To Promote Employees' Mental Health Via Career Maturity

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Abstract
The significance of mental health and its role in our survival confirms the importance of humans as social beings. With good mental health, people feel well, and can tolerate reasonable amounts of pressure, adapt to changing circumstances, enjoy rewarding personal relationships and work according to their abilities. While it is difficult to know exactly how many employees have a mental health problem, there is much that can be done to improve mental health. One related factor to its improvement is focused on career maturity in workplace. The construct of career maturity consists of a readiness, attitude and competency to cope effectively with the career development tasks corresponding to one's life stage. Career maturity and mental health concerns could be approached from an occupational mental health position. The current study in the relationship between career maturity and mental health is an example of a growing awareness that human development is multidimensional and multifaceted.

Keywords: Mental health, career maturity, career planning

Introduction

Mental health is everybody's business; it is not only an issue for the health sector, (Jané-Llopis & Anderson, 2005), but also for other sectors, private and public. Mental health is a fundamental element of the resilience, health assets, capabilities and positive adaptation that enable people both to cope with adversity and to reach their full potential and humanity (Friedli, 2009).

Health and mental health is an art that could help people to adopt themselves to environment and select optimal solutions for their problems. Health dimensions are affected on health improvement and provided a proper condition to potential talents (Mahdavi, et al. 2009). The significance of mental health and its role in our survival confirms the importance of humans as social beings: levels of social interaction are universal determinants of wellbeing across all cultures (Friedli, 2009). While there is much that can be done to improve mental health (Friedli, 2009), managers should notice the factors that promote employees' mental health. One related factor is career maturity in workplace (Kalchik & Oertlie, 2010).

One of the most widely researched aspects of adolescent career development is the career maturity (Cinamon, 2001). Freud's view of maturity is performance based, and the defining characteristics are at least in principle observable by others (Hogan & Roberts, 2004), but career maturity consists of individual's readiness, attitude, and competency to do job and work duties. Every one who has high career maturity enables to make right and real decisions in workplace.

So, the concept of career maturity plays a central role in career decision- making; indeed, MacKenzie (1996) succinctly states, career maturity may be viewed as one of the goals of career counseling. Accordingly, it could have a positive influence on employees' mental health. As Hinkelman &Luzzo (2007) found that career maturity is a factor to decrease mental health problems (Miles, 2008).

In recent years, various authors and researchers have stressed the need for a more holistic approach to counseling that combines career and mental health issues (Chopra, 2009), but there are not a comprehensive research that combines career maturity and mental health as a vital subject in the organizations.

Career maturity and mental health concerns could be approached from an occupational mental health position. Historically, career and personal domains were thought to be separate entities and, as such, should be approached as distinctly different domains. The current study in the relationship between career maturity and mental health is an example of a growing awareness that human development is multidimensional and multifaceted. Therefore, we will try to familiar employees' mental health and their career maturity, separately; then we will survey the effect career maturity on mental health in workplace.

Mental Health

Health is a major subject that organizations usually tend to consider it. One of organizational actions is to develop health plans which divided in physical and mental health (Kazemi, 2010). Concepts of mental health include subjective wellbeing, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence and recognition of the ability to realize one's intellectual and emotional potential. It has also been defined as a state of wellbeing whereby individuals recognize their abilities, are able to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully (Friedli, 2009).

In the other word, mental health means to prevent mental problems and to create a healthy workplace in which employees could have psychological balance and favorable relations in organization (Saatchi, 1999). Although definitions vary, positive mental health is generally seen as including:

- Emotion (affect/feeling),
- Cognition (perception, thinking, reasoning)
- Social functioning (relations with others and society)
- Coherence (sense of meaning and purpose in life) (friedli, 2009).

In any organizations, private or public, employees often spend more time in their workplace and the working conditions are influenced on individuals' mental directly and indirectly, therefore focusing on mental health is inevitable (Mohammadi, 2010). While it is difficult to know exactly how many employees have a mental health problem, the figure is likely to be significant. In the United States, for example, 18.2% of employed people had evidence of a mental disorder which had impaired their work performance within the previous 30 days. In a study in Germany, incapacity for work due to mental health problems accounted for 5.9% of lost workdays and appeared to be increasing (World Health Organization, 2005).

Some mental health problems that result of workplace are as following: complex division of labor and job specialization, improper compensation, job uninterested, role conflict, and role pressure (uncompromising expectations) (Mohammadi, 2010). Therefore, employees' mental health could be driven different sources. A main policy of success organizations is to reduce mental health problems

and reinforce it by suitable ways. As Creed (2000) found that to promote health within organizations cause to more products, better relationship, and positive attitude.

Career Maturity

The career development approach added a developmental perspective on careers to the traditional individual differences view of occupations. Super added the concepts of career maturity, career adaptability, and life stages to formulate a theory of career development. Super began developing a major segment of his approach, career maturity, through studying the work of sociologists and psychologists on adolescent development. In 1955, Super identified maturation as the central process in adolescent career development (Allison & Cossette, 2007).

Initially called "vocational maturity", the construct now known as "career maturity" (CM) was proposed by Super (Patton & Lokan, 2001). Career maturity has been studied extensively over the past 3 decades and is an important construct in career development theory (Rajewski, et al. 1995). According to Super, career maturity means individual readiness to take job duties for career development (Prideaux & Creed, 2001).

To realize career maturity, it is needed to familiar models of career maturity. There are various models about career maturity. We discussed briefly the four models: Super's Developmental Approach, Tiedeman's Decision-making Theory, Crites's Comprehensive Theory, and Langley's Compound Model.

Super's Developmental Approach: Super (1957) is probably one of the best-known writers in the field of career development and is often referred to as the father of career development. His theory postulates that an individual will choose an occupation that allows him/her to function in a particular role that is consistent with his/her self-concept. His theory is based on research done by Rogers (1951) on the self-concept and research done by Buehler (1933) on life-stages. Super (1957) noted that career planning was a continuous process and not a single choice. His work encourages the monitoring of an individual's career progression during his/her life rather than just predicting initial occupational entry (Coertse & Schepers, 2004).

The Super model which is structured in five dimensions or factors: planfulness, resource for exploration, information, decision making, and reality orientation. The structure is the same for adolescence and adulthood, what varies are the content of the each factors (Gonzalez,2008).

Tiedeman's Decision Theory: Tiedeman's (1979) research on career development focused on the process of organizing and identifying different occupations through the interaction of the individual's personality with society. He focused on the decision-making process, indicating that the individual should take ownership and charge of his/her life. According to him decision-making consists of two stages:

1. Anticipation stage: During this stage the individual explores a particular career. As he/she becomes aware of different personal needs, possible alternative occupations are identified. These alternatives are evaluated and compared with one another, after which the individual makes a choice.

2. Induction stage: This is the second stage in Tiedeman's (1979) theory where the individual is in a specific occupation and is conforming to the behavior of his/her colleagues. As the individual experiences the need to fulfill certain unattained personal goals within his/her chosen occupation, he/she will endeavor to change this mismatch and aim to integrate personal and career goals (Coertse & Schepers,2004).

Crites's Comprehensive Approach: Crites (1981) created a comprehensive career development model by integrating different approaches. In essence his approach focuses on development that relates to the decision making process and not the content. He views time as the underlying factor of career development, and divides an individual's life span into certain stages. The stages are not tied to specific time frames and differ from person to person. He also focused on career maturity and postulated that maturity would increase over time. He proposed that the most important stage in career

development is the establishment phase (age 16 to 25 years), which is a good predictor of future career success. Crites (1978; 1981) proposed a career maturity model with two dimensions: an affective dimension and a cognitive dimension. The cognitive dimension is represented by career decision making skills, whereas the affective dimension represents attitudes towards career development. Crites (1978) maintained that attitude is a dispositional response tendency that is distinct from abilities and interests (Gonzalez, 2008).

The Crites's model has three level: at the first level are the variables (a total of 20); at the second, intermediate level are the four factors (consistency, realism, competencies and attitudes) which group the variables; and the third level consists of the degree of career development. This is a hierarchical model where significant, relatively high correlations exist between variables within one factor, and moderate correlations are found between variables in different factors (Gonzalez, 2008).

Langley's Compound Model: Langley (1989) integrated the approaches of Super (1980), Crites (1981) and Westbrook (1983) and designed a scale called the Career Maturity Scale. The Career Maturity Scale measures:

1. Knowledge of self
2. Decision-making
3. Career information
4. Integration of knowledge about self and about the career
5. Career planning.

Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) support the views of Langley (1989) and postulated that career mature behavior will assume different forms depending on the context provided by an individual's life stage. The career mature fourteen year- old individual will be concerned with assessing personal interests and abilities to reach the goal of deciding on an educational plan, while a 45-year-old career mature person will concentrate on ways to maintain career status in the face of younger competition (Coertse & Schepers, 2004). The last is the most complete model that covers the main dimensions of career maturity.

According to above models, originated from the developmental theory of vocational behavior, career maturity, as the maturity of attitudes and competencies pertaining to career decision making, has been defined normatively in terms of congruence between individual's career behavior and his expected behavior at that age (Hasan, 2006). The construct of career maturity consists of a readiness, attitude and competency to cope effectively with the career development tasks corresponding to one's life stage (Super, 1957).

Effect Career Maturity on Mental Health

Work is important to the mental health and wellbeing of individuals. It is a central aspect of life for most people and provides valued personal roles, social identity, and an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the community (Waghorn & Lloyd, 2005). People who are mentally healthy may occasionally have symptoms of emotional distress, but they are appropriate and in proportion to the situation. Mental health involves a wide range of emotions, thoughts and behaviors. With good mental health, people feel well, and can tolerate reasonable amounts of pressure, adapt to changing circumstances, enjoy rewarding personal relationships and work according to their abilities (World Health Organization, 2004).

On the contrary, mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety and stress, are common, affecting individuals, their families and co-workers, and the broader community. In addition, they have a direct impact on workplaces through increased absenteeism, reduced productivity, and increased costs (World Health Organization, 2005).

According to outcomes of mental health, organizations have to discover the factors that influence on employees' mental health. One related factor is career maturity in workplace (Kalchik & Oertlie, 2010). Career patterns are influenced by external factors such as individual's socioeconomic level, mental ability, education, skills, and personality characteristics (Akbulut, 2010). In the other

word, the nature of the career pattern—that is, the occupational level attained and the sequence, frequency, and duration of trial and stable jobs- is determined by the individual's socioeconomic level, mental ability, education, skills, personality characteristics (needs, values, interests, and self-concepts) (Allison & Cossette, 2007).

Career maturity causes to increase individual awareness to make real choices and decisions, and to improve individuals for higher career duties. Career maturity is a personal talent to get useful information and to persuade a good career path in the world of social pressure and opportunities (Salami, 2008).

Focusing on career maturity as an individual ability to select desired job (Amadi, et al. 2007), sometimes it is seen that mental illness can create unique individual experiences which can lead to inappropriate values, attitudes and aspirations regarding work and careers.

Impaired work values and impaired perceptions of current work skills can cause unrealistic vocational goals, where perceptions of own work skills may diverge from actual skill levels and experience. These experiences may also represent career immaturity thought to result from the lack of exposure to typical life experiences, responsibilities and roles which help a person form appropriate work perceptions, work confidence, work interests, work values and work ethics. Although the precise psychological processes are unclear, it is likely that career maturity is influenced by the person's life experiences, personality, perceptions of illness experiences, family background, educational attainment, work values, and knowledge of workplaces and employer requirements (Waghorn & Lloyd, 2005).

In the other hand, the process of developing career maturity presents the following characteristics:

a. The pace of development is varies, it is not uniform across the different dimensions of age or educational level. Certainly, greater development of career maturity takes place as the subject grows older and reaches higher levels in education.
b. The development of career maturity in adolescents has not reached the level required for making career decisions with any assurance of success.
c. The stability of career maturity in remains less than that traits and variables, which while separate from career maturity, are related to it (intelligence, self-concept, aspects of personality, socio-economic status, etc.) (Gonzalez, 2008).

However, the studies confirm the relation between career maturity and mental health. Kalchik & Oertlie (2010), for example, performed a study about the vital role of career development on job-related supportive plans. They found that career or job choices often effect on employees' mental health. Also, Coertse & Shepers (2004) found that individuals with high career maturity have high self-esteem and self-control, and they have better health. Also, Sauter, Murphy and Hurrell (1990) identified six factors most likely to affect workers' mental and physical health: autonomy or job decision-latitude; job content (e.g. skill variety); role stressors; interpersonal relationships; work scheduling; and career security issues (Loughlin & Barling, 1998).

Ultimately, Herr (1989) concluded that if one considers work and mental health to be linked, and career counseling to be an effective process in helping persons choose work wisely and improve their adjustment to it (Koivisto, 2010), then logic would argue for career maturity to be a useful process to improve mental health.

Conclusion

For many businesses, addressing mental health problems at the workplace will begin with the development of a policy. A mental health policy for the workplace helps to define the vision for improving the mental health of the workforce and to establish a model for action (World Health Organization, 2005). A policy for the workplace for improving the employees' mental health is focusing on their career maturity.

Mental health is one of the most important factors to develop and growth individuals (Mahdavi, et al. 2009), especially within organizations. Whereas, mental health problems have an impact on employers and businesses directly through increased absenteeism, reduced production, increased costs, and reduced profits (World Health Organization, 2005).

Certainly, the related studies show that mature people have particular characteristics; for example, successful career in the future, readiness to make career decisions, more commitment to job choices, and take more responsibility to given job. When employees' career maturity increase, their readiness will be improve to do better duties, and it will cause to individual and organizational success. Individuals' success leads to job satisfaction, and promote mental health, decrease absenteeism, and increase productivity. Also, career maturity thought could be searched in personal experiment, working trust, abilities and competencies, ethical principles, and working values.

Successful organizations usually improve their employees' mental health by suitable ways, like focusing on vocational or career maturity. That is, they should be aware of related issues to mature individuals before selection and promotion. The issues are summarized in knowledge of self, decision-making, career information, integration of knowledge about self and about the career, and career planning.

The study is recommended using an experimentally one so that individual's career maturity can be analyzed in order to determine if the findings will be duplicated. Also, determining other factors that may help to promote mental health is important. Also, managers should succinctly develop career maturity in workforce by individual awareness to make real choices and decisions, and improve individuals for higher career duties.

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