5

Career Choice and Development and the Changing Nature of Work

This chapter focuses on career choice and development constraints that have emerged from changes in the workplace, how work is being restructured, and how the nature of work is changing. For the past 30 years, the changing organizational context of careers and new concepts in career development have received considerable attention. Economic restructuring, demographic changes, globalization of the economy, external markets, and technological changes have dominated the dialogue. What has happened to work in America has significant consequences for many families and especially for individuals who experience constraints in career choice and for those who find barriers to their career development. There appears to be a consensus of opinion that many adults will make multiple career choices over their life spans (Drucker, 2002; Feldman, 2002). This suggests that adults will be challenged to meet the demands of changing technology and other changing work roles. Changes in the workplace may be accompanied by individual problems associated with mental health concerns or faulty beliefs that were discussed in Chapter 4.

As helpers, we must recognize that the changes in how, where, and when people work reflect ongoing complex changes in most aspects of our society. Changes, however, are not new for the American workforce; changing work roles have been ongoing since our country's inception. Thus, most workers recognize that there have been significant changes in the nature of work over a period of time. New careers and work procedures have been developed on a fairly regular basis throughout U.S. history. Currently, however, one of the major concerns is the restructuring of the U.S. economy and extensive and rapid ongoing changes that require individual workers to change their career development plans. Some people view the ongoing restructuring of organizational changes as significantly limiting their freedom of choice. This perspective is quite different from traditional beliefs; most Americans believe in the right to choose, which has been an underlying principle of the American dream. In this chapter, I discuss changes in the workforce brought about by

economic restructuring, technological advances, and external market demands. Although changes in the workplace are discussed separately, extensive restructuring of the workplace and economy are considered to be interrelated and intertwined. Within each of these contexts potential individual reactions to career choice and development are discussed, as are the accompanying mental health problems. In addition, an identity crisis may present significant barriers for some adolescents while they are in the process of making an initial choice. The first part of this chapter focuses on initial career choice. This overview of how initial career choice is shaped provides a backdrop for later discussions on constraints. The rationale here is that the better one is informed about the career choice process, the greater understanding one will have of potential barriers that can deter initial career choice and those that follow. Thus, an overview of career choice perspectives of some career development theorists is also very instructive. In the final part of this chapter, career choice is viewed as the central component of a person's identity, followed by influences of economic restructuring, loss of internal career ladders, the boundaryless career model, implications of contract breach, and a summary of career barriers.

Initial Career Choice: The Shaping Process

There are good reasons why the process leading to initial career choice has been elusive and responsible for realms of research and speculation. Initial career choice involves decisions that are based on each person's background, traits, culture, and numerous other factors that have shaped a unique individual. "Human development is a holistic enterprise" (Shaffer, 2002, p. 618). Many social forces shape development. People may share some experiences and characteristics with others, but interacting situations and events are uniquely interpreted, evaluated, and internalized. Viewing clients as unique individuals, however, does not rule out the use of valid interventions that have helped others. The point here is that there are differences in the effectiveness of interventions; what works well for one client may not be as effective for another. Normal and idiosyncratic development are both important, however. Thus, researchers continue to look for additional clarification to determine how adolescents and young adults formulate their initial career choice. In the next paragraphs, I introduce some observations from studies of human and personality development related to the formulation of initial career choice process.

A logical connection between identity development and initial career choice has been pointed out by both human development researchers (Newman & Newman, 2003; Shaffer, 2002; and Sigleman & Rider, 2003) and personality development researchers (Ryckman, 2004; Schultz & Schultz, 2005). The basic concepts of identity formation, for example, can be considered a unifying factor. The major focus of most studies involving identity formation has involved the puberty and adolescence stages of identity

cohesion versus role confusion (Erikson, 1968). This stage in life is a time when one is faced with certain developmental tasks, such as autonomy from parents, gender identity, internalized morality, and career choice (Havighurst, 1972). Erikson, on the other hand, views this stage of personal identity development as a time when one is developing a single, unified concept of the self and a sense of personal identity in order to answer the age-old of question of "Who am I?" (Nairne, 2003). Erikson's eight stages represent an order of ascendancy based on the epigenetic principle that development occurs in a series of stages and that psychosocial strength has a special time or period of importance (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2004).

Much has been written about identity cohesions versus role confusion centering around what has been appropriately labeled an *identity crisis*. This can be a difficult time for many adolescents, who may be experimenting with different roles and ideologies in an attempt to find a compatible fit. Those who emerge from this period with a strong sense of self-identity are better prepared in terms of the self-knowledge that is so necessary in making an initial career choice. Those who fail may experience what Erikson (1968) referred to as an *identity crisis* and subsequent role confusion. Withdrawal from normal life sequences and what one wants to become is the likely reaction of individuals who exhibit confusion of roles (Schultz & Schultz, 2005). Role confusion can result in a tendency to procrastinate and influence one to delay making important life decisions for as long as possible.

According to Ryckman (2004), Erikson suggested that the most disturbing part of this period of life for adolescents is an inability to find an occupational identity. This contention is supported by Violato and Holden's (1988) research on a large sample of adolescents; they concluded that the areas of greatest concern among the group surveyed were careers and grades. Identity development has been approached by observing stages of identity status. James Marcia's (1980) research has identified different stages of confirming identity in the form of the following four identity status groups (Shaffer, 2002):

1. *Identity diffusion*. Persons in this stage have given little thought to resolving identity issues. At this time they are not questioning who they are, and they have not committed to a career. Example: "I don't exactly know what I want to do in the future, and so I haven't thought too much about a career."

2. *Foreclosure*. Persons in this stage have made a premature commitment to career but with little thought given to their alleged commitment. They have yet to experience an identity crisis. Example: "My brothers are working at that company, so I guess I will go there, too."

3. *Moratorium*. Persons in this status are currently experiencing what Erikson identified as an identity crisis. They are actively searching for answers to life commitments. Examples: "I don't really want to go to work in that plant. I think I should decide what's right for me instead

of just following what my brothers did"; "I have been looking into courses in community college to see what they might have to offer."

4. *Identity achievement*. Persons in this status have made insightful considerations of identity issues and have made firm commitments to goals, values, and a career. Examples: "I spent a lot of time in the community college counseling center, and I finally decided which career is best for me"; "I believe I have found something that really interests me, and now I know what it is I want."

Marcia (1980) suggested that the process underlying identity development requires adolescents to be proactive, to self-assess, and to use personal agency to work through solutions for life commitments. This is a complex process that requires mature perceptions and assumptions on the part of the adolescent. It should not be surprising to find that some adolescents will delay commitments and others will resist making any decisions altogether. Some may adopt a negative identity and resort to disruptive acting-out behaviors. Some may decide to enter college but not declare a major, or they take a job and plan to decide on a career later. Super (1963) concluded, after following the career development of high school students through adulthood, that *career maturity* is essential for making a career decision. The important traits of career maturity are planning skills, accepting responsibility, and an awareness of various aspects of a preferred vocation. It is generally agreed that career maturity takes place during certain periods of the life span (adolescence through young adulthood) within a range of ages; that is, the age of the person can vary. Some people may resist making serious commitments until well into adulthood. Currently, there are an increasing number of young adults who are delaying career commitment (Feldman, 2002).

The current labor market that I referred to earlier in this chapter, and which I discuss further in the next part of this chapter, may reward individuals who make early commitments with better opportunities in the workplace. College students, for example, who have committed to major fields of study may find opportunities for internships and other work-related educational programs early in their degree programs. Some important considerations are discovering skills and interests, gathering information, and eliminating some possible choices to create a realistic set (Feldman, 2002). At this point, individuals may select work environments that reinforce their interests and perceived skills. This process is driven by individual initial predispositions and has been termed *cumulative continuity* (Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000). Likewise, in what is referred to as *interactional continuity*, an individual's choice of careers may be shaped by feedback from important others, such as members of his or her peer group. Self-perceptions of abilities are most strongly reinforced by feedback received from an environment that is honest and realistic (Feldman, 2002; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000). In the next paragraphs, I summarize some career development theories' perspectives of career choice. These perspectives should help consolidate the position that the career choice process is complex and involves factors associated with both human and career development.

Career Choice Perspectives
From Career Development Theories

Super's (1974) developmental approach to the career choice process includes six dimensions: (1) orientation to vocational choice (an attitudinal dimension), (2) information and planning (a competence dimension), (3) consistency of vocational preferences, (4) crystallization of traits (forming a self-concept), (5) vocational independence, and (6) wisdom of vocational preferences (realistic preferences). Super emphasized that career development occurred through stages over the life span. In Healy's (1982) developmental model the client's individuality is of the utmost importance in career decision making. He stressed that individuality can be established by helping clients understand the meaning of their goals, obstacles, assets for securing goals, beliefs about problem resolution and counseling, action already taken, learning style, and goal impediments.

In a learning theory model proposed by Krumboltz, Mitchell, and Gelatt (1975), the following observations are made: career decision making is a learned skill, clients come from a wide array of groups, clients need not feel guilty if they are not sure of a career to enter, and no one occupation is seen as the best for any one individual. This group of researchers felt that individuals choose poor career alternatives because of faulty beliefs. Unique learning experiences over the life span formulate the primary influences that lead to career choice. In their cognitive information-processing perspective, Peterson, Sampson, and Reardon (1991) suggested that career choice results from an interaction of cognitive and affective processes. Furthermore, making career choices is a problem-solving activity. They suggested that career identity is highly dependent on self-knowledge.

The choice model in a social cognitive theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002) contains the following five components: (1) self-efficacy and outcome expectations promote career-related interests; (2) interests, in turn, influence goals; (3) goal-related actions lead to performance experiences; (4) the outcome of performance experiences determines future pathways, that is, whether self-efficacy is strengthened or weakened; and (5) efficacious expectations can influence people to make a career decision or redirect goals. This model supports the rationale that social beliefs and expectations are the mechanism through which self-efficacy deficits are developed, especially for women. Self-efficacy is strengthened when success is experienced within a performance domain, whereas it is weakened when there are repeated failures. Thus, individual influence situations ultimately affect one's thoughts and behaviors.

According to Gottfredson (1981), individual development progresses through four stages: (1) orientation to size and power (ages 3–5): some sense of what it means to be an adult; (2) orientation to social situations (ages 9–13) in which self-concept is influenced by gender development; (3) orientation to social valuation (i.e., awareness of social class and self-in-situation; ages 9–13); and (4) orientation to the internal, unique self (beginning at age 14)

that includes a growing perception of others and increased self-awareness. This theory addresses career choice from the position that choice is actually a process of eliminating options and a narrowing down of choices. Important aspects of careers are thought to be prestige, interest, and gender type. Individuals may compromise their goals by selecting a career that fits their gender rather than pursuing their interests.

John Holland (1992) believes that career choice is an expression of, or an extension of, personality into the world of work, followed by subsequent identification with specific occupational stereotypes. The rationale is that individuals are attracted to a given career primarily because of their particular personalities. As discussed in Chapter 3, Holland proposed six personality styles (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) with matching occupational environments. The stability of a career choice depends on the dominance of personal orientation. Holland suggested that individuals are products of their environment; that is, environmental experiences greatly influence personal orientation and subsequent career choice. Self-knowledge is a key ingredient in making an optimal career choice.

In sum, how one forms an initial career choice is a multidimensional process of development that is very inclusive. One can conclude that people play an active role in the formation process of initial career choice though participation in activities in their environment. There may be some stage-like changes as well as gradual ones. The shaping process is both continuous and discontinuous. Some key factors that can influence career choice include the following: competency in planning, attitudes, consistency of choice, crystallization of traits, the person's individuality, socioeconomic status (SES), faulty beliefs, self-knowledge, self-efficacy, freedom of choice, prestige of career, interests, career gender types, and personality types. The career choice process is thought to be a learned skill and a problem-solving activity (Zunker, 2006).

Career Choice: A Central Component of a Person's Identity

The work role is a major part of most people's life stories. A person's work not only provides financial security but also provides one with a social identity; associates; friends; and, in most cases, a workplace. Through one's work role, a person meets other people who have similar interests, and we strongly identify with shared work roles. Most Americans spend a considerable part of their lifetimes involved with their work and work-related activities. Initial career choice, therefore, has always been a most important decision, but current conditions driven by an external market may require some workers to make multiple career choices. In addition, an uncertain and unpredictable job market may have a significant influence on the initial career choice process of many prospective workers. Career paths other than some

professional ones are less clear, and there is an increasing number of new work roles. I discuss economic restructuring in more detail later in this chapter, but in the meantime the discussion will continue to focus on relevant influences on the career choice process itself.

For a more thorough perspective of how initial career choice is influenced, helpers should observe biological, psychological, and social/cultural influences that interact to shape behavior. What is being suggested is an integrative approach that is very inclusive yet straightforward. In Box 5.1, some negative factors that can influence career choice are listed in three groups. These factors are not all inclusive, but they do represent some issues discussed in this chapter and in Chapter 4. The importance of this perspective, however, is to point out the multidimensional nature of human development per se and some important factors that can influence initial career choice. In the biological domain, inherited characteristics are thought to influence predispositions of intellectual functioning, personality traits, and temperaments (Eysenck, 1967; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985; Holland, 1992; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2004; Plomin & Petrill, 1997). Intellectual ability may also be influenced by speed of neural transmissions (Nairne, 2003). Although the extent of influence genetic predispositions have on the development of personal characteristics has been questioned, there is evidence to support the position that inherited genes do indeed influence intellectual functioning and suggest a predisposition toward certain personality traits and temperament.

Box 5.1   Negative Factors That Influence the Development of Career Choice Constraints

Biological Influences

Genetic predispositions toward less than desirable intellectual ability, personality traits, and temperament

Psychological Influences

An external orientation that suggests individuals have no control over life events

Failure to self actualize and to enhance self-knowledge, including skill development

Identity crisis that leads to role confusion

Lack of decision-making and problem-solving skills

Lack of openness to new ideas, methods, and procedures

Low self-esteem

Mental health concerns, including mood and personality disorders

Self-efficacy

(Continued)

(Continued)

Social/Cultural Influences

Changing work roles

Contextual experiences that can discourage some individuals from considering upper level work roles.

Difficulties faced in achieving social mobility

Discrimination against and oppression of career ideals

Insufficient knowledge of the world of work

Lack of access to educational institutions

Lack of access to occupational opportunities

Lack of quality educational experiences

Poor role models

Racial discrimination

Sexual harassment

SES disadvantages

Supply and demand of jobs

Uncertainty of external labor markets

Unstable familial experiences

The psychological domain could have an almost endless list of problems, value structures, personality traits, and mental health issues, among other psychological factors. Be aware that the influences listed in these domains considered are not inclusive but rather a format for adding other relevant issues. The function of all domains, especially the psychological influences domain, makes the point that initial career choice is an integrative process in which there is an interaction within and between domains; it is multidimensional and multifaceted. Thus self-efficacy, for example, may be partly influenced by genetic predispositions, faulty beliefs and assumptions, and contextual experiences. This position allows helpers to effectively conceptualize client concerns by domains and between domains. An individualized conceptualization promotes the uncovering of unique specific concerns that can be addressed by tailored and valid interventions.

One of the important psychological factors in decision making is self-knowledge, a topic that has occupied the attention of most career development researchers. One major focus has been on methods to evaluate each

client's perception of the self, including perceived strengths and weaknesses as well as measured characteristics and traits. Adolescents and young adults in particular search for a clearer definition of the self in order to establish a sense of career identity. People generally evaluate career fit by projecting into work environments. An oversimplified rationale is that people who have a realistic perception of their own abilities, interests, and personality traits, for example, have a much better chance of appropriately evaluating career opportunities. What is behind this interest in self-knowledge? Plenty! Self-knowledge is a very inclusive concept that involves the total person: core values and beliefs, basic assumptions, contextual interactions, self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and many other complex factors. The process of knowing oneself is a lifetime event.

In adolescence, self-perceptions are particularly significant for providing pathways to form a career identity. Failure to crystallize one's knowledge of self can lead to an identity crisis (Erikson, 1968), which may be embedded in genetic predispositions, psychological issues, faulty cognitions, and salient messages from contextual experiences. Culture, race, gender, and SES disadvantages, especially in early childhood, could influence the development of a self-perspective of low self-esteem and a lack of openness to career selection. The belief that fate and luck control one's future (i.e., an external orientation) has many negative consequences for both life and work roles. The development of skills, for example, is one way to improve self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986), but an individual who is externally oriented may not conceptualize how individual effort can lead to a clearer pathway for career selection. Over time, skill development can have a significant impact on career selection (Feldman, 2002).

The increasing awareness of the connection between mental health issues and career choice and maintenance is a refreshing development. The whole-person approach of helpers who offer career counseling include significant emotional and cognitive influences that have an effect on how each person approaches the initial choice process. Mood disorders, which usually include anxiety, depression, and emotional instability, are logical concerns of helpers who are assisting clients in the decision process. Negative cognitions can seriously alter an individual's ability to make an optimal career decision. Self-referent beliefs and assumptions that are demeaning can influence feelings of being inadequate, incompetent, and inefficient. Negative cognitions can lead to indecision and/or negative overgeneralizations about the world of work and one's future goals (see Figure 5.1).

The environment continues to be recognized as a major force in human development. Contextual experiences can be a positive force for influencing initial career choice; unfortunately, they can be a negative influence as well. As we learned in Chapter 4, some adolescents develop faulty beliefs about their ability to determine their future; their family and other members of their community have unwittingly passed on the belief that fate and luck are of major importance in determining one's future. The oppression of career

About World of Work   About Self

**Negative
Cognitions**

About Future
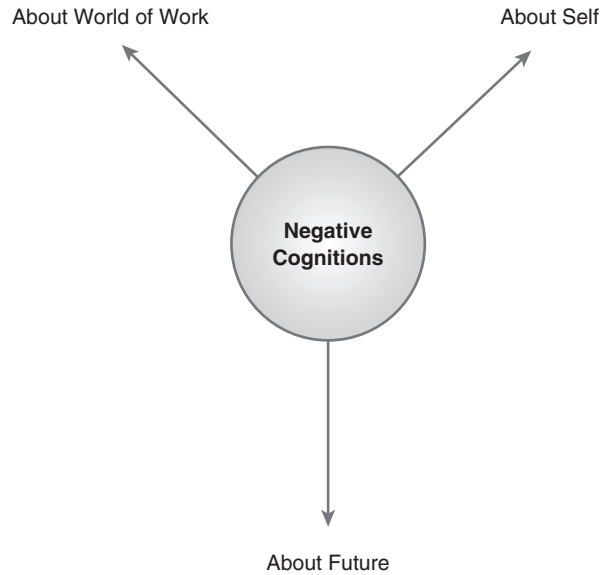
Figure 5.1   The Pervasive Role of Negative Cognitions
SOURCE: Adapted from Barlow and Durand (2005).

ideals influences some people to accept the fate of low-level jobs and sup-
presses their motivation to move upward through personal initiative. In a
very realistic way, the environment may not provide access to educational
and occupational opportunities, although more community colleges are being
constructed. The realism of work commitments, however, means that for
some people a full-time job during the week and a part-time job on the week-
ends are required to pay the bills. Under these conditions, many people in
low-end jobs cannot find the time or resources to enroll in training pro-
grams. Finally, the external market has impacted supply and demand for
jobs, especially for the working class. Many manufacturing jobs have been
moved to other locations, resulting in fewer traditional jobs for the working
class. Insufficient knowledge of the changing workforce has left many people
searching for information about the world of work. In the next section, I
provide some information about how the nature of work is changing and
being restructured.

Economic Restructuring

The U.S. economic system, which is in the process of being restructured, has
brought about significant changes in production and distribution of goods
and services. According to Drucker (2002), economic restructuring will con-
tinue for 50 years or more, and there will be significant transformations in the
basic structure of work. External markets have had a significant impact on

most aspects of careers in the working world of organizations. Most organizations have shifted from an internal career ladder approach to a performance–rewards approach. These changes have influenced employers to focus the hiring process on how much an employee can immediately contribute to the goals of an organization. Although careers based on market demands have always been an important element of working in an organization, in the current environment practically all workers are exposed to the risks of losing their jobs when there is a change in demands for products or services. The social consequences could be as significant as, but also somewhat different from, those of the Industrial Revolution, which greatly impacted families. Before the Industrial Revolution, for example, most members of the nuclear family were involved in production on farms and in artisan workshops. During the Industrial Revolution, an increase in the number of factories located in urban areas took work and the workplace away from the home (Drucker, 2002). Thus, the changing nature of work and a changing location of the workplace had a significant impact on family members; the rise of industrialism in the late 18th century created vast social change.

There now exists what many have labeled a *global economy*, which is the driving force of economic restructuring. Markets have opened around the globe, resulting in more world trade. Nations have increasingly become interdependent. Multinational corporations have grown to be a very powerful force in that they have significant political influence worldwide (Andersen & Taylor, 2006). In the meantime, U.S. industries have faced severe competition around the globe; in many countries, the wages for workers are significantly lower. To meet the competition from countries that can manufacture goods at a cheaper price, U.S. industrial organizations have made significant changes in work itself and in the workplace. These changes have had a tremendous impact on the lives of workers and their families.

What we have here is *deindustrialization*, which has shifted work from production of goods to delivery of services. Although some organizations continue to have assembly lines, they have downsized their workforces and have outsourced most manufacturing jobs to overseas locations where labor is much cheaper. The delivery of services has been fostered by technological advances. Electronic information, for example, can be transferred globally in less that one second. Many firms have offshore data entry locations, because again, the hourly wage is much cheaper. Robots have replaced some workers, especially in the automobile assembly plants. Thus, it appears there are new forms of work for some people and no work for others. Although there should always be some jobs at the lower end of the pay scale that do not require educational or technical skills, it is generally agreed that a good educational or skill development background will be essential in future job markets.

In this very brief review of economic restructuring there is clearly a changing job market that is expected to continue to change for some time. The most recent job market changes have affected both white collar and blue collar jobs. By 1995, forty-three million jobs were eliminated in the United States, and the casualties at that time were white collar jobs (Uchitelle &

Kleinfeld, 1996). In the early 2000s, the American workforce had the smallest proportion of factory workers in all the developed countries (Drucker, 2002). As mentioned earlier, many of the jobs lost were outsourced to other countries where labor is cheaper. In other situations, organizations downsized their workforce to cut costs. The traditional pathway of the "organizational man" has been virtually eliminated. Workers have lost many guarantees that previously existed in the workplace and, with it, the loss of job security.

Loss of Internal Career Ladders

One of the keys to fully understanding what is currently going on in the job market is recognition of what the pervasive nature of changes in organizations means for the worker. Previously, industrial organizations provided job security, tenure, and a lifetime job. This concept was often referred to as an *internal career ladder* (Leana, 2002). Employees would select job opportunities with an organization that was committed to advancing their career development through a variety of in-house and off-site educational programs. This position on the part of the organization helped individuals in the decision-making process by marginalizing concerns about short- and long-term interests. The internal career ladder was viewed by employees as a systematic method of achieving job security and, most important, it promoted feelings of well-being.

Current market forces have resulted in significant changes concerning the relationship between the individual and the organization. Fiercely competitive external markets have created an almost completely different approach in the way that organizations do business and form relationships with individual workers. In previous years, organizations hired people and put them in the system for growth; they assumed considerable responsibility for their employees' career development. Currently, organizations hire and pay individual workers on the basis of what they can immediately contribute to the firm. Compensation is usually based on performance. Under these conditions, organizations have taken much less responsibility for an individual worker's career development. There are no guarantees for a lifelong job. Individual effort to stay up to date in terms of job skills is essential. Along with the loss of job security, benefits, and training opportunities, individual workers are more at risk and can lose their commitment to an organization and, with it, the loss of motivation and their feelings of well-being.

It should be mentioned here that the people most affected by the current job approach changes have been higher level workers, such as managers. Managers and professional members of organizations had reaped the greatest benefits of job security and career development training when compared to lower level workers (Jacoby, 1999). As Leana (2002) pointed out, however, there was much more lost than training programs; an ideal career and the career development of each worker are important parts of the American

dream. A career was, in many respects, a psychological contract of commit-
ments between employee and employer and thus met the expectations of the
American worker. Leana characterized it as the traditional career ideal.
Career management systems were set up by organizations to foster the career
development of each employee. The changes in relationships between orga-
nization and employee have indeed undermined stability and security and
replaced them with job insecurity and high turnover rates. It should not be
surprising to learn that workers' commitment to organizations has signifi-
cantly declined in the last 20 years. Prospective employees are now facing
new approaches to work roles and greater responsibility for their career
development. In the next section, I introduce the evolving perception of
career and career development in organizations.

A Prevalent Career Model: Boundaryless Careers

The focus on a relatively new career model in organizations suggests a dif-
ferent and changing perception of the nature and structure of work in orga-
nizations that continues to evolve. It also suggests that one can expect further
and continuing changes in the future. *Boundaryless careers*, as the name
implies, suggest that a worker is not bound to any organization or segment
of an organization but is prepared to use her or his expertise in different work
sites and teams. Furthermore, one's work may cut across functions and work-
places and may require multiple skills. Some have labeled such workers *free
agents*, people who offers their skills to the highest bidder (Arthur &
Rousseau, 1996). Thus, the evolving career model highlights differences in the
structure of work in organizations and how individual workers are to func-
tion, be evaluated, and be paid. Clearly, workers in the 21st century will
assume greater responsibility for their career development.

In the midst of changes that involve the nature and structure of work in
organizations, job expectations and perceptions of work per se will need to
be addressed. The boundaryless career has been touted as a welcome chal-
lenge for a more diverse work role. The perception of work from this point
of view suggests that one is freed from pursuing the interests of an organi-
zation in a step-by-step fashion; career development is more individually
oriented (Feldman, 1985). In this respect, career development reinforces a
career identity. One is not just a Company B employee but a professional
data analyst who happens to be working for Company B. As a free agent,
the data analyst offers services to the highest bidder and in doing so learns
that there are opportunities for personal rewards in the workplace; one can
become more accepting of a new system of working. What it comes down to
is that each worker will be required to evaluate his or her comfort level and
ability to function when working in an environment that has high risks as
well as substantial rewards (Leana, 2002).

The boundaryless career model is a good example to illustrate the differ-
ences in the way work has been restructured in 21st-century organizations.

Other changes in established work patterns include independent contractors, self-employed individuals, contingent workers, consultants, and freelance workers. An information technologist may begin her or his career by working for an independent contractor, or he or she may be employed as a contingent worker (someone who agrees to work for a specified period of time). What stands out here is the insulation from risks in the current work environment. The ability to perform, backed by a strong knowledge base, is the essence of job security in the workplace. The winners in the boundaryless career model will be those who have signed on as lifelong learners and, most important, learn to tolerate problems associated with risks in a competitive workforce.

Contract Breach

Over the last 20 years, workers in organizations have viewed downsizing and restructuring as a breach of contract. The have acted accordingly, and this is reflected in high turnover rates, lower job performance, and in general a negative attitude concerning their employers (Robinson, 1996). It is not only organizations that have changed in the way they view employer–employee relationships; employees have, too: They have lost their sense of trust in organizations. How prospective workers and current employees view their future with an organization may be summarized as follows: *Linear development has shifted to perpetually changing work roles and careers.* It is increasingly common for workers to experience uncertainty of job tenure and to know that one must be flexible in a new employment relationship (Cappelli, 1999; Werner, 2002). One would suspect that individuals in the initial choice process have some of the same reactions as current or previous employees. Thus, individual career decision making within organizations has been affected by uncertainties as well as by individuals contemplating an initial career choice; there are legitimate concerns about their long-term interests.

The changing nature of work in organizations has it proponents. One view of the influence of external markets is that organizations need self-directed continuously learning workers who find new work roles challenging and exciting. Managers in organizations are including novel learning experiences for employees in order to encourage them to recognize developmental opportunities (London, 2002). New technologies require continuous expansion of knowledge in order to stay abreast with global competition. What is being stressed here is that workers are being encouraged to take responsibility for their own careers; they are to adopt the role of self-developer (Sullivan, 1999). One of the long-time major purposes of training in organizations has been to encourage individual career motivation. Workers who develop self-efficacy, identity, and resilience will be in a much better position to cope with the uncertainties in current organizations (London, 2002).

Some Career Barriers

In this final section of the chapter, some career barriers are identified from discussions in this chapter and Chapter 4. Career barriers are grouped into four categories, in alphabetical order as follows: (1) contextual experiences, (2) external market forces, (3) mental health issues, and (4) negative cognitions. Sources of constraints are listed under each of the four headings as shown in Box 5.2. These four categories are to be viewed not as discrete but rather as interacting forces that influence the development of career choice constraints. Sources of deficits in self-efficacy, for example, can evolve from contextual experiences, subsequent faulty beliefs, and/or a personality disorder. SES disadvantages may restrict one's ability to compete for work roles in organizations that require an extensive educational background; some individuals lack the financial resources for obtaining a higher education degree. Box 5.2 is not meant to oversimplify the nature of career barriers and sources of constraints, but just the opposite: Helpers should view sources of influence as being multidimensional. Although there are definite connections that overlap categories, the four categories are meant to provide a whole-person approach to conceptualizing sources of constraints. The consequences associated with a variety of external and internal constraints may be uncovered in locus of control problems and self-efficacy deficits that need to be addressed, as in the example of Jill, a client described in the next paragraph.

Box 5.2   Some Career Choice Barriers

Contextual Experiences

Limited access to educational opportunities

Limited access to occupational opportunities

Gender discrimination

Lack of financial resources

Locus of control

Negative perceptions of life and work

Racial discrimination

Socialization process

SES disadvantages

(Continued)

(Continued)

External Market Forces

Changing organizational structure

Downsizing of workforce

Loss of internal ladders

Loss of job security

Work role changes

Uncertainties of short- and long-term interests

Mental Health Issues

Anxiety disorders

Mental retardation

Mood disorders

Personality disorders

Schizophrenia

Somatoform and dissociative disorders

Substance-related and impulse control disorders

Negative Cognitions

Faulty beliefs and assumptions

Identity crisis

Low self-esteem

Self-concept deficits

Self-efficacy deficits

Demeaning self-talk

A client named Jill was currently experiencing the mood disorder of depression, even though she had made a career commitment and planned to enter a particular education program. Further probing by the helper uncovered a locus of control problem that had not been addressed. Jill had grown up believing that getting a good job was a matter of luck, but more recently she had been encouraged by a friend to take aggressive action to upgrade her skills so that she could get a better job. She was not able to cope with the stress associated with opposing positions and developed symptoms of depression. Faulty beliefs influenced by contextual experiences were addressed

through cognitive restructuring, and career barriers were approached as a problem-solving activity (see Chapter 12). In this case, the helper viewed Jill's self-efficacy deficits as constraint problems that could be overcome by observational learning and development of realistic goals.

What stands out in Box 5.2 is the category of external markets. Helpers should be familiar with the psychological sources of career choice constraints as listed under contextual experiences, mental health issues, and negative cognitions, but to think in terms of external market forces as career choice constraints requires a somewhat different approach to career barriers. One might suspect that we will hear more about the growing recognition of influences from market forces in a global economy that affects the nature of work in the United States and other countries. Career development theory has been heavily dominated by psychologists who believe that one can control her or his own destiny (A. G. Watts, Super, & Kidd, 1981). T. Watts's (1995) observations, however, suggest that the career choice process must address more than just psychological variables; in current changing conditions, social and economic factors may be equally important. Will helpers end up counseling about a market-driven workforce (Cappelli, 1999)? This position will more than likely become of greater interest to workers as well as to helpers in the future social, economic, and political transformations we are expected to experience.

Summary

This chapter is a continuation of the discussion of career barriers and sources of constraints. Psychological influences from career constraints have many sources. Of major importance in this chapter have been the influences that shape behavior and, subsequently, the initial career choice. Career barriers are viewed as having both internal and external sources of constraints. Interacting sources of constraints are viewed as complex influences that are multidimensional and multifaceted.

1. In initial career choice, the shaping process includes many social forces that mold development.

   Normal and idiosyncratic development are both important. Personality identity development involves issues of identity cohesion versus role confusion. An identity crisis delays important life decisions.
   Inability to find an occupational identity is a major concern for adolescents. Four identity status groups identified by Marcia (1980) include identity diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achievement. Currently, an increasing number of young adults are delaying career commitment.

2. Career choice perspectives from some career development theories were summarized. A developmental approach suggests that career development occurs through stages over the life span. Career decision

is viewed as a learned skill. Faulty beliefs may result in poor career alternatives. Career choice is a problem-solving activity. Self-knowledge is essential for initial career choice. Self-efficacy deficits are addressed to improve future expectations. Important aspects of careers are prestige, interests, and gender type. Individuals may compromise goals by selecting a career that fits their gender type rather than pursuing interests. Career choice is an expression of or an extension of personality into the world of work. Individuals are attracted to careers because of their personality.

3. Career choice is viewed as a central component of a person's identity. External markets may require that some workers make multiple career choices. Uncertain and unpredictable job markets are barriers faced by many people in the initial career choice process. Initial career choice is influenced by biological, psychological, and social/cultural factors that shape behavior. Inherited characteristics in the biological domain influence one's predisposition toward intelligence, personality, and temperament. The psychological domain contains a broad array of mental health issues and self-referent deficits. Environmental experiences are a major driving force in human development. Contextual experiences can exert both negative and positive influences on development. Socioeconomic status disadvantages can be very influential in one's perception of the self and the world of work.

4. Economic restructuring is a major driving force in the changing nature of work, and it is expected to continue for several decades. External markets have also changed the nature of work.

   U.S. industry has changed from production to the distribution of goods and services. Workers are hired on the basis of what they can immediately contribute to an organization. Nations have become interdependent.

   Multinational corporations have increased in number and are more powerful worldwide. Many manufacturing jobs have been outsourced. Workers have lost the guarantee for a lifetime job.

5. Loss of internal career ladders has proven to be very disturbing for many workers. Organizations no longer provide stages of promotion and career development through career ladders.

   Job security has been lost in many work environments. Organizations are now less responsible for career development of workers. Workers' commitment to organizations has declined.

6. A prevalent career model is known as boundaryless careers. In the current job market, the boundaryless career suggests that a worker is not bound to any organization or segment of an organization.

   A *free agent* is a worker who offers his or her skills to the highest bidder. Workers must take responsibility for their career development.

7. Contract breach reflects workers' concerns about downsizing in the workforce. Workers have lost their sense of trust in organizations. All employees are being encouraged to become self-developers.

8. Some career barriers are grouped as contextual experiences, external market forces, mental health issues, and negative cognitions. Sources of constraints are included in each category. The four categories are not to be considered discrete. They provide a whole-person approach to conceptualizing career constraints.

Supplementary Learning Exercises

1. What is the significance of identity formation to career choice and development?

2. Explain the significance of negative self-talk in the career counseling process. How would you address concerns associated with negative self-talk?

3. What is meant by the term external market? What is the external market's role in career choice constraints?

4. Explain the concept of career ladders. How were they used, and why have they disappeared in most organizations?

5. Select one of the barriers to career choice found in Box 5.2 and describe its role in constraining career choice.