

# A Comparative Analysis of Age Based Career Stage Models Needs and Characteristics at Various Career Stages

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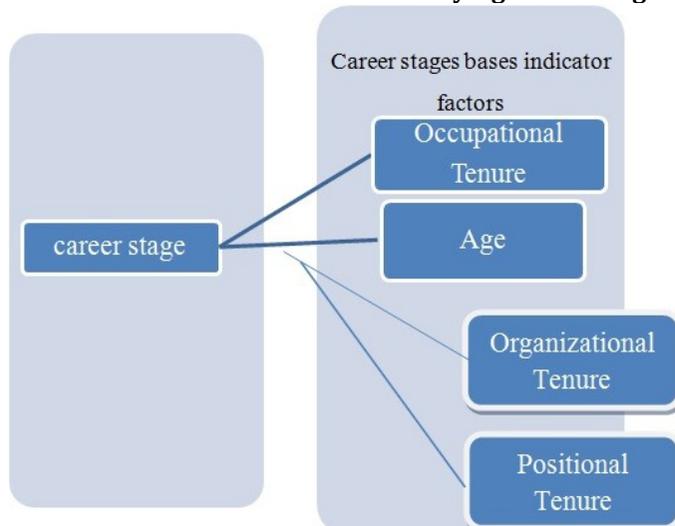
**ABSTRACT:** The researchers have made an attempt to find the comparative picture of various age based career stage models in the reference of employee's needs and characteristics at different career stages. The paper describes how a career stage influences the needs of an employee. The purpose of the research is to acquire deeper insight into the various age based career stage models proposed by various eminent researchers vis a vis identifying the career needs and characteristics associated with these stages. The entire exposition is supported by relevant literature review. So, the study is exploratory in nature.

**Key Words:** Career stages, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, Decline, Career needs.

## I. Introduction

Career is the sequence of experiences throughout the life time of an individual. An individual go through the various phases in the career called career stages. Career stages are related with the job and job related attitude through which an employee seeks to define and clarify in their needs and values. The number of researchers proposed various career stage models in that they classified career stage by taking organizational tenure, occupational tenure, positional tenure and most important employee's age as the base indicators. The literature review shows that age is the most supported base indicator for identifying career stages. First age based career stage model was proposed by Super. Later on Levinson and Erickson also proposed their career stage model based on age. These models were followed by Cron, Hall, Miller and many more researchers. This paper is focused on only age based career stage models. In the paper the researchers tried to give comparative picture of various career stage models on the basis of nomenclature of career stages given by the researchers and needs or characteristics of an individual associated with these career stages. The literature review shows that there is ambiguity in terms of number of career stages, name of the career stages and age limit of each career stage. So, there is a need to remove this ambiguity and find a theoretical career stage model for any HR purpose research. The aim of the researcher is to bring a comparative picture of the opinion of various researchers on different career stages and their respective career needs & characteristics of the employees and give a theoretically age based career stage model for future research.

**Picture 1: Base indicators for identifying career stages**



## II. Objectives of the study

1. To compare different age based career stage model given by the researchers.
2. To identify the employees needs and characteristics at various career stages for different career stage models.

## III. Career Stage models based on age

### Super career stage model

Career stage model is initially developed by Super in 1957. He explained individual's experiences in four stages of concerning career - trial, establishment, maintenance and decline or disengagement. He states that each employee chronologically passes through these four career stages. Further in 1978 Super explored his life stage model .He explained five stages -Growth (1-14), Exploration (15-24), Establishment (25-44),Maintenance (45-64)and Decline (65 above) years. Super's first career stage growth is same as childhood career stage given by Erickson. Super explained that in the second stage exploration an individual tries to choose the best suitable and correct occupation. This stage can be associated with early transition in Levinson and Adolescence in the Erickson's model. In this stage individual explore the available options and try to associate with one organization which is best suitable to his expectations. In establishment stage an individual look for the commitment, involvement, and intimacy and to identify the aim of his /her life. It is same as Erickson's young adulthood stage. In maintenance stage, an individual demands for self esteem, self acceptance, settling down and try to involve in the work, where he / she can reassess or restate his achievements. On the bases of assessment and experience the individual accepts or changes his current job. It is similar to Erickson's Adulthood stage and Levinson's middle adulthood stage. In the last forth career stage decline stage it is very difficult to motivate the individual. In decline career stage employee's losses his interest in the job. This stage is similar to Maturity stage of Erickson's model.

Further this research has given the new direction by the other researcher that irrespective of the employee age (they belongs to) they can re-enter/enter these career stages if they find any changes in their career like change in job profile, organization, and occupation during their career. (Stout, Slocum, &Cron, 1987; Super D. E., 1984). It has observed that Super's career stage model is more appropriate and associated with the individual's job attitudes (Ornstein et al., 1989; Smart, 1998). In later years Savickas (2002) further substantiate similar stages in his developmental theory of vocational behavior.

### Levinson career stage model

Levinson et al. (1978)explored career stage model with six career stages. First stage isEarly Adult Transition stage (Age 18-22) is the first time when one is out from their comfort zone to join a new formal group; one is out first time from his comfort zone. Second is Movement into adult world: structure building (age 23-28) at this stage individual starts examine themselves and try to explore self, still dependent on superiors. Third is Transition (age 29-32) here individual just get settle down and try to reassess the occupational things, the individual try to change his/her identity. Forth is settling down and further structuring (age 33-40), in this individual is highly committed to the organization and needs recognition. Fifth is again Transition (age 38-42), Individual reassess the goals and ambitions, that defined in his early stage. Now individual is ready to accept the reality and restate their goals. He is more involved and committed to the work as well as for family. And last sixth stage is Imitation and middle adulthood (age above 40s) in this stage individual is less competitive. He has the desire to enjoy the life.

### Cron

In 1984 , Cron took super's career stage model as the base model (Super, 1957; Super, 1984) and also referred different career stage models (Hall &Nougaim 1968; Schein, 1971; Super, 1984; Super, 1957) successfully devised his own career stage model. He described four career stages on the bases of age as indicator factor. He abbreviated these four career stages as- exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement same as super's career stage model. And in his model and each stage is associated with some psychosocial needs. That needs influence the employee's effectiveness at each stage. He expressed concern about the influence of job tenure on all three variables in the motivation process, viz., valences, expectancies, and instrumentalities. According to him the three personal determinants of performance i.e., motivation, sales resources, and role perceptions are influenced by an individual's career stage. Hence, the need is to be identified correctly.

### Hall and Nougaim

In 1968, they introduced a three-stage career model: establishment, advancement and maintenance stage. In the establishment stage individuals are focused on safety needs, recognition and consolidation of oneself in the organization. Normally these are the initial expectations of the individual when they just got the job. From this stage employee starts his career in the organization and later on during this stage individual try to

fulfill their needs for achievement and esteem. This is the stage of hard work, performance and involvement for the individuals. In the next stage in -advancement, individual is focused on promotion and achievement. In this individual increase the competence and try to achieve the advancement in the career .It is contradict by Hall stated that the successful managers fulfill of their esteem and achievement need during the first years of their career. In the last third maintenance stage, the individual are near to the boundary of his advancement. In this stage individual find them self less competent, physically weak. But in the stage individual in more involved in help others to grow and strengthen the organization as a consultant.

#### Miller and Form

Miller and Form gave his career stage model in 1951, and he explained five stages based on the individual's job behaviors. In the first career stage individuals busy in prepare themselves for the work life, this stage is named as childhood. The second stage starts late teens; in this individual start their work life with part-time jobs. In late twenties or early thirties individual starts their full time work life. The last fourth stage starts from thirties to sixties. This stage covers the long period. In this individual tries to settle down, involvement, try for the higher position and moves to the retirement.

**Hall (1984) model** states that in the beginning stage of the career individual starts the process of self-directed career planning. In this stage individual also tries to develop skills through experience, training, coaching, and mentoring and performance management. In the Mid-career when individual have good career which create more interest at this stage through job rotation, special assignments, recognition and rewards for effective performance. In the later career individuals settled down and are more concerned about the future. At this stage individual need respect, recognitions, opportunities to take challenges. Individuals also need the mentoring role and they want to be financially secure for the after job life. Individuals start more concerning and want assurance about post job life. At the end of career with the organization there is chance to work part time for a period before they finely go considered for disengagement stage.

#### IV. Identifying most common career needs and characteristic of employees for the various career stages.

On the basis of literature review researcher tried to identify most common career needs and characteristics of an employee at various career stages. In the following table, researcher tabulated the career needs and characteristics of an employee given by various researchers based on the literature review.

**Table 1: Employees career needs and characteristics given by various researcher.**

| Career Stage                  | Age         | Needs and characteristics                       | Name of the Researcher                       |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---|--|
| Career Stage-I Exploration    | 15-24 years | Self Exploration                                | Super, Levinson and Hall                     |
|                               |             | Dependence on superior                          | Super, Levinson                              |
|                               |             | To adjust to the job                            | Super  |
|                               |             | Role confusion                                  | Super, Erickson, Levinson                    |
|                               |             | Inability to establish an occupational identity | Super, Levinson, Erickson                    |
| Career Stage-II Establishment | 25-44 years | To achieve and advanced in career               | Super, Levinson, Erickson                    |
|                               |             | Increase the competence                         | Super  |
|                               |             | Commitment                                      | Super, Levinson, Erickson                    |
|                               |             | Integrate work and personal sphere              | Super, Levinson                              |
|                               |             | Involvement                                     | Super, Levinson, Erickson<br>Miller and Form |
|                               |             | Intimacy  | Super, Levinson, Erickson                    |

|                              |                |  |  |
|------------------------------|----------------|--|--|
| Career Stage-III Maintenance | 45-60 years    | Restate and reassess achievements                    | Super, Levinson, Erickson                                      |
|                              |                | To search for alternatives and redirect efforts      | Super , Levinson, Erickson                                     |
|                              |                | Self acceptance                                      | Super  |
|                              |                | Settling down ,involved in work                      | Super, Levinson Miller and Form                                |
| Career Stage-IV Decline      | 60 above years | Stress to non work transition                        | Super  |
|                              |                | Loss interest in work /Desire to enjoy personal life | Super, Levinson and Hall                                       |
|                              |                | Mentoring role<br>Financially secure                 | Super, Dalton, Erickson<br>Levinson and Hall<br>Super and Hall |

**V. Findings and conclusion**

The researchers took super’s career stage model as the base model and strengthen the described career needs and characteristics with other researcher’s point of view. Finally the researcher synthesis a theoretically claimed model, with four career stages i.e. exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline for age group 15-24 years, 25-44 years, 45- 60 years and above 60 years respectively with respective career needs and characteristics of the employee. The above career stage model depicts that employees from age 15- 24 years belongs to exploration career stage and their career needs and characteristics are self exploration, dependence on superior, to adjust to the job, role confusion and inability to establish an occupational identity. Employees from age 25- 44 years belongs to establishment career stage and their career needs and characteristics are to achieve & advanced in career, increase the competence, commitment, integrate work & personal sphere, involvement and Intimacy. Employees from age 45- 60 years belongs to maintenance career stage and their career needs and characteristics are restate & reassess achievements, to search for alternatives & redirect efforts, self acceptance and Settling down & involved in work. Employees from age above 60 years belongs to decline career stage and their career needs and characteristics are feeling stressed for work to non-work transition, loss interest in work & desire to enjoy personal life.

**VII. Significance and future scope of the study**

The career stage models were initially proposed in 1970. Few researchers has done further research on those models and again modified them in terms of number of career stages, abbreviation of career stages, and range of each career stages. Few researchers developed new career stage models in terms of different conceptualization of career stage by taking different base indicator. But there is no modified or updated career stage model in respect of today’s changing scenario and changing perception of the employees. This research gave a theoretically claimed career stage model for future research in the area of HR. Following are the area which needs the further research-

1. There is a need to check the relevance of this theoretically claimed career stage model given by the researcher.
2. This research has done on the basis of age based theoretical career stage model; Organizational tenure and positional tenure are the area of future research.
3. This research has done only to identify career needs and characteristics of employees for each career stage, career development interventions can also be identify for each career stage.

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