

The Impact of Enabling Workers to Improve the Quality of their Careers

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Abstract

Enabling individuals to enhance their professional trajectories is a critical component of labor market equity and effective organizational management. This paper provides a comprehensive overview and analysis of existing research focused on empowering individuals to improve the quality of their careers. It explores the impact of job transitions on employees' upward mobility, emphasizing the importance of facilitating these transitions through both logical frameworks and motivational support mechanisms. The study examines the signaling costs associated with job titles, investigating how shifts in job titles can influence perceptions of status and career advancement. Additionally, it addresses the prevalence of job title changes and their implications for employees' professional journeys. The connection between desired working hours and career promotions is also scrutinized, revealing how flexible work arrangements can influence upward mobility. Furthermore, the paper highlights the multifaceted benefits of empowering individuals, including increased job satisfaction, enhanced employee engagement, and the potential challenges and barriers that may arise in the empowerment process. The role of leadership and organizational policies in fostering an environment conducive to career advancement is critically analyzed, underscoring the necessity of providing professional development opportunities and adaptable work arrangements. Overall, this paper contributes to the ongoing discourse surrounding workplace dynamics and their effects on improving the quality of working life. By shedding light on the interplay between empowerment strategies and career development, it offers valuable insights for organizations seeking to cultivate a more equitable and fulfilling work environment.

Keywords: Human Capital Theory – Quality – Careers

1. Introduction

This issue of Spotlight on Economics summarizes research that studies how well job transitions appear to serve workers' goals of moving up in the world, how various groups of workers differ in the prevalence and impacts of their interest in job upgrading, and perhaps most importantly, how promising it might be to facilitate such moves by providing logical and motivational assistance to workers. The signaling value of today's job titles and the incidence and impacts of job title shifts are primary subjects of this paper. (Liu-Farrer & Shire, 2023)

First, we examine the degree of fluidity in the job transition patterns of American workers. Transitions, both voluntary and involuntary, are shadowed by repeated, imitative, and frictional job losers. The questions of why these transitions subsequently result in improved job opportunities for some workers but not necessarily for others are discussed. Second, we consider whether the job transitions that appear to spur improved prospects are likely quotas that dispose of workers by signaling their relative unproductive or productive levels to potential employers. The characteristics, labor force trends, and those who make a transition associated with improvement serve as subjects of investigation in this part of the paper. In the last section, evidence is developed on whether interest in improved occupational opportunities or work life characteristics spills over into longer hours of work for job changers to match nonpecuniary preferences with adequate wage compensation. A review of the evidence provided suggests that workers' desired working hours and job promotions are closely linked, and that these two mechanisms augment earnings for job changers. (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021); (Vaziri, Casper, Wayne, & Matthews, 2020); (Boeri, Giupponi, Krueger, & Machin, 2020)

1.1. Background and Context

For decades, labour market policy and governance have focused on creating regulations and support systems that help people to move from unemployment into jobs. The objective has been to help individuals avoid 'scarring effects' as the result of unemployment or inactivity, to maximize employment generally and to increase productivity in the economy. The shift towards a more proactive policy towards work and workers has been a feature of the labour market policy approach in many countries now for over a decade. Empowering individuals to plan and define more productive employment and build skills and qualifications accordingly raises several issues: if individuals are let off the hook, regulation should secure the service and management development levels of transparency, reliability and added value required by aspiring workers. (Jackson, D.; Tomlinson, M., 2020); (Cook & Grimshaw, 2021); (Dieppe, 2021); (Kabeer, 2021).

With the shift in policy emphasis to more active labour market, training and employment measures, the content of these programmes has increasingly become one of interest. In some respects,

one can observe a trend from treating the labour market behaviour of unemployed people as structural and largely functionalist (in which the characteristics of their search activity are the prime consideration) to a perception involving aspects of personal development and growth: such as the importance of working in new ways through 'employability development' (leadership, personal communication, teamworking). 'Enterprising behaviour' is important for everyone and in every kind of job and a 'new career path' is 'personal' (e.g. leading a team, business management, develop further, become a consultant). (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021); (Pambudi & Harjanto, 2020)

2. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks are an essential part in order to conduct an academic research. Underpinning theoretical frameworks present the combinations of theories, which substantiate the statement of the research problem. Three theories (Human Capital, Self-determination theory, and Skill-oriented development) used to develop the concept of enabling workers to improve their careers are focused on education and skills that influence future employability, employability as a motive for employees to enable them indeed to seek after further education during their full-time job, and satisfaction in viewing education results in an improved quality of career. (Owan, et al., 2022); (Lai, Lin, Saridakis, & Georgellis, 2024); (Lam, 2023)

Much of the conceptual groundwork for career guidance is built on the academic literature that is based on human capital theory and competences. According to human capital theory, a person invests in training and development in order to improve his or her 'worth' in the labour market. The theory has attracted a sizeable amount of literature and, while often criticized on account of its lack of emphasis on power relations in the workplace, it has nonetheless had an enduring influence. It might be tempting to dismiss this theory without too much further ado. However, human capital theory has conceptual value for career guidance because it draws attention to the importance of employees engaging in activities that improve their skills and knowledge so they can find a new job. (Anosa, 2021); (Abbas, Ekowati, Suhariadi, & Anwar, 2024); (Mellander & Florida, 2021)

The self-determination theory is concerned with fostering self-motivation. It is founded in humanistic and organismic theories and focuses on autonomous and controlled motivations underlying skills development behaviour. Autonomous behaviours are generated by 'intrinsic' satisfaction and controlled motivations are created by consideration to what others think of us. According to the AFI, education resulting in obtaining employer scholarships and being granted leave results directly in an increased chance to establish living or organization according to the workers. Also, obtaining a business based on an opportunity is a favorable position, and the role (position) entrusted by the organization is valuable. (Chiu, 2024); (van Dorssen-Boog, van Vuuren, de Jong, & Veld, 2021); Wood, 2020)

2.1. Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory posits that individuals or firms invest in education and skills considering future enhancements in productivity. Productivity improvement is seemingly attractive to both the employer and the employee: the employer benefits from the higher returns of the individual's effort

and the employee profits from higher output and rewards. By enabling workers to improve the quality of their jobs, workers can become more productive, more engaged, and motivated, making workforce raising an optimal investment for any firm. (Sun, Li, & Ghosal, 2020); (Schlepphorst, Koetter, Werner, Soost, & Moog, 2020); (Abbas, Ekowati, Suhariadi, & Anwar, 2024)

The HRHM follows the 'logic of opportunity costs' of this theory and claims that from an economic perspective and managerial practice, workforce skills transformation and development is an investment into the enhancement of the utilization value of the labor input. Like other capital investments, human investments can increase productivity or increase capital costs and thereby widen the dichotomy of our society. With respect to the promotion of a resource-oriented WFD policy, this makes it necessary to consider the assessment of the alternatives from different perspectives by moving away from an 'either or' perspective of profit maximization to an 'and'-perspective. Rather, there is a need to focus more on the public interest in equal opportunities for everyone to gain access to an adequate standard of living, especially in the time frame of increasing digitalization changes in the world of work. The investment in qualification is in the interest of all and the benefits of such an investment will be easier to reap the more attractive working conditions are for the workforce. Humans are not 'things and quantities'. The case of workforce development and well-being will be seen in a socially responsible way by more and more companies. (Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021); (Su, Yuan, Umar, & Lobonț, 2022); Bawono)

2.2. Self-Determination Theory

Background and Hypotheses

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is often used in the career field to explain employees' motivation and engagement. SDT posits that three basic psychological needs must be satisfied for individuals to experience well-being, autonomous motivation, and engagement: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy is the need to experience one's behavior and feelings as volitional, one's actions as having an internal source, and a sense of choice. Competence is a psychological sense of being effective in one's interaction with the environment, needing support and challenge for full development. Relatedness is a basic psychological need to feel connected with and a sense of belonging to significant others in environments that are meaningful and provide opportunities for giving and receiving care and contribution. These needs are not separate from one another and are interrelated; when one need is not satisfied, it affects the satisfaction and fulfillment of the others as well. The satisfaction of these needs gives a sense of being in good mental and physical health. (Martela, Lehmus-Sun, Parker, Pessi, & Ryan, 2023); (Tang, Wang, & Guerrien, 2021) (Matsumoto & Takenaka, 2022); (Guay, 2022); (Zhu, Dolmans, Köhler, Kusrkar, Abidi, & Savelberg, 2024)

Within careers, SDT also suggests that individuals should have the freedom of choice and decision-making concerning their career goals. Therefore, in order to satisfy the need for autonomy proposed by SDT, individuals should be able to express and deepen their preferences through their career choices and develop their careers to increase their relatedness and sense of belonging. By having this freedom in career development, workers feel higher levels of autonomy, which creates

high engagement and commitment. In addition, SDT is helpful to examine how employees experience their employability in terms of having feelings of competence and self-efficacy in relation to their career development. Given the supportive qualities of SDT, it is arguable that employees are likely to experience more flow in their careers based on the opportunity to continually develop and grow in their careers. Comings; (Dewi & Putra, 2021); (Maree, 2022)

3. Empirical Evidence

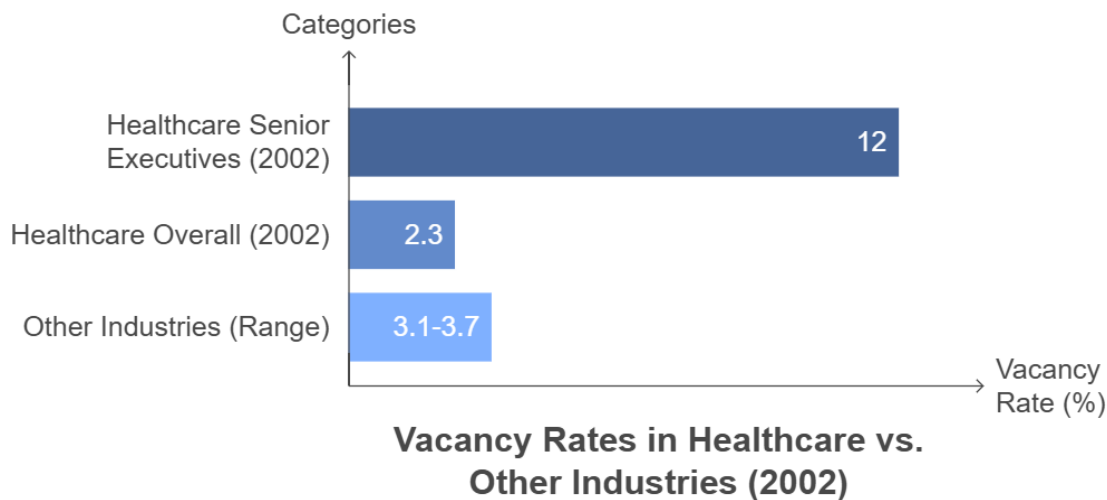
Are there known cases where firms give workers discretion over their training, allowing workers to invest in their careers to a high level of quality, but some workers are discouraged from investing by their rank in a wage hierarchy or the upward mobility prospects implied by wage progression? The evidence in this century-old debate has generally been of two forms: case studies or surveys and laboratory experiments. These studies have improved our understanding of the determinants of career concern choices, such as individual and group characteristics that affect perceived upward mobility, levels of promotion pressures, taste for competition, and so on. However, they are limited with the degree to which these insights can be generalized to the labor market. (Comings; De et al.2020; (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024); (Dewi & Putra, 2021)

Some studies report an association between a preference for a promotion and various career decisions. For example, recent studies based on Canadian and Danish surveys have concluded that workers who desire a promotion (usually based on wanting more responsibility, or a better or challenging job, better wages) are more inclined to pursue job change or training investment than those who do not desire a promotion. Explicitly linked with career concerns, the evidence on the determinants of training is limited. There is some direct evidence, although rather dated, that where job rotation includes further training, educational requirements are used to some extent as a criterion for participation. Some state and federal government agencies in the United States set aside a proportion of their training budget for specific groups, for example, workers with upgradeable skills, workers who stated an insufficient time for training as the reason for their high risk of lay-off, or workers specializing in low technology sectors. Comings; (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024); (Dewi & Putra, 2021); (Maree, 2022)

3.1. Surveys and Research Findings

Studies show that enabling employees to manage the development of their careers leads to positive measurable results. For example, a series of studies sponsored by Career Systems International (CSI) for the past several years based on national surveys has determined that empowering workers significantly impacts individual worker and career satisfaction, commitment to their work, and global job satisfaction. Study participants were 1,100 business professionals and managers in a variety of industries. In addition to the survey results, focus groups and change management activities have utilized the data to help companies develop work practices to improve employee job satisfaction. Comings; (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024); (Dewi & Putra, 2021); (Avolio, Chávez, & Vélchez-Román, 2020); (Maree, 2022)

According to Steven Knox of the University of Michigan's National Center for Healthcare Leadership (NCHL), a recent study of over 600 senior level health care executives similarly found that opportunities for career development were a key attraction and retention tool. The NCHL 2002 turnover survey is part of an ongoing research initiative to assist health care organizations in managing their human capital. The survey captures turnover at both the senior executives as well as director levels including job level and job function.



In 2002, health care organizations filled over 1,000 senior level vacancies. The average vacancy rate over the three-year period was around 12%. Comparably, in 2002, the average vacancy rate for health care organizations was around 2.3% whereas the range was between 3.1% to 3.7% for other industries. Data for the 2003 survey has not yet been released. While this data is for health care executives, it is indicative of a problem that is not industry-specific. Tracy Lavezza, president of CCI Enterprises, has found Henderson's findings to be consistent with those obtained and lists a clear, industry-wide problem. Comings; (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024); (Dewi & Putra, 2021); (Law & Dunbar, 2024)

4. Benefits of Empowering Workers

There are several potential benefits to enabling workers to improve the quality of their careers.

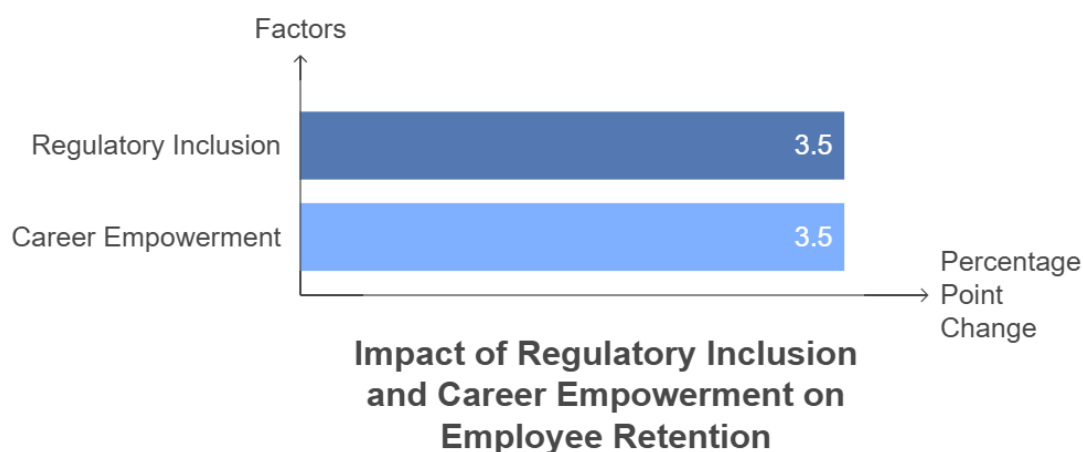
- Improved job satisfaction. It can be expected that enabling workers to decide how and when they want to improve the quality of their careers would increase their job satisfaction. Being able to take the consequences of the decisions they make about their careers will be quite empowering for many people in the workforce, especially if the activity is supported by the management. Being able to match personal values and expectations with those of the company when sharing corporate goals and strategies would also increase job satisfaction and commitment to the company. Harging suggests that individual career decisions need to be supported and that individuals need to be given a helping hand.

- Enhanced employee engagement. Workers who take their career seriously (that is, actively try to improve its quality from time to time, perhaps following a carefully worked-out career plan) are vulnerable to losing motivation and becoming disengaged if they are actively restricted from taking decisions enlightened by their insights and minute knowledge of their own capabilities and desires.
- Enhanced motivation. Those employees who feel supported by the company in achieving their goals are likely to respond by being more motivated than others. (Comings; (Dewi & Putra, 2021); (Avolio, Chávez, & Vílchez-Román, 2020); (Maree, 2022)

4.1. Increased Job Satisfaction

There is evidence that organizations are interested in enhancing levels of career satisfaction because organizations believe career satisfaction leads to greater job satisfaction and performance. Tansky, Goldman, Anderson and Reilly argue that career satisfaction and empowerment may influence job satisfaction, as satisfaction associated with one meaningful aspect is likely to influence satisfaction derived from another meaningful domain. Korte suggests that the empowerment of employees within the labor market aims to enhance their level of satisfaction with their own careers. the results for those in the workforce and it is apparent that on average, those employees that indicate they are empowered also indicate that they are happy with their career. They report an average career satisfaction above 6.5, suggesting they experience high levels of satisfaction (career satisfaction was measured on a scale from 1 = totally dissatisfied, to 10 = totally satisfied). In the UK, the mean British job satisfaction score is 7.69 (0.15 standard errors) using all employees. Further, over 90% of workers in the UK in 2018 stated they were satisfied with their job, and close to 20% were strongly satisfied, which at the time of the survey was the highest level of job satisfaction since 1991. (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024); (Avolio, Chávez, & Vílchez-Román, 2020); (Law & Dunbar, 2024)

Employment outcomes. An additional positive outcome of workers' regulatory inclusion/compliance is that satisfied employees are more likely to remain in the industry. Those employees with career empowerment are consequently less likely to exit ($p < 0.01$, percentage point change of 3.5%).



This, perhaps, indicates a possible channel through which possible network effects operate for the industry. Networks may be more effective when employees are retained, used to attract workers into the industry that hadn't previously considered working there. To explore this possibility further, we investigated the relationship between career empowerment and the probability of employment in the industry. However, it was apparent that although employees who were empowered were more likely to enter and less likely to exit the hospitality industry, these results were not statistically significant. (Comings; De et al.2020; (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024)

4.2. Enhanced Employee Engagement

Almost by definition, enabling employees to take charge of their careers is likely to result in higher levels of engagement throughout the workforce. A closer review of the trusted engagement model confirms what we are told by employees: that engagement will not exist unless employees feel pride in their organization they are part of, and unless leaders and managers genuinely value the work performed for the organization by the people. Therefore, such a model can also become a useful indicator of enabling and employee engagement, thus further ensuring linkage with customer satisfaction and organizational performance. A negative aspect of lack of career development is the feeling of stagnating or being stuck, which can often result in apathy. The underlying factors and mechanisms of the model on how career empowerment is linked to employee engagement can be discussed from a positive perspective. Here, employees are encouraged to "go the extra mile" because they want to achieve short-term objectives for their organization. (Stone, Cox, Gavin, & Carpini, 2024); (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022)

The P-E fit model can also help us to understand better how career breach can result in decreased engagement and turnover. According to the P-E fit model, there are three dimensions that are of great importance for the understanding of career breach: the demands-abilities fit; needs-supply fit; and values-supply fit. Taken together, this brief discussion and analysis of some dimensions that are important for individual engagement and the organizational enablement model contribute to our model of engagement as an aspect of career empowerment. Employee attitude and motivation are thought to result from perceptions of how individuals feel about P-E fit. P-E fit is important in the enablement model as it links perceptions of career empowerment by employees with values, organizational culture, behavior, and job satisfaction or sense of fulfillment. Organizational induction and social support mechanisms are concerned with increasing socialization, norms, and the P-E fit of employees within an organization. (Allal-Chérif, Aránega, & Sánchez, 2021); (Stone, Cox, Gavin, & Carpini, 2024); (Barhate & Dirani, 2022); (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022); (Li, 2022)

5. Challenges and Barriers

Some employees are conservative about changes in the way or progress made in developing themselves because they are used to the pattern of the unit or location where they work. Empowered solved the policy mainly by consolidating the cadre development program. It may take several months or years term if dominance over job rotation promotion program for the whole career with concern every job ladder of each worker. The Manager's decision or Lackit Coordination about

explanations of Employee Career Stage makes the employees do not know where they are and where they must go during their time working at the company. It is one of the reasons causing frustrations for employees because they do not understand what is now, if they have to move later, what they need to get to move their care. (Kilag, et al., 2024); (Barhate & Dirani, 2022); (Li, 2022) (Herawati & Fithratullah, 2022); (Ali & Anwar, 2021)

The organization has limitations or difficulties in providing career development assistance because career development benefits a few employees who feel strong incentive to develop. The amount person who felt there is an obstacle in the company when developing the career of workers 60% were higher than the number of people so do not feel at all obstacles are 15%. The biggest constraint is in terms of the lack of facilities and infrastructure that need to exist in the company when providing career development training. Amoi Corporate plans to increase the employee personnel density next year, but cannot do it because the facilities and infrastructure have not been completed. (Kilag, et al., 2024); (Barhate & Dirani, 2022); (Herawati & Fithratullah, 2022); (Ali & Anwar, 2021).

5.1. Resistance to Change

The positive impact on human resources of enabling workers to avoid skill obsolescence is not always straightforward. Employees have a right to voice their opinion about their work conditions, but they also benefit from job seniority. As a result, as soon as they enter a company, workers expect to be protected against possible future failure of the training system, including new training initiatives. Favoring older workers for training in technology may consequently generate frustration among younger (potentially more talented) employees. Additionally, if workers understand that there is overstaffing, they may have incentives to prevent newcomers from accessing promotion/skill acquisition channels. (Kulcsár, Dobrean, & Gati, 2020); (Allal-Chérif, Aránega, & Sánchez, 2021); (Kilag, et al., 2024); (Stone, Cox, Gavin, & Carpini, 2024); (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022)

Similarly, resistance may emerge among those who already have a powerful position within the firm because they benefit most from the status quo. Additional reasons for resistance in general and career initiatives in particular can be that career development programs are often resource-dependent investments that are subject to efficiency wages, favoritism, subjective advantages begetting spinning and inefficiencies from non-direct labor rewards, witlessly encouraging free riding and reducing effort, and counter advocacy on the part of insiders reluctant to provide newcomers with some form of legitimate graft. If the fraction of workers opposing promotion to others is big enough, newcomers may be deterred from joining the firm. (Kulcsár, Dobrean, & Gati, 2020); (Allal-Chérif, Aránega, & Sánchez, 2021); (Kilag, et al., 2024)

5.2. Lack of Resources

One main obstacle for organizations to enable workers to improve the quality of their careers is insufficient resources. In our field study, one of the major concerns for those who were not willing to participate in the program that allowed enrolling in additional training existed for managers in organizations with a low level of available financial resources, either not being entirely able or on the

verge of not being able to pay out salaries, etc. In this way, a high level of strained economic conditions within the organization gives them little or no margin to enable workers to improve the quality of their careers. As shown by models of escape stimulation, financial incentives are likely to be particularly important when there is little intrinsic satisfaction obtained from doing the job. While in low resource situations clarifying performance outcomes-enhancing programs, to avoid the perception of disrespect to their employees improved learning support in the organization. (Kilag, et al., 2024); (Stone, Cox, Gavin, & Carpini, 2024); Li, 2022; (Herawati & Fithratullah, 2022)

Another possible way to go about this topic would be to actually study the impact of resource constraints on career development programs, going into a more detailed approach of the potential solutions to such issues. Resources do not impose constraints unless practiced, so explaining the basis of this claim, that running practices lead to scarce resources, could potentially be helpful. Although, running a practice can supposedly bring in resources via other ways, such as implementation of reputation. The "Physis" discussion in the consideration of economic resources constraint could also be potentially evolved and improved, connecting key concepts and notions and building a more informative, illustrative narrative. (Ginevra, Di Maggio, Santilli, & Nota, 2024); (Lent & Brown, 2020); (Frijters, Clark, Krekel, & Layard, 2020)

6. Strategies for Enabling Workers

For autonomous reasons alone, caring about workers' quality of career is important. But what is the best way to enable these workers to better their careers? In this Thursday Theory article, we share strategies that organizations can employ to enable workers to improve the quality of their careers. (Lent & Brown, 2020); (Frijters, Clark, Krekel, & Layard, 2020); (Aithal & Aithal, 2020)

1. Encourage professional development activities. Organizations should encourage their people to take part in career-enhancing training opportunities, significant industry or professional associations in their industry, professional certifications in their field, and advanced degrees in order to advance their professional development goals. Doing so allows for improvement in multiple relevant competencies, while also helping practitioners to stay innovative and creative in their roles. (Ginevra, Di Maggio, Santilli, & Nota, 2024); (Pordelan & Hosseinian, 2022); (Munte & Monica, 2023); (Kilag, et al., 2024)

2. Pair practitioners with relevant and actionable mentors. An organization that seeks to develop its workforce should pair professionals with a mentor. A large investment may seem daunting to these individuals, but it is not when one considers the long view. The authors encourage organizations and educational institutions to pair professionals with mentors. In doing so, relevant organizational, work team, and customer informants can calculate their error, update their generalizable models, and make their algorithm equivalent to that of a cross-industry customer informant, thereby nurturing a generalist mindset. (Ginevra, Di Maggio, Santilli, & Nota, 2024); (Pordelan & Hosseinian, 2022); (Munte & Monica, 2023); (Frijters, Clark, Krekel, & Layard, 2020)

6.1. Professional Development Opportunities

Enabling workers and careerists to improve their careers through professional development opportunities helps them to upgrade skills, knowledge, and competencies, making them eligible for better job prospects. (Ginevra, Di Maggio, Santilli, & Nota, 2024)

These expanding opportunities for professional growth have a few noteworthy elements. For example, one overlooked aspect of professional or career growth is that not all workers who take advantage of such programs need to do so in order to be more attractive to hiring professionals. Not coincidentally, tuition benefits (also sometimes referred to as "tuition discounts") are known to make positive impacts on a company's retention efforts. Such incentives can help a firm minimize turnover costs, mainly when some of the most motivated workers who feel more at ease seeing that they can pursue their academic interests at the same time that they fulfill their job responsibilities and provide valuable, real-world applications of the class content they learn, the people they meet, and the skills they have had the chance to develop or fine-tune during the training process, are less likely to quit their employment. Several tuition benefit administration organizations have gone on the record to say that these particular reimbursement programs foster a high-return-on-investment activity for Employers. (Ginevra, Di Maggio, Santilli, & Nota, 2024); (Pordelan & Hosseinian, 2022); (Munte & Monica, 2023)

6.2. Mentorship Programs

As a complement or substitute for training programs, another possible policy to enable workers to better invest in their careers centers on mentorship in the form of mentorship programs. A large number of labor market studies find a positive impact of mentorship on careers. Mentorship not only elicits informant gain in symptom perception but also provides a relatively inexpensive apparatus for knowledge transfer between existing workers. Mentorship programs can be interpreted as career support on a small scale. Mentors provide apprentices with emotional support and encouragement through the mere interaction gained from the meetings and help with acquiring 'unwritten' rules. The most relevant advice extracted from studies on mentoring and young workers can be singled out as follows. Studying the determinants of regular meetings in mentor-advisee relationship might provide some policy-relevant results. (Ginevra, Di Maggio, Santilli, & Nota, 2024); (Pordelan & Hosseinian, 2022); (Munte & Monica, 2023); (Frijters, Clark, Krekel, & Layard, 2020)

To date, some studies have discussed the potential significance of mentorship for career development. However, to the best knowledge of the author, no study has analyzed the likely impact of mentorship on knowledge transfer between existing workers in the Canadian context. Although there is a large body of research on the organization of work and the determinants of the way learning takes place (at the workplaces), there are no studies that have evaluated the impact of mentorship in these crucial variables (especially in the presence of training). If mentorship provides a relatively inexpensive apparatus for knowledge transfer, it will follow that systematic training (while awarding positive effects) will not be optimal either from an individual point of view or from society's point of view. (Ginevra, Di Maggio, Santilli, & Nota, 2024); (Frijters, Clark, Krekel, & Layard, 2020); (Aithal & Aithal, 2020)

7. Organizational Policies and Practices

Enabling workers to improve their careers or align their qualifications with their occupation is essential. It builds trust, supports lifelong learning, and ensures job holders have the necessary qualifications. Not prioritizing career development comes with costs and reduces commitment to work. (Ginevra, Di Maggio, Santilli, & Nota, 2024); (Pordelan & Hosseinian, 2022)

Employers have a variety of policies and practices at their disposal to empower workers in optimizing their careers. Policies that stretch possible options to attain different kinds of good work are, for instance, flexible work arrangements and work involvement policies. Practices that improve the possibility of a fit between actual qualifications and the demands of an occupation are promotion policies, collective agreements, and wage systems that put an accent on personal contribution rather than on seniority, programs that inform employees about the fit between ambitions and organizational realities, but also procedures for the formulation of individual goals, and the provision of performance feedback. (Ginevra, Di Maggio, Santilli, & Nota, 2024); (Pordelan & Hosseinian, 2022); (Aithal & Aithal, 2020); (Ronnie & Philip, 2021)

7.1. Flexible Work Arrangements

More and more organizations are operating flexible work time arrangements for their employees, which is a countermeasure against the stress that comes with long working hours. The long working hours these days are also due to the fact that workers take their jobs home with them; as a result, work-life balance becomes an urgent issue. Flexible working hours enable workers to balance their career pursuits with household affairs. This policy is positive for those who are also responsible for housework and childrearing. As a consequence, pressure on non-economic life weakens and is seen hereafter as pressure on the career. Consequently, flexible work arrangements help workers to improve the quality of their careers, which provide the potential of being more productive in the long run. (Ginevra, Di Maggio, Santilli, & Nota, 2024); (Pordelan & Hosseinian, 2022); (Lent & Brown, 2020)

Flexibility options like flexi-time, time off in lieu, preferential working hour allocation, home office, and flexible leave arrangements have the potential to reduce the unsocial aspect of their private lives. As compensation, employees would be more willing to take over jobs with those conditions if it pays off regarding career smartness. In the long run, however, it is more likely that the business will appreciate the hours not worked factor. This could be due to an increase in output per hour to make up for the direct and indirect costs caused by employees spending time at work rather than experiencing family-related work-life conflicts. More broadly, it appears that a change in working-time norms will also be needed to prevent such coverage measures exacerbating 'second-tier' and precarious work. (Atmaja, Fachrurazi, Abdullah, Fauziah, Zaroni, & Yusuf, 2022); (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024); (Hoang & Huy, 2021); (Molla & Nolan, 2020)

7.2. Promotion and Advancement Policies

Promotion and advancement policies can be important in increasing the power of workers to improve the quality of their careers. They may, of course, be relevant because they determine the

amount of differential promotion experienced by different groups of Employees. However, this effect should not concern us. No doubt, those employers who can see a demand for differential treatment, that is complex, risky and demanding work. Instead, we are most concerned here with the issue of who gets to progress through these general career grades at all. Our concern here is solely to determine if and how promotion and advancement policy could be designed to enable workers to have a say in and, hopefully, gain some control over the proper progress of their own careers. (Barhate & Dirani, 2022); (Mann, et al., 2020); (Molla & Nolan, 2020); (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024); (Atmaja, Fachrurazi, Abdullah, Fauziah, Zaroni, & Yusuf, 2022)

see jobs in terms of developmental processes while draw an explicit link between the promotion process and the career development of individuals. The career one has and the career one could have are dependent on each other in a form of 'set-tie' mentality. To move beyond one career set, one has to invest in all the existing career opportunities circling different job sets. A pseudonym can balance key constructs in a twofold manner; a job provides the resources to cope with stress and also has to cope with barriers to advancement. Our prior research indicated the importance of examining the interactions of situational and individual barriers in understanding the advancement process. Enabling the workers to remove such barriers assist them in their research careers to overcome the institutional hurdles and glass ceilings which serve as obstacles. (De Haas, 2021); (Barhate & Dirani, 2022); (Mann, et al., 2020); (Hoang & Huy, 2021); (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024)

8. The Role of Leadership

A task as crucial as enabling workers to improve the quality of their careers needs to be led. An agenda for action could indeed come from anywhere in an organization, at any of the three levels of leadership: senior, team, or self-leadership. But it is ultimately senior leaders who have the power to sanction and sustain the policies that are needed if we are to make work - and its organizations - decent, fulfilling, and both personally and societally beneficial. Furthermore, it is teamwork and the norms of behavior which ensure decent treatment are exacted that make working practices in an organization human. Actions are needed then at each level of leadership, from: (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024); (Atmaja, Fachrurazi, Abdullah, Fauziah, Zaroni, & Yusuf, 2022)

1. Senior leadership. This is about setting a supportive, caring, and questioning culture. It is also about setting clear expectations, being visible, visibly challenging others' poor performance, and accepting and providing feedback about how well dignity is being sustained. Senior leaders need to be leaders with an upset mind, leaders who are more comfortable in the betweenness of organizational life and are therefore learned in the contradictions, tensions, and ambiguities of leadership and human endeavor. (Hoang & Huy, 2021); (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024); (Atmaja, Fachrurazi, Abdullah, Fauziah, Zaroni, & Yusuf, 2022)
2. Team level leadership. This is about being facilitative and role-modeling as a leader; knowing team members, their strengths, and what they completely hate doing; championing people; involving followers in discussions and possible strategic development; and encouraging personal development and career growth. It is also about being a champion of giving and goodwill, embedding diffidence in service of dignity suppression, and insisting on the consideration of any

act with dignity-compromising potential on those it will most affect. (Hoang & Huy, 2021); (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2024); (Atmaja, Fachrurazi, Abdullah, Fauziah, Zaroni, & Yusuf, 2022)

8.1. Creating a Supportive Culture

Much (likely most) consideration of career development and career resources/interventions focuses on what the organization can do for the employee. To enable the employee to exploit these resources, interventions or processes and enhance the quality of the careers typically rely upon the presence of a supportive organizational culture. We use the term supportive culture to imply an organization in which employees feel that the leadership generally cares about the kind of lives that they lead. The supportive culture is not necessarily one where the management communicates affection or intimacy with the employees. Support can be demonstrated by objectively acting in the genuine interest of the employees. (Hoang & Huy, 2021)

Leaders should recognize that how they manage followers is on the front stage for those followers, and not just in terms of the task outcomes. The whole experience of leadership and group dynamics can be conceptualized in human capital terms. How an individual is actually managed, as well as how (s)he believes (s)he is managed; whether managers appear respectful, supportive, empathic, and create opportunities for self-development construe an important element of relationships at work that develops human capital. All employees are potential human capitals. As a leader, however, it takes a display of exemplary behavior to facilitate a supportive climate in the workplace. From the bottom-up, knowing that their actions contribute to the workplace culture makes workers feel involved in the culture equation, which also motivates them to positively contribute to the bigger picture. (Carling & Schewel, 2020); (De Haas, 2021)

8.2. Setting Clear Expectations

Leaders should set clear expectations for the performance of their staff. Our unblinded results use a written management field experiment with original primary data collected from teams in the retail setting that I am referring to. The field experiment convincingly illustrates the impact of setting clear expectations in leadership on strengthening the normative foundations of everyday management for enabling workers to improve the quality of their careers, i.e., career-enablement. The results could be due to the impact of conveying clear expectations to employees resulting in a greater sense of empowerment, achievement, or some other psychological impact related to goal setting. (van der Merwe, Nel, & Hoole, 2024); (Mitra & Dopson, 2024); (Jacobs, Erasmus, Khuluse, & Marais); (Stone & Harkiolakis, 2022); (Gandhi, 2023)

Given the importance of the topic, an evidence-based understanding of how career-enablement takes place for most workers is a predictive step; our study greatly enhances the clarity on how these practices can be applied most effectively. Goals serve to communicate the results that each team needs to achieve and are intended to set a clear expectation for employees. In a cross-section of businesses, incorporating goals into their business operations (especially the front line) is shown to influence the firm's success with positive effects on employee motivation, empowerment, and job satisfaction. Goals are instrumental in workplace settings because they provide a direct and specific

mechanism for managers to communicate their expectations to employees. This direct line of communication is especially important for tasks that are complex and difficult to evaluate because of the subjective nature of excellence. Leading firms, therefore, use goals to make chores easy to assign, easy to measure, and easy to motivate; the essence of what it means to be an operationalized career-enablement employer. (Kalogiannidis, 2021); (George, Haas, McGahan, Schillebeeckx, & Tracey, 2023); (Eide, Saether, & Aspelund, 2020); (Chowdhury, Budhwar, Dey, Joel-Edgar, & Abadie, 2022); (Nnubia, 2020).

9. Conclusion

Initiatives to promote employee "voice" in organizational life involve a number of features designed to enable workers to improve the quality of their work and careers. This essay has focused on four such initiatives: HR-based voice, whistleblowing, individualized voice, and HR targeting. A key complicating factor is that, in addition to these direct payoffs, there are also likely to be indirect payoffs. For example, by conferring greater legitimacy on decision making, such forms of voice might also boost attachment toward the firm and worker well-being. Clearly, this paper benefits from integrating these different areas and approaches, as well as from the continued and more explicit comparative investigation of "voice" in settings across the globe. In the context of increasing pressure to improve the quality of working life, there has been growing debate about various forms of work organization arrangements that can achieve such change. It is first and foremost organizations which should act in order to improve levels of employee well-being. The results of our empirical tests highlight that all forms of cooperation-based workplace "voice" influence the subjective well-being of employees, over and above subsequent changes in working time, skill development, and the range of work opportunities facing workers. Using data from 24 organizations in the Canadian manufacturing, finance, non-profit, and services sectors, Burton and van den Broek indicate that, through "enhanced perceptions of work-control...the subjective quality of working life is improved". Replicating the findings of Frege and Kelly using Dutch APS data in the last two decades, Strijker and Delsen also find that employee involvement improves job-related well-being.

Despite decades of policy interventions, the employment opportunities for many workers remain more precarious and have lower quality compared to those of the professional middle class. In this essay, we conduct a field experiment with 640 workers in low-skilled non-supervisory jobs at a public suburban transportation agency in the United States who generally drive a bus. The theory and management practice of employee-centered relational coordination indicate that a focus on the relationship between workers' values and their job tasks can lead to a more fully engaged workforce and remind employees of their common purpose, which in turn can improve the quality of service delivery. Our empirical results are completely in keeping with this theory: When only managers are trained to improve the more standard capabilities of workers, the quality of service does not appear to improve. But when drivers themselves are enabled to perform higher quality careers, the passengers they serve report their experiences to be more pleasant; these drivers also stay with our field experiment employer longer. Our driver-focused treatment is associated with a 7% increase in driver retention. Both passenger reports and driver retention continue to influence passengers about two months after the end of the passenger survey and therefore treatment. Passenger satisfaction, of

course, is not the only output of interest within our field experiment organization. Riders who report that they are having a more pleasant experience on their commutes are also passengers who are more likely to behave in some other career-improving ways.

We find, in particular, that we are able to decrease the number of passengers who ride for free by about 6.6%. We are also able to elicit more repeat patronage, with passengers provided high-impact treatment indicating that they are willing to pay about 2.3% more for an eight-months-long pass. When these three outputs - passenger satisfaction, fare compliance, and non-price demand - are summed in a conjoint analysis of welfare change, the economic benefits of passenger treatment manifest at about 5.4% more revenue than those commensurate outputs from the general passenger base. Overall, our results indicate that delivering quality outcomes can prove to be important not just within private financial markets, but also when riders are primarily end users of a public good. This paper has reviewed and analyzed the available and emerging research around the impact of enabling workers to improve the quality of their careers. It has used this research and analysis to identify and offer a detailed documentation of environment, process, output, and outcome-focused strategies being used in Australia and internationally to provide people with a stronger sense of control over their local labor market conditions. The research and analysis suggest that many of the reported activities are being taken up to increase the speed and/or strength of local job placement. The direction of career advice and guidance is less in providing attention to enabling individuals to improve their core capabilities and move into more in-demand jobs. This appears to be a lost organizational and policy strategy that could deliver greater impacts over the medium and short term. As such, the findings from this research may also have relevance for policymakers as they start to explore and develop more targeted workforce strategies. This report also may have relevance for organizations who are involved or considering becoming involved in activities that enable workers to increase the quality of their careers and the likelihood that some of these workers may be available for these new opportunities. Suggestions and considerations for policymakers working toward the proposed National Careers Institute and concerned about the facilitation of workers to obtain the career of their choice are provided.

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