). Many social roles are linked to gender and it seems likely that gender, socialization, and role expectations will influence the objectives people seek to achieve through work.

1.10.5 Family Expectations and Needs

Family expectations and needs refers to the demands family life hold for an individual including parenting, economic pressure, relocation and taking care of older family members. Williams (2003) believed that an individual’s family can affect the development of internal values, interests, skills and a person’s stability in the working world. Many aspects of a family life can be defined as influencing factor of a person’s career development.

In the United States, issues associated with the interaction between work and family has become particularly important in managing a diverse workforce. Family issues vary significantly, depending on the age, marital, parental, and economic status of employees. Workplace issues and career development programs seem to be most critical for adults with child-care responsibilities. The commonality of two-career families, as well as the rise in such nontraditional family styles as single parents, stepfamilies, and divorced parents alternating child-rearing responsibilities, call for greater attention to work–family interaction.

1.10.6 Career Planning

Career planning is not a new concept in the study of career management. In the late 1980’s, Hall & Associates (1986) defined career planning as a deliberate process for becoming aware of self, opportunities, constraints, choices and consequences, as well as identifying career related goals, and programming for work, education, and related developmental experience to provide the direction, timing and sequence of steps to attain specific career related goals. They viewed career planning as an initiative where an individual exerts control over their career and engages in informed choices as to his occupation, organization, job assignment and self-development. Then, there were Leibowitz, Farren and Kaye (1986) who concurred and stated that individuals are responsible for initiating their own career planning and seeking out their career options in order to set goals and establish their career plans.

Recent definitions have not diverted far from the definitions above. Manolescu (2003) identified career planning as “a continuous process of discovery in which an individual slow develops his own occupational concept as a result of skills or abilities, needs, motivations and aspirations of his own value system". As McDonald & Hite (2005) have observed, due to the downsizing and reconfiguring of companies, employees are no longer pinning their career plans on advancement within a particular organization but rather have come to the realization that the future of their careers depended on their own initiative. Hence individual career planning is seen as every action taken to help the individual to make informed choices and changes about their career such as self-assessment, exploration of opportunities and establishing goals (Zlate, 2004). Neveanu (2003) also feels strongly that career planning must link individual needs and aspirations with organizational needs and opportunities.

Employees should know and understand the implications of their particular career stage for their satisfaction and job performance. Managers should provide opportunities to discuss career development issues. They should also give feedback about reasonable expectations for employees, identifying the employees' potential and providing relevant growth opportunities. Linking employees to appropriate resources can also help their career development. A lack of such information, in addition to the dilemmas experienced at various stages of career development, may contribute to confusion and conflict in the performance of work and nonwork roles.

Workers should also ensure that they do not become plateaued performers - executives and workers who cannot advance because of limited advancement opportunities and whose job responsibilities never change. They should have a clear set of career goals for their advancement for nowadays companies have more opportunities for advancement than in the past. Companies that once had single advancement paths offer alternatives. Procter & Gamble, for example, has given some of its marketing executives the chance to move off the traditional management ladder and act as strategic counselors for marketing, with the opportunity to return to the management track if they wish.

1.10.7 Career Management

Career management is a continuous process of work life. It is defined by Hall (2002) and Greenhaus, et al. (2000) as an ongoing process of preparing, developing, implementing and monitoring career plans and strategies undertaken by the individual alone or in concert with the organization's career system. It involves, as stated by Gutteridge (1993), specific HR activities, such as job rotation, potential appraisal, career counselling, and training and education designed to help match employee interests and capabilities with organizational opportunities. Hall (2002) believed that the integration of both individual career planning and institutional career management processes results in career development when the individual attains the career goals set.

1.11 Operational Definitions

In the context of this study, career development means more than job promotions but also improved quality of work life and self-satisfaction. This is as maintained by McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), that career development is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic and chance factors that combine to shape the career of any given individual over the life span. Many elements and circumstances could affect career development including those that come from within a person, their surroundings as well as other external factors. Therefore, two clusters of independent variables are used in this study's research framework which are:

(i) Individual factors – Social learning and career planning
(ii) Social factors – Family expectations and needs, and gender

These variables are used because the researcher believes that both aspects are important in a person's career and they can have both positive and negative influence on career development. Previous research has shown the relationship between these variables with career development which will be further discussed in this chapter.

1.11.1 Social Learning

Similarly, the researcher also believed that social learning is another significant variable in this study. This is due to the fact that social learning takes place at a wider scale than individual or group learning, up to a societal scale, through social interaction between peers including at work. It may or may not lead to a change in attitudes and behaviour. Since people learn through observing others' behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviours, the researcher believe that this will influence their own behaviours towards work and achievement in work. Therefore, individual's learning experiences about work and perceived ability to perform particular tasks necessary to succeed in a certain career are vital for decision making. In other words, people learn from their experience and surroundings and this influence their internal goals for career development.

This variable is stemmed from the work of Krumboltz (1979) of "Social Learning Theory". He believed that career decisions are the product of an uncountable number of learning experiences made possible by encounters with the people, institutions and events in a person's particular environment. Learning experiences, especially observational learning stemming from significant role models like parents, teachers and heroes, have a powerful influence on career decisions, making some occupations more attractive than others. At the same time, positive modelling, reward and reinforcement will likely lead to the development of appropriate career planning skills and career behaviour.

1.11.2 Gender Equity

Gender was one of the first contextual areas to be explored in vocational psychology and research has demonstrated gender differences in career aspirations and career behaviors (Blustein & Fourard, 2008). There is considerable evidence demonstrating that gender roles add heterogeneity to the nature and effects of work involvement (Moen, Kim, & Hofmeister, 2001). Blustein (2006) emphasizes the predominance of sexism in both the workplace and in theories of career development. He summarizes several studies demonstrating that women face multiple barriers in the workplace including lack of opportunities and complex choices between work and family roles. As such, the researcher aims to verify the (non)existence of disparity of career developments opportunities among the employees of UMLand based on their gender.

1.11.3 Family Expectations and Needs

One of the social factors that influence career development is family expectations and needs. The family unit has been identified at the most significant influence on career development (Brown, 2004; Whiston & Keller, 2004b). Family expectations and needs in this study context refer to the demands family life hold for an individual including parenting, economic pressure, and relocation and taking care of older family members. This variable is considered because an individual’s family can affect the development of internal values, interests, skills and a person’s stability in the working world and it provides the environment in which work roles, values, expectations and aspirations are transmitted to and formed by the individual (employee) . Family-of-origin characteristics significantly relate to people's aspirations, interests, and feelings of support, self-efficacy, and choice; even though these relationships seem to vary on the basis of gender and race.

Duffy & Dik (2009) studied the external influences in the career development process and found that although a family can be viewed as external to the individual, the values and expectations a family imposes are likely among the many factors influencing the development of internal interests, values, and skills. For adults in the working world, the influence of having children, having to make career decisions that affect both oneself and a partner (Gordon & Whelan-Berry, 2004), the need to care for older family members, family relocation, and juggling economic pressures are just several of the many factors that can significantly influence career development and the direction of one’s career (Ackah & Heaton, 2003). Nevertheless, the supportive role a family in an individual's career development is also considered in the context of this study. This may come in the form of financial and emotional support, networking, and social resources.

1.11.4 Career Planning

Career planning is also a significant variable in the research framework. For the purpose of this study, career planning refers to a deliberate process for becoming aware of self, opportunities, constraints, choices and consequences, as well as identifying career related goals, and programming for work, education, and related developmental experience to provide the direction, timing and sequence of steps to attain specific career related goals. This variable is considered following a study by McDonald & Hite (2005) which found that individuals are responsible for initiating their own career planning and seek out their career options in order to set goals and establish their career plans and Zlate (2004) who noted that individuals have to take action to help themselves make informed choices and changes about their career. This is where individuals exert control over their career and engage in informed choices as to their occupation, organization, job assignment and self-development. Therefore, for the purpose of the research, career planning refers to whether or not employees in UMLand have their own career plan and whether their career plan is aligned with the company's vision and mission. It also refers to whether or not and how they apply their career plans to their job as well as if there is a continuous discussion of strategies with their superiors in achieving their career goals.

1.11.5 Career Development

Career development in this research focuses on the progression of career development efforts enjoyed or experienced by UMLand's employees. This is also inclusive of the promotion and advancement that the employees enjoy from time to time as part of their career growth. Career development is also measured in terms of whether the employees understand the need for continuous career development. Also, career development is measured through the availability and importance of individual career planning, social learning, equal opportunities regardless of gender and activities that take into account employees work-life balance.

1.12 Summary

In conclusion, current issues of career development lead the researcher to study the relationship between individual factors and social factors and career development. The research questions aim to understand the relationships between individual career planning, social learning, gender and family needs and expectations and career development at UMLand. This chapter gives explanation on the overall aspect of this research including problem statement, research questions, objectives, purpose of study, significance and limitations of study. The research questions and objectives discussed will be further analysed in the following chapters.

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