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Toward A Theory of Organizational Career
Development :
A Longitudinal Investigation of the
Role Making Process of Japanese
College Graduates¹⁾

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In this theoretical note, the process whereby newcomers to an organization develop their career roles is the focus of discussion. One of the basic questions of our research interest states that why some individuals come to achieve higher development in the organization, while others not. As a step to explore this question, three heuristic models called (1) the assessment center model, (2) the organizational socialization model, and (3) the role making model, are proposed.

Human development after adolescence is often called adult socialization, or socialization after childhood (Brim and Wheeler, 1966; Becker, 1964). The underlying notion of this conceptualization is that men are socialized throughout the life cycle, through childhood as well as adulthood. The individual faces relatively novel situations through life (e. g., family, school, occupational, and organizational situations) in which he will be required to learn a set of new be-

1) The authors express their application to the administrators and the participants in this investigation, and to Akemi Chang of Stanford University, who read an earlier draft of this paper.

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Organizational Career Development

haviors. Especially, the impact of new learning will become stronger in occupational situations where the effective role learning is pressed by the structure of the organization and the institution. Brim pointed out that role acquisition may be the key aspect in socialization after childhood. He stated that:

“Our emphasis is on the acquisition of habits, beliefs, attitudes, and motives which enable a person to perform satisfactorily the roles expected of him in his society. The acquisition of role is not viewed as the entire content of socialization, but role learning is the segment of socialization that we propose to analyze, and role acquisition is probably the most important aspect of adult socialization.”

(Brim, 1966, p. 5)

The process of development after basic socialization periods has frequently been studied in connection with occupational achievement of the individual. Past studies have disclosed the mechanism of role acquisition and development unique to the specific occupational groups: doctors (Becker, *et al.*, 1961), nurses (Davis, 1968), school-teachers (Becker, 1952), scientists (Glaser, 1964; Hinrichs, 1964; Pelz and Andrews, 1966), forest rangers (Kaufman, 1960; Hall, *et al.*, 1970), priests (Hall and Schneider, 1969), soldiers (Janowitz, 1960; Stouffer, 1949; Dornbush, 1955), managers (Berlew and Hall, 1966; Jennings, 1967; Bray, *et al.*, 1974), and so forth. However, occupational studies as cited above have long been concerned only with the descriptions of occupational specificities (e. g., aptitudes, occupational values and beliefs, uniqueness of the occupational institutions, etc.) rather than oriented toward theoretical elaboration on the phenomenon of career development itself. Moreover, in these studies the very basic questions such as, What does development mean to the individual and the organization? Why does one person attain higher development than other people? What are key conditions that integrate career development of the individual into the effectiveness of the human organization? and the like have not been asked.

It seems that the past occupational studies tend to adopt deterministic views to explain the phenomenon of career development. One such deterministic approach may be called a cultural-personality view. For this approach, occupational development is assumed to be an extension, or a variation, of basic personality properties of the individual that have been developed through childhood socialization under the influence of dominant socio-cultural factors connected with each individual. Thus, this approach suggests that occupational development is a process of matching between the personality characteristics of the individual and requirements of the occupational roles. On the other hand, mismatch between the two is interpreted as an error caused by incorrect employment selection and/or a part of the trial and error process associated with the occupational choice behaviors. Another view that might be called the institutional determinism suggests that development is a process through which the individual is transformed into a kind of person that the institution wants. For this approach, the stages of development are predetermined by the institution, and the individual is only allowed to conform to the socialization pressures at each stage of development within the institution. The failure in development again is interpreted as an error caused by the unknown random factors associated with the institutional and organizational environment for career development.

Defining Career Development

Developing a refined definition of development seems to be the only way to avoid deterministic approaches. Following Hughes (1937), Mansfield suggested that career development can be viewed as a two-sided concept. He pointed out that one side of the concept represents what he called *objective* career development (Mansfield, 1973). For example, Wilensky's (1960) definition of career development

Oganizational Career Development

may illustrate this dimension: he stated that a carrer development viewed structually is a succession of related jobs arranged in a hierarchy of prestige through which persons move in an ordered, predictable sequence. The other side of the concept is referred to as *subjective* career development. This is carrer experienced subjectively by the individual who goes through development: his career interests and preferences, assessment of career jobs and himself, decisions on career changes, and the like. Mansfield (1973) suggested that both objective and subjective aspects of career development need to be integrated into a single conceptual framework allowing the interaction between the two.

The second point to be considered for defining development is the nature of the relationship between the personal growth and the method of human resource utilization of the organization. In our study, it is assumed that the nature of this relationship can be determined basically as a cross-section of the following two principles of development: (1) the individual tries to enhance his personal values so that his potentials can be best utilized from his point of view, and (2) the organization endeavors to develop human resources so that they will be effectively utilized to fulfill the needs of the system. The concept of human resource development, as Mills (1975) indicated, requires that there must be a match, or an equilibrium, between the above two principles at least in the long run. However, since the above two processes are essentially independent of each other, matching between them will not be attained automatically. And thus, assuming a perfect match *a priori* easily leads to a determinism of one form or another. There exists a lot of turnover studies that suggest a mismatch between the two processes is common rather than unusual (Dunnette, *et al.*, 1973; Porter and Steers, 1973). The concept of "obsolete socialization" may indicate another example of such a mismatch. Caplow (1964) pointed out that it happens quite often that after new members to the organi-

zation have been developed to acquire certain skills and values, the organization itself has to abandon them due to the change in environment. This phenomenon implies what was once regarded as development now becomes an obstacle to adaptation and progress. Likewise, "oversocialization" (Schein, 1968; Weick, 1964) represents a similar incidence in that conformity to one particular course of action leads to a loss of innovative capability of the individual in the long run.

Equilibrium in development can be described as a situation in which the individual endeavor to gain in the value of his personal resources matches the organizational practices to develop and utilizes them. It is the purpose of our study to explore how this matching situation evolves, and what are the critical incidents that will give rise to the success and failure in organizational career development over time among a group of individuals. In sum, for the purpose of our research, the concept of development must be defined by considering the following two critical aspects: (1) the interaction between the objective and subjective sides of career development, and (2) identifying conditions by which the two independent efforts find mutually reinforcing relationships. Based upon the above considerations, our definition of career development can be stated as follows:

Career development is a process of increasing the value of services of the individual by his investing in a given occupational role position, and acquiring new skills, abilities, knowledge, motives, and behavioral patterns connected with the role position(s) expected of him as target(s) for the next move.

For our definition, the process of "acquiring new skills, abilities, knowledge, motives, and behavioral patterns," denotes the subjective aspect of career development, through which the individual increases the potential value of his personal resources. This is a process of learning that will take place when the individual is placed in a novel

environment associated with his occupational roles. On the other hand, the process of "increasing the value of services," implies the objective aspect of career development through which the individual performance is evaluated and rewarded by acquisition of extra resources of the organization. For our definition, the above two processes are assumed to take place simultaneously when, and only when, the individual's investment in his role position keeps growing. Investment is conceived of, in our terms, an accumulation of credit of various kinds (performance, contribution, merit, qualification, innovation, etc.) attained through role activities and recognized by the organization as attributable to a particular individual. Then, a question to follow is how investing behaviors are initiated, and how it will lead to the progress in career. To answer this question, it is necessary to examine a mechanism of individual commitment to his career role, and the structure and process of organizational resource allocation.

Mechanisms of Individual Commitment to His Career Role

Studies on vocational choice and development have long been interested in how people become committed to their occupational roles. Super (1957) viewed a person's vocational preferences and career commitment as attempts to implement a *self-concept*. This term implies that a person selects, and grows out in, an occupation in which requirements of the work will provide a role consistent with his picture of himself. The self-concept implies a person's history of vocational preferences developed in a sequence during adolescence and implemented in adult life. Super illustrated that the entire process of development can be broken down into the following three different phases that indicate levels of one's vocational maturity: (1) fantasy stages, (2) tentative stages, and (3) realistic stages. For this approach, the career development is assumed to follow the

vocational image established in early stages of one's life cycle, and changes in adult life are interpreted as simply an elaboration of, or variation on, an already established theme.

Hall (1971) proposed a similar concept, *career subidentity*, to explain changes and growth in the career phenomenon. He defined career subidentity as an aspect of person's identity that is engaged in working in a given career area. According to Hall, occupational choice is a process of subidentity selection, and career growth is conceived of differentiation and adjustment of the career subidentity. That is, as the person acquires more knowledge, ability, or motivation related to his career role, his career subidentity grows, i. e., creation of new aspects of the self. Hall continued that experience of success in attaining career goals generates feelings of psychological success, increasing self-esteem and reinforcement of needs for a competent identity. These experiences, then, enhance career commitment of the individual and prepare conditions for proceeding to the higher stages of development.

Both self-concept and career subidentity theories emphasize the integrating function of personality in career-related decisions of the individual, and provide a simple framework to relate seemingly random or exogenously induced incidents occurring in one's career as internally consistent events. However, the framework tends to overdetermine the process of development due to the rigid assumption on personality. In addition, these theories seem too grand and descriptive to be analytical of the important conditions that will facilitate, or deter, the process of career commitment in the organizational and occupational settings.

Contrary to the psychological explanation of career development as discussed above, the sociological approaches tend to emphasize the impact of the organizational structure upon the process of career development. Becker (1964) pointed out that the social structure of the organization and its patterned effects upon the individual is the

key to explain the phenomena of career development. According to Becker, the process of development can be summarized by two key concepts, the situational adjustment and commitment. The *situational adjustment* is a process of changes in which individuals take on the characteristics required by the situations they participate in. Becker stated that the person, as he moves in and out of a variety of social situations, learns the contingency for continuing in each situation and for success in it. If he has a desire strong enough to continue, the ability to assess what is required, and can deliver the required services, the individual turns himself into the kind of man the situation demands. Becker added that sequences and combinations of small units of situational adjustment produce the large units of role learning that makes development possible. The concept of *commitment* (Becker, 1960 and 1964) explains the consistency in the pattern of adjustments from one situation to another. According to him, a person is said to be committed when we observe him pursuing a consistent line of activity in a sequence of varied situations. The committed action is marked by the actor's rejection of other, situationally feasible alternatives in favor of choosing one particular course of action that best suits his goals. Becker suggested that in so doing, he often ignores the principle of situational adjustment and carries on his consistent line of activity in spite of short run losses. In other word, the process of commitment consists in linking one's past decisions and choice behaviors with his present and/or future course of action to maintain behavioral consistency. This consistency is a critical part of development strategies by which the individual can convert fruit of his past adjustments into resources for future development.

Using our terminology, commitment is defined as a process of investing one's time and energy toward the attainment of a career target. The career targets can be any role positions directly connected with a given career role of the individual, and equipped with

the higher level of resource allocation of the organization. Targets are a subset of a career goal: they can be derived from a given role position of the individual, accessible after a certain level of investment within a relatively short time period, and leading to the attainment of a career goal lying beyond a sequence of targets. By definition, attaining a target changes one's position in the structure of resource allocation in the organization. Commitment is conceived of a process of acquiring additional organizational resources, and it is this resource acquisition that makes career development possible. Then, the next question is, what are the resources, and how they are connected with roles of the individual within the environment of career development?

Development evolves within the career environment. Career environment is defined as a subset of organizational resources connected with a given career role of the individual. The environmental resources can be classified into the following three categories: positional, personal, and interpersonal resources. Positional resources consist of, (1) terms and conditions of employment including pay and benefits, (2) the quality of work itself, (3) legitimate right to access to the material-financial resources of the organization (machine, equipment, facilities, budget, manpower, etc.), and (4) the formal decision-making authority connected with one's position. Personal resources may consist of the personality components of the individual: skills, abilities, knowledge, intelligence, motives, values and beliefs, goal preferences, and so forth. These factors belong to the individual, and their utilization is largely subject to the individual's initiative, but they are a part of the organizational resources as often mentioned: "Our employees are our most important—our most valuable—assets" (Brummet, *et al.*, 1968). Interpersonal resources may consist of chances by which one individual can receive from the other valuable services such as, support, cooperation, trust, influence, friendship, and the like. These are "properties" of two or more individuals, and thus, if one

of them "uses" up these properties, they no longer become available between him and the other person(s) to the relationships. However, as long as these properties are maintained, they will function as a very important set of resources such that parties to the relationships can account for receiving critical services from one another beyond the formal structure of organizational resource allocation. Although interpersonal resources are created, owned, and exchanged informally, they are still an important category of resources of the organization, and both the individual and the organization can be greatly benefitted from proper management of these resources.

The concept of commitment advanced by Becker (1964) suggests that one invests his time and energy in a given role position expecting that the greater the investment, the higher becomes the chances that he will attain the proposed career target, i.e., making the shift in his resource position within the environment for career development. In the following, we will examine what conditions in the career environment will make investment feasible for the individual in the process of development.

Structures of Resource Allocation within the Organization

A resource theory of the organization suggests that the organization is conceived of a system of resources structured to serve as a means to attain goals of collaboration, and to satisfy personal interests of each individual who collaborates. Structurizing the pattern of resource allocation, rather than subjecting allocation to a competitive process, becomes a prerequisite for any attempts of organizing, because the structure stabilizes and coordinates processes of division of labor on the one hand, and induces commitment, or investing behaviors, of the individual on the other. The structure will define rules and regulations for distributing (transferring and delegating) organizational resources among members of the organi-

zation so that the structure can answer formally the following two basic questions associated with the allocation problems; How much of resources should be connected with each functional role of the organization? How, and by whom, should each role position be occupied? "A right person to a right place" is not the answer to the questions, because the questions themselves are asking who is the right person, and what is the right place? Our definition of development suggests that the following two propositions should be the criteria by which a pattern of resource allocation can be designed in the organization to answer the above distributive questions. (1) Resource distribution to the individual is to be made as an increasing function of investment. (2) The investing behavior of the individual is to be accompanied by the increasing value of his personal resources prompted by the process of learning. Figure 1 illustrates how a pattern of resource allocation can be structured in the organization to incorporate the above key propositions.

In Figure 1, the process of development is displayed as a combination of two cyclical phenomena. One of the cycle shown on the leftside half in the diagram illustrates (using solid lines) a sequence of events consisting of, commitment—→investment—→evaluation and selection—→acquisition of organizational resources—→positional change. The other cyclical phenomenon shown on the rightside half in the diagram (using dotted lines) displays similar sequence involving, learning processes—→acquisition of personal resources—→increased value of human capital—→acquisition of organizational resources—→positional change. The organization for development needs to promote two cyclical processes to attain development to an optimal extent simultaneously so that the limited amount of resources can be utilized to ensure the development of both the individual and the organization. Components of the allocative structure that will regulate the cycles of development will be discussed below.

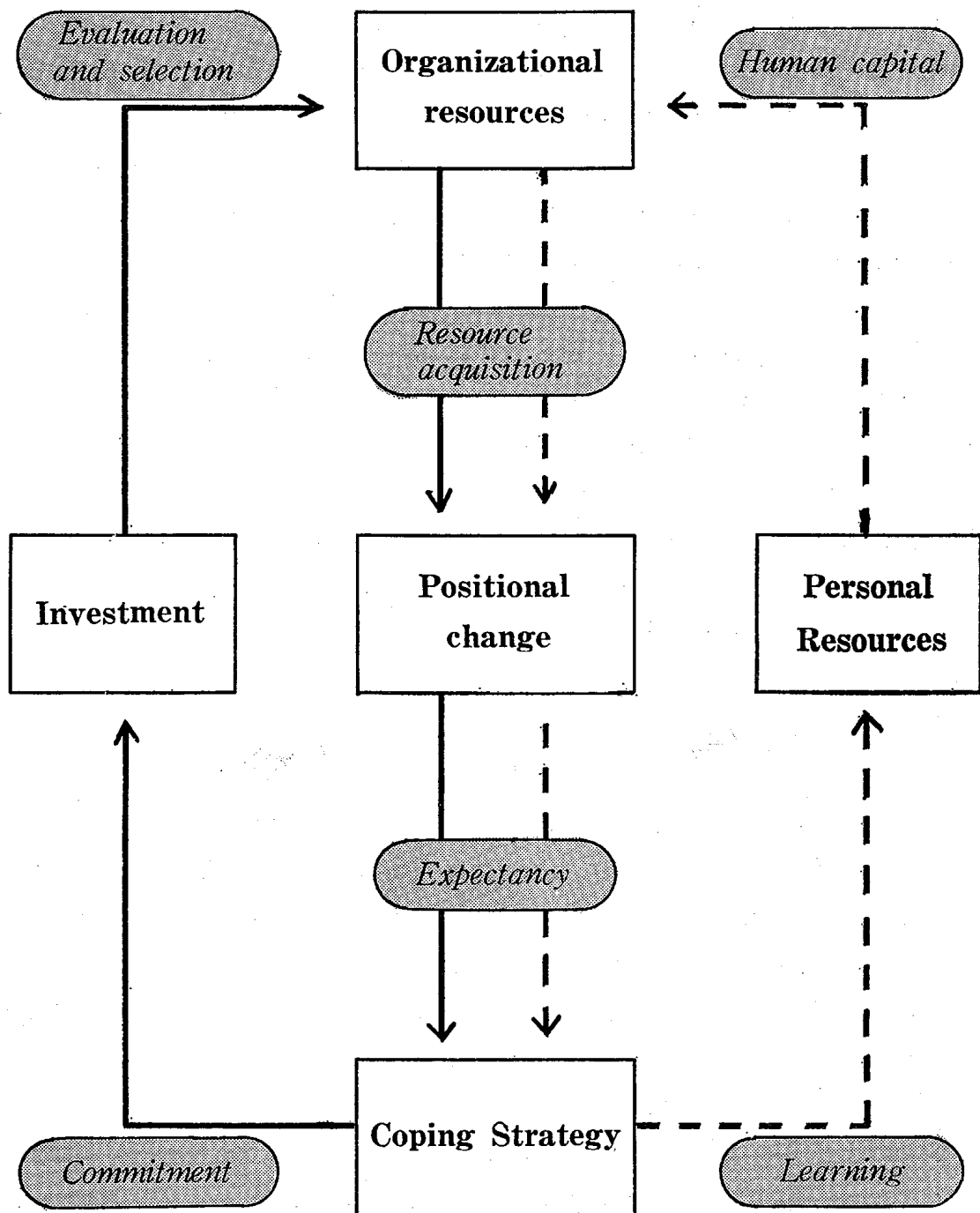


Figure 1. The process of resource acquisition and a pattern of organizational resource allocation.

1. **Investment function:** Suppose a person desires for investment in his occupational roles for development, he may want to know what combination of his time and energy allocation on his career

role activities will lead to the attainment of his desired investment level. This question may represent a "predictor" problem from an investor's point of view. On the other hand, from the organization's point of view, the question is what behaviors of the individual should be credited (or decredited) as contributing to the profit (or loss of it) of the organization. This may represent a "criterion" problem from the evaluator's point of view. The classical dichotomy, cosmopolitans and locals, or professionals and generalists (Gouldner, 1960), may suggest that the investment function may have a quite different character between the two occupational groups. The thesis indicates that for the highly professionalized jobs, a set of universalistic and highly specified criteria by which the individual role activities are guided and evaluated can be identified, whereas for the generalist's jobs such criteria may be more particularistic and diffuse. However, the occupational difference between cosmopolitans and locals seems to be a relative matter from our approach of organizational career development: Cosmopolitans working under the bureaucratic organization—doctors in large general hospitals, scientists and engineers in the R & D department of the private corporations, lawyers, accountants, etc. employed by large offices and firms, and so forth—have to go through exactly the same process of resource acquisition for their development as what locals are doing. Thus, regardless of differences in the occupational categories, it is critical for the individual in the process of organizational career development that he can formulate a strategy to accomplish investment on his given occupational role. Corresponding to the above condition for the individual, the organization must be able to show explicitly a set of criteria by which the individual's investment is guided and evaluated.

2. *Schedule of selection and expectancy of being selected:*

As Becker (1964) suggested, development is only possible by a com-

Organizational Career Development

mitted action—the person must subordinate immediate situational interests to goals that lie outside the situation. However, the critical factor that makes commitment possible is that the person has a high level of subjective probability, or expectancy, that commitment pays off. If he were skeptical about the outcomes of commitment, it will be very difficult for him to subordinate interests that benefit him immediately to future goals. Also, it is necessary that the organization establishes a clear schedule for the selection of personnel and to make consistent decisions upon whom to move, when, how, and at what “speed” (Schein, 1971, p. 402). It is the establishment of this kind of schedule that enables the individual to have a clear expectancy about the outcomes of his commitment. Therefore, the second condition for the organizational career development may be that given that the individual knows how to behave for investing, he can also have unambiguous expectancy about acquiring his career target as a function of his level of investment.

The idea of promotion-from-within is a basis for formulating organizational policies on human resource utilization. A study conducted by Campbell and his associates (1970) reported that out of the organizations they surveyed on the basis of its progressive policies on human resource development, almost all organizations (96 percent) believed in filling positions from within their own organizations. In addition, the most frequent estimate reported by the executives and personnel people of the sample organizations was that at all levels of management, at least 90 to 95 percent of managers had come from either one of the following three internal sources: promotion from nonmanagerial jobs, promotion from lower level of managerial jobs, and lateral transfers. The authors cited that studies done by Megginso (1963), Pamplin (1959), and Newcommer (1955) are reporting similar statistics about the internal utilization of managerial resources. However, the important question is how to administer the system of promotion-from-within. Campbell and

his associates discussed three schedules of personnel selection: schedules based upon (1) experience and seniority, (2) strict performance evaluation, and (3) the assessment center method. These three are not necessarily alternatives, but probably integral parts of the elaborate system for the internal manpower selection.

Expectancy on attaining a career target and a goal may be determined by (1) the degree of stringency in an evaluation and selection schedule of the organization, (2) the time required for reaching each successive stage of development, and (3) an individual's estimate on his potentials for development, or the "self-esteem" (Korman, 1967). The stringency and the time factors will constitute the level of goal difficulty. It is known that the goals which are intermediate in difficulty tend to motivate the candidates most toward the attainment of the goal, while too easy and too difficult goals tend to be avoided as targets of commitment (Locke, 1968). This thesis suggests that the organization's scheduling of resource allocation requires a design to avoid the two extreme situation: stringent selection after a long period of commitment (difficult goals that will be associated with low expectancy of success), and lenient selection within a short-time period (easy goals with very high expectancy of success). Instead, the schedule may require a design with moderately stringent selection within relatively short period of time. These design features will produce a stimulating environment for career development in which equal chances of success and failure challenge individual efforts, and failure for the first trial allows success for the next. A self-esteem theory of carrer development (Korman, 1967) suggests that those who estimate their potentials highly tend to have higher expectancy of attaining difficult career goals and targets than those who have a low estimate. This theory indicates that the choice of career targets may be a function of the individual estimate of his career potentials. However, an important question is to what extent the individual's estimate can be correct.

Organizational Career Development

If the individual either underestimate or overestimate his abilities to grow, then, how can the organizational schedule for evaluation and selection help the individual formulate "realistic" expectancy on his career development. This question implies costs of commitment, because it is the error in expectancy that induces high costs of commitment (or noncommitment) for both the individual and the organization.

3. Cost of commitment: Decisions on commitment or noncommitment may depend on relative costs, economic as well as psychological, involved in each decision. Expectancy that career development may be more prosperous in the organizations elsewhere, will make the present commitment in the given organization more costly than otherwise would be the case. However, the decision to change the organization based on the above expectancy involves cost arising from the type-I error, i.e., cost that would be incurred by leaving when staying with the organization is the right answer. In addition, to the extent one is involved in socio-cultural aspects of the organization, changing the organization incurs psychological costs of losing them, and assimilating to the new social environment elsewhere. On the other hand, the decision to stay committed to career development available in the given organization involves cost of type-II error that would be incurred by not taking chances of changing the organization when the change actually pays off. Young mobile managers as Jennings (1967) reported may be highly sensitive to the type-II error in their career decisions. Therefore, they become very active in searching information on job market, willing to take chances, and ready to move from one organization to another. On the other hand, the permanent employment system, or the rigid seniority system, is capitalized on type-II error when the system creates expectancy that encourages overestimate on cost of type-I error and, in turn, underestimate on chances of type-II error, along

with the individual's emotional attachment to the system. Cosmopolitans may be more sensitive to the type-II error than locals, probably because of the relatively high transferability of investment for cosmopolitans from one organization to the other. This indicates that for the highly professionalized people, investment accomplished in one organization can be transferred without discount, or with premium perhaps, to another organization, thus minimizing the risk on type-I error associated with changes of the organization.

One of the most important problems for the organizational career development may be the cost of career decisions incurred by erroneous expectancy on one's development. It is likely that decisions on stay or leave, choice of targets, investment strategy, and commitment may be made based upon incorrect expectancy on chances of future development. The preceding discussions on the formation of expectancy suggest that the frequent interaction between the individual and the organization is the key for both parties to come to share realistic expectancy on potentials for development. The interaction must be facilitated such that the individual is challenged by moderately demanding assignments rather frequently followed by feedback on his performance. This will enable the individual to formulate a new target for the next stage of commitment. In sum, since the organizational career development requires commitment over a long period of time, it is critical that the individual and the organization come to share a realistic expectancy on the outcomes of commitment so that both of them can reach decisions that will minimize the cost of commitment.

4. *Individual's learning and human capital gains of the organization:* For our approach, the key proposition is that the process of resource allocation is to be made balancing gains in human capital values for the organization with the investment of the individual. As Mills (1975) emphasized, the belief that both the

Organizational Career Development

individual and the organization will be better off by accelerating the cyclical processes of development must be the basis for promoting programs for human resource development. The development model displayed in Figure 1 indicates that facilitating individual's learning can be a strategic means for such programs of human resource development. To promote the process of learning, it is necessary that various training methods such as, coaching from supervisors, job rotation, in-company training courses, off-the-job courses and training programs, and so forth are systematically utilized in addition to encouragement of self-development efforts of the individual. Training will be effective when opportunities for learning occur in close connection with career progression (Schein, 1971). This implies that the training programs must be developed as an integral part of career design of the organization. The establishment of career design reinforced by comprehensive training programs will make it possible for the organization to have flexible planning and utilization of human resources, and for the individual to have clear expectancy on the outcomes of commitment.

"Manpower chaos" implies a situation in which the human development system of the organization is out of equilibrium: one person's personal resource is overutilized while that of the other person is underutilized. In this situation, a given amount of services required by the organization has to be produced by person A using more organizational resources (positional and interpersonal) than would be used by person B to produce the same, or more, units of services that the organization needs. At the extreme, under this circumstance the entire system of career development (training, performance evaluation, selection, etc.) may turn into a mere lip-service, and the structure of resource allocation becomes a tool for internal politics, or a part of the organizational rituals of status giving to reinforce loyalty. To avoid this situation, it is imperative for the organization to establish a system-wide manpower development pro-

gram in which various training methods are systematically utilized to minimize the gap between resource allocation and the productive value of human assets of the organization.

Determinants of Career Progress for the Newcomer to the Organization

For our study, career progress of the college graduates recruited by the large industrial organizations in Japan will be examined based on data collected over the first three years of recruits' experience in their employment organizations. The unique organizational controls imposed by our sample Japanese organizations upon career development of our newcomers gave us an excellent opportunity to study the career development phenomenon under the quasi-experimental settings. That is, (1) all newcomers sampled for our study were male, college graduates fresh from the school. They were considerably homogeneous with respect to the age and educational background, and they had no experience of formal employment prior to recruitment. (2) All subjects were tested and selected as having potentials to fill middle and upper management positions in each sample organization. Employment involved the idea of lifetime relationship between the recruit and the organization. Therefore, it is assumed that all newcomers had high expectancy, at least at the point of employment, of attaining their career goals within the given organization. (3) They went through the same training programs for establishment in each organization. They were also subject to the supervision by the central personnel office with respect to the key personnel decisions. (4) All recruits started their career at the bottom level of managerial hierarchy, but with different role assignments depending upon differences in their major fields.

The employment conditions discussed above may suggest that the initial situation for career development seems pretty well con-

Organizational Career Development

trolled. To explain why, then, the difference in the extent of career progress emerges among the new recruits during a initial period of career development, the following three propositions were advanced based upon our resource theory of organizational career development.

1. The first proposition states that it is the difference in abilities, knowledge, intelligence, motivation, etc. (i.e., the difference in personal resources) that creates differential outcomes of the career progress among individuals. This proposition implies that each recruit is actually different with respect to his potential to grow at the beginning, and thus, if the assessment of his kind of potentials can be made perfectly at the point of employment, the extent of progress each recruit attains subsequently can be predicted with considerable accuracy. For our model, potentials may imply the individual's capability to deal with environmental pressures, to learn from experiences, and to commit to a given line of investment. However, one of the problems associated with this proposition is how to define and assess individual's potentials beyond a general examination for employment qualification.

2. The second proposition states that it is not abilities or potentials of the individual, but the quality of career environment that produces the difference in outcomes from a developmental process. As discussed earlier, the new recruits may face different career environment depending upon their role assignments, although they are basically under the same organizational control for career development. This second proposition assumes that development is a process of conforming to the environmental pressures at each stage of career progression, but the choice of the environment is beyond the control of each individual. This is particularly true for the newcomer to the organization. Therefore, according to this proposition, the progress in one's career occurs only to those who are fortunate enough

to have an environment with favorable conditions for promoting their development. Since environmental pressures may not necessarily be responded by conforming behaviors all of the time, the key to the second proposition may be that, to what extent the newcomer sees the conformity as a relevant strategy to the attainment to his career goals. Thus, the second proposition may require at least the following two conditions to be predictive of the career progress: (1) the newcomer can find targets for commitment as relevant to the attainment of his career goal, and (2) he sees the immediate environment of his work encouraging investment to reach the target.

3. The third proposition indicates that it is the quality and quantity of interpersonal resources one can acquire that makes difference in career progress among the individual. For our theory, provided that the newcomer has a given amount of positional and personal resources at the start of his career, it will be the difference in interpersonal resources (i. e., support, influence, trust, etc. provided by the other person) that will cause variations in the course of development. The acquisition of interpersonal resources implies access to, and utilization of, the other person's resources, within a certain limit, to help develop one's own position. As stated earlier, interpersonal resources can be created, maintained, and distributed informally between the two or more individuals. This indicates that parties to this informal relationship will come to develop interdependence in resource utilization beyond the formal structure of the organization. The informal system of resource exchange must emerge within the organization, simply because of the fact that if a person wants to do a good job that other people will appreciate, he often finds positional and personal resources given to him are quite insufficient to do so. Likewise, if a newcomer to the organization has a strong needs for growth, he will face a lack of resources. Then, he will search for the extra resources that might be available in the environ-

ment, and involve in exchange relationships with the other persons to acquire needed services from them. Thus, the third proposition states that it is the amount of interpersonal resources one can acquire that explains variations in outcomes of a developmental process. Particularly, for the newcomer to the organization, the amount of support, attention, influence, and the like that he may receive from his immediate supervisor will be critical for him to grow within the organization.

It is interesting to see that our propositions stated above can find close relations with research results reported in the area of managerial resource development. First, studies conducted by the *assessment center* method (Bray and Grant, 1966; Dunnette, 1971; Finkle, 1976) will provide us some evidence to support our first proposition concerning the effects of personal resources of the individual upon progress. Bray and his associates (1966 and 1974) conducted a pioneering study in this field. In their study, a group of college graduates who were recruited by the Bell Telephone Companies went through a series of testing sessions called the assessment center. The recruit's performance on each test was rated by the assessment staff members along 25 psychological dimensions assumed to be predictive of newcomer's progress in the organization. In addition, staff members rated the overall potential of each recruit based on all test information. Then, the predictive validity of overall ratings was tested using the level of managerial responsibility each recruit attained after eight years in the Bell system as a criterion outcome of managerial progress. It was found that the overall potential identified and rated at the beginning of recruit's career was predictive of the managerial levels attained after eight years. Moreover, the factor analysis conducted based upon the 25 development variables produced the following 7 dimensions as responsible for defining the domain of personal resources of the individual: (1)

administrative skills, (3) interpersonal skills, (3) control of feeling, (4) intellectual ability, (5) work-oriented motivation, (6) passivity, and (7) dependency (The last two dimensions had negative effects upon progress).

For the second proposition, studies on *organizational socialization* may provide supportive evidence. This approach assumes that the progress in the organization is a result from a particular mode of adaptation to the organizational pressures for socialization. Merton's classical typology on the mode of adaptation (Merton, 1957) suggests that the "innovation" is the mode of adaptation that is more relevant to the progress in the organization than the other four modes he specified, i.e., conformity, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. Likewise, Schein (1971) proposed a concept similar to the Merton's innovation. He suggested that the "creative individualism" can be the strategy to be chosen by the individual in the process of development, because it enables him to cope with socialization pressures effectively without sacrificing his initiative to promote investment for the progress. However, empirical data on organizational socialization report that the nature of work environment for the newcomer to the organization very often prohibits him from taking on innovative roles, rather it tends to press him to adopt one of the noninnovative roles as specified by Merton and Schein. For example, many studies disclosed that the newcomer to the organization who tends to have an idealistic image on his job and career, the starting job and its environment are perceived too anemic to be creative, and the organization's practices for socialization are felt pressing obedience (Dunnette, *et al.*, 1973; Bray, *et al.*, 1974; Berlew and Hall, 1966; Schein, 1964; Porter and Steers, 1973; Graen, *et al.*, 1973; Graen, 1976). But, these studies also reported that if one was fortunate enough to be assigned to a challenging job with pressures encouraging innovation at the start of his career, then he would attain higher level of performance on the job, and become more

prepared for later job assignments. Schein (1964) emphasized that socializing practices of the organization based upon the stereotype image on the nature of newcomers are more likely to create "disillusionment" on the part of the newcomer that will depress his initiative to innovate, but solicit conforming, or rebelling, behaviors against the pressures for socialization. In sum, the socialization proposition stresses that the quality of work environment at the initial stages of development, i.e., the socialization period, has a critical impact upon the subsequent process of organizational career development. If it is good, everything that follows in later stages of one's career becomes nice and smooth, and vice versa.

A series of studies conducted by Graen and his associates (Graen, *et al.*, 1973; Dansereau, *et al.*, 1975; Graen, 1976) raised evidence to support our third proposition. Using a longitudinal research method, these studies documented that the newcomer to the organization can start changing the environment for his career progress by acquiring interpersonal resources from his immediate supervisor. The study conducted by Dansereau and his associates (1975) reported that the newcomer will receive critical assistance from his supervisor through a resource-exchange relationship, what they called a *vertical exchange*. The result of their study indicated that the quality of a vertical exchange each newcomer acquired during early stages of work experience was predictive of his subsequent role behaviors and progress in the organization. That is, the high-exchange newcomers reported higher level of leadership support and attention, lower dyadic problems, more satisfaction with their jobs, and a pattern of role behaviors preferred by the supervisor, compared to those having a low-exchange relationship with their supervisor during the period for role making within the organization. This *role making* proposition suggests that if a newcomer has strong needs for growth, he will try to exploit his environment in the acquisition of extra resources to enrich the content of his role. (So

will do his supervisor who is the most significant person in his role-set members!). For this proposition, the newcomer is conceived of an "optimizer" (Seashore and Yuchtman, 1967) in a sense that he seeks potential resources in the environment, and try to utilize them to an optimal extent. Studies conducted by Graen and his associates suggest that the interpersonal resource with the supervisor may be the most important object in the environment which is accessible to the newcomer. These studies also displayed that the process of resource acquisition involves rules of exchange specifying the nature of the process beyond a general principle of social exchange (Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1958). According to the role making model, the transaction requires an exchange of critical services between the newcomer and his supervisor in such that the newcomer's investment helps the leader achieve goals of his work unit, and the leader's support in turn gives extra resources for the newcomer to develop his investment and learning on the role. The major thrust of the role making model to our proposition is that role development of the newcomer to the organization can be enhanced, and integrated with the effectiveness of the work group through proper utilization (creation, exchange, and recreation) of interpersonal resources.

Summary

Our propositions advanced here will be called in order (1) the assessment center model, (2) the organizational socialization model, and (3) the role making model for managerial career progress. The organization's policy on managing its career development system can be formulated as any of the above models. However, an ideal policy may integrate the three approaches so that their combination will best facilitate the processes of development illustrated in Figure 1.

The purpose of our study is to empirically test these three

models, based on the first-three year career progress of the college graduates recruited by the large industrial organizations in Japan. What factors in the interrelationships between the newcomer to the organization and the career environment will come to determine the level of his progress during the early periods of his experience with the organization? In a subsequent paper, we will report and discuss the results of our empirical testings of a set of hypotheses derived from each of these three models.

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Organizational Career Development

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