

Career theory essay sample

[Business](#), [Career](#)



Career theory has begun since the early 20th century. As the changing nature of world, career theory experiences major transition from time to time to achieve an applicable theory. This essay will discuss and analyse the literature about career theory in the early 21st Century.

Sonnenfeld (1982) has described career theory as theory which attempts to explain occupational variables such as type of job and income or psychological variables such as job satisfaction and job-related stress. Career development began from Frank Parsons' work where he predicts a person's career choices from the his characteristics, including self-knowledge, career planning and "true reasoning"(Patton et al, 2006). Later, several aptitude tests were used in the assessment of unemployed workers which led to the development of trait-factor approaches. Fitzgerald (1992) suggested that the trait-factor approach can be attributed to the combination of Parsons matching models with the concepts and technology of individual differences. As consequences, trait-factor theory implies on the match or fit between individual's characteristics and work environment, emphasizing on the relationship between knowledge about self and knowledge about environment (Betz, 1989).

Collin (1986) has argued that the major thrust in career theory has centred on individual rather than on contextual factors. However, Holland's (1959) research focused closely on the interaction of individual's personality and work environment. Dawis and Lofquist (1987) has expanded that this theory relies on supervisor or job analyst ratings of work environment characteristics. Baruch (2006) criticised these theories conceptualize careers as a fixed sequence of stages where people do not switch organisations or

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occupations. In short, classic theories mainly focus on the relationship of social status to career attainment. Issues on the relationship between parental occupation, education and wealth were brought up but it is still unclear after nearly a century of work on how strong the relationship is. (Roe, 1957)

The focus of vocational psychology had shifted in the second half of the 20th century due to the massive waves of redundancies and restructuring. Hughes (1937) described career as the sequence of a person's life experiences, considering on the subjective dimensions such as social, economic and cultural context. DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) introduced the boundaryless career concept, which combines both traditional hierarchies and innovative new ventures. Hassard (2012) stated that the concept of secure jobs have diminished, instead employers help employees to improve their working competence and experience (Baruch, 2006). However, the 'insecurity paradox' has increased female participation in workforce in short term careers as women have a history of discontinuous careers (Hassard, 2012). Later, 'intelligent career' was introduced where people will decide for their career rather than letting the organization decide for them as they experience emotional struggle during transitions (Goleman, 1995).

Hall and Mirvis (1996) had also come out with 'Protean Career' where it is described as the contract within oneself, rather than between oneself and the organization. Therefore, career and life success are defined and formed by individuals. Unlike the traditional career approach, contemporary career success is more concerned with the inner feelings of self-actualization,

fulfilment, and satisfaction of a person from his own career. Baruch (2006) argued that careers are developing in a certain extreme direction, either under full control of the organization or under full control of the individual. In summary, these changes to organizational forms are increasingly international phenomena and large corporations have reduced the traditional career which reflected in job insecurity (Hassard, 2012) This paper will discuss on my planning for future career. I would choose Ginzberg five career stages model to describe my career. (Sonnenfeld, 1982) The first stage is the preparatory work period where I would refer to my education, which ended at the age of 25.

It will follow by the initial work period where I will attach to a law firm and start my pupillage for 9 months until I become a practising lawyer. The third stage of career, I will be a practising lawyer for few years and may change the career path due to contextual factors such as marriage. Then it is followed by the stable work period where either I will continue my law career or start a new business. However, there is a possibility that I might fail to pursue my career after the third stage. This particular research focus on women's career patterns has shed light on the need to study career patterns beyond work by including family and other life domains (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) After all, I will come to the last career stage, which is retirement.

The classic career theory is diminishing as the growing number of people and career environment. However, classic career theory can still be a vocational guidance to those who wish to start or change their career. While protean career and intelligent career fit in the changing nature of work but it does

not change the way careers are now managed. Therefore, we may achieve a balance between classic and contemporary career theory.

Appendix

This career graph explains my future career in a simple picture. It resembles the characteristics of Ginzberg five stage career model.

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