

INVESTIGATING THE PREDECESSORS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM OMANI AND EMIRATI EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

Career Development is a continuous and formalized effort by an organization using HRM policies, that focuses on enhancing, enriching and empowering the organization's human capital to begin innovative and entrepreneurial activities to fulfill both the employee's and the organization's goals. This paper investigates the relation between career planning and career management as predecessors of career development and job satisfaction, and career commitment as its result. A sample of 550 employees of a reputed Omani and Emirati organizations revealed the important relation between the variables of career planning and career management, and career development which in turn leads to employee job satisfaction and career commitment. The paper presents the implication for employee career development.

Introduction

"A career is a general course that an employee chooses to pursue throughout his or her working life. Career development is a formal approach that ensures that careers are productive for employees until their retirement materializes, Edwards (2000).

Due to technological advancement and globalization, most of the organizations need to cope with the changes. Now a day's organizations are less willing to make long-term commitments to employees; even if they make, it is in exchange for flexibility about the roles and tasks the employees will perform. Increasingly, therefore, security lies not in employment but in employability. Individuals who want to maintain their employability have to be willing to regularly learn new skills. So careers are now increasingly seen not as being 'chosen' but as being constructed, through the series of choices about learning and work that people make throughout their lives. Career development in this sense need not be confined to the few: it can, and must, be made accessible to all. **(Why career development matters? By professor tony watt)**

Employees who participate in job training, continuing education and other types of professional development can refine and acquire new skill sets that could help advance their career. Career development not only provides opportunities for employees but also for employers. A more knowledgeable staff may translate into various advantages for employers. Building more well-rounded employees by preparing them to better handle tasks and be successful in their roles helps organizations become more effective and efficient. For example, cross-training employees would mitigate the loss of productivity while backfilling a position. **(Source-SHRM)**

For Career development individuals need to undergo change. According to Edwards (2000) there are different stages in human life leading to change for example age, opportunities for growth, and status are some of the elements causing change. The same motivators that are attractive to younger employees may not be as enticing to senior level members of an organization. Many of us are employees in the same professions, but possess different aspirations, social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, along with different levels of experiences that affect how we interact in our environments.

A research conducted by Edgar Schein (1975) depicts that there are five categories individuals can prepare and enhance their careers. Schein describes these categories as "Career anchors" and classifies them as Managerial Competence, Technical Competence, Security, Creativity and Autonomy. Each classified concept leads to recognition of different traits of employees and their desires, motivation, and circumstances that they foster in achieving opportunities and to satisfy their varying need within the organization. In order to succeed, Schein lists management's role in providing the leadership and making resources available as individuals pursue professional development.

In order to achieve any department goals, the management uses certain tools and techniques. An employee can finesse assignments by obtaining more tools and techniques through organizational feedback and experience. Career development is one of the important source through which an employee can obtain organizational feedback, providing mutual benefit to both employee and supervisor. Thus, Career development is not limited to classes, degrees and seminar or any other type of coursework. Michael Ward (2001)

Harry Carter (2001) identifies three important elements of any organization that employees need to focus on for career development. Carter lists these as Organizational Structure, Organizational Process, and Organizational Behavior. According to him the best way for any staff to succeed within the organization is to follow the policies that have been established to guide the operation of your particular organization. Carter further states that any policies that an organization has, must be formulated by the individual in charge of the organization, or their designee, and must be broad based enough to allow all members of a group to conform within the mainstream of group thoughts and actions. Career development would be an example of a policy that would accomplish just these objectives set within a given set of predetermined parameters. An organization which implemented career development program from the inception, reviewed and revised it periodically will be benefited in today's competitive environment.

In the opinion of Baruch (2004), career is the property of the individuals. In the past, organizations use to plan and manage employee careers, but from the last couple of decades individuals realized that they are responsible to foster their own careers, instead of relying completely on organizations career development support. Thus, **Career management** needs initiatives from both sides i.e. organizations as well as individuals to secure mutual benefits.

Al though in the last five decades, important career development theories and practices were developed, examined and defined (Leibowitz, Farren & Kaye 1986, McDaniels & Gysbers 1992, Herr 2001), but subsequently a well planned, systematic and formalized effort is needed to fulfill individuals career needs and organizations efficient human capital requirements. (Leibowitz, Farren and Kaye (1986).

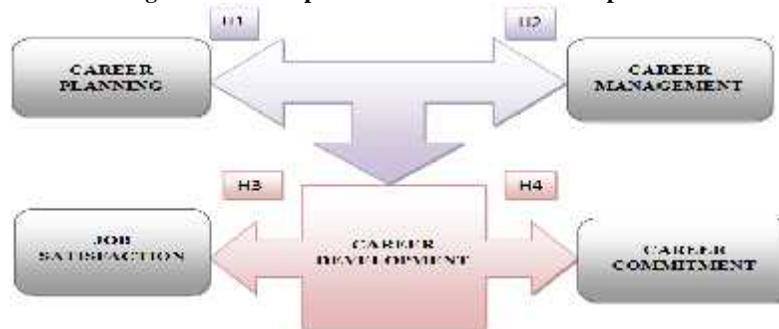
According to Hall and Associates (1986), proper career planning and career management leads to career development. To achieve organizational effectiveness, there is a need to change the traditional pattern, where the employees depend on the organizations for career enhancement. In the present time, employees need to take responsibility for their own career growth and development. (Martin, Romero, Valle & Dolan 2001). A well planned career development system facilitates organizations to tap their wealth of in house talent for staffing (Internal recruitment) and promotion by matching the skills, experience, and aspirations of individuals to the needs of the organizations. Career development helps the management to take informed decisions about compensation and succession planning and also to attract, retain and motivate the employees, there by resulting in a pool of productive workforce (Thite 2001, Kapel & Shepherd 2004, Kaye 2005). Furthermore, it should be noted that career development is not a onetime practice, rather it must be a continuous system linked with the organization's human resource (HR) structures and policies. (Leibowitz, et al.1988).

The various arguments discussed above shows the link between individual and organization in sustaining career development system. These arguments call for the research on the topic "predecessors and consequences of career development". This paper focus on the key variables that are linked to career development presented in conceptual framework below, it provides empirical evidence of the link between variables with respect to Oman and United Arab Emirates.

A Conceptual Model of Career Development

The following conceptual model (Figure 1) illustrates the predecessors of career development i.e., Career planning and Career management and its outcomes which is job satisfaction and career commitment. Here, the principal variable is career development which is acting as an intermediary and depicting the relationship between two primary independent variables, such as career planning and career management with the dependent variables, such as job satisfaction and career commitment. Based on this type of association, hypotheses has been setup and discussed in the following section.

Figure1: A Conceptual Model of Career Development



Career Planning and Career Development

Career planning is described as a deliberate process by which individuals become aware of various opportunities, limitations, options and consequences. Individuals identify career goals and setup program for work, education and other developments in order to provide direction, timing and sequence of steps leading to the achievement of those specific goals. Hall and Associates (1986), Leibowitz, Farren and Kaye (1988) also define career planning as a process by which individuals determine their skills, interests, and values.

According to Granrose and Portwood (1987) career planning is the first step towards the career development process. In fact, employees need to identify specific career development areas and decide about personal goals and development plans.

On one hand, Individuals are responsible for Career planning, they need to initiate career planning by recognizing their skills, interest and values and seek out their career options in order to setup career plans. Leibowitz, Farren and Kaye (1986).

On the other hand, organizations should assist employees by providing career planning tools or conducting workshops, offer vocational counseling, or use career resource centre to guide employees to conduct self assessment, analyze and evaluate their career options and preference, encourage the employees to list down their development objectives and prepare to implement the career plan (Hall & Associates 1986, Leibowitz, et al. 1988, Appelbaum, et al. 2002). These various opinions lead to the first hypothesis H1.

H1: Career planning has a positive impact on employee career development.

Career Management and Career Development

Career planning is followed by career management, which is another antecedent of career development. Individuals after career planning need to acquire appropriate skills, competencies and values to achieve career goals through career management process. Career management is a continuous process by which individual alone or with the help of organization's career system establish, enhance, apply and monitor their career plans. (Hall & Associates 1986, Greenhaus, et al.2000). In fact, career management is a self-monitored lifelong process. Further, it is observed that a well managed career have a positive impact on the individuals self-esteem and subsequently benefit the organization. (Greenhaus, et al. 2000, Martin, et al. 2001).

According to Greenhaus, et al.2000, individuals need to re-examine their career options and modify career paths in order to meet the various environmental changes such as change in business strategies and direction, downsizing, mergers and acquisitions and technological changes (Greenhaus, et al. 2000).

Morrison and Hock (1986) Hall & Associates (1986), Martin, et al. (2001) argues that both employees and organizations are responsible for proper career development. Organizations plans to match employee career interests and capabilities with organizational opportunities through career management which encompasses of various activities such as career systems, career counseling, job rotation and other career management tools and resource Gutteridge (1986). Hall & Associates (1986), states that the combination of both individual career planning and organization career management practice results in career development when the employee attains the career goals.

A study by Noe(1996) demonstrates the link between career management and employee career and performance development. The study result show advancement in the employee development activities and the managers play an important role in employee career management practice.(Appelbaum, et al. 2002). These arguments lead to the second hypothesis H2.

H2: Career management has a positive impact on employee career development.

Career Development and Job Satisfaction

Almost everyone in this world seeks job satisfaction, no matter whatever they do. Locke (1976), defined job satisfaction as “A positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”.(p. 1304). According to Hawthorne studies (**Give reference**), “happy worker is a productive worker.” Career development is considered as a key to employee job satisfaction. Institutions that implement career management practice are more likely to increase job satisfaction level among employees (Lee 2000).Job satisfaction is a kind of attitude towards work related conditions and aspects (Wiener 1982). Such an attitude, either in the form of liking, or disliking a job, is significant feature of career development (Jepsen and Sheu (2003). According to (Herzberg, Mausner & Sydenham 1959, Bartol & Martin 1998) there are certain motivators that lead employees to job satisfaction such as achievement, responsibility, work itself, recognition, growth, and achievement (Bartol & Martin 1998).

Jepsen and Sheu(2003) states that an employee experiences job satisfaction if he get engaged in a work that matches his occupational choices and interest. Chen, Chang and Yeh (2004) surveyed and found positive relation between career development program and job satisfaction, professional development and productivity. The present study further investigates the relationship between career development and job satisfaction, and this leads to the third hypothesis, H3.

H3: Career development has a positive effect on Job satisfaction.

Career Commitment and Career Development

The other positive outcome of Career development is employee commitment towards the organization. Career development opportunities leads to career commitment initiatives among employees. Kent and Otte (1982), stated that, employees apart from having pay check and fringe benefits need career development which intern increases loyalty and commitment towards the organization and its goals.

On the other hand, Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) also concluded that a positive relationship exists between job satisfaction, job advancement and propensity to remain in the organization.

Peterson and Tracy (1979) explains that career development is an effort towards evaluation of an employee’s potential, identifying suitable career paths for that employee and providing training and development programs to prepare employee for more advanced job.

(Granrose & Portwood 1987)Management can bind employees more closely to an organization by providing career related information and assistance to employees’ in achieving career goals, leading to career commitment. Through career development both the employee and the department will have greater advantages by having career options and paths that will keep employees interested and dedicated to their careers. **Edwards (2000)**

According to King (1999), the psychological forces such as self insight, self identity, and resilience in achieving career goals represent important components for career commitment and employee motivation, and for establishing cooperation, cohesiveness and consensus in an organization. These observations support the forth hypothesis H4.

H4: Career development also effects career commitment along with the increased level of job satisfaction.

Thus, the literature survey emphasizes the need for implementation of career development program in any organization regardless of its size. Based on the literature survey this research was conducted to investigate the impact of career planning and career management on career development and subsequently determining the impact of career development on job satisfaction and career commitment.

Methodology

Site and Respondents

Sample Size

A group of Omani and Emirati organizations were taken for the research. The primary respondents were full time employees. A total of 550 questionnaires were distributed out of which 523 employees, who were working across a wide continuum of jobs within these two counties, participated in the survey.

These participants were employed in different categories of jobs, which ranged from managerial functions to a variety of customer support job (e.g., General Managers, circle managers, head of the various departments in the organization, consultants and experts, teachers, police officers, lieutenant etc). Out of a total sample of 550 employees; the number of participation rate was 95.09 per cent (523 cadre). However, 23 questionnaires were invalid, leaving 500 valid questionnaires (90.90 per cent) for data analysis.

Methodology

Survey questionnaire was distributed to all of the participating employees. The survey instrument was administered in the select organizations over a period of 5 days. The employees were given particular time period for completing the questionnaire.

Participants were given explanation in advance about the important objective of this research, in order to encourage them to unambiguously and voluntarily participate in the research by filling the questionnaire genuinely at their best. Participants were guaranteed that the data they furnished would be treated with privacy. The survey was finished and returned amid the same session. Two versions of the questionnaire employed included an English version and an Arabic version, defining the same set of questions. Participating employees, who were less comfortable with English language, were encouraged to fill-in the Arabic version of the survey questionnaire, which was developed through an appropriate translation procedure.

Data Collection and Evaluation

There are three set of variables that were evaluated. Firstly, the demographic characteristics of the sample population such as gender age, marital status, nationality etc were evaluated. Secondly, responses related to the impact of two Independent variables, namely, career planning and career management on career development are assessed. Finally, the impact of career development on two dependent variables i.e. job satisfaction and career commitment were measured.

The primary data was collected through questionnaire as mentioned earlier. The questions used to evaluate career planning were based on King (1999), Gould (1979), and Coachline's career development needs survey (Available: <http://www.orghealth.com/cdn/>). A five point Likert scale that ranged from (1) strongly agree to (5) disagree strongly was used. The reliability alpha for career planning was 0.76. Chen, Chang and Yeh (2004), and Chay and Bruvold (2003) measurement scale were used for evaluating career management variable, the scale was related to the presences and importance of career management practices within the organizations under observation. A five point Likert scale where (1) strongly agree to (5) disagree strongly was used. The reliability alpha for career management was 0.89. To determine whether career planning and career management are essential factors that impact career development and how it is important, Coachline's (available: <http://www.orghealth.com/cdn/>) were used to prepare questions with a 5 point Likert scale. The reliability alpha for career development was 0.89. Job Satisfaction questions were adapted from the survey of Hackman and Oldham (1980). A five point Likert scale, were (1) strongly agree to (7) strongly disagree, was used. The reliability alpha for job satisfaction was estimated at 0.83. Lastly, career commitment questions were adopted from Chay and Bruvold (2003), and Colarelli and Bishop (1990) work with a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly agree to 2 as strongly disagree, with coefficient alpha at 0.84.

Analysis

Data analysis was carried out in four steps using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). In the first step, data robustness was recognized by using principal component factor analysis using varimax rotation option to ascertain the core factors linked with the independent, dependent, intervening variables measured. Queries which were repeated were excluded from the analysis. In the second step Cornbach's coefficient alpha is measured in order to determine internal consistency (or reliability) of the variables i.e. how closely related a set of variables are as a group using SPSS software. In the third step correlation analyses was conducted in order to measure the relationship between two variables. Finally, in the fourth stage regression analysis was employed for estimating the hypothesized relationships as depicted in the conceptual model of career development above.

Results

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the frequency of respondents by Education, age, marital status, ethnicity and gender. Out of a total number of 500 respondents, 60.60 per cent were male and 39.40 per cent were female indicating the large number of male participation in the evaluated Omani and Emirati organizations. In terms of ethnicity it is found that 54 per cent are Emirati whereas 38.2 per cent are Omani and only 7.8 per cent are expatriates. Almost 48.4 per cent of employees are married and 40 per cent are single. Furthermore, the highest age group (around 30.6 percent) was represented by participants between 25-34 age groups, while the lowest age group (3.2 percent) was represented by participants between 65-74 years old. It was interesting to note that almost 50.8 per cent of the participants were between the age of 18-34 indicating the employment of younger workers in the assessed Emirati and Omani organizations. Educational qualification of respondents show that only 17.6 % of the employees hold bachelors degree and hardly 5% have masters degree, whereas only 4% of the employees are professionally qualified. It can be observed that 15.8% employees went to some school and 15.4% employees hold diploma, whereas 11.2% are vocationally trained, 8.2 % employees posses college credit but no degree and 21.0% hold associate degree.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents % (N =500)

Gender	%	Ethnicity	%	Marital Status	%	Age	%	Education	%
Male	60.60	Omani	38.2	Single, Never Married	40.0	18-24 years old	20.2	Some School, no diploma	15.8
Female	39.40	Emirati	54.0	Married	48.4	25-34 years old	30.6	High school, Diploma	15.4
		Expatriate	7.8	Widowed	6.4	35-44 years old	20.0	College credit, no degree	8.2
				Divorced	4.4	45-54 years old	17.0	Trade/technical/vocational training	11.2
				Separated	0.8	55-64 years old	7.6	Associate degree	21.0
						65-74 years old	3.2	Bachelor's degree	17.6
								Master's degree	5.0
								Professional degree	4.0
								Doctorate degree	1.8

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

The mean and Standard deviations of the variable is presented in the table 2 below. The mean value of all the variables was approximately equal to two, which indicates a high degree of agreement from the participants. A five point Likert scale was applied to measure the variables, where 1 denotes “strongly agree” and 2 denotes “agree”. It was also observed that standard deviations for all the variables ranged from 0.838 to 0.915, signifying the data homogeneity.

The correlation between career planning, career management, career development, job satisfaction and career commitment is shown in Table 2 below. It is observed that all the variables are positively correlated. The two predecessors i.e. career planning (0.567) and career management (0.547) are strongly correlated to career development. Further, it is observed that among the two dependent variables of career development, job satisfaction is highly correlated at 0.809 whereas the career commitment is positively correlated at 0.230.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (N = 500)

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Career planning	Career Management	Career Development	Job Satisfaction	Career Commitment
Career Planning	1.872	0.838	1(0.756)				
Career Management	1.760	0.786	0.605**	1(0.887)			
Career Development	1.830	0.767	0.567*	0.547**	1(0.889)		
Job Satisfaction	1.883	0.8	0.565**	0.608**	0.809**	1(0.827)	0.386
Career Commitment	2.237	0.915	0.274**	0.262**	0.230**	0.386**	1(0.840)

Notes:

- S.D. = Standard deviation.
- ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
- Reliability alphas are presented in brackets

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to test the four hypotheses, as shown in conceptual model above. Table 3 below indicates whether career planning and career management has a positive impact on employee career development (H1). Table 3 indicates that 32.1 per cent of the variance was explained by the independent variable career planning providing some degree of confidence in concluding the result, the relationship is significant at $p < 0.001$. Table 3 also indicates whether career management has a positive effect on employee career development (H2). Table 3 indicates that 19.8 per cent of the variance was explained by the independent variable career management on career development. The evidence supported the second hypothesis at a significant level of $p < 0.001$ i.e. career management as a predecessor of career development.

Table 3: Regression Analysis for the Effect of Career Planning and Career Management on Career Development (N=500)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Adjusted R ²	F	T
Career Development	Career Planning	0.321	235.107	15.333*
	Career Management	0.198	129.554	7.130*

Notes: a. F = F statistic, t = t statistic
b. * $p < 0.001$.

The regression analysis results for hypotheses H3 and H4 are shown in table 4 below. It is observed that independent variable i.e. career development explains almost 65.4 per cent variance in job satisfaction and only 5.1 per cent variance in career commitment there by providing some degree of confidence in interpreting the results. Although both variables were significantly related at $p < 0.001$ level supporting H3 and H4, but one can observe that career development has a strong impact on job satisfaction in comparison to career commitment. Thus the regression analysis result is consistent with the result of correlation analysis (Refer table 2).

Table 4: Regression Analysis for the effect of career development on job satisfaction and career commitment (N=500)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Adjusted R ²	F	T
Job Satisfaction	Career Development	0.654	942.282	30.697
Career Commitment		0.051	27.731	5.266

Notes: a. F = F statistic, t = t statistic.
b. * $p < 0.001$.

Conclusion

This paper empirically investigates the relation between career planning and career management as predecessors of career development and job satisfaction, and career commitment as its result, as shown with the help of a conceptual model (Figure 1). The sample size taken was 500 employees of Omani and Emirati organizations. On one hand, the research focus on testing the hypotheses that career planning and career management are the predecessors of career development, and on the other hand job satisfaction and career commitment are the consequences of career development. The research findings indicate that both the antecedent variables i.e. career planning and career management have impact on career development and the result also indicate that career development in turn influences employee job

satisfaction and career commitment. Thus, the predecessors shown in conceptual model contribute towards the attainment of career development and its consequences. The results of the present study have suggestions with respect to career development especially for the Omani and Emirati organizations.

The findings imply that both career planning and career management had positive and statistically significant relationship with career development. This study supports the career development framework drawn by Hall and Associates (1986), Pua, P. & Ananthram, S.(2006) and Raed Ababneh (2013).The adjusted R^2 value indicates that career planning is more significant in comparison to career management in the process of acquiring career development.

The findings also imply that career development had positive and statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction and career commitment, thus the 2nd and 3rd hypotheses are accepted. It can be observed from the results that career development has a strong relationship with job satisfaction in comparison to career commitment.

A lot of empirical investigations were done in the past with respect to career development in different countries for example, Career Development in Organizations was studied by Hall and Associates (1986) in America, whereas Pua, P. & Ananthram, S.(2006) empirically explored the Antecedents and Outcomes of Career Development Initiatives in Singaporean hotel, Çi dem KayaI and Belgin Ceylan.(2014) studied the role of career development in the various organizations of turkey, Agba, A. M. Ogaboh; Festus Nkpoyen; Ushie, E. M.(2010) investigated the role of Career development and employee commitment in industrial organizations of Nigeria. Yasir Saleem.Y, Kamran.M, Sabir.F, Iqbal.J (2013) conducted an empirical study on Career Development as Imperative of Job Satisfaction and Career Commitment in Pakistan, Uvais. M (2012) empirically investigated Human Resource Management Practices With Reference To Job Satisfaction in India and Raed Ababneh (2013) empirically investigated the Antecedents and Outcomes of Career Development in Jordanian Public Sector.

This study was conducted considering the lack of empirical investigation on career development in the organizations based in Oman and Emirates; it integrates various predecessor and outcome variables together in the form of a broad career development framework. The findings of this research are of great importance to human resource managers, academicians, research scholars, and especially the human resource department of the assessed organizations in Oman and UAE.

The Human resource managers of the assessed organizations will be motivated to develop an employee career development strategy. Further it can be observed from the demographic analysis that there is lack of literacy among the employees, the organizational management must support employees in pursuing necessary education in their respective career field by providing employees with education benefits and flexible work time, so that employees can attain universities or college to fill the education gap. In order to avoid the problem of employee retention, organizations must encourage the employees to discuss their career expectations with the organizations, so that these organizations can setup programs for assessing employees in setting and achieving their career development goals. This kind of initiatives can have a positive impact on employees as it motivates employees towards career development and make them feel valued.

Future Research Directions

The following are the future research directions:-

1. Similar kind of future research can be carried out to examine the Predecessors and Consequences of Career Development Program focusing different type of industries in Middle East.
2. Based on this study, further, there is need to examine the Predecessors and Consequences of Career Development Program with larger data set.
3. Further, focus group sessions should be conducted for the staff to ascertain subjective evidence for the significant relation between the Predecessors and Consequences of Career Development Program.
4. Finally, the researcher scholars must determine the kind of career development policy that an organization must implement and why career planning surpasses the career management.

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