

Relationship between Organizational Career Program and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the correlation between organizational career program and job satisfaction using self-reported questionnaires accumulated from employees at a defence based higher learning institution in Malaysia. The results of multiple regression analysis confirmed that career management negatively and insignificantly correlated with job satisfaction while career development positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction. This finding explains that career development is an essential predictor of job satisfaction, but career management is not an essential predictor of job satisfaction in the studied organization.

Keywords: Career management; career development; job satisfaction

Abstrak

Tujuan kajian ini dilakukan adalah untuk menyiasat perhubungan di antara program kerjaya organisasi dengan kepuasan kerja menggunakan soalan-soalan borang selidik yang dikumpul daripada pekerja-pekerja di sebuah institusi pengajian tinggi pertahanan di Malaysia. Keputusan analisis regresi berganda menunjukkan bahawa pengurusan kerjaya berhubung secara negatif dan tidak signifikan dengan kepuasan kerja manakala pembangunan kerjaya berhubung secara positif dan signifikan dengan kepuasan kerja. Keputusan ini menerangkan bahawa pembangunan kerjaya merupakan peramal penting kepada kepuasan kerja manakala pengurusan kerjaya pula bukanlah peramal yang penting bagi kepuasan kerja dalam organisasi kajian.

Kata kunci: Pengurusan kerjaya; pembangunan kerjaya; kepuasan kerja

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Career program is generally seen as a strategic human resource development and management. The program highlighted the employees' job, process, attitude, behaviour and also focused on the state of affairs related to the employees' work life (Ferreira, Santos, Fonseca, & Haase, 2007; Janeiro, 2010; Pua & Ananthram, 2006). Under this perspective, an employer often designs and administers career programs to enable employees to match their interests and capabilities with organizational opportunities and easily adapt with current and future organizational changes. Thus, it may lead to an improved the progression of employees' career in organizations (Baruch, 2004; Greenhaus, *et al.*, 2000; Martin, *et al.*, 2001; Theodossiou & Zangelis, A., 2009).

A review of current human capital development and management highlights that organizational career program consists of two salient features: career management and career development (Conger, 2002; Nachbagauer & Riedl, 2002; Nancarrow, 2005; Post, Koch, & Roberts, 2007). Career management is usually seen as a continuous activity whereby management implement and monitors the progression of employees in order to enable them easily adapt with organizational changes (e.g., turbulent working environment, job stability and security, flexible work practice and multi skilling) and to achieve higher career ladders in organizations (Greenhaus, *et al.*, 2000; Martin, *et al.*, 2001; Whymark & Ellis, 1999). Further, career development is often related to as management implements development activities such as training programs, succession planning, counselling and job rotation to continuously update employees' necessarily skills and experience needed in order to improve job performance, add value for current and future job, meet feelings of fulfilment and improve life span well-being (Chen, *et al.*, 2004; Greenhaus, *et al.*, 2000, Herr, 2001; Isaacson & Brown, 2000; Mondy *et al.*, 2002; Pua & Ananthram, 2006).

Interestingly, recent studies in the organizational career program reveal that the ability of management to properly manage and develop employee careers may have a positive impact on employee outcomes especially job satisfaction (Janeiro, 2010; Pua & Ananthram, 2006; Theodossiou & Zangelis, 2009). In an organizational behaviour perspective, job satisfaction is normally defined as an individuals' positive emotional state, pleasurable feelings and/or attitudes towards job as a result of their appraisals about the extrinsic and intrinsic job characteristics (Appelbaum & Shapiro, 2002; Linz, 2003; McShane & Von Glinow, 2005).

In a career program model, most researchers think that career management, career development and job satisfaction are different, but highly interrelated constructs. It is reflected in studies by (Pua & Ananthram, 2006; Theodossiou & Zangelis, A., 2009; Wilkens &

Nermerich, 2011) where the ability of management to appropriately manage and develop employee career paths may enhance their job satisfaction. Although the nature of the relationship between career program and job satisfaction is interesting, but the role of organizational career program as an important predicting variable has been given less attention in the workplace career research literature (Hirschi, 2009; Ismail *et al.*, 2013; Wilkens & Nermerich, 2011). Many scholars argue that this condition is due to the previous studies that have much described the features of organizational career program, employed a simple correlation method to analyse the degree of association between respondent characteristics and organizational career program. Besides that, they have ignored to quantify the effect size and nature of the correlation between career program characteristics and job satisfaction in the workplace. As a result, it has not provided adequate recommendations to be used as useful guidelines by practitioners in understanding the complexity of organizational career program, as well as formulating and implementing strategic career programs for organizations that operate in a global economy (Ismail *et al.*, 2013; Theodossiou & Zangelis, A., 2009; Wilkens & Nermerich, 2011). Thus, it motivates the researchers to fill in the gap of literature by measuring the effect of organizational career program on job satisfaction.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study has two important objectives: firstly, is to measure the correlation between career management and job satisfaction. Secondly, is to measure the correlation between career development and job satisfaction.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Several recent studies using an indirect effects model to measure organizational career program based on different samples, such as perceptions of 5500 household taken from British Household Panel Survey (Theodossiou & Zangelis, A., 2009), perceptions of 330 Swiss eighth graders (Hirschi, 2009), perceptions of 620 students from Portuguese school system (Janeiro, 2010), perceptions of 13 in-depth interviews with workers from knowledge intensive working context (Wilkens & Nermerich, 2011), and perceptions of 140 employees in a Sabah local government in Borneo (Ismail, Madrah, Aminudin & Ismail, 2013). Findings from these studies reported two important outcomes: first, the ability of management to properly implement employee career programs (e.g., monitoring the progression of employees in career paths) had been an important determinant of job satisfaction in the organizations (Ismail, Madrah, Aminudin & Ismail, 2013; Theodossiou & Zangelis, A., 2009; Wilkens & Nermerich, 2011). Second, the ability of management to properly develop employee career paths (e.g., training, succession planning, counselling and job rotation) had been an important determinant of job satisfaction in the organizations (Hirschi, 2009; Janeiro, 2010; Ismail, Madrah, Aminudin & Ismail, 2013).

The literature is consistent with the notion of motivation theory, namely Herzberg's (1959, 1966) motivator-hygiene theory, Alderfer's (2002) Existence, Relatedness and Growth theory and McClelland's (1962) learned needs theory (need for achievement, need for affiliation and need for power). Application of these theories in the organizational career program reveals that the ability of management to appropriately manage and develop career program based on individual's work characteristics (Herzberg, 1959, 1966), job needs (Alderfer, 1972), and learned needs (McClelland, 1962) may strongly enhance employee job satisfaction in organizations (Hirschi, 2009; Janeiro, 2010; Ismail, Madrah, Aminudin & Ismail, 2013; Theodossiou & Zangelis, A., 2009; Wilkens & Nermerich, 2011).

The literature has been used as the basis of establishing a conceptual framework for this research as exhibited in Figure 1.

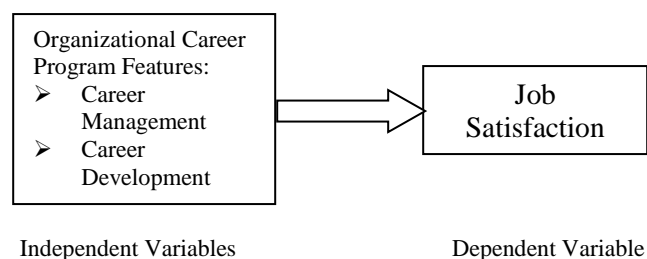


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Based on the conceptual framework, it was hypothesized that:

- H1: There is a positive correlation between career management and job satisfaction
 H2: There is a positive correlation between career development and job satisfaction

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional research design was employed in this study because it permits the researchers to integrate the organizational career literature, the pilot study and the actual survey as a main procedure to gather data. As suggested by prominent researchers (Cresswell, 1998; Sekaran, 2000), this methods able to gather accurate and high quality data. This study was conducted at a defence based higher learning institution in Malaysia. At the initial stage of this study, survey questionnaire was drafted based on the organizational career program literature. After that, a pilot study was conducted by discussing the survey questionnaire with two experienced HR managers and

two experienced supporting staff in the human resource management department of the studied organization sample. Their views were used to verify the content and format of the questionnaire for an actual study. Hence, a back translation technique was employed to translate the survey questionnaires into Malay and English versions in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings (Hulland, 1999; Wright, 1996).

3.2 Measures

The survey questionnaire consisted of two sections: first, career management had 4 items and career development had 3 items that were adapted from career program literature (Baruch, 2004; Greenhaus *et al.*, 2000; Hirschi, 2009; Ismail, Madrah, Aminudin & Ismail, 2013; Janeiro, 2010; Martin *et al.*, 2001; Theodossiou & Zangelis, A., 2009; Wilkens & Nermerich, 2011). Second, job satisfaction had 7 items that were adapted from job satisfaction literature (Chen *et al.*, 2004; Knop, 1993; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Linz, 2003; Nachbagauer & Riedl, 2002). All these items were measured using a 7-item scale ranging from “strongly disagree/dissatisfied” (1) to “strongly agree/satisfied” (7). This study emphasizes on employee attitudes, so demographic variables were used as controlling variables.

3.3 Population and Sampling

The population of this study is employees who work in the studied organization. For the first step of data collection procedure, permission from HR manager to conduct this study has been obtained, but the list of registered employees who have worked in the organization was not given to the researchers, so the survey questionnaires had to be distributed to employees through the HR office. Considering the organizational rule, duration of study and financial constraints, a convenient sampling technique was used to distribute 200 survey questionnaires to employees in the organization. Out of the number, 92 usable questionnaires were returned to the researchers, yielding a 46 percent response rate. The survey questionnaires were answered by participants based on a voluntary basis. This figure exceeds the minimum sample of 30 participants as required by a probability sampling technique. Therefore, it can be analyzed using inferential statistics (Sekaran, 2000; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

3.4 Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, researcher has used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 for this study. In the first step, exploratory factor analysis was used to assess the validity and reliability of measurement scales (Hair *et al.*, 1998; Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). Relying on the guidelines set up by these statisticians, a factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was first done for all items that represented each research variable, and then it was followed by other tests: Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Test (KMO), Bartlett’s test of sphericity, eigenvalue, variance explained and Cronbach alpha.

Before testing research hypotheses, these statistics were useful to determine the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses for the measurement scales. For the second step, Pearson correlation (r) analysis and descriptive statistics were further conducted to determine the validity and reliability of constructs (Tabachnick *et al.*, 2001; Yaacob, 2008). Finally, an analysis of multiple regression was conducted to quantify the magnitude and direction of many independent variables and one dependent variable (Aiken *et al.*, 1991; Berenson and Levine, 1992; Foster *et al.*, 1998). In addition, the value of R^2 is used as an indicator of the overall predictive strength of the model. For example, the value of R^2 are considered as follows; 0.19 (weak), 0.33 (moderate) and 0.67 (substantial) (Chin, 1998).

4.0 FINDINGS

The participant characteristics were shown in Table 1. From the table, we can see that majority of the respondents were male (52.2 percent), aged between 28 to 32 years old (47.8 percent), diploma holders (39.1), employees who served from 1 to 5 years (88 percent), and employees who has monthly salary starting from RM1001 to RM2000 (41.3 percent).

Results of validity and reliability analyses were shown in Table 2. The table demonstrates that the survey questionnaire consisted of 14 items. It is related to three variables which is career management (4 items), career development (3 items) and job satisfaction (7 items). The factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was done for all variables. Further, Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Test (KMO) that has been used as measurement of sampling adequacy was conducted for each variable and the results demonstrated that it was acceptable. Based on Hair *et al.* (1998) and Nunally and Bernstein’s (1994) guideline, these analyses showed that (1) the value of factor analysis for all items that represent each research variable was 0.5 and more, indicating the items met the acceptable standard of validity analysis, (2) all research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin’s value of 0.6, were significant in Bartlett’s test of sphericity, (3) all research variables had eigenvalues larger than 1, (4) the items for each research variable exceeded factor loadings of 0.40 (Hair *et al.*, 1998), and (5) all research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of reliability analysis of 0.70 (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). From these analyses, it confirmed that measurement scales used in this study met the requirements of validity and reliability analyses. Thus, the findings of these analyses can be seen in Table 2.

Table 1 Participant characteristics (N=92)

Participant Characteristics	Sub-Profile	Percentage
Gender	Male	52.2
	Female	47.8
Age	< 27 years old	25.0
	28 to 32 years old	47.8
	33 to 37 years old	19.6
	38 to 42 years old	3.3
	> 43 years old	4.3
Education	Degree	30.4
	Diploma	39.1
	STPM	12.0
	SPM	18.5
Length of Service	1 to 5 years	88.0
	6 to 10 years	8.7
	11 to 15 years	1.1
	16 to 20 years	2.2
Monthly Salary	< RM800	4.3
	RM801 to 1000	8.7
	RM1001 to 2000	41.3
	RM2001 to 3000	29.3
	RM3001 to 4000	9.8
	RM4001 to 5000	5.4
	> RM5000	1.1

Note:

SPM/MCE: Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia/Malaysia Certificate of Education
 STPM/HSC: Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia/Higher School Certificate

Table 2 Results of validity and reliability analyses for the measurement scales

Measure	No.	Factor Loading	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Eigen value	Variance Explained	Cronbach Alpha
Career Management	4	0.53 – 0.95	0.77	156.35	2.73	68.22	0.84
Career Development	3	0.73 – 0.88	0.73	144.37	2.41	2.41	0.88
Job Satisfaction	7	0.74 – 0.89	0.91	557.54	5.16	73.78	0.94

The results of Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics were shown in Table 3. The mean values for the variables are between 5.1 and 5.3, signifying the levels of career management, career development and job satisfactions ranging from high (4) to highest (7). The correlation coefficients for the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable were less than 0.90. It indicates that the data were not affected by serious collinearity problem (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Further, these statistical results confirm that the constructs used in this study met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses as exhibited in Table 3.

Table 3 Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Pearson Correlation (r)			
			1	2	3	4
Career Management	5.2	1.04	0.42**	1		
Career Development	5.1	1.26	0.33**	0.46**	1	
Job Satisfaction	5.3	1.18	0.25*	0.46**	0.59**	1

Note: Significant at **p<0.01

Reliability estimation is shown in diagonal

The results of testing hypothesis using a multiple regression analysis were shown in Table 4. The independent variable (i.e., organizational career program) was entered in Step 1 and then followed by entering job satisfaction as the dependent variable. An examination of multicollinearity in the table shows that the tolerance value for the relationship between career management, career development and job satisfaction were 0.81, 0.64, and 0.69, respectively. These tolerance values were more than the established tolerance value of .20 (as a rule of thumb), indicating the variables were not affected by multicollinearity problems (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2001).

Further, the result of hypothesis testing in Step 1: firstly, career management negatively and insignificantly correlated with job satisfaction ($\beta = -.044$, $p < 0.05$). Secondly career development positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.92$, $p < 0.001$). In terms of exploratory power, the inclusion of organizational career program features had explained 81 percent of the variance in

dependent variable. Statistically, this result demonstrates that career management is not an important determinant of job satisfaction, but career development is an important determinant of job satisfaction in the studied organization.

Table 4 Results for multiple regression analysis

Variable	Dependent Variable (Job Satisfaction)
	Step 1
Career Management	-.044
Career Development	.92***
R Square	.81
Adjust R square	.80
F	184.710***

Note: Significant at *** $p < 0.001$

■ 5.0 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study confirms that career management does not act as an important determinant of job satisfaction, while career development does act as an important determinant of job satisfaction in the studied organization. In the context of this study, most of the respondents perceive that managers have properly managed and developed their employees' career ladders based on the stakeholder's needs and expectations. The levels of career management, career development, and job satisfaction are high in the organization. This situation explains that managers have put a greater effort to manage the progression of employees' career ladders, but it may not enhance their employees' satisfaction with job in the organization. Conversely, the role of managers in developing employees' career ladders may help to enhance their employees' satisfaction with job in the organization.

This study provides three important implications: theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology, and practical contribution. In terms of theoretical contribution, the result of this research reveals two important findings: firstly, career development has been an important predictor of job satisfaction in the studied organization. This finding has supported and extended organizational career program studies by Hirschi (2009), Janeiro (2010) and Ismail, Madrah, Aminudin and Ismail (2013). Secondly, career management has not been as an important predictor of job satisfaction in the studied organization. This finding may be affected by external factors, that is respondents who have different backgrounds may have different beliefs about the benefits of career management, and they may have different recognitions and acceptance about the style of managers in managing career programs for employees who work in different job categories. These factors may decrease the effect of career management on job satisfaction in the organization.

From the aspect of the robustness of research methodology, the survey questionnaires used in this study have met the acceptable requirements of validity and reliability analyses; thus it may lead to produce accurate and reliable research findings. Further, in term of practical contributions, the findings obtained from this study can be used as guidelines by management to improve the design and administration of career programs in organizations. Some positive efforts that can be done are: first, career training content and methods should be updated in order to enhance employees' proactive personalities in managing and developing their future careers. Second, communication openness should be implemented in order to help employees understand clearly the benefits and consequences of organizational career program. Third, participative decision making should be encouraged in order to strengthen organizational career program based on employees' brilliant opinions. Fourth, coaching and mentoring programs should be formally implemented in order to increase knowledge sharing and transfer, as well as creativity and innovations in performing job. Finally, the type, level and/or amount of pay for merit should be improved in order to attract, retain and motivate high performing employees continuously support their organizational goals and strategy. If organizations pay attention on these suggestions this may increase motivate employees support and accept the workplace career goals and strategy.

■ 6.0 CONCLUSION

This study tested a conceptual framework based on the organizational career program literature. The instrument of this study met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses. The findings of multiple regression analysis confirmed that career development did act as important predictor of job satisfaction in the organization. Conversely, career management did not act as an important predictor of job satisfaction in the organization. This result may be affected by external factors, that is respondents who have different backgrounds may have different beliefs about the benefits of career management, and they may have different recognitions and acceptance about the style of managers in managing career programs for employees who work in different job categories. These factors may reduce the influence of career management on job satisfaction. Thus, present research and practice in the human capital and management models need to consider career management and career development as critical driving forces of the organizational career program domain. Further, this research proposes that the willingness of management to appropriately manage and develop career programs based on dynamic inside and outside organizational forces will help to invoke subsequent positive individual attitudes and behavior (e.g., commitment, engagement, performance, justice and ethics). Therefore, these positive outcomes may lead to maintained and enhanced organizational performance in an era of borderless world.

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