

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN ITS ANTECEDENTS AND OUTCOMES: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN

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Abstract: *The impression of strengthening human capital to promote innovation and creation by planning the careers of organizational members in light of HRM practices and policies and to develop distinct mentalities, competencies and skills with the sole objective of providing a series of novel services and products has been getting importance. The current paper dig into the importance of career planning along with the career management as input for the career development and career commitment, and career satisfaction as the output of this relationship. A sample of 395 teaching staff of the colleges of Malakand Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan was randomly selected for the current research. To test the hypotheses of the study, structural equation modeling as a statistical technique for analysis of the empirical data was employed. Empirical results supported all the hypotheses of the study. These results illustrated that career planning along with the career management are very important roots of the career development which further engenders career commitment and career satisfaction. These results also validated the mediating role of career development in the relationship of career management and career planning on the one hand as antecedents and career commitment and career satisfaction as outcomes on the other hand. The study has uniqueness in the sense that the study is the first one that tests these hypotheses in colleges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. And that is why the study has both academic and practical implications. At the end a few recommendations has been put forwarded for future research.*

Key words: Structure equation modeling; career development; career planning; career commitment, career management, and career satisfaction.

Introduction

Our current globalized world of business is characterized by continuous and unavoidable changes that are taking place on daily basis leading to downsizing/ rightsizing processes and restructuring, acquisitions and mergers, and technological progressions to deal with the active pressures of globalization (Baruch, 2004;

Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2009). Such constant shifts in the organisations have increased the level of importance for managing people at work, and specially, the managing and planning of their employment careers (Baruch, 2004). Career related issues are critical because they are matters of concerns for both the employee and employer. It is a composite process and the related theories of this composite process came into being in 1950s in the work of Anne Roe, John Holland, Eli Ginzberg, Donald Super and David Tiedeman (Herr & Shahnasarian, 2001). Career development involves a planned, formalized, and organized effort to create equilibrium between the organization's work force requirements and individual's career needs. Literature on careers in the 1990s remained focused on the practices of career development covering a widespread range of career related issues, organizations and populations (Adekola, 2011).

Career is a lifelong process composed of some patterned work related experiences. These experience inter alia, job positions, work related decisions, works related activities or duties; and subjective interpretations of job and associated events, such as work aspirations, values, expectations, needs, wants and feelings about any specific work, related to a class of individual is called as career (Greenhaus et al., 2009). Evidently, only a job is not a career, it is the collective name of a process, attitude and behaviour, and a situation in an individual's work life with the aim to accomplish some work related goals. According to Baruch (2004), although career is the attribute of an individual, it is the responsibility of the organisation to plan and manage the career of their employees and therefore, is a joint responsibility of taking care of the career management for maximum benefit for both. Proper investment in the career planning and career management of individuals enables them to harvest the fruits of such investment by achieving in the form of career development. According to Greenhaus et al. (2009) the development of career is a continuous process by which individuals move on with a chain of steps, every step is characterized by a comparatively distinct themes, issues, and unique set of tasks.

Organizations take initiatives for career planning and career development with the purpose to enhance the experiences of their employees with the ultimate aim to enable them to have proactive style of responsibility for their own promotion and progression in their career (Ababneh, 2013; Martin, Romero, Valle, & Dolan, 2001). It has been acknowledged that a properly structured career development system helps organizations to retain their valuable personnel with more developed skills, knowledge, and enhanced competencies. This further enables these organizations to equip themselves with motivated and retrained employees, find themselves in a better position to take informed decisions on compensation and succession planning ensuring in a well engaged and productive manpower (Kapel & Shepherd, 2004; Kaye, 2005). Keeping in view these theoretical perspectives this paper attempts to empirically test career planning and career management as antecedents and career commitment and career satisfaction as outcomes with the mediating role of career development in public and private colleges' context.

Model of Career Development

Figure 1 represents the conceptual model for the current study. The variables are interlinked and present a mediation role for career development. Each arrow in the path diagram represents a distinct hypothesis. The subsequent discussion carries discussion on the hypotheses.

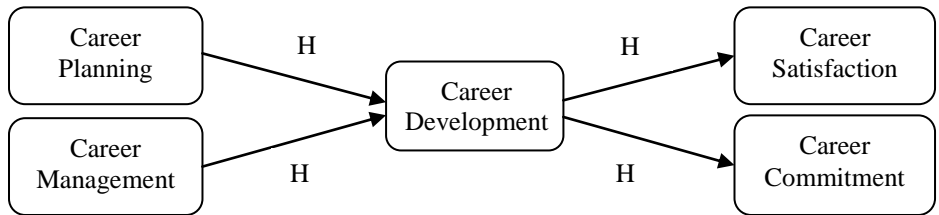


Fig. 1 Conceptual Model of Career Development

Career Development and Career Planning

Career development has critical importance in the relationship between the employees and their employer. No doubt, career development is an individual initiative, organisations set up mechanisms, systems and structures, as well as processes to nurture career development initiatives among personnel (Adekola, 2011); the impression of individuals pursuing their careers and molding, developing and shaping them with the objective to get maximum benefits, has received great attention in the present age. It is imperative for them to make career planning as an intentional activity for equipping themselves with personal knowledge, skills, strengths, create opportunities, overcome constraints, consequences and choices, and planning for education and work, and associated developmental experiences to devise planning to achieve career goals (Ababneh, 2013). In the light of this discussion first hypothesis is presented:

H1: Career planning of employees' leads to their career development.

Career Management and Career Development

The second mostly quoted antecedent of career development is the career management. When individuals plan their career aims and goals, they need knowledge, skills, and competencies to execute them with appropriate career management practices. Otherwise stated, forthcoming stage after career planning will be its execution via suitable career management drills. It is clear that career management is a continuous exercise of creating, developing, organizing, implementing and monitoring career plans and strategizing them by the employee itself, or together with the employer (Greenhaus et al., 2009). Surely, for any living organization career management is an ongoing activity of work life. A well-managed career management can have positive effects on employees like promoting and encouraging spirits of fulfillment while ill-managed career management and poor career decisions can have negative effects on individual's sense of wellbeing. Similarly, continuous flux of change in business direction and

strategies, mergers and acquisitions, organizations' downsizing, and technological innovations, needs continuous career management (Greenhaus et al., 2009). It is claimed that most of the employees can arrive at informed decisions if they have effective career management system. Any initiative of career management provides a link between institutions and its employees and strengthens the bond, as institutions strive to couple an employee's interests and capabilities with institutional opportunities through some well-planned program including activities such as job enrichment, job enlargement, job rotation, career counseling, etc. (Martin, et al., 2001). Effective career management practices will help in gathering proper feedback and this feedback further help the individuals in developing their knowledge and skills, promote employee insight, goal and strategy development (Greenhaus et al., 2009; Martin et al., 2001). In the light of this discussion second hypothesis is presented:

H2: Career management employees' leads to their career development.

Career Development and Career Satisfaction

Career satisfaction has great importance in an employee physical, psychological, and social well-being. It has significant and a positive impact on the output of an employee (Afonso, Ramos, Saraiva, Moreira, & Figueira, 2014). This critical variable in organizational behaviour represents an overall summary of how a person feels about a lifetime of work. Organizations are serious about employees' career development as it is considered one of the effective ways of developing and retaining employees (Kong, Cheung, & Song, 2012). According to Greenhaus et al. (2009) it is the collectivity of satisfaction that individuals get from the extrinsic and intrinsic facets of their careers, promotion and increase in pay, and developmental opportunities. According to Kong, et al. (2012) it is an important predictor of career success both subjective and objective. External or objective career success relates more or less to some tangible indicators like salary, promotion, etc. (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). Researchers (e.g. Arthur et al., 2005) consider subjective career success an increasingly important and is one of the factors that contribute significantly to career success. In the light of this discussion third hypothesis is presented:

H3: Career development of employees' will have positive effects on their career satisfaction.

Career Development and Career Commitment

Career development has many outcomes. Career commitment is one of them. Career development opportunities affect an employee's personal career objectives, identification with, involvement in and attachment to those objectives. Career commitment is the intensity of an employee's motivation towards his or her work in their career (Noordin, Williams, & Zimmer, 2002). Institutions that help and assist their employees by providing them career related information well in time, it basically narrow down the focus of their employees and bond them more tight to their institutions, hence becoming committed towards their career. As institutions are subject to more flux and become less capable of guaranteeing employment security hence commitment to an internally defined career may become a significant source of occupational meaning and continuity (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990). Therefore, career

development would be fundamental for career commitment and career progression (Noordin et al., 2002). Career development opportunities and initiatives provided by the organization strengthen employees' commitment. According to King (1999) some psychological forces like self-insight, resilience and self-identity in pursuing career aims and objectives constitute prime components for career commitment, motivation, cohesiveness, consensus, and for strengthening cooperation in institutions. In the light of this discussion our fourth hypothesis is:

H4: Career development of employees' will have positive effects on their career commitment.

Rationale of the Study

Career issues have got centrality in the relationship between employees and employers. Any HR intervention that affects this relationship is very pivotal. Though variables in this relationship may have common names, social and cultural development of these variables differs from culture to culture and from organization to organization. Studying these constructs in different organizational setups and validating hypotheses therein is very essential. These hypotheses have been tested in developed countries and in bits and pieces. This study is the first attempt to test these hypotheses through empirical data from the colleges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which is a developing part of a developing country. The results may have great academic and practical implications.

Method

Population and samples for the study

Population for the current study is all the teaching staff of colleges of the Malakand division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Simple random sampling technique has been employed to cover the approximately 2200 population. A total of 750 employees, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professor, and full professors within these colleges were sent the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire has a covering letter wherein the purpose and objectives of the research have been explained. A total of 415 employees returned the filled in questionnaires which made 55% response rate. Out of these 20 questionnaires were discarded due to missing data, hence the analyses were run on the remaining 395 which represented a participation rate of 53%.

Measures

Two main measures have been used: first consists of demographic information on gender and rank of the employees; the second one is aimed at measuring the five career constructs i.e. career management, career planning, career development, career commitment, and career satisfaction. For the five career constructs, five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagreed) to 5 (strongly agreed) has been employed.

Demographic profile of the respondents

The frequency of respondents by gender is enlisted by Table 1. It is clear from table 1 that male participants dominate with 82% (n=324), while female participants are 18% (n=71). Similarly, table 2 presents the frequency of respondents by age. The statistics in table 2, it is clear that age group 25-35, having 52.2% (n=206) is the dominant

group. This is followed by the age group 36-45, having 25.8% (n=102). The age group 46 and above has 20% (n=79) share in the collected data. There are 8 respondents who left the age column in the questionnaire blank.

Table 1 *Gender of the Respondents (N=395)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Male	324	82.0	82.0	82.0
	Female	71	18.0	18.0	100
	Total	395	100.0	100	

Table 2 *Age of the Respondents (N=395)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	25-35	206	52.2	53.2	53.2
	36-45	102	25.8	26.4	78.0
	46 and above	79	20.0	20.4	100.0
Missing System		8	2.0		
	Total	395	100		

Table 3 presents the information regarding designation of the respondents. It is clear that lecturer is the dominant group, having 59.9% (n=233), followed by the group of Assistant Professor (n=87) with 22.4%. Associate Professors share 15.2% (n=59), and Professors with 1.5% (n=6), followed by Other (n=4) with a percentage of 1. Six respondents (1.5%) did not reveal their designation.

Table 3 *Designation of the Respondents (N=395)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Lecturer	233	59.0	59.9	59.9
	Assistant Professor	87	22.0	22.4	82.3
	Associate Professor	59	14.9	15.2	97.4
	Professor	6	1.5	1.5	99.0
	Others	4	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	389	98.5	100.0	
Missing System		6	1.5		
	Total	395	100		

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Since the model for the study has interdependence, and to measure and assess the constructs and the hypothesized relationships in such cases, the best statistical technique recommended by the researchers is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). In addition, the hypotheses of the model are very common, here they are tested in a new setting, hence confirmatory factor analysis is needed. Keeping these aspects in mind, the researchers employed the same. The application of this technique is due to two reasons “1) it provides a straight forward method of dealing with multiple relationships simultaneously while providing statistical efficiency; and 2) its ability to assess the

relationships comprehensively and provide a transition from exploratory to confirmatory analysis” (Hair, et al., 2006, p. 578). Through this model testing procedure, the goodness-of-fit between the hypothesized model and the sample data is searched out. The researchers have applied the hypothesized structure model to the empirical data to test as to what extent the observed data fit to the restricted structure. For the validity of the model the researchers have employed five commonly used fit indices i.e. CFI, GFI, RMSEA, RMR and CMIN/DF.

Career planning

In data collected, respondents have recorded their perceptions regarding the current status of career planning in the career development process. The items for the measurement of this construct were taken from Gould (1979), King (1999). Five point Likert scale ranging from (1) for Strongly Disagree to (5) for Strongly Agree has been employed. The construct has been measured with 11 items. The scale has been checked for its reliability with the help of Cronbach Alpha which is 0.85.

While conducting CFA for this construct, the results of the initial model with eleven indicators were not found with some low values for the fit statistics. Therefore, the model was looked into in the light of recommendation of the modification indices. By detailed assessment of the values it was found there that CrPlng-3, CrPlng-5, and CrPlng-11 indicators are creating problems as they were highly correlated with other indicators. They were, therefore, dropped and the model was run again. The results of the CFA after deleting these indicator are reported in Table 4.

Career management

The participants provided data about the presence of career management and importance of career management in these colleges based on their perception. Career management practices were measured by adapting scales from Lee and Bruvold (2003), and Chen, Chang and Yeh (2004). Five point Likert scale was used. The reliability estimates of the six items had Cronbach alpha value of 0.87.

CFA was conducted for this construct with six indicators. The results of the initial model did not demonstrate good fit in the light of the fit indices. The model was, thus, looked into in the light of recommendation of the modification index. By detailed assessment of the values it was found there that CrMgnt-2 indicator was creating problems as it was highly correlated with other indicators. This indicator was, therefore, dropped and the model was run again. The results of the CFA after deleting this indicator are reported in Table 4.

Career development

The mediating construct was supposed to measure whether career development has any role between the antecedents and resultant variables. The items (five in total) for the construct has been developed by adapting from Coachline’s survey (available: <http://www.orghealth.com/cdn/>). The five items had a Cronbach alpha value of 0.87.

CFA was conducted for the construct of career development having five indicators. The results of the initial model were not found satisfactory in the light of the fit indices. By

detailed assessment of the values it was found there that the error terms e1 and e2 were creating problems as they were highly correlated with one another. They were, therefore, connected through correlation arrow. The results of the CFA after this are reported in Table 4.

Career satisfaction

Career satisfaction was measured through an eight-items scale on a five point Likert scale. Participants provided information on the items of this construct which were adapted from the Survey of Hackman and Oldham (1976). Cronbach alpha value for the scale was found 0.84.

After the reliability estimates, CFA was conducted to see the fitness of the model. The results of the initial model were not found satisfactory as the values did not fall within the acceptable range. By detailed assessment of the values it was found there that indicators CrSatfcn-7 and CrSatfcn-8 were creating problems as they were highly correlated with other indicators. These indicators were, therefore, dropped and the model was run again. The results of the CFA after deleting these indicators, the results are reported in Table 4.

Career commitment

The respondents provided perceptual information about their experience and existence of career commitment with these colleges. The items for this construct were adapted from the work of Colarelli and Bishop (1990), and Lee and Bruvold (2003) evaluated career commitment with a five point Likert scale was used. Cronbach alpha value for the scale was found 0.85.

CFA was also conducted for this construct having seven indicators. Again the results of the initial model were not found within the acceptable levels of the goodness-of-fit indices. By detailed assessment of the values it was found that indicators CrComnt-5 and CrComnt-7 were creating problems as they were highly correlated with other indicators. Therefore, these indicators were dropped. The final results of the CFA for this construct are reported in Table 4.

Table 4 Fit statistics for the five constructs

Construct	χ^2	CMIN/DF	CFI	GFI	RMR	RMSEA	Sig
Career Planning	36.03	1.896	0.985	0.98	0.023	0.048	0.000
Career Management	11.71	2.927	0.987	0.99	0.028	0.073	0.000
Career Development	5.856	1.464	0.998	0.99	0.009	0.034	0.000
Career Commitment	11.92	2.981	0.985	0.99	0.020	0.074	0.000
Career Satisfaction	23.96	2.994	0.979	0.98	0.029	0.071	0.000

Hypotheses Testing

After testing the validity of the individual constructs structural equation modeling was applied to the model as a whole. The hypothesized relationships of the model of the study were analyzed in two ways: individual tests and a test of the overall path model. Simultaneous equations' model estimation procedures were used. The results of the hypotheses testing are as under:

H1: Career planning of employees' leads to their career development.

This hypothesis was tested with aim to see whether the relationship between career planning and career development could be validated or otherwise. The resultant value represented by standardized path coefficient for this relationship is 0.540 and the *t*-value is 8.346 were significant at $p = 000$. These values validate the relationship and thus it can be concluded that the empirical data from the sample strongly support the hypothesis.

H2: Career management employees' leads to their career development.

This hypothesis was tested with the purpose to see the relationship between career management and employees' perception about the career development. The value for standardized path coefficient of is 0.120 and the *t*-value is 2.228 both were significant at $p = 022$. These values validate the relationship and thus it can be concluded that the empirical data from the sample strongly support the hypothesis.

H3: Career development of employees' will have positive effects on their career satisfaction.

This hypothesis was tested with the purpose to see the relationship between career development and employees' perception of career satisfaction. The value for standardized path coefficient is 0.604 and the *t*-value is 9.275. These values are significant at $p = 000$. These values validate the relationship and thus it can be concluded that the empirical data from the sample strongly support the hypothesis.

H4: Career development of employees' will have positive effects on their career commitment.

This hypothesis was tested with the purpose to see the relationship between career development and employees' perception of career satisfaction. The value for standardized path coefficient is 0.535 and the *t*-value of 8.192 were significant at $p = 000$. These values validate the relationship and thus it can be concluded that the empirical data from the sample strongly support the hypothesis.

Table 5 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Results
H1 <i>Career planning of employees' leads to their career development.</i>	Strongly Supported
H2 <i>Career management employees' leads to their career development.</i>	Weakly Supported
H3 <i>Career development of employees' will have positive effects on their career satisfaction.</i>	Strongly Supported
H4 <i>Career development of employees' will have positive effects on their career commitment.</i>	Strongly Supported

Discussion

The extant literature on career issues is replete with conceptual and empirical evidences wherein the researchers have hypothesized and then empirically tested the relationships among career constructs with organizational and employees' behavioural outcomes. These results have been found varying in degrees from culture to culture and organization to organization. This study was an effort to continue the empirical testing of these relationships in the colleges of a little bit backward and far flung areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The results validated most of the previous researches by supporting almost all of the hypotheses. These results connote that college employees in the Malakand Division share commonalities in their perceptions with employees in the advanced organizational cultures. These results strengthen the concepts and theories put forward by career theorists. They also illustrate the pervasiveness of employees' common concerns about their career issues and their appreciation for organizations that support them in their career development.

Limitations of the Study

The study has a number of limitations. First, the study has taken a limited number of constructs exclusively related to career. Variables like organizational culture could have been made part of the study. Second, only teaching staff has been selected though administrative staff could also have been made part of the study. Third, analyses have been made only on the perceptions of the employees. Lastly, the results have been drawn on the sample data which could have same limitations like other sample studies.

Implications of the Study

The study has both academic and practical implications. First, this study has been the first empirical study undertaken in the colleges in Malakand Division and thereby addressed the research vacuum. In other words the study would help the reader in enhancing their understanding regarding interdependent relationships among these constructs. More intensive research can be carried out in the light of the findings of this study and can also be replicated. Similarly, findings of this study could help the policy makers in addressing the lacunas in the present career related HR interventions. If policy makers are sincere in providing quality education to the public, they must take care of the career of the teaching staff.

Conclusion

Empirical investigations through the current study revealed that the effects of career planning and career management are significant on the career development of the teaching staff of colleges in Malakand Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It further investigated the subsequent effects on career commitment and career satisfaction of these employees. The results also demonstrated that career development positively influence career commitment and career satisfaction. In summary, these results reflect that the constructs of the study contribute to career development which further affects career satisfaction and career commitment. These findings have validated the findings of previous studies (Afonso et al., 2014; Appelbaum, Ayre, &

Shapiro, 2002; Kapel & Shepherd, 2004; Kaye, 2005; Kong et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2001; Noordin et al., 2002) undertaken in the field of career.

These results have implications both for these colleges and the employees working there. There is a clear cut message for the management to show seriousness about career planning and career management issues of the employees in such a way that these efforts may promote career development. The empirical evidence manifests that there exists a relatively high difference between the path coefficients for career planning and career management (0.54 and 0.12 respectively) which again warrants the management about the tilted approach on the equally important career aspects. However, the findings regarding career satisfaction and career commitment have relatively close semblance. These findings from the current empirical evidence strengthen the model presented in the study and are a positive contribution to the field of career development.

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