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ENGLISH SUMMARY

The Contemporary Career Navigator: Individual and Organizational Outcomes of Self-Directed Career Management

Careers have undergone overwhelming transformations that have left traditional ideas of hierarchical progression and job-security a thing of the past. Instead of a sanctuary granted by a lifetime employing organization or stability vouchsafed by careful career planning, contemporary career actors are sailing the high seas on a sinking vessel while contemplating the realization that none of the passing boats will simply tow them to safety. Yet, in a sense, the spirit that envisaged how basic competence and good constant effort would eventually pay off is gone but not lost.

Career researchers have witnessed how the changing landscape finally trickled down to individuals who now understand their responsibility for self-managing their careers, proactively investing in their own development, taking initiative to navigate their situation, and generally re-claim ownership of their destinies. Even more, this forced adaptation to profound changes in the social structure that govern employee-employer relationship is starting to produce a counter effect in which the agency of individuals, their proactive adjustments, and their passion to reinvent the rules of the game are not only shaping their own individual careers but also the organizations that employ them.

Focusing on this important counter move I set out to explain the effects of employees' career self-management on both individuals and organizations. By focusing on career capital as a key concept, I specifically investigate how and to what extent the development of professional motivation, skills and networks contribute to individuals' employability and to organizations' core competencies. I further examine the role of personal factors and organizational human resource (HR) practices in shaping these individual and organizational

outcomes. Employing mixed research approaches, this thesis presents the findings from four empirical studies across both the public and private sectors. The findings of chapter 2 show that the development of career capital is positively associated with employees' contributions to organization's core competencies - culture, capabilities and connections. Furthermore, results suggest this positive association is influenced by who people are (i.e. personality traits) and the career support they receive from the organization. These results recognize the importance of proactive dispositions and organizational HR practices in developing professional motivation, skills and social capital.

Chapter 3 builds on the findings of Chapter 2, and further confirms the impact of employees' career capital development on organization's core competencies. However, I also find that this depends on the level of employees' perception of their career satisfaction. Hence, if employees are satisfied with their careers they contribute more to organizational culture, capabilities, and connections. Although both scholars and practitioners voiced concerns regarding individual agency, it can be concluded that people do not see their own career development as incompatible with organizational success. On the contrary, career self-management is beneficial for organizations and is associated with employees' satisfaction with their employability.

Chapter 4 addresses the effects of career self-management for individuals' career outcomes (e.g., career satisfaction, salary and commitment), and whether this relationship differs across the career choices employees make when using a newly implemented organizational career management practice. Contrary to previous research, the study reveals a reciprocal dynamic between career capital development and career success. These findings suggest that experiencing positive outcomes stimulates and impacts employees' career development over time. Additionally, I also find that organizational HR practices can

facilitate these developments, especially when they are designed to accommodate employees' "work-life balance" needs.

The study reported in Chapter 5 further explores the various ways in which organizations can facilitate employees' career self-management. It presents a particular case of employees' career capital development through corporate volunteering practices. From the findings we can conclude that corporate volunteering is a vital and powerful career management tool. The study shows that employees are not participating in the program to add another line to their résumé, but rather due to a genuine motivation to make a significant change. Indeed I find that the volunteering experiences re-energize employees to gain autonomy and responsibility by which they acquire career capital and apply it at work upon their return. It therefore confirms that HR practices which are designed as meaningful experiences provide more opportunities for personal exploration and subsequent contributions to organizations.

Each chapter examined and revealed important theoretical and methodological challenges, contributing to the understanding of how career capital development accumulated during individuals' career trajectories could be beneficial for both employees and their employing organizations. By doing so, this dissertation offers novel and relevant practical approaches for managing and facilitating self-directed career management. Taken together, the findings summarized in this thesis indicate that for individuals who become the captains of their own careers, those who work hard to fix their boats, who innovate by building new sails and engines, who learn how to navigate in the dark, and for whom a career is not just cruising, for them, a new land discovered is also a new land conquered and changed.