

Analysis

Career Anchors: A Study with Indian Professionals

Sharon Pande¹,

Vidya Naik²

Abstract

The purpose of the research is to study the topic of 'Career Anchors' from an Indian perspective. The researcher wanted to see that which of the Career Anchors will feature in the priority list and which would be considered as the bottom of the pile. As study of 1630 employees from 4 different sectors i.e B.P.O. , Retail, Software and Telecom was studied . Employees in the age group 23 – 28 years of age with an experience range of 1 – 6 years were a part of the sample. The analysis indicates that General Managerial Competence was the first anchor, followed by lifestyle and the ones that featured last were pure challenge followed by autonomy. The career orientation between the employee's designation and career anchors could not be done, as there were too many designations in the sample and it did not yield any conclusive results. Lastly, the age

²¹ Associate Professor,
Human Resource and Organisational Behaviour,
School of Business Management , NMIMS University , Mumbai

gap between completion of one's education and the commencement of work has not been taken into account. Career anchors function as stabilizing forces in guiding future career directions and decisions and can be thought of as the values and motives that the individual will not give up if forced to make a choice. Hence, career anchors hold significant consequences for individuals' job satisfaction and job stability. Suggestions are made on how career anchor distribution data could be used by organisations to determine appropriate career development strategies. The research study has significance and relevance to human resources managers as well as career counselors / industrial psychologists. The originality of the research lies in that it addresses the topic of career anchors in an Indian context among four industries and in a relatively younger age group than the previous studies done in the past, thus striving to fill a gap in existing literature.

Key Words : Career Anchors , Careers, Career Development

Introduction

Career theory is a growing interdisciplinary body of knowledge with roots as a subfield of organization and management studies (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Collin & Young, 2000). In the early 1970's, the field of career studies was not yet established. But, as the prevailing historical narrative goes, a small group of organizational scholars, led by Douglass Hall (1976), Edgar Schein (1974), and John Van Maanen (1976) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, grew increasingly interested in the long-term issues associated with working in organizations and the long-term influence of careers on individuals, the institutions within which they worked, and the societies to which they belonged.

In the last several decades, changes such as increased globalization and rapid technological advancements have precipitated into an organizational restructuring that has

forced those in careers studies to re-examine traditional career assumptions (Sullivan, 1999). As firms downsize and flatten managerial structures, individuals are becoming mobile, by choice or chance. The culture of work has also changed with the relative integration of women and minorities. Individuals are increasingly moving both intraorganisationally, across projects and jobs within an organization and interorganisationally, across employers and even occupations. Other traditional boundaries, like those dividing workplace from home and recreation, are also being permeated. In a modern perspective, careers are seen as a process of development of the employee through a trajectory of experiences and occupations in one or more organizations (Rosenstein, 2010).

Careers in the contemporary world tend to be associated with the professional trajectories of each individual, regardless of the education or organizations where such trajectories are developed. The modern career transcends the existence of an organisation. (Balassiano & Costa, 2009).

Career Anchors

Younger employees seek lateral rather than hierarchical career paths and these paths, upheld by career values or anchors, increasingly cross international borders. As never before, employees are questioning their need for job security and are seeking new definitions of organizational justice as a personal reaction to downsizing (Brockner and Greenberg, 1990; Dobbin and Boychuk, 1999; Feldman and Bolino, 2000; Fish, 1999; Greenberg, 2001). These assumptions are being challenged in today's complex world of job arrangements with highly divergent and diverse career paths (Bonner, 1997; Bridges, 1994). Early career research in the 1950s redefined "jobs" as a continuum of career experience rather than "just a

job" (Miller and Form, 1951; Super, 1957). The earliest models emphasized the movement from college to stable professional employment, usually for a limited number of employers (Bridges, 1994; Schein, 1978). Holland (1973) developed the first and still most widely accepted theory related to career interests, which included elements of career congruence, consistency, and differentiation. These seminal studies lay the groundwork for Schein's (1974, 1978) development of his theory of "career anchors", exploring a broader view of careers by examining the interrelationships between individuals' career motives, talents and value.

Career Anchors Theory

Edgar Schein (1975, 1978 and 1987) suggests that the life experiences that people undergo give them a more accurate and stable 'career-self-concept', a construct which he labels 'career anchor'. A career anchor has three components: (1) self-perceived talent and abilities; (2) self-perceived motives and needs; and (3) self-perceived concept attitudes and values.

The first two are based on actual experience in a work setting, while the third is derived from the individual's reaction to a variety of norms and values encountered in different social and work situations. Schein (1978) regards a career anchor as: 'That one element in a person's self-concept, which he or she will not give up, even in the face of difficult choices (Schein, 1990).He posits that an individual's future career choices are affected as he matures and his anchor stabilizes'.

A career anchor is a descriptive and predicative tool that 'serves to guide, constrain, stabilize and integrate the person's career' (Schein, 1978). It is 'inside the person, functioning as a set of driving and constraining forces on career decisions and choices' (Schein, 1978).

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1) Technical/Functional Competence: Primarily excited by the content of the work itself; prefers advancement only in his/her technical or functional area of competence; generally disdains and fears general management as too political.

2) General managerial Competence: Primarily excited by the opportunity to analyze and solve problems under conditions of incomplete information and uncertainty; likes harnessing people together to achieve common goals; stimulated by crisis situations.

3) Autonomy/Independence: Primarily motivated to seek work situations which are maximally free to organizational constraints; wants to set own schedule and own pace of work; is willing to trade-off opportunities for promotion to have more freedom.

4) Entrepreneurial Creativity: Primarily motivated by the need to build or create something that is entirely their own project; easily bored and likes to move from project to project; more interested in initiating new enterprises than in managing established ones

5) Security/Stability: Primarily motivated by job security and long-term attachment to one organization; willing to conform and to be fully socialized into an organization's values and norms; tends to dislike travel and relocation.

6) Service/Dedication to a Cause: Primarily motivated to improve the world in some fashion; wants to align work activities with personal values about helping society; more concerned with finding jobs which meet their values than their skills.

7) Pure Challenge: Primarily motivated to overcome major obstacles, solve almost unsolvable problems, or to win out over extremely tough opponents; define their careers in terms of daily combat or competition in which winning is everything; very single-minded and intolerant of those without comparable aspirations.

8) Lifestyle: Primarily motivated to balance career with lifestyle; highly concerned with such issues as paternity/maternity leaves, day-care options, etc.; looks for organizations that have strong pro-family values and programs.

Schein (1974) concluded that five 'career anchors' existed, along with their inherent motivations. Subsequent research (Derr, 1980; DeLong, 1982) added three more categories

One of Schein's (1974, 1978) basic theoretical premises is that individuals' career values, motivations and attitudes are consistent throughout their careers after an initial adjustment following the first three years or so of workplace experience. According to Schein (1978), a person's abilities, motives and values are mutually interactive and inseparable. He also developed the theory of 'internal' careers (individuals' subjective opinions) and 'external' careers (the progression of positions or jobs). Schein (1980) describes internal careers as those "activities designed to help individuals develop a clearer self-concept around their own occupational activities, a set of plans that make sense to the individual".

An important point about Schein's (1990) career anchor theory is that despite numerous researchers' follow-up studies which have sought to refute the theory, the basic typology has held firm. Schein (1978) claims that each individual has only one true career anchor which emerges after the person has accumulated a meaningful amount of life and work experiences. Schein's (1978) main contribution is that his work describes how a stable career identity is formed and distinguishes this process from initial vocational choice (Feldman and Bolino, 1996).

According to Schein (1990), when individuals achieve congruence between their career anchor and their work, they are more likely to attain positive career outcomes, such as job effectiveness, satisfaction and stability. However, because people do not always work in jobs that fit their career anchors, large variations in job outcomes occur in the population.

Career anchors emerge for individuals who have worked for at least 3 to 5 years (I-Chiu Chang et al, 2007, Bromley Kniveton, 2004, Verena Marshall and Dede Bonner, 2003) as they collect information about their values, needs, and self-

perceived talents through actual work experience. An incongruence between an individual's career anchor and the work environment leads to dissatisfaction. Feldman and Bolino (1996) proposed that it might be possible for individuals to have both primary and secondary career anchors. They argued that multiple career anchors could exist for an individual for two main reasons. First, career anchors can be talent based, need based or value based, and individuals could hold one career anchor that is primarily talent based and another that is primarily need based or value based. Second, individuals may have high levels of personal ambivalence and may be torn between two equally attractive goals.

Need for the Study

The researcher felt the need to study this area from an Indian perspective .The researcher wanted to see that which of the Career Anchors will feature in the priority list and which would be considered as the bottom of the pile. Since the last decade, it has been observed that most employees take up job assignments that they are either not qualified for or interested in. Some maybe qualified, but may not have a proper 'career fitment' at the organisation, as per their career aspiration. Many a time, organisations do not honour their commitment made to employees. After a brief duration of work, employees could face a crisis with regard to the 'job content' at their organisations.

Scope of Study

It was decided to conduct this study on employees in the four industries for all functions viz. BPO / Call Centre, Retail, Telecom and Software with an experience range of 1 – 6 years. The experience age of around 1 – 3 years was also

considered in the chosen sample, though the Career Anchor study by Edgar Schein (1976,1994) indicates that a minimum of 3 – 5 years is beneficial , three studies have been carried out in this area (Chang et al, 2007, Kniveton, 2004, Marshall and Bonner, 2003). The researcher wanted to study career anchors of employees with an experience range of 1 – 3 years in comparison to the original study by Edgar Schein (1976). Careers have advanced tremendously over the last thirty years and researcher’s goal was to find out if the Career Anchors study holds good even for this experience range.

Design of the Study

Sampling

Sectors chosen for the study: During the researcher’s industry experience, it was found that sunrise industries have more number of employees in this age group i.e. quarter life. The researcher had a discussion with the industry experts, on the kind of companies and sample size. It was then decided to base the study on the samples drawn from these industries. 4 sectors were finally chosen for the study viz. BPO / Call Centre, Retail, Software and Telecom. The sample size was 1,630 employees.

Parameters for choosing the Sample :. It was decided to identify the following parameters for the study: employees in the age group 23 – 27 years of age with an experience range of 1 – 6 years.

Time Lines for the Study: The timelines for the data are as follows. The data for the main study was from end of April ’2009 to first week of June 2009.

Reliability

The following are the reliability results :

Table No. 1

Career Anchors	Reliability
Technical / Functional	0.831
General Management	0.909
Autonomy	0.806
Security / Stability	0.888
Entrepreneurial Creativity	0.875
Service Dedication to a Cause	0.861
Pure Challenge	0.811
Lifestyle	0.887
Overall Reliability	0.83

Validity

Factor analysis tests were run on the data to determine whether respondents' ratings on 41 Career Orientations Inventory (COI) items will respond to the nine career anchors.

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Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Hair, Anderson & Tatham, 1987) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy (Kaiser, 1974) were employed. Both tests were conducted due to the sensitivity associated with the large sample size. These results suggest the presence of homogenous groups of variables and appropriate application of factor analysis.

Principal components analysis confirmed the existence of career anchors among academic executives. Factor analysis applying varimax rotation identified nine factors. Those items that did not satisfy a minimum factor loading of 0.40 were not analysed. These extracted factors will explain the cumulative percentage of the total variance which was found to be 69.082% (almost two thirds) of the variability in the career anchor scale.

The analysis identified the following factors: (1) general managerial competence, (2) lifestyle, (3) security and stability, (4) entrepreneurship creativity, (5) service dedication to a cause, (6) technical / functional competence, and (7) pure challenge. (8) autonomy, (9) work independence. The items included in the ninth factor were a subset of factor 8 i.e. Autonomy, the researcher decided to label it as 'Work Independence', though the meaning of the factor 'Autonomy', is similar to the meaning of 'Work Independence'.

Discussion of Results

Schein regards a career anchor as: 'That one element in a person's self-concept, which he or she will not give up, even in the face of difficult choices (Schein, 1990). Schein (1990) posits that an individual's future career choices are affected as he matures and his anchor stabilizes'.

General Managerial Competence: Schein (1978, 1990) theorized that manager-anchored individuals will not give up an opportunity to climb to a high level in the organization to enable themselves to integrate the efforts of others and be responsible for the output of the organization. These individuals desire the power and achievement of top positions. Schein (1978) further elaborated that individuals who possess this anchor are believed to possess analytical, interpersonal, intergroup, and emotional competence. They want challenging, varied, integrative work with high levels of responsibility and leadership opportunities (Schein, 1990). He also posited that individuals with this anchor expect to be very highly paid and they look toward internal equity (with reference to colleagues within the same organization) rather than external equity (with reference to others in other organizations with the same skill levels). They insist on promotion based on merit, measured performance and results.

This concerns managing others; advancement, responsibility, leadership and income are all important. They tend to be generalists and regard specialist posts only as a means of gaining some relevant experience. According to Schein (1996), this ranks in the top third, accounting for 25 per cent of individuals' responses. He predicts that its importance will increase with changing working practices. Marshall and Bonner (2003) ranked it in the bottom third with only 14 per cent responses. In our study, this anchor was featured as number 1 i.e. Ranked at the topmost of all anchors of the career anchors with 17.15 percent of responses .

General Management anchor was the first anchor due to the fact that most employees prefer to climb up the ladder and many company career paths are also designed in such a fashion. Such employees want to rise in the organisation, they

seek higher and higher levels of responsibility, they must also be good in handling people, excellent analyst and emotionally able to withstand the pressure and tensions of the 'executive suite'. This kind of a person needs to be a manager in the sense of needing opportunities to express the combination of interpersonal, analytical and emotional talents delineated above.

In the present study, as work becomes more technically complex it requires greater coordination and integration at lower levels. As we can see in today's organizations, whole layers of management are being cut out and organizations are being flattened and re-designed around multiple shifting project teams. Often those teams are described as self-managed, implying that centralized controls will be reduced to fewer and fewer functions. The skills of general management, i.e. analytical, inter-personal, and emotional competence, will therefore be needed at lower and lower levels too. Team managers, project managers, and program managers will have to have general management and leadership skills above and beyond their technical understanding of the tasks at hand. In many organizations today one does not become a general manager until one is at department or division level and promotion to general management implies a big status jump on the organizational ladder. In the future those skills will have to be present so much lower in the organization that the status of general management will become much more variable.

Lifestyle: Schein (1978,1990) theorized that lifestyle-anchored individuals will not give up a situation that would permit them to balance and integrate their personal needs, family needs, and the requirements of their careers. In addition, lifestyle-anchored employees respond well to company schemes such as part-time work, sabbaticals,

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paternity or maternity leave, day care and flexible hours. To them, success is defined more broadly than just career success, and their identity is tied up with how they live their total lives. Therefore, a working environment congruent with lifestyle-anchored educators must enable them to balance their family, career and self-development concerns. According to (Lambert, 1991), because lifestyle-anchored educators value a balanced lifestyle, they are positioned to be lower in extrinsic satisfaction when there is a lack of extrinsic features such as flexible working hours or sabbaticals to enable them to live a balanced lifestyle.

Individuals who are oriented to lifestyle integration desire to develop a lifestyle that integrates family concerns, career concerns and concerns for self-development. Previous related research on career orientations (Applin, 1982; Igbaria & Baroudi, 1993; Igbaria et al, 1991) reported that executives were concerned of the possibility of integrating work, family and self-concerns into a coherent lifestyle. This was an indication that individuals are aware of choosing careers that balance their professional and private lives. Among Indians, they give much attention to their families, and they work in order to earn the logistics necessary to support themselves and their families.

This is primarily concerned with aspects of the whole life, balancing the career with the family and other interests. Schein ranks this amongst the bottom tier of anchors, but Marshall and Bonner (2003) rank it at the top. Schein however, predicts an increasing emphasis on this anchor with the growing proportion of dual career (job and family) individuals. In our study it featured at the second level of ranking.

The trend toward autonomy and life style as anchors is, of course, a healthy development, given the way the world is going. As noted above, the occupational structure is moving increasingly toward a different concept of the employment contract in which organizations owe their career occupants less and less. In the present study, both the organization and the individual are gradually adjusting to the notion that they have to look out for themselves, meaning that organizations will become less paternalistic and individuals more self-reliant. To the extent that more and more individuals will begin dual career situations, they will think, plan, and act more as social units and organizations will have to consider how to maintain support systems for such units in the form of child care, job sharing opportunities, part-time work, sabbaticals, and other adaptive modifications of the traditional 9 to 5 job. Even the way work is defined will gradually change as the boundaries between jobs, between organizations, and between work and family become more fluid and ambiguous.

Security/Stability: Security-anchored individuals will not give up employment security or tenure in a job or organization (Schein, 1978, 1990). Their main concern is to achieve success so they can relax. The anchor shows up in concern for financial security (such as pension and retirement plans) or employment security. Such stability may involve trading their loyalty and willingness to do whatever the employer wants from them for some promise of job tenure. Therefore, government and civil service jobs are often attractive to security-anchored individuals (Schein, 1990). The employees are more concerned about the context of their work (such as improved pay, working conditions and benefits) than the content of their work. Job challenge, job enrichment and other intrinsic motivations matter less to them.

In the present study , this anchor mainly motivated by long-term job security and attachment to one organisation and being willing to adapt to norms and standards. Schein (1996) ranks this in the second level, whereas Marshall and Bonner (2003) rank it at the bottom of the scale. Schein predicts that it will become less popular as a result of the increasingly transient nature of employment. But, however in our study this career anchor featured as number three , this could be attributed to the fact that the study happened during the recession phase and the world was going through a global slump or it also could be attributed to the fact that Indian's by and large due their cultural background prefer security and stability their jobs and careers .Many Indians also have a 'savings mentality' . This shift implies that the only thing the career occupant can really expect of an organization is the opportunity to learn and gain experience, which presumably makes him or her more employable in some other organization. What this means internally to the career occupant is that the base of security and stability has to shift from dependence on an organization to dependence on oneself.

From the findings of this study, it would appear that security/stability of the job has indeed increased in career value for the large majority of respondents, across all cultures and both genders in the Indian context. The reasons could be attributed to the fact that Indians by and large prefer secure and stable jobs. With the recession hitting the global markets, by which India was also affected, most employees got the jitters of their life, as globally their counterparts were being sacked, though the direct repercussions were not felt in these companies, at the time the study was done.

Entrepreneurial Creativity: It is the orientation of individuals who need to create something on their own by developing a

new product or service, by building a new business enterprise through financial manipulation, or by starting and building a business of their own (Schein, 1993). More and more people are drawn to the idea that they can develop their own business and, as the world becomes more dynamic and complex, the opportunities for individuals with this anchor will increase dramatically. The increasing mobility that is available in the world today will make it more and more feasible for the entrepreneur to go to whatever part of the world is most hospitable to his or her ideas. The dynamic complexity of industry will put a premium on creativity and it is creativity that is at the core of this anchor.

Schein (1996) contends that companies are created by people who value the entrepreneurial creativity career anchor and in turn create new jobs for people who value other career anchors. Schein considers that it is important to train people to be entrepreneurial, thereby encouraging people to prepare for autonomous careers. Organizations may encourage entrepreneurship as a valued component of 'employability'. Do all employees want to be entrepreneurial, particularly if they value other career anchors? For those who do value entrepreneurship, do they feel efficacious in the skills and abilities required for creativity? Conversely, while employees may feel highly self-efficacious in an employment area, and in turn be highly creative in that area, will this creativity necessarily translate itself to entrepreneurial activity? There remains a requirement to challenge employees with high self-efficacy in either entrepreneurship and/or creativity and develop self-efficacy in those who lack confidence in either aspect of this career anchor.

This is mainly motivated by the need to create or to build something to be identified with. More interested in setting up new projects rather than managing the existing ones . Both

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Schein and Marshall and Bonner (2003) gave it a low ranking. Schein (1996) predicts an increase in ranking due to the shift towards subcontracting. Small and McClean (2002) reported fewer females with this orientation. In our study, it featured at number four.

Service/Dedication to a Cause: Schein (1978, 1990) theorized that service-anchored individuals will not give up the opportunity to pursue work that achieves something of value. Such individuals are dedicated to serve other people and to make the world a better place in which to live and work. They pursue such opportunities even if it means a change of employment and they do not accept transfers or promotions that would take them away from work that fulfills those values. Service-anchored employees want recognition from professional peers and superiors for their contribution, often above monetary rewards (Schein, 1990). This is largely concerned with improving the world, helping society, anxious to work in a field which meets their values, rather than their skills. Schein ranks it amongst the bottom third, but predicted an increase with growing emphasis on ecology and recycling. Marshall and Bonner placed it about mid-point in the ranking. In our study it featured at No.5.

With reference to the present study, employees who are oriented to sense of service are dedicated to serve people and to make the world a better place to live and work. The number of people showing up with this anchor is increasing. More and younger people, as well as mid-life career or early life occupants, report that they are feeling the need not only to maintain an adequate income, but to do something meaningful in a larger context. The service anchor combined with the entrepreneurial anchor is already creating new organizations devoted to recycling, to privatizing health care and welfare, to managing the environmental problems through products that

use less energy, to waste management and so on. Such organizations will, in turn, absorb a lot of the technologically unemployed as well as attracting some of the best and brightest of the new generations. In our study, this featured as the fifth anchor.

Technical / Functional Competence: According to Schein (1978, 1990), technical-anchored individuals will not give up the opportunity to apply their own skills in areas of expertise and to continue to develop those skills to a higher level. Their sense of identity is derived from the exercise of their skills, and they are most happy when their work permits them to be challenged in those areas. Technical-anchored employees orient their careers around their areas of competence and explicitly avoid situations that would remove them from those areas or push them into general management.

Schein (1990) proposed that technical-anchored individuals are more concerned with the intrinsic content of their work than with its context. They like autonomy in achieving agreed upon goals as well as available resources to enable them to perform their work effectively. The employees are more oriented toward external equity than are manager-anchored employees. They want to be paid for their skill levels, often defined by education and work experience. They feel that their compensation is reasonable only if it is comparable to that of their contemporaries in other organizations. According to Schein (1978), success for this group is determined more by feedback indicating that they are expert in their areas and by increasingly challenging work in those areas than by promotion or monetary rewards per se. The opportunity for further learning and self-development in their area of specialty is of top priority in their list of incentives (Schein, 1990).

This concerns the content of the work itself, prefers advancement in a technical area rather than in general management. This anchor, according to Schein (1996), was equally top in the ranking whereas with Marshall and Bonner (2003), it was only ranked fifth. In our study the anchor ranked sixth in the study.

In other words, to remain technically/functionally competent will require constant updating and relearning in an organizational world that will not bear the costs in terms of money and time for this updating process. It may be observed that there would be an acceleration of the process of outplacating obsolete people and replacing them with younger, more up-to-date talent.

Pure Challenge: According to Schein (1978,1990), challenge-anchored individuals will not give up the opportunity to work on solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems, to win out over tough opponents or to overcome difficult obstacles. To them, the only meaningful reason for pursuing a job or career is that it permits them to win out over the impossible. Novelty, variety and difficulty become ends in themselves, and if something is easy, it becomes immediately boring. Success for them involves constant opportunities for self-test.

This is primarily concerned with overcoming obstacles or problems, concerned with competition and winning. Schein (1996) ranks this in the bottom third, but Marshall and Bonner (2003) rank it second to top. In the present research study, it featured as the number seventh anchor .There has always been a small group of people who defined their careers in terms of overcoming impossible odds, solving the unsolved problems, and winning out over competitors. It is the researcher's impression that this group is growing in number, but it is not

clear whether more people are entering the labor force with this predisposition or whether it is an adaptation to the growing challenges that the world is presenting to us. In any case, there will not be a shortage of challenges to be met, so long as this group is willing to become active learners as well, since the nature of these challenges will itself evolve rapidly with technological change.

Autonomy: Schein (1978, 1990) theorized that individuals with an autonomy anchor will not give up the opportunity to define their work in their own way and will seek work situations in which they will be maximally free of organizational constraints. They want to remain in jobs that allow them flexibility regarding when and how they work. These individuals seek work situations in which they will be maximally free of organizational constraints and restrictions to pursue their professional competence.

Individuals anchored in autonomy find the occupational world an easier place to navigate. The autonomy anchor is aligned, at least for the present, with most organizational policies of promising only employability. The self-reliance that may be needed in the future is already part of the psychological make-up of this group of people. They may well become the role models for future career incumbents.

This concerns independence from an organisation and individual freedom. Both Schein, and Marshall and Bonner rank this in the second tier. Schein considers that this may be more typical of older employees, who have the personal and financial security to be more independent, and self-willed. In our study the same is reflected as the eighth anchor. It is also evident that as many people age, their autonomy needs increase, leading to fantasies of opening up their own businesses, becoming consultants, working part-time, and, in

other ways, reducing dependence on any particular organization or job.

In **summary**, what has been seen so far is that each of the anchor categories still attracts a set of people, but, that the working out of a given anchor can become problematic as the world of work and organizational structure becomes more turbulent. The main effect is that people will have to become more self-reliant and figure out where their particular anchor best fits into the emerging occupational structure. The ability to analyze oneself, as well as the ability to figure out what kind of job is available and how that job will evolve, becomes a crucial skill.

During the literature review the researcher did not come across any study that had identified Security / Stability as the first anchor, whereas, in the study done on the Indian population, this anchor was in the forefront. This could be because of two prime reasons - the first being, that Indian culture, by and large has a great emphasis for 'financial security' and future planning, may it be savings for one's old age, kids education, buying a new home etc , they do not believe on taking high amount of risks , most Indians take 'calculated risks', where their finances are concerned . From some people, security and stability become an overriding central issue which comes to guide and constrain all career decisions. Such people often seek jobs in organisations which provide job tenure, which have reputation of never laying off people, which have good retirement plans and generous benefits and which have the image of being strong and reliable in the industry. Most people, from the earlier generations have worked at public sectors, nationalized banks , state and central government jobs wherein such employment guarantee life time employment , till recent years . One's parents also play a major role in the employee's life until the

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employee reaches a marriageable age, whereas this is not true in the case of most western countries. All these values get inculcated in the employee's mind from a very young age, though with today's generation, most employees change jobs frequently, but the values engrained in their minds remain with them.

The second reason being – 'recession', since the last few years, due to the global melt down and India feeling the heat, though in the 17 companies, till the time the researcher conducted the study, none of the companies had retrenched their employees. Nevertheless, most working employees did get quite jittery, as globally most were losing their jobs and most companies all across the globe froze the hiring plans. Hence, these employees would have also felt the heat; this could be one of the reasons for Security / Stability being the priority anchor in quarter life crisis. Nevertheless, recent research (Giles and West 1995) indicates that employees with security / stability anchor were less likely to be proactive in career planning.

For most of the 1970's and 1980's, when Edgar Schein administered the career anchor self-analysis exercise, they obtained fairly consistent results with roughly 25 percent of populations anchored in 'general management,' another 25 percent in 'technical/functional competence,' 10 percent each in 'autonomy' and 'security' and the rest spread across the remaining anchors. Even management students who might be expected to have primarily a general management anchor are spread across the whole spectrum with only about 25 percent in that category. And even with middle managers and senior executives, this anchor rarely goes above 50 percent. As discussed earlier in our study with the Indian sample size for the dominant anchors were General Management Lifestyle and then Security / Stability.

Global comparison on Career Anchors: It was found that lifestyle remained the predominant career anchor across three geographic regions, with the exception of the UK/Ireland and Africa, where it was placed second and third respectively in order of importance. Pure challenge attracted high scores across the regions (with the exception of North America), and with Africa placing this career anchor highest in importance. Service/ dedication to a cause attracted high scores in the UK/Ireland and North America, but relatively low scores in Africa and Asia. General managerial competence achieved low scores across all five regions, as did security/stability, with the exception (though moderate) of the Asian region. In our study, on Indian population, it was found that General Management anchor was priority , then followed by Lifestyle and then by Security/ stability and last was autonomy.

A study done with Brazilian Professionals (Kilimnik & Oliveria,2011), identified Lifestyle anchor ,as the most dominant anchor ,reflecting a need to balance family life and work. The study done by them had a gap of two years , they nevertheless found that the career anchors of the employees did change in the two years of the sample that they had studied. They attributed this to the fact that certain changes in the anchor were most likely related to the new career demands that, paradoxically , may be leading to some professionals to leave aside their values and aspirations ,even if temporarily.

Conclusion

This shows that General Management followed by Lifestyle then Security / Stability are amongst the top anchors for the employees done in the four sectors on an Indian population

and amongst the ones that feature in the bottom pile are Technical / Functional , followed by Pure Challenge and last featured the Autonomy anchor

Recommendations

The career anchor literature suggests the importance of understanding non-monetary motivators of career satisfaction, depending on the individuals motives, values and talents. It is also suggested by a number of writers (Barth, 1993; Derr, 1986) that a greater understanding of career anchors can help organisations to tailor and focus career initiatives more successfully. This research shows that cumulative career anchor information can be a good indication of the key drivers for career satisfaction and create an understanding of the overriding career culture.

The importance of tailoring career development programmes to the culture of an organisation is well documented (Hirsh and Jackson, 1996; Mayo, 1991; Walters, 1992). By analysing career anchor data in this way, it is possible for an organisation to build up a picture of the key drivers of career satisfaction in the organisation, by providing a valuable insight into the career culture in existence. Furthermore, if more organisations begin to take this approach, benchmarking the success of career initiatives with other companies will have a greater relevance against this cultural backdrop.

Management and employee development will become much more a process of initial selection based on competency profiles that will have been built up from actual work histories. Socialization and training will fall much more on the individual and will be designed as learning exercises rather than teaching or training programs. Organizational culture

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will be acquired by self-socialization, observation, mentoring, and coaching. Career pathing and career development will become a more negotiated process between the individual and members of project teams rather than a corporate centralized activity. Corporate functions of all sorts, even human resource policies, pay systems, and other regular routines may become more decentralized with only the most general policies coming from the center.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies are required to determine the extent to which the internal career orientations (career anchors) of Indian academic executives found in this study matches the external career options provided by organizations. This research constitutes an initial step toward exploring this important area. Replication with a larger and more geographically dispersed sample of corporate executives is certainly warranted. It is hoped that this study will serve as a catalyst for such future research.

This research could also lend itself to a longitudinal design in order to examine Schein's contention that individuals do not relinquish their career anchors throughout their work history. One could also explore the types of career management behaviours that are most valuable for achieving important career outcomes for employees.

Baruch (2004) suggests additional anchors for the twenty-first century, such as employability and spiritual purpose, while Suutari and Taka (2004) suggest the addition of an Internationalism anchor, which may characterize

internationally oriented managers. This direction could be explored by future research.

In addition, individuals with multiple career anchors could be compared with those of single career anchors; the first group may experience poorer career outcomes because of satisfying multiple goals instead of just maximizing one career goal. The concept of multiple anchors and secondary anchors which could give rise to alternate careers could also be explored.

Implications of Research

The research study has significance and relevance to human resources managers as well as career counselors / industrial psychologists. For researchers they can delve more into employee's decision-making capability where careers are concerned and review which Career Anchors employees opt for and then compare the same across various industries. The cumulative Career Anchor information can be a good indication of the key drivers for Career Satisfaction and create an understanding of the overriding career culture. For Human Resource Managers : This research can aid in mapping the employee career interest vis a vis the organisation requirement and will thereby minimize attrition. It will also help in the area of performance appraisals, career counseling, designing of career initiatives and flexible career paths, incentive and reward systems, training programs to accommodate the need for a variety of career anchor occupants. It can help in creating a healthy balance in the organization for the employees and for the

organisation itself. For Career Counselors: They can aid in conducting such tests for employees in the early stage of their career.

Limitations of the Study

The career anchor theory has several key limitations. First, though it is well known and widely used both by individuals and organizations, it has been subject to limited empirical investigations (Arnold, 1997; Yarnall, 1998). For example, the empirical validation of career anchor classification deserves future attention due to the inconsistency of results (Feldman and Bolino, 1996). Second, the idea that individual has only one stable dominant career anchor has been questioned. Schein (1990) himself also sees that anchors may appear to be changed through work experience that leads to greater self-discovery, but still sees that there is one dominant anchor to be observed. Some other authors see that career orientations can change with age and due to external influences (Derr, 1986; Yarnall, 1998). Third, Feldman and Bolino (1996) see that it is possible for individuals to have both primary and secondary career anchors. Contradictory to expectations, Schein's (1978) own empirical findings indicate that approximately one-third of the respondents report that they have multiple career anchors. For those individuals with multiple career anchors, an important factor to consider is whether those career anchors are complementary or mutually inconsistent (Feldman and Bolino, 1996).

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