



HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

Title	Career Research Issues in Japan
Author(s)	Firkola, Peter
Citation	Economic journal of Hokkaido University, 33, 135-150
Issue Date	2004-07
Doc URL	https://hdl.handle.net/2115/5392
Type	departmental bulletin paper
File Information	EJHU_v33_p135-150.pdf



Career Research Issues in Japan

Peter Firkola

Research on career development in Japanese companies has been limited. This paper provides an overview of research related to careers. Research on career development in Japan is then reviewed. It was found that the concept of career development differs between Western and Japanese culture. The main implication is that Japanese companies may have to adjust their management practices to respond to changing employee career attitudes.

JEL Classification Number: N12

Key Words: Career, Career Development, Career Path

1. Introduction

Japanese enterprises today face a variety of new problems, caused by recent social and labor market changes, that are not being adequately dealt with within most companies. Thus the effectiveness of traditional Japanese management practices is being questioned. Furthermore, although Japanese companies have enjoyed a great deal of success, this success does not appear to have significantly improved the employees' quality of life, that is, their living conditions, everyday family life, and quality of work life. Consequently, Japanese organizations and, in particular, their human resource policies need restructuring and revitalizing in order to overcome these problems.

Since the mid-1980s, as a means of overcoming some of these problems, there has been considerable discussion about incorporating career development programs (CDP) into the human resource systems of Japanese companies (see for example, Goda 1986; Shimuzu 1991). By examining career development in detail, a much clearer picture of the degree to which a company matches its needs to employee needs can be obtained. Ideally, by integrating company and employee needs, the company will obtain higher productivity from its employees and at the same time provide employees with a better quality of work life. Little research in this area, however, has been undertaken to date. This paper aims to fill that gap.

This paper is organized as follows: Sections 2-5 explain the meaning of the terms "career", "career development" and "career path" and how they are related. Section 6 examines some of the traditional views of careers and career development in Japan.

2. Career

The term career has been used to refer to a variety of concepts in the literature (Hall 1976). One definition of career is as advancement. Here career entails the notion of vertical mobility, moving upward in an organization's hierarchy. By this definition, career represents the sequence of promotions and other upward movements (e.g., lateral transfers to more responsible positions or moves to "better" organizations or locations) during the course of an individual's work life. This concept of directionality ("up is good, down is bad"), then, is a pervasive theme in this definition of career.

A second way to view career is as a profession. A less common way of viewing careers is that certain occupations represent careers, while others do not. This is related to the career-as-advancement theme, since "career" occupations are generally those in which some clear pattern of systematic advancement ("career ladder") is evident. For example, in the legal profession, there is a clear advancement ladder from law student to clerk to associate to partner. Doctors, professors, businessmen, and teachers, as well as other professional people, also have a generally understood path of career movement. Jobs that do not generally lead to advancement or to a long-term series of related positions, however, are often viewed as not constituting a career, for example, secretaries and parking lot attendants are not considered to "have" careers.

A career can also be viewed as a lifelong sequence of jobs (objective career). By this definition an individual's career is their job history—the series of positions held, regardless of occupation or level, during the course of his/her working life. According to this definition, all people who work have careers. No value judgment is made about the type of occupation or the direction of movement. An individual's sequence of jobs is referred to as an objective career and the particular experiences he/she has in those jobs as a subjective career.

A career can also be viewed as a lifelong sequence of role-related experiences. According to this definition, career represents the way the individual experiences the sequence of jobs and activities that constitute his/her work history. This is the subjective career, the changing aspirations, satisfactions, self-conceptions, and other attitudes of the individual toward his/her work and life. Using this career-as-life-process view, it is even possible to consider careers independent of work; the term could refer to the history of an individual in any particular role or status, not just in a work role.

The first two meanings of career, advancement or profession, are commonly used in the literature. The last two definitions, however, are more representative of behavioral science literature related to careers. Thus the word "career" is used in a number of different ways, depending on the definition,

from “pursuing a career” to “career counseling”; even criminals can be regarded as having a “career”.

In this paper a career is defined as *a sequence of positions occupied by an individual during his/her lifetime*. This definition of career is similar to the business perspective of career (career as profession) and is also similar to the sociological perspective of careers as a lifelong sequence of jobs which provide a link between individuals, organizations, and society. Using this definition, a career represents an individual’s working life, which is a primary factor in determining an individual’s overall quality of life.

A feature of this definition is that career is looked at from an individual perspective. This definition is based on self-reliance and individualism, as well as the notion of self-responsibility. Thus in this definition it is implicitly assumed that individuals have some degree of control over their destinies and that they can manipulate opportunities in order to maximize their satisfaction and success. It also assumes that a career does not imply success or failure. Career success or failure is best measured by the individual whose career is being considered, rather than by other individuals.

3. Career Research

Much of the early work on careers in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s focused on the individual or psychological perspective of employees in the United States. The major works in this area are by Super (1957), Holland (1966), Erikson (1950), Miller and Form (1951), Hall and Nougaim (1968), and Schien (1971), and all are related to life or career stages. The following provides a brief outline of their career choice and career stage models.

Super’s (1957) work focuses on the impact of self-identity upon career choice. Super, whose research began in the late 1930s, views career as being a synthesis of the individual’s self-concept and the external realities of the work environment. Self-concept is a general term used to describe a person’s image of him/herself-his/her abilities, interests, needs values, past history, and aspirations. This synthesis develops gradually as the individual becomes aware of (1) their self-concept, (2) the opportunities and requirements in particular occupations, and (3) experiences in implementing one’s self-concept by working in particular occupations. Developing one’s career consists of passing through a sequence of stages brought about by the interaction between self-concept and occupation. Super also developed a career stage model. The five stages of his model are growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline.

Holland’s (1966) work focuses on career selection. His research is based on the assumption that there is an interaction between personality and environment, that is, people gravitate toward environments that are congruent with

their personal orientations. He proposed six personality types and six matching occupational environments: Realistic, investigative, social, conventional, enterprising, and artistic. The central hypothesis in Holland's theory is that an individual's personality type will be a good predictor of his/her present career aspiration or later career choice. For example, enterprising individuals will tend to choose careers in enterprising environments, such as management.

Erikson's (1950) theory of the eight stages of the life cycle can also be applied to the study of careers. Erikson believes that each stage is characterized by a particular developmental task that an individual must work through before advancing fully into the following stage. Four of the eight stages of the life cycle that apply to careers are adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood, and maturity.

Miller and Form (1951) developed a career model of occupational stages. They described five career stages based more on actual job behaviors than on the underlying developmental processes. The initial work period (late teens) consists of part-time and occasional jobs. The trial work period starts with the person's first regular full-time job and continues until he/she settles into a stable field of work (late twenties or early thirties). The stable work period extends from the 30s to the 60s, and is followed by retirement. Typical career patterns tend to emerge based upon the way individuals have gone through (or have failed to go through) these work stages, with primary emphasis on the stability or security of the career.

In a study of young AT&T managers, Hall and Nougaim (1968) found some evidence to support the concept of career stages. In Hall and Nougaim's model there are also five stages: prework, establishment, advancement, maintenance, and retirement. Managers who eventually attained the greatest success in the company were those individuals with the lowest needs for safety in the first year. Also, young managers in the study showed a significant increase in the importance of the needs for achievement and esteem between the first and fifth years of their careers.

In Schein's (1971) career cycle there are eight stages: growth, entry into work, first career, early career (from 17 to 30), mid-career, later mid-career (crisis period), late career, and leaving the workforce (retirement). Schein developed a model, called a career cone, that examined the basic dimensions of integration between the organization and the individual's career cycle. This model views the organization as a three dimensional area, like a cone or cylinder. Although all careers are unique, careers develop along these three dimensions. First, careers move in a vertical direction, that is, promotion (upward movement) within the organization. Second, horizontal movements reflect changes in specific job functions or movements between different fields or spe-

cialties. Third, careers can also move in a radial direction toward the center or the core, thus acquiring more power and influence for the individual within the company. Radial movements often, but not necessarily, occur together with promotion.

With the exception of the Erikson model, which deals with general life stages rather than work career stages, these career stage models resemble general biological growth and decay curves: an early period of exploration and trial, a period of growth, a stable period in the middle (maintenance), and a period of decline and withdrawal from the work environment.

4. Career Development

Following Gilley and Egglund's definition (1989, 48), career development is defined as "*an organized planned effort comprised of structured activities that result in a mutual planning effort between employees and the organization.*" In career development, the employee is responsible for career planning, and the organization, and particularly the HR staff, is responsible for career management.

Career planning is a process of helping employees to set clear career objectives and developing activities to help them achieve these goals. This is a continuous process of preparing, implementing, and monitoring career plans which is undertaken by the individual alone or in concert with the organization's career system. Thus, career planning focuses on the individual developing and achieving his/her goals. A variety of techniques are used to promote career planning-counseling, workshops, assessment programs, and self-development materials. Career planning sub-processes include occupational choice, organizational choice, choice of job assignment, and career self-development. Career planning implicitly assumes, however, that the individual is responsible for his/her career and that the individual can make decisions about his/her long-term goals.

Factors or motives that lead individuals to choose one type of career over another early in their careers are called career anchors (Schein 1975). These career anchors, which account for the way people select and prepare for a career, are managerial competence, technical functional competence, security, creativity, autonomy, and independence. An implication of this is that different career paths are needed, depending upon the career anchors of different individuals.

Career management, however, refers to specific HR activities such as job placement, performance appraisal, counseling, training, and education. Effective career management programs focus on long-term results, take into account the diversity of people, and use methods other than the traditional class-

room approach to training. These alternatives include experience-based training, self-directed learning projects, and involvement in professional organizations and associations. To obtain the best results possible, the HR staff have to identify the needs and career goals of the individual employees and then plan appropriate career management activities. Career management programs also encourage employees to examine future career paths.

These programs also help employees to analyze their abilities and interests and to better match their personal growth and development needs with the needs of the organization. Many North American organizations attempt to assist employees in their career planning through career management programs, and research findings suggest that these are successful to the extent that employees perceive a match between their own career plans and those proposed for them by the organization. A mismatch between the employees' career plans and the organization's career management plans would lead to low levels of satisfaction and sometimes result in employees leaving the company.

Another important aspect of career management is the extent to which the organization makes information available to employees regarding career paths, that is, to what degree the organization helps employees develop their careers. Hall (1986) found that the three main goals of career development programs are (1) to help individuals improve their performance, (2) to clarify options available within the organization, and thus reduce uncertainty among employees, and (3) to focus employee career plans upon organizations they are employed in and thus enhance their commitment and loyalty.

These two separate but related processes, career planning and career management, constitute organizational career development programs. An important feature of these career development programs is that the company and the employees are partners in career development, that is, it assumes that employees are responsible for planning their own careers and that companies support them in their endeavor. Organizations have two main incentives for implementing career development programs (CDP). The first is to develop employees from within, and the second is to reduce employee turnover.

Morrison (1992) proposed a model of career development built on three critical elements; challenge, support, and recognition. These three elements work together over time to initiate and maintain development. The challenge of new situations and demanding goals requires managers to learn lessons that will help them perform effectively at higher organizational levels. Recognition involves acknowledgment and rewards for achievement and the resources supporting further achievement in the form of promotions, pay increases, and awards. Support involves acceptance and understanding by the

organization. Morrison suggests that all three elements must be present in the same relative proportions over time (that is, they must be balanced).

5. Career Paths

An important component of career development are career paths. Following Walker (1980, 309), career paths can be formally defined as “*an objective description of sequential work experiences through which employees typically move.*” Career paths refer to the pattern of sequences and roles an employee moves through, usually related to work experience, during his/her working life. Career paths, however, do not need to be described in writing in order to exist. For purposes of career management and other HR planning activities, career paths are only useful when they are formally defined and documented. Individual career planning without career path information can often lead to frustration because individuals are not sure where they are actually going. Career path information, however, can be communicated to individuals in a variety of ways, for example, through employee publications.

Organizations also need to move individuals along various career paths in order to develop diverse capabilities necessary to staff various functions and a variety of jobs. Lateral paths provide exposure to many functions and activities necessary to develop individuals with broad capabilities. There is also a need to have career professionals in some special areas who do not move at all.

A problem with career paths is that they imply the necessity of moving ahead or climbing career ladders. Lateral moves or downward moves or staying at a given level are not viewed as attractive options. This bias toward promotion as the only meaningful career direction is clearly built into the traditional perspective of career paths (careers as advancement). Yet typical career paths that lead to success are not straight upward progressions, but rather more of a zigzag progression (Sayles and Strauss 1977).

Walker (1980) suggested that there are three types of career paths. First, historical paths are the informal paths that have always existed in the past and are represented by past patterns of movement among the senior employees. These paths have guided promotion over the years, as superiors have promoted their subordinates along their own footsteps. These paths are easily analyzed by examining biographical data. Second, organizational paths are those defined by management. These are paths that are determined by current business situations. The paths also reflect the prevailing values of management in the organization. Third, behavioral paths represent the logical and possible sequence of positions that could be held based on an analysis of what people actually do in the organization. Such paths inherently challenge historical patterns and prevailing management assumptions. Mobility across

organizational and functional lines may be explained by applying behavioral paths.

They provide a strong reference point for individuals in career planning activities. Often, career path charts can show progression through three levels to top management positions. And, so, the individual can calculate the path he/she needs to take to become a manager. By studying job descriptions for higher positions, the individual is able to determine the developmental needs he/she requires to achieve a higher level position.

An important feature of this behavioral approach is defining career paths in terms of similarity of job content. Through job analysis, positions with similar job content are brought together, even if they are in different departments. With this job analysis, new career options are examined that might otherwise be ignored. This behavioral approach looks at career paths as linear narrow progression lines and analysis these lines in an organization within a grid framework. Using the grid framework, employees consider various alternatives to the usual "up the ladder career" progression.

The behavior approach looks at positions as being grouped on the basis of similarity. By examining actual work activities and behaviors, it is possible to identify similarities in job content among jobs from different functions as well. The behavioral approach assumes that individuals can acquire necessary technical skills or specialized knowledge that may be needed in other positions. Progression from one behavior role pattern to another is viewed as a critical dimension in career paths. The behavioral approach provides greater flexibility in career planning, offering individuals a wider range of options and management a larger pool of candidates.

6. Career Development Research in Japan

To date, the amount of research on career development in Japanese companies is minimal. Most research relating to career development in Japan focuses on the areas of career paths and promotion patterns. Ouchi (1981), in comparing Japanese and American companies, notes the non-specialized career paths in Japanese companies as opposed to the more specialized career paths in American companies. Sasaki (1981) provides a general overview of Japanese-style career paths. This research focuses on career development as it relates to career paths and the generalized careers of employees. This traditional view of career development in Japan begins with employees being recruited from leading universities into the corporation. The employees are then transferred through different departments every three to four years; some employees are eventually promoted to upper management, while others are seconded to a subsidiary or forced to retire.

Suzuki (1986) examines career development in Japanese organizations in relation to the hierarchical structure of the Japanese organization. Suzuki found that because of the upper management glut, there has been the creation of *kachotaigu* position or manager (*kacho*) without subordinates. Furthermore, due to a shortage of positions, many managers are now being promoted later in their careers.

Suzuki also found that the *genten* principle (demerit system) exists until the age of 35, and above age 35, the *tokuten* principle (merit system) is found to be dominant. With the *genten* principle, the employee starts with a full score, say 100 points, and if the employee should make a mistake, points are subtracted. With the *tokuten* principle, however, the employee starts from zero and has to earn points based on merit or contribution to the company. While their results are interesting, Ouchi's, Sasaki's, and Suzuki's research findings are theoretically based on little or no actual organizational information. More organizational information is required to fully justify their results.

There has also been some sociological-based work that looks at the careers of Japanese workers in particular organizations (see Plath 1983). Most notably, Noguchi (1990) carried out a case study of Japan National Railways, conducting in-depth interviews at one station in order to investigate the careers and career paths of individual employees.

Noguchi's use of metaphors is particularly interesting as he compares an individual's career to a journey on a train. The speed of different trains is used as an analogy for different rates of promotion. University graduates who enter the railways can be thought of as riding on the special express train. Employees at the branch division can be thought of as riding on the local express trains, and all those who are not university graduates are riding on the ordinary (normal) trains. The rate of promotion among senior employees follows a more circular journey, and was likened to mosquito coil by one employee. This research shows the dissatisfaction many employees have about their careers and the lack of concern the organization seems to have toward individual careers.

Promotion, or career as advancement, is the research area that has received the most attention in Japan, particularly the issue of whether Japanese promotion systems are different from Western systems. Marsh and Mannari (1976) suggest that seniority and educational background are the two most important factors in promotions in Japanese companies. Cole (1980) described Japanese companies as having an internal labor market since nearly all promotions to management jobs are made from within the firm.

Ouchi describes a unique Japanese management practice in which promotion decisions were delayed and newly hired university graduates were pro-

moted through the company at the same speed. This is referred to as “deferred competition.” In this model, the identification and development of individual talents are deferred throughout the first few years. Lorriman and Kenjo (1994) note that this type of promotion system is like *Shogi* (Japanese chess). All the players start at the same point, adopting similar initial moves; but there is an overall well-thought-out strategy.

Clark (1979) modifies this version, noting that until the *kakaricho* level, or section head level, everyone is promoted at the same speed and then promotions became much more competitive. Rohlen (1974), however, argues that early distinctions are made and that some elite selection is made in Japanese companies, a process similar to Western style promotion systems.

There have only been a few studies that have directly examined the issue of career development in Japan. Takagi's (1984) research focused on integration between the individual and the company and the impact of lifetime employment on this relationship. He studied an electronics company and conducted in-depth interviews with twenty-seven employees who were between the ages of 44 and 49 at the time of the research, in 1982. He found that there were certain basic expectations on both sides. He also found that the employees' degree of involvement in their job varied considerably.

Other research relating to career development focuses on promotion patterns and has taken a more quantitative approach using methods such as Rosenbaum's career tree model. This research suggests that early selection does seem to take place. Research by Wakabayashi and Graen (1984), Pucik (1985), Hanada (1987), and Wakabayashi et al. (1988) on career development focuses on promotion patterns and factors leading to successful and faster promotions. Empirical data is used to study the promotion patterns of Japanese managers. Work by Wakabayashi and Graen examines the factors that are predictive of getting promoted faster. This study was actually part of a long-term longitudinal investigation of careers of Japanese managers. Its findings suggest that the traditional perspective of career development in Japan based on a slow seniority oriented promotion system may not be the case and that early distinctions are often made. Wakabayashi, Graen, and Uhl-Bien (1990) hypothesize that managers who eventually reach the executive suite are often identified and treated differently early on in their careers. Another key finding was that in order to obtain promotion success the individual should concentrate on developing positive relations with his/her superiors.

This study began in 1972, and is continuing up to the present. A number of different variables were examined as potential predictors of career success and performance. These factors included: leader member exchanges, manager job performance, their assessed potential and the ranking in the university

and their first job assignments. These results were checked after three years, seven years, and thirteen years. One of the results suggested that individuals were selected for fast tracks relatively early in their careers in contradiction to another model that suggests this distinction is not made until at a somewhat later time, after seven years. A second finding was the fact that the leader-subordinate relationship seems to be most important for promotion. Ranking of the university and the nature of the first job add little to the prediction of an individual's future promotion. Job performance is rated as the second most important factor. Findings suggest that individuals who were able to develop good working relations with supervisors are most likely to be selected early in their careers to enter the fast managerial tracks. This suggests that managers who enjoy positive relationships with their supervisors are more likely to obtain success than managers whose relationship with their supervisors are less favorable.

Pucik (1989) and Hanada (1987) find that in more innovative companies, even if individuals do fall behind in their careers relative to their cohort, they still do have a chance to catch up. Hanada notes this trend in more innovative companies, but finds this was not the case for more traditional companies .

Koike (1988), however, focuses his career related research on training and skill formation. This research examines how companies train their white-collar employees and focuses on different types of training activities and the role of promotions. Employees were slowly promoted through the company hierarchy with most of their training focusing on job rotation and on-the-job training. Koike finds that there is little difference between promotion patterns in Japan and in other countries.

Research by Lorriman and Kenjo (1994), which uses the data from engineers in electronics companies, found that career development in Japan is highly autocratic and that engineers in these companies have no say about their career moves. They also found that a major factor for career success is having a mentor whose own career had been successful. Thus the mentor and mentee rise up in the company together.

Storey et al. (1991) compared career development policies of four similar types of companies in both Japan and Great Britain. A total of 239 senior managers were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. Although no major cultural variation was found, there was an absence of career paths and a low level of formal training in the Japanese companies examined.

Three studies have used Schien's (1990) career anchor questionnaire to examine career development in Japan from an individual perspective. Hirano (1994) examined career anchors at a retail store, using a sample size of 121 middle managers. His study led to the development of a career anchor contin-

gency model, although the implications of this model are unclear. Sakakibara et al. (1993) focuses on the diversification of career choice. This research compares differences in career anchors between students entering Japanese companies with those entering foreign affiliated companies. The data were collected in 1989 from ninety-nine undergraduate non-technical students in three top universities in the Tokyo area who had received informal notice of employment. Although the results were not decisive, those who joined the foreign affiliated companies seemed to place more emphasis on autonomy, independence, and technical ability, while those students joining a Japanese company seemed to place more emphasis on stability. Tiessen and Firkola (2000) examined the career orientations of Japanese and Canadian students about to make their way into the workplace. They found that that Japanese students may have to adjust their career expectations as companies change their management practices.

Table 1 summarizes the major research to date relating to career development in Japan. Most of this research focuses on promotion patterns and has taken a more quantitative approach. Research to date also indicates the lack of clear career paths and that career planning is minimal in Japanese companies and thus the aspirations and desires of employees are mainly ignored. The existing research has looked at career development from either an em-

Table 1 . Summary of Research on Career Development in Japan

Researcher	Method	Research focus	Findings	Limitations
Takagi	Single Case Study, Interviews	Career Development and Lifetime Employment	Varying Degrees of Loyalty	Generalizability
Hanada	Career Tree Model	Promotion	New/Old Style HR, Elite, Consolation Match, Demerit/Merit System	Non-Employee Perspective
Pucik	Career Tree Model	Promotion	New/Old Style HR, Elite Course	Non-Employee Perspective
Wakabayashi	Longitudinal Study, Questionnaire, Interviews, Career Tree Model	Career Mobility Factors	Early Competition, Vertical Dyad	Generalizability, Weak Individual Perspective
Koike	International Comparative Study, Interview, Questionnaire	Skill Formation, Wage, Promotion	No Cultural Uniqueness, Internal Labor Market	No HR Role Perspective
Sakakibara	University Students, Questionnaire	Career Anchors	Different Recruit Career Anchor	Generalizability
Hirano	Single Case Study, Questionnaire	Career Anchors	Career Anchor Contingency Model	Generalizability
Storey	International Comparative Study, Interview, Questionnaire	Differences in Management in 2 Countries	Absence of Career Paths in Japan	No HR Role Perspective

ployee or HR perspective, but no research to date has attempted to integrate these two perspectives.

7. Conclusion

Although the terms career, career development, and career path are similar and closely related, the distinctions between the three can be summarized as follows: a career refers to the overall sequence of positions occupied by an individual during his/her working life, career paths refer to the sequence through which employees typically move; and career development refers to the mutual planning effort between employees and the organization so that individuals can achieve their career goals. If career paths are not clearly defined, career development becomes difficult. Likewise, if career paths are defined but career development activities are not undertaken, employee satisfaction is lower and results in higher turnover and less commitment. This will also result in an individual having a career that he/she did not desire.

The concept of career development differs between Western and Japanese culture. From a Western perspective, career development is about matching company needs with employee needs and encouraging the employee to take a more active role in his/her career development. An implicit assumption of career is that employees have a certain degree of control over their destinies, that they are responsible for their careers, and can make distinctions about long term career goals. The results of the interviews conducted in Canadian companies indicate that the emphasis is now on employees taking individual responsibility for their careers.

The word career development has been imported into the Japanese language, and, as a result like many English words which have been imported, its meaning remains vague. The interviews with Japanese employees indicated that in Japan there is little or no sense of individuals taking responsibility for their own careers. Iwata's (1986) research which examines how the Japanese concept of responsibility differs from the Western concept, concurs that in Japan there is little awareness of individual career responsibility. It is important to recognize, however, that changing societal, labor market, and organizational conditions in Japan are impacting on this awareness of individual career responsibility.

A feature in Japanese society over the last 100 years, has been the strong central government control over its citizens, with citizens having few individual rights and little say in how the country was run. This control is reflected in the paternalistic management style of Japanese companies; a style in which employees were traditionally allowed little input or given little choice. As Japanese society changes and becomes less centralized, management styles

are changing to reflect this decentralization and the effects are filtering down to the company and the employee. This decentralization will force Japanese employees to take more responsibility for their careers.

It would also be a mistake to ignore the important role of the labor market in the career development shift. In post-World War II Japan, job changing between companies was rare and when it did occur it was often in a downward direction. This often occurred at a late stage in an employee's career and was decided by the company, without the employee's consent. As a result of this inflexibility in the labor market, traditionally from a company perspective there was little worry about talented employees leaving the company. Job changing in Japan is on the rise, but it is still a limited phenomenon. As more workers consider changing employers, and as job changing becomes more accepted, Japanese companies will be forced to adapt their management practices to prevent talented employees from leaving the company.

Associate Professor, Hokkaido University

References

- Adams, R. J., Peterson, R. B., and Sewind, H. F. (1988), "Personal value systems of Japanese trainees and managers in a changing competitive system", *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 5 (3), pp.169-179.
- Befu, H., and Cernosia, C. (1990), "Demise of "permanent employment" in Japan", *Human Resource Management*, 29 (3), pp.231-250.
- Brown, D., Brooks, L., and Associates. (1987), *Career Choice and Development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Burke, R. (1995), "Career development in a professional services firm", *Journal of Management Development*, 14 (1), pp.25-33.
- Erikson, E. (1950), *Childhood and Society*, New York : Norton.
- Feldman, D. C. (1988), *Managing Careers in Organizations*, Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman.
- Ferris, G. R., and Rowland, K. M. (1990), *Career and Human Resources Development*, Greenwich, Connecticut : JAI Press Inc.
- Firkola, P. (1995), "Career development practices in large Japanese organizations", *Annual Report of Japan Society for Personnel and Labor Research*, 24, pp.94-99.
- Firkola, P. (1996), "Career development practices in a Japanese steel company", *Best Paper Proceedings Association of Japanese Business Studies*, pp.113-132.
- Firkola, P. (1996), "Human resource trends in a Japanese steel company", *Economic Journal of Hokkaido University*, 25, pp.95-119.
- Firkola, P. (1997), "Career development in Canadian companies: A shift towards increasing employee responsibility", *The Journal of American and Canadian Studies*.
- Forbes, J. B. (1987), "Early intraorganizational mobility: patterns and influence", *Academy of Management Journal*, 30 (1), pp.110-125.
- Gilley, J. W., and Eggland, S. A. (1989), *Principles of Human Resource Development*, Reading, MA: Addison-

- Wesley.
- Goda, Y. (1986), *Senmonshoku no Shinsekkei* (A New Design for Specialists), Tokyo: Japan Productivity Center.
- Granrose, C. S., and Portwood, J. D. (1987), "Matching individual career plans and organizational career management", *Academy of Management Journal*, 30(4), pp.699-720.
- Gutteridge, T. G., and Otte, F. L. (1983), "Organizational career development : what's going on out there?" *Training and Development Journal*, 37 (2), pp.22-26.
- Hall, D. T. (1976), *Careers in Organizations*, Pacific Palisades, California: Goodyear Publishing.
- Hall, D.T., and Associates, (Eds.) (1986), *Career Development in Organizations*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hall, D.T., and Nougaim, K. (1968), "An examination of Maslow's need hierarchy in an organizational setting", *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 3, pp. 12-35.
- Hanada, M. (1987), "Jinji seido ni okeru kyoso genri no jitsuno-Shoshin, shokaku no shisutemu kara mita nihon kigyo no jinji senryaku (A study on principle of competition in personnel system – Personnel strategy of promotion systems in Japanese firms)", *Soshiki Kagaku*, 21 (2), pp. 44-53.
- Holland, J. (1966), *The Psychology of Vocational Choice*, Waltham, MA: Blaisdell.
- Iwata, R. (1982), *Japanese-Style Management: Its Foundations and Prospects*, Tokyo: Asia Productivity Organization.
- Kaye, B. L. (1982), *Up is Not the Only Way: A Guide for Career Development Practitioners*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Katz, R. (ed.) (1982), *Career Issues in Human Resource Management*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Koike, K. (1988), *Understanding Industrial Relations in Modern Japan*, London: Macmillan.
- Koike, K. (1991), *Shigoto no Keizaigaku* (The Economics of Work), Tokyo: Toyo Keizai.
- Levinson, D. J. (1974), "A conception of adult development", *American Psychologist*, 41, pp.3-13.
- Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985), *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Beverly Hills: Sage.
- London, M., and Stumpf, S. A. (1982), *Managing Careers*, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.
- Lorriman, J., and Kenjo, T. (1994), *Japan's Winning Margins*, New York: Oxford Press.
- Marsh, R. M., and Minnari, H. (1976), *Modernization and the Japanese Factory*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Miller, D., and Form, W. (1951), *Industrial Sociology*, New York: Harper.
- Morishima, M. (1992), "Japanese employees attitudes toward changes in traditional employment practices", *Industrial Relations*, 31 (3), pp. 433-454.
- Morrison, A. (1992), *The New Leaders*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Mroczkowski, T., and Hanaoka, M. (1989), "Continuity and change in Japanese management", *California Management Review*, 31 (2), pp. 39-53.
- Neelankavil, J. P. (1992), "Management development and training programmes in Japanese firms", *Journal of Management Development*, 11 (3), pp. 12-17.
- Nihon Keieisha Dantai Remmei. (1995), *Shinjidai no Nihonteki Keiei* (The New Age of Japanese Style Management), Tokyo: Nihon Keieisha Dantai Remmei.
- Noguchi, P. H. (1990), *Delayed Departures, Overdue Arrivals*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

- Ohta, H. (1994), *Nihon Kigyō to Kojin* (The Japanese Company and the Individual), Tokyo: Hakuto Shobo.
- Otte, F. L., and Hutcheson, P. G. (1992), *Helping Employees Manage Careers*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Ouchi, W. G. (1981), *Theory Z*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Plath, D. W. (Ed.). (1983), *Work and Lifecourse in Japan*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Pucik, V. (1985), "Promotion patterns in a Japanese trading company", *Columbia Journal of World Business*, 20 (3), pp. 73-79.
- Pucik, V. (1988), "Managerial career progression in large Japanese manufacturing firms", In K. Rowland and G. Ferris (Eds.), *International Human Resources Management*, Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press.
- Rosenbaum, J. E. (1984), *Career Mobility in a Corporate Hierarchy*, Orlando: Academic Press.
- Sakakibara, K., Kusunoki, K., and Koda, A. (1991), *Kyaria shiko to kanri shisutemu no tekihodo bunseki* (Conformity between career orientations of organizational members and management systems: a comparative analysis), *Diamond Harvard Business*, 16 (2), pp. 59-68.
- Sakakibara, K., Kusunoki, K., and Koda, A. (1993), "Effects of diversification of career orientations on management systems in Japan", *Human Resource Management*, 32 (4), pp. 525-543.
- Sasaki, N. (1990), *Management and Industrial Structure in Japan* (2nd ed.), Oxford: Pergamon.
- Schein, E. H. (1971), "The individual, the organization, and the career: a conceptual scheme", *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 7, pp. 401-426.
- Schein, E. H. (1990), *Career Anchors: Discovering Your Real Values*, San Diego: Pfeiffer.
- Shimizu, T. (1991), *Bijinesu Seminaru-Kaisha Jinji Nyumon* (Business Seminar-Company Personnel Introduction), Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha.
- Storey, J., Gow, I., Okazaki-Ward, L., Edwards, P., and Sisson, K. (1991), "Managerial careers and management development: a comparative analysis of Britain and Japan", *Human Resource Management Journal*, 1 (3), pp. 33-57.
- Super, D. (1957), *The Psychology of Careers*, New York: Harper and Row.
- Suzuki, N. (1986), "Mid-career crisis in Japanese organizations", *Journal of Management Development*, 5 (5), pp. 23-32.
- Takagi, H. (1984), *The Flaw in Japanese Management*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press.
- Tiessen, J., and Firkola, P. (2000), "The Career Orientations of Japanese and Canadian Recruits: Are Perceptions Changing with Reality?" *Journal of Asian Business*, 15 (4), pp. 41-59.
- Wakabayashi, M., and Graen, G. B. (1984), "The Japanese career progress study: A seven year follow-up", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69, pp. 603-614.
- Wakabayashi, M., Graen, G. B., Graen, M. R., and Graen, M. G. (1988), "Japanese management progress: Mobility into middle management", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 73, pp. 217-227.
- Wakabayashi, M., and Graen, G. B. (1988), "Human resource development of Japanese managers: Leadership and career investment", In K. Rowland and G. Ferris (Eds.), *International Human Resources Management*. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press.
- Walker, J. W. (1980), *Human Resource Planning*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Yashiro, A. (1995). *Daikigyō Howaitokara no Kyaria* (The Careers of Large Company White Collar Workers), Tokyo: Nihon Rodo Kenkyū Kiko.