

Review of Research on Protean Career Attitude

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Abstract: With the vigorous development of knowledge economy and digital technology, the traditional employment relationship that emphasizes long-term stability has changed, and the self-oriented and value-driven protean career attitude has gradually attracted the attention of the academic community. This paper combs the domestic and foreign researches on the protean career attitude from the aspects of concept, dimension and measurement, antecedent variable and outcome variable, and summarizes the main contributions and future research directions.

Keywords: Protean Career; Protean Career Attitude.

1. The Concept of Protean Career Attitude

Protean career attitude refers to the tendency of individuals to manage their own career behavior independently and to guide their career development by their own values rather than those of the organization.

Hall believes that the responsibility for career development lies with the employee, not the employer. Career success, traditionally marked by salary growth and status advancement, is increasingly being defined by psychological success, characterized by a sense of honor and pride. Accordingly, individuals with a protean career attitude have two distinct characteristics. On the one hand, individuals are responsible for their own career development, and they have full leadership in career selection and initiative in career exploration, which can be changed by times and trends. On the other hand, an individual's own values are an important criterion to judge the success of a career. Internal factors such as initiative, initiative and sense of achievement guide the direction of career development, rather than external factors such as money, title and rank.

2. The Dimensions and Measurement of Protean Career Attitude

Briscoe et al. divided the protean career attitude into self-oriented and value-driven dimensions and developed the protean career attitude scale, which has been widely used in empirical studies. The first 8 items measured the self-orientation dimension ($\alpha=0.76$), such as "Freely choosing career path is one of my most important values". The last 6 items measured value-driven dimension ($\alpha=0.71$), such as "What matters most is my own perception of career success, not the perception of others".

3. The Antecedent Variable of Protean Career Attitude

(1) Population characteristic variable

In terms of gender, women have a higher level of protean career attitude than men. In terms of age, although there is no research to reveal the specific differences between generations of protean career attitude, qualitative studies have shown that individuals' protean career attitude is mostly formed in youth. In terms of region and race, affected by the

cultural trend of freedom and democracy, employees in western countries such as Europe and the United States are better able to control their career independently, and the level of their protean career attitude is correspondingly high. In terms of the degree of socialization, Segers et al. found that the degree of socialization of individuals is positively correlated with the protean career attitude, that is, with the extension of the time of education and work, the tendency of individuals to choose independently and internally drive career development becomes more significant.

(2) Personality trait variable

The research shows that proactive personality is positively correlated with protean career attitude. Individuals with proactive personality have stronger self-awareness. On the one hand, they are better at actively capturing opportunities for career choice and development. On the other hand, they are more accustomed to actively learning new knowledge and mastering new skills, so as to continuously enhance their career adaptability and competitiveness. Similarly, Rastgar et al. found that individuals with openness and extroversion are more willing to accept new job requirements and work experience, and are better at flexibly adjusting their own state according to changes in the external environment, with correspondingly higher levels of their attitude towards protean career. In addition, Herrmann et al. showed that positive psychological factors such as self-esteem, self-efficacy and psychological capital were positively correlated with protean career attitude.

(3) Organizational situational variable

Based on the embedment theory, Peilin Wang found that, at the individual level, leader-member exchange quality negatively affects the protean career attitude, at the organizational level, leader-member exchange difference positively affects the protean career attitude, the difference of leader-member exchange has a positive cross-level moderating effect on the influence of leader-member exchange on the protean career attitude. In addition, power distance is negatively correlated with individual's protean career attitude.

4. The Outcome Variable of Protean Career Attitude

(1) Career success

Most previous studies have discussed the positive correlation between protean career attitude and subjective

career success, that is, individuals with a higher level of protean career attitude will generate a higher level of work happiness and career satisfaction in the process of guiding career decisions and actions with their own values, thus subjectively judging career success. However, some studies have found that only the self-oriented dimension of protean career attitude is positively correlated with subjective career success, while its value-driven dimension is unrelated to subjective career success. The reason for this difference is still unknown.

At present, few studies have discussed the relationship between protean career attitude and objective career success. Volmer and Spurk found that protean career attitude is positively correlated with salary level. Other studies have revealed the positive predictive relationship between protean career attitude and objective career success indicators such as job performance, job level and promotion frequency.

(2) Organizational commitment

Studies have shown that the correlation between protean career attitude and organizational commitment varies greatly with different regions and organizational cultures. For example, Min Li et al. found a positive correlation between protean career attitude and emotional commitment, but some scholars pointed out that only the self-oriented dimension of protean career attitude was positively correlated with emotional commitment, while its value-driven dimension was negatively correlated with both sustainable commitment and normative commitment. Another example is the same survey on protean career attitude and turnover intention of employees, which shows no correlation among New Zealand enterprises, but shows significant negative correlation among Vietnamese enterprises. According to the study, the reason why the variable career attitude leads to the increase of turnover intention of employees and the decrease of organizational loyalty lies in the fact that individuals with a high level of protean career attitude perceive that their values are deviated from or even contrary to the organizational values.

5. Summary

The main contributions of the research on the protean career attitude are as follows: (1) The concept definition, two-dimensional division and measurement of the protean career attitude different from the traditional career attitude. (2) The antecedent variables of protean career attitude mainly include demographic characteristics such as gender, age, region and race, and personality traits such as initiative, openness and self-efficacy. (3) The outcome variables of protean career attitude mainly involve career success and organizational commitment.

The future research directions of the protean career attitude are as follows: (1) Expand the research on the organizational situation as the antecedent variable of the protean career attitude. (2) Deepen the research on the relationship between protean career attitude and objective career success. (3) Study the influence path of protean career attitude and extra-role behavior. (4) Explore the protean career attitude combined with the Chinese local management situation.

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