



Career Management Planning and Strategy – An Albania Study

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Abstract

This comprehensive study investigates the significance of career planning and strategy in attaining career objectives. The research question is: Can improving career planning and strategy help achieve career goals? The survey was performed using a direct survey model and a questionnaire filled out by the respondents who work in different companies. The study sample consists of 250 employees in Tirana and Durrës, the two largest cities in Albania. The data analysis will be focused on three different methods, ensuring a thorough examination of the research question. The first one involves factors that weigh each factor and reliability analysis using the Cronbach alpha coefficient, which should be above 0.7. The second method will be focused on multicollinearity analysis. Finally, after we conclude the methods above, we will be focused on testing the hypothesis through multiple regression. The findings revealed that career planning and strategy positively impact career goals. This study's implications are far-reaching. It can guide employees in planning and developing their careers, assist companies in managing and growing their employees' careers, and provide a valuable reference for researchers in this field of study, reassuring them about the validity and reliability of the findings.

Keywords: career management, career goal, career planning, career strategy.

1. Introduction

Organizations are operating in a constantly evolving and intricate environment. This dynamic and evolving nature of the organizational environment is not just urgent and relevant, it's a testament to the adaptability of businesses. To adapt to the pressures of globalization, organizations are continually restructuring, streamlining processes, and integrating technological advancements. Consequently, the significance of managing people at work, particularly their careers, has escalated significantly. Changes and transformations have occurred in different situations, influenced the approach to human resource management, and reshaped the content of people management (Mohan, 2001).

Employees are not just the workforce; they are the most valuable resource of an organization. Their role in nurturing and building their careers is not just important; it is crucial. This underscores the significance of career management. Researchers have probed the

individual and organizational aspects of career management, revealing changes in career management and role differentiation, including shifts in employees' expectations from the organization. Employers are tasked with adapting the context and content of their work tasks to meet situational demands. However, it is a collaborative effort, with employees playing the most crucial role in their career development. Hence, career management necessitates organizational and employee initiative to benefit both parties. For organizations to thrive, they must not only adapt but also actively provide enhanced opportunities for their employees to grow professionally and personally, thereby maximizing the topic's potential impact.

Employee career planning can help reduce turnover intentions and absenteeism (Tanoli, 2016). Organizations can achieve this by nurturing and improving their workforce's skills and laying down policies that provide practical career improvement guidelines (Bimrose et al., 2005). In career planning, it is essential to determine the responsibilities of the employees and the organization itself. Zlate (2004) determined that individual career planning focused on self-esteem, creating opportunities, and establishing shared goals with the organization to help employees with career changes. According to Zlate (2004), individual career planning involves five ways:

1. Pursuing achievement goals, considering successes and failures, and making decisions to retain or change career courses.
2. Self-assessment involves collecting information about interests and skills, continuous assessment, and reporting to others.
3. Making decisions and setting goals for short- and long-term training requirements and changes in the job.
4. Planning involves determining ways and means of achieving goals, taking actions to achieve them, considering their consequences, and setting deadlines and resource requirements.
5. Exploring opportunities through training and other development methods by gathering information about existing opportunities within and outside organizations.

The company derives significant benefits from implementing a robust career planning system. This system reduces the time needed to fill vacancies, identifies employees with solid management potential, and empowers them to establish and achieve their career goals (Antoniou, 2010). The career planning system significantly enhances professional satisfaction by aligning employees with positions that align with their objectives (Antoniou, 2010). Additionally, providing access to training, self-managed learning, and support for gaining qualifications is crucial for creating career pathways and enabling employees to acquire specific skills or qualifications (Hirsh, 2007). The performance management process informs internal selection decisions and profoundly impacts career progression. Informal processes, such as receiving advice and leveraging internal networks, also significantly contribute to employees' career development (Hirsh, 2007). This study examines the relationship between career planning, career strategy, and career goals. The research question of this study is whether career planning and strategy can help achieve career goals. The study hypothesizes that career goals can be achieved through career planning and strategy.

2. Literature review

Career development involves individuals progressing through distinct phases, each presenting unique issues, topics, and tasks (Greenhaus et al., 2000). The process of career development entails the collaboration between the organization and individuals in their career planning and management (Hall & Associates, 1986). It is important to note that career development, as a human resources program, extends beyond simple career progression,

focusing on facilitating adaptable changes for a secure future and addressing evolving market conditions. This program provides various advantages to organizations, including the internal growth of critical skills, improved talent deployment, attracting and retaining top talent, enhanced workforce flexibility, and the ability to respond effectively to business changes (Hirsh, 2007).

Effective workplace management requires proper plans and policies constructed by the organizational leader to transform the skills of their followers, developing their abilities and ways of performing tasks (Gikopoulou, 2008). A key outcome of career guidance is the development of career management skills. The term CMS, or Career Management Skills, encompasses the essential skills, attributes, and attitudes required to strategically plan, oversee, and cultivate careers over a lifetime (Mackay et al., 2015). CMS recognizes the dynamic nature of career development within evolving labor markets, emphasizing the need for individuals to navigate this fluidity. Additionally, organizations are inclined to enhance efficiency in routine tasks and embrace professional methodologies to effectively complete assignments and projects (Cohen & Soto, 2007). Career planning provides employees with consistency and development opportunities, ensuring their long-term stay in the workplace (Johnson, 2011). Career management skills encompass a spectrum of competencies that empower individuals and groups to gather, analyze, synthesize, and organize self, educational, and occupational information. These skills enable individuals to make and implement well-informed decisions and transitions, as defined by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (Sultana, 2009).

The National Careers Service Funding Rules (Skills Funding Agency, 2014) define career management outcomes as customers who can manage their careers independently. This involves evaluating their skills, considering employer demand, pursuing further education, checking their Personal Learner Record, updating their Lifelong Learning Account, enhancing their CVs, and striving to reach their potential. More people can extend their skills and pursue employment goals by encouraging this behavior. Employers should focus on five key areas (Hirsh, 2007) to support the career development of their employees. According to Hirsh (2007), businesses can benefit enormously from career development, including the acquisition of scarce skills, the flexible use of existing skills, and the motivation of employees. Employers should integrate career development into their standard processes, such as job design, hiring, and training, to support employees beyond their current roles. It is crucial to encourage employees to engage in formal and informal career discussions with various mentors. Employers should establish a robust "web" of career support, with access points and guidance from line managers, and designate a dedicated individual to coordinate career development efforts. Lastly, training managers to support career growth and empowering employees to take charge of their development are critical factors for sustained success.

3. The methodology

The survey was performed using a direct survey model and a questionnaire filled out by the respondents. This allowed them to obtain additional explanations regarding their answers. The questionnaire is structured into two sections. The initial section inquires about the organization's type of activity, while the subsequent section addresses the responder's position in the company and work-related issues. After obtaining information about career management, the latter section becomes the most critical part of the questionnaire. Each question is rated on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The questionnaires were distributed via email, with the sample selection made randomly. The data collection was focused on two cities, namely Tirana and Durrës. Of the 350 questionnaires distributed, 250 were received and used as the study sample. The data analysis was conducted in three phases. In the first phase, factor and reliability analysis was performed.

Factorial analysis is a technique that groups variables to reduce data while retaining as much information as possible (Field, 2009). The weight of each factor should be above 0.4 (Hair et al., 2009). Reliability analysis using the Cronbach alpha coefficient was conducted to observe the data's reliability (Hair et al., 2009), which should be above 0.7 but can be accepted up to 0.6 in exploratory research. The second phase of the analysis will be conducting multicollinearity, while the third phase will test the hypothesis through multiple regression.

4. Research Results

Career planning is a process that helps individuals assess themselves by analyzing their values, skills, capabilities, interests, and opportunities. The objective is to identify career goals and develop plans to achieve them. Career strategies are activities designed to assist individuals in reaching their career objectives. These activities may include job search, increased engagement at work, self-advocacy, networking, conformity with others, and building stronger relationships with supervisors (Gould, 1978). The term "career" has evolved from being associated only with professionals or those climbing the organizational ladder to encompassing individuals' diverse experiences in various roles. Objective career success encompasses tangible outcomes such as status, promotion, and salary, while subjective career success involves individuals self-assessing their career progress about their goals and aspirations. Assessing career goals helps individuals ensure that their career progress aligns with their values and preferences.

In this research, three variables were used, two of which were independent. All variables were measured using more than three questions, necessitating factorial and reliability analyses. The independent variable "career planning" was measured with four indicators with factorial weights exceeding 0.4. The independent variable for "career strategy" was also subjected to factorial analysis and measured with three questions, all with factorial weights surpassing 0.4. The dependent variable, "career goal," was measured with three indicators, all weighted more than 0.4. A reliability analysis using the Cronbach alpha coefficient should be conducted to ensure data reliability. Table 1 presents the results, with all three variables exceeding the required weight of 0.7 and centering around 0.7. Notably, the variable "communication/information sharing" holds the highest weight, prompting further analysis.

Table 1. Reliability analysis

Variables	Cronbach alpha
Career goal	0.700
Career planning	0.810
Career strategy	0.863

Source: authors

We will now proceed to the crucial stage of our study: validating and testing the hypothesis. Firstly, we need to assess the multicollinearity among independent variables. Based on our testing, the correlation between independent variables falls within the acceptable range of -0.7 to 0.7, as suggested by Hair et al. (2009).

To test the hypothesis, we utilized multiple regression analysis. The results revealed a positive impact of career planning and career strategy on career goals. The statistical value $F(2,147) = 7.4$ was highly significant ($p \leq 0.01$), indicating the robustness of the model. The adjusted R^2 value of 43.7% signifies that 43.7% of the dependent variable (career goal) can be explained by the two independent variables (career planning and career strategy).

These compelling findings underscore the critical role of career planning and strategy in achieving career goals and personal fulfillment. This study and others conclude that having

a plan and following an approach leads to more significant progress and success in one's profession. It is important to note that employees should take responsibility for their career development, with organizations providing support and guidance as needed.

5. Conclusions

This research investigated how career planning and career strategy affect career goals. The study involved 250 employees as participants. The study found that planning and career strategy positively impact career goals. This research delves into the nexus between career goals and achievements, emphasizing the significance of meticulous planning and strategic implementation. The analysis underscores the importance of employees devising tailored strategies and creating opportunities to realize their career objectives. Referring to the study by authors Yean and Yahya (2008), they emphasized that improving image with superiors was the most crucial dimension in explaining career success. The commitments and involvement of supervisors in the development of the plan and strategies for the employees' careers have a direct impact on the individual objectives of the employees. In another study, it was found that, as a mediating variable, career development proved to have a relationship between career planning and job satisfaction (Mohamed et al., 2023). On the other hand, researchers Zhang and Perey (2023) observed that career planning brings some benefits in job satisfaction, deepened skills, aspiration, and increased adaptation. Furthermore, employers play a pivotal role in ensuring employees engage in meaningful and challenging work to advance their career aspirations.

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