

Career Adaptability an important component of career construction theory: Theoretical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to theoretically review the concept of career adaptability Which is considered as an important component of career construction theory-CCT. Author takes a theoretical research methodology to study Savickas theory of career construction and discuss in detail the theoretical and practical importance of the concept of career adaptability. The research study has important practical implications for the managers and organizations to ponder over their attention to the important concept of career adaptability to make them adjustable and adaptable according to the dynamic changes happening on daily bases in the organizations.

Keywords: Career adaptability; career construction theory; vocational personality; life themes

INTRODUCTION

The Career Construction Theory-CCT

Savickas career construction theory- CCT (1997) describes how individuals construct their career across the life-cycle. CCT does not only present a model that explains employees' vocational behaviour in dynamic job environments but it also provides methods and tools to the career counsellors which they can use to help their clients for maintaining a successful work life and to make the best vocational choices in their careers. This theory comprehensively discusses employee vocational behaviour by taking three different perspectives that is (a) differential perspective (that talks about what), (b) developmental perspective (that talks about

how), and (c) dynamic perspective (that talks about why). Taking differential perspective, Savickas Career construction theory- CCT (1997; 2002) describes the different types of vocational personality and explains what the different personalities like to do at their vocations. The developmental perspective explains in detail the process of adaptation and examines how people deal with their developmental tasks, work transitions and changing work conditions. From the third perspective i.e., dynamic perspective, CCT explains why individuals adjust work into their lives in different ways. As a whole, all these three different perspectives of CCT help us to understand how people construct their career using themes of life to integrate their self-organization and career adaptability into a self-defining personality that helps them perform their work, direct their vocational choices and form their career adjustment in this dynamic career era. Overall, this theory has remained very popular to study the career construction of employees in organizations as it discusses all the needs and trends of modern era including the frequent changes of jobs and careers by the individuals. Consideration of dynamic changes in the individuals' careers gives this theory an advantage over the other relevant career theories. Career construction theory explains how people use their personality to adapt to several job changes (Savickas, 1997). There are three main components of Savickas career construction theory i.e, (i) life themes, (ii) vocational personality, and (iii) career adaptability.

Vocational Personality

Vocational personality aspect of career construction theory talks about person's needs abilities, values, and interests about the career. Personalities are made at home and developed at school and residential locality before a person enters into vocational life so the characteristics of occupational personalities are rehearsed even before entering into professional careers in the form of activities such as every day working at home, the games and hobbies etc. CCT takes occupational interests and vocational personality types as the related concepts and considers vocational personality as a reputation of an individual among the people. This theory discusses that personality is built while doing work. It takes work in the context of a human development (Savikas, Brown, & Lent, 2005). In CCT, vocational personality is defined as the combination of a person's needs, interests, values, and skills. CCT describes its concept of vocational personality on the theoretical framing of RISEC

model which discusses “Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional” types of personalities to define the self-organization of a person’s skills. Savickas career construction theory takes RIASEC just as abstract. This theory describes that vocational personality types are the similarities to attitude and skills. As the career adaptability component of Savickas career construction theory describes the self-regulation of personality skills the vocational personality component talks about the self-organization.

Life Themes

As explained by Savikas et al. (2005) the life theme component of CCT focuses on the why of occupational behavior and explains the nature of work life. This component of CCT is related to Super’s theory of vocational development (Super, 1953, 1957) that describes different stages of a career in a person’s life. He explains these stages as growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. He further describes that at the time of occupational choices, an individual considers his idea of the person he is, when starting an occupation he implements the concept of himself, and once getting stabilized in an occupation he maintains his self-esteem. The life theme perspective of CCT describes that careers are very important in a person’s life and explains that how the construction of career is critical at different stages of life. It also highlights what people do and contributes to the society is important not only for them but for other people as well (Savikas, 2002).

One of the major focuses of Savickas career construction theory is on the life stories of that counselors share with their clients. A life theme is the third and the last component of CCT, life themes deal with the life stories of a person. It helps the career counselor to understand the facts that why a person has made some specific career choices. The understanding of life themes subsequently helps the career counselors to realize the meanings behind the specific career choices made by his client. Savickas used "life stories as the crucial threads of continuity that made meaningful the elements of vocational personality and adaptability" (McIlveen & Patton, 2007, p. 227).

Career Adaptability

The second component of CCT is the career adaptability. Savikas et al. (2005) describe career adaptability as, “the coping processes through which individuals connect to their communities and construct their careers” (p. 48). Life themes discuss how the personality is expressed in work and this expression of personality is guided by the process of career adaptation. Career construction process is comprised of the series of efforts to apply the self-concept in social roles. These attempts are done while going through “transitions from school to work, work to work, and profession to profession”. According to CCT, the adaptation to these transitions is advanced by 5 basic type of vocational behaviours i.e., exploration, orientation, establishment, disengagement, and management.

In the modern world of work individuals do not work for the organization for the whole time of their life rather they are more active in the construction of their career because of many factors including but not limited to globalization, technological changes, and redesigning of the jobs. Now the people change jobs frequently and as a result, they have to repeat the cycle of orientation, exploration, stabilization, management, and disengagement. Human ability to adapt to the new environment is increased by the resources that help him cope with complex, novel, dynamic, and vague problems that occur during job transitions. Savikas et al. (2005) describe specific “attitudes, beliefs, and competencies which are called ABCs of career construction, these ABCs of career construction help individuals to shape up their coping behavior that leads them to blend their self with their work”. These ABCs are also categorized into four dimensions of adaptability i.e. concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. An adaptable individual is the one who has (a) concern about his future, (b) control over his future, (c) exhibits curiosity by exploring all possible future options, and (d) confidence to chase his ambition. Savickas career construction theory is very comprehensive in its nature as it discusses the how of career adaptability. Savikas et al. (2005) explain that the important aspect of Savickas career construction theory is that careers are willfully constructed by the people “imposing meaning on their vocational behavior and occupational experiences (p.43)”. Sharf (2016) describes CCT as meta-theory in the field of career. The characteristics of CCT make it a very comprehensive theory in the literature of career

and match it with person-environment fit model and life themes literature. The vocational personality component of CCT has been drawn on RIASEC typology of interests of Holland (1997). However, CCT takes interests as a socially constructed and dynamic thing rather than as a stable behavior. Another aspect of Savickas career construction theory which makes it critical is its component of career adaptability that talks about the development tasks of and the stages a person takes in its life e.g., growth, exploration, establishment, management, and disengagement. A person's coping resources and his readiness to respond to the environment are the main characteristics of career adaptability, these characteristics are conceptualized into four conceptions i.e., (a) concern, (b) control, (c) curiosity, and (d) confidence which are known as the dimensions of career adaptability.

Conclusion

This paper has theoretically discussed in detail how career adaptability is an important concept in the field of careers. Drawing on Savickas Career Construction theory the author has discussed the theory of career construction, its components like, vocational personality, life themes, and career adaptability. The focus of the paper is career adaptability. Author has reviewed this concept based on past studies. We expect more researches in the area of career adaptability in future.

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