

Effect of Organizational Sponsorship, Career Management Behaviour and Proactive Personality in Predicting Managers' Subjective Career Success

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Received: Oct. 9, 2020 Accepted: Oct. 30, 2020 Online published: Nov. 4, 2020

doi:10.5296/ijhrs.v10i4.17915

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v10i4.17915>

Abstract

The main aim of the study was to examine the role of organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour and proactive personality in predicting subjective career success of managerial staff in large scale manufacturing firms in Kenya. Primary data was collected using a sample of 255 managers from large scale manufacturing firms in Kenya based on descriptive survey. Hypothesis was tested using hierarchical regression model. The findings indicate that the joint effect of the predictor variables was greater than their individual effect on subjective career success. The study recommends that large manufacturing firms should facilitate their staff's career success by providing them with organizational sponsorship programmes. The findings also point out the need for the staff to be proactive and to adopt suitable career management behaviour that can enhance their achievement of career success. Future researchers may benefit from the already established conceptual and methodological reference in their pursuit for further studies with regards to this area in different contexts.

Keywords: organizational sponsorship, proactive personality, career management behaviour, career success

JEL: M3

1. Introduction

As a result of the transformation of jobs and organizations, careers are growing more complex and difficult to predict (Hall, 2002). The achievement of career success may require a lot of transitions and relocations from one organization to another due to delayering of organizations and mergers (Frese, 2001). The available job opportunities that may allow for

up-ward career mobility are few and individuals are forced to look far beyond their current organizations to realize their career dreams (Arnold, 2001). Scholars have consequently initiated new terms to capture the current trends in the world of career. These include; the boundaryless career that conveys the fact that people can traverse one organization to the other in the quest for career success and protean career that maintains that people have to take an active role in managing their own careers (Hall, 2002). The two concepts basically point to the idea that the issue of career management have been solely left to individual staff and that organizations have since relinquished their participation in facilitating career success of their staff (Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer, Schaufeli & Blonk, 2015). In light of the above, individuals are expected to be proactive and to develop appropriate career management behaviour in order to succeed in their careers. The path to career success is marked with numerous challenges and obstacles (De Vos & Segers, 2013). This calls for one to be keen in recognizing opportunities, resilient in countering the obstacles that may hinder their career advancement, to come up with proper and workable career development plans and to ensure successful implementations of these plans (Seibert, Kraimer & Heslin, 2016).

For organization that wants to succeed in the long run, there is need for them to offer necessary career support for their staff (Moon and Choi, 2017). Employees who succeed in their careers are generally motivated, loyal, contented and dedicated in their work. Organizations can influence staff's achievement of subjective success by offering them training and development, mentorship, supervisor support and by providing them with both financial and non-financial resources (Barnet & Bradley, 2007). This will determine their pay, promotion and benefits that are under the control of the organization. Furthermore, the manner in which organizations allocate these rewards may have a significant influence on whether or not an employee feels successful (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005). Besides, subjective success criteria such as feelings of achievements, positive rewards, interesting jobs, or good collaboration in work set-ups can also be influenced by the where the organization exists (Heslin 2005). Finally, the company can potentially determine the accomplishments of aspects that are of concern to the staff but not directly connected to work such as creating a balance between work and life or better health by minimizing the time and effort the staff have to dedicate towards these pursuits. The literature suggests that employees who work for organizations that understand and are able to facilitate their subjective career success will report more positive attitudes towards work and their employers. The Kenyan manufacturing firms is a key sector to the economy. The nation relies on this sector to provide revenue and employment (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Its staggering performance is hence a cause of alarm. As observed by Moon and Choi (2017), when employees attain career success there is an in-built satisfaction of the staff that propels them to strive for high performance for the benefit of the organization.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Cognitive Career Theory

The study is built on social cognitive career theory (SCCT). The theory was proposed by Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994, 2006). It explains the interactive relationship between people and

their environment. The basic assumption made by this theory is that personal factors, environment and behaviour variables form a complex interaction that in turn directs and sustains one's behaviour in order to counter the challenges and obstacles faced in the quest for a desired outcome. The identified personal factors include: racial background, gender, behavior and proactive personality. Whereas environmental factors include; one's culture, economic background and organizational sponsorship for career success.

The theory presents a new perspective to understanding the procedure that people use to develop their interests, choices and attain different degrees of success in their education and occupation (Lent, Steven & Hackett, 2006). By drawing its foundation from general SCT, SCCT emphasizes on a number of cognitive-person variable such as personal effectiveness, desired outcome and goals and on how these elements relate with other characteristics of an individual's environmental features such sex, race, tribe, organizational supports and obstacles to aid in directing the path of career advancement. According to SCCT, career success is affected by both objective and perceived environmental features. The objective features comprise of the quality of the educational experiences that one has gained and the monetary support one has to pursue training options. This has an impact on one's career development. The environmental features include: economic background, parental upbringing and peer influences. The success of the individuals is then defined by how people comprehend and react to what is offered by their environment. Lent et al., (2006) through this theory explains the interaction between environmental and individual factors towards achievement of career success. The theory thus proposes that the interaction among the three variables notably; organizational sponsorship, career management behavior, proactive personality jointly predicts positive achievement of career success.

2.2 Organizational Sponsorship, Career Management Behaviour, Proactive Personality and Career Success

There is a growing consensus that organizational sponsorship can directly lead to employee career success (Rosenbaum, 1984). The staff that is offered sponsorship through training and development, supervisor support, organization resources and mentorship usually succeed in their career faster than those who do not (Barnett & Bradley, 2007). Those employees who obtain such sponsorship generally have access to resources they need for their accomplishments, greater support, development opportunities and mentorship (Bozionelos, 2004). High quality leader – member exchange is associated with higher performance ratings during performance appraisals by one's supervisor that forms the basis of promotion and salary increments and higher level of delegation of responsibilities that offer an employee wider skill on job related areas. Employees thus experience career success through increment in salaries, upward mobility, and contentment with their career (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman & Taylor, 2000).

Proactive individuals are likely to develop new ways and affect their work situations and surroundings in a way that create opportunities for their career self-advancement (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). Proactive people tend to counter obstacles and situations that may be a hindrance to their career prospects and are resilient to ensure that they achieve their objectives. Proactive people normally search for likely opportunities and go after them. They

also persist and ensure that they earn positive support from the company through adopting appropriate career management behaviour (Seibert & Kramer, 2001). Furthermore, Lent, Stevens & Brown (2006) observe that proactive personality tends to define career management behaviour adopted by various individuals in their quest for career success. Gould and Penley (1984) in their study observe that effective utilization of career management behaviour enables people to advance in their careers more than those who do not. The studies by Nabi (2003) and Bozionelos (2003, 2008) also showed that career management behaviour was among the factors leading to increased promotions and attainment of career satisfaction. The basis of the argument is that people who demonstrate high degree of specific career management behaviour like networking can benefit from maintaining career flexibility and forming helpful relationship with influential people; this may help them advance in their careers. Similarly, social capital theory proposes that a wide association between people and robust social groups such as the company's high-level management, professional and trade association may be utilized for a number of functions such as easier acquisition of gainful information, seats and authority (Bozionelos, 2003). This in turn promotes one's career success. Each of the three predictor variables; organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour and proactive personality predicts one's achievement of career success, however, when the three predictor variables are used together, it is expected that they will have a higher magnitude in predicting an individual's achievement of career success.

Earlier empirical studies have examined the relationship between these predictor variables and career success individually. Barnett & Bradley (2007) examined the link between organizational sponsorship and career success; Seibert & Kramer (2001) looked at the relationship between personality traits and career success; while Yean and Yahya (2008) explored the link between career management and career success among employees of manufacturing companies from Malaysia. Despite the positive findings by these studies, their magnitude was very small as was observed from the low r-square. The current study hence explored the joint effect of these predictor variables on career success as it was believed that the interaction of these three variables would give a better prediction and view of career success. It was also proposed that the joint effect of the three variables was likely to give a more balanced theoretical approach to the study of career success by considering both individual and organizational predictors of career success at the same time. The hypothesis that was developed for testing was:

H₁: The joint effect of organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour, and proactive personality is greater than the individual effects of each predictor variables on subjective career success

3. Research Methodology

This study used descriptive cross-sectional survey. This was necessary in order determine the association among the constructs and data was gathered among a considerable number of companies at a specific point in time (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). 255 managers from large manufacturing companies in Kenya were considered as unit of analysis. The exact number of

management population is not known and could not be ascertained during the study. Therefore, the decision on the sample size was made in consistent with the proposition of Roscoe (1975) sample size determination for unknown population. In light of the proposition, a good sample should be larger than 30 and less than 500. The data gathered was primary in nature and it was collected using a semi structured questionnaire.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

On the basis of the sample, 255 questionnaires were given to the informants. They in turn returned a total of 205 questionnaires among which two had incomplete responses thus were disregarded during analysis. The response rate was therefore established to be 79.6%. The analysis done consisted both of descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive aspect provided information that shaded light on employees' background. The analysis yielded details on percentage frequencies. Regarding the inferential aspect, hierarchical regression analysis was used to determine the joint effect of organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour and proactive personality on career success.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that 62.4% of the respondents were men while 37.6% were female this was slightly above the 30% requirement of the gender rule. The results indicate that 39.1% had less than 5 years in their current organization, majority of the managers accounting for 41.4% had stayed in their current organization from 5 to 10 years and another 12.3% had stayed for a period ranging from 11 years to 15 years. The least percentage was 6.4% which accounted for those managers who had stayed for a period above 15 years in their current organization. From the results in Table 1, 26.1% of the respondents belonged to the supervisory level, the highest number of managers that was 52.7% belonged to middle level management and the least respondents were from the senior level management that represented 21.2% of the total sample. The results also indicate that 11.8% of the respondents had worked for their respective firms in the current position for less than 1 year. Those who had worked for a period 1-3 years accounted for the majority with 50.3% while about 24.1% had worked for 4-5 years and 13.8% had worked for more than 5 years.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	127	62.6
	Female	76	37.4
	Total	203	100.0
Length of time in years	Less than 5	81	39.9
	5-10	84	41.4
	11-15	25	12.3
	Above 15	13	6.4
	Total	203	100.0
Position in the firm	Supervisory level	53	26.1
	Middle level management	107	52.7

	Senior management	43	21.2
	Total	203	100.0
Length of service in current position in years	Less than 1	24	11.8
	1-3	102	50.3
	4-5	49	24.1
	More than 5	28	13.8
	Total	203	100.0

4.2 Test of Hypothesis and Interpretations

The objective was to establish the joint effect of organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour and proactive personality on subjective career success. Consequently, the hypothesis tested was:

H₁: The joint effect of organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour, and proactive personality is greater than the individual effects of each predictor variables on subjective career success

This hypothesis was tested using hierarchical regression analysis with study variables being entered into the analysis in a sequence of groups. In the first step, subjective career success was regressed on organizational sponsorship. In step two, career management behaviour was added into the equation. Lastly, in step three, proactive personality, was added to assess their joint effect on SCS. Table 2 presents the results of this analysis.

The analysis show that organizational sponsorship explained 35.8% of variance in subjective career success ($R^2=0.361$, adjusted $R^2=0.358$). The remaining 64.2% was related to factors other than those dealt with in the study. The overall model was statistically significant ($F=113.526$, $P<0.05$). The coefficient of correlation ($R=0.601$, $t=10.66$, $P<0.05$) indicated a significant positive relationship between organizational sponsorship and subjective career success. Equally, the beta coefficients show that the influence of organizational sponsorship on subjective career success was statistically significant ($\beta=0.681$, $t=10.655$, $p<0.05$). This is an indication that a unit change in organizational sponsorship is associated with 0.681 change in subjective career success.

In the second model, career management behaviour (CMB) was introduced in the model. The results indicate that 42.3% of variance in subjective career success (SCS) was explained by organizational sponsorship and career management behaviour. 57.7% of variance in SCS was not explained by the two variables (CMB) and (OS) and therefore was attributed to other factors not included in the regression model ($R^2=0.429$, adjusted $R^2=0.423$, $F=75.096$, $P<0.05$). Adjusted R^2 changed from 0.358 ($R^2=0.361$, adjusted $R^2=0.358$) in step one to 0.423 in step two ($R^2=0.429$, adjusted $R^2=0.423$) suggesting that introduction of career management behaviour resulted in the increase of the variance in SCS by 6.8%. The correlation coefficient indicates a positive significant relationship between the two; organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour variables (OS and CMB) and SCS ($R=0.655$, $t=12.28$, $P<0.05$). The overall model was statistically significant indicating the suitability of regression analysis ($F=75.096$, $P<0.05$). In addition to this, the beta coefficient was significant ($\beta=0.382$, $t=4.878$,

$P < 0.05$) implying that one-unit change in career management behaviour is associated with 0.386 change in SCS.

Model 3 consisted of the three predictor variables: organizational sponsorship (OS), career management behaviour (CMB) and proactive personality (PP). The results indicate that 51.4% of variance in SCS was explained by the predictor variables. However, 48.6% of variance in subjective career success was due to other factors not included in the study ($R^2 = 0.521$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.514$). The overall model was statistically significant ($F = 72.235$, $P < 0.05$) and the F change statistics was also significant (F change = 38.415, $p < 0.05$). This provided a basis for the use of regression analysis. The results also indicate a decrease in the standard error of estimates from 0.62279 in model 1 to 0.54173 in the third model indicating an improvement in the predictive ability of the model when the three variables were used together. The coefficient of correlation ($R = 0.722$, $t = 14.81$, $P < 0.05$) implies a strong significant positive relationship between the variables (OS, CMB and PP) and SCS.

The foregoing results suggest that the joint effect of organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour and proactive personality had a greater effect on SCS as compared to individual effects of the predictor variables. It was evident from the regression models that 51.4% of variance in SCS was explained by the three variables: organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour and proactive personality (adjusted $R^2 = 0.514$). The introduction of career management behaviour in the second step resulted in a change in R^2 by 6.8% and the introduction of proactive personality resulted in a change in R^2 by 9.2%. The three variables were found to uniquely and significantly contribute to subjective career success. In model 3, it was only the beta coefficients for organizational sponsorship ($\beta = 0.274$, $t = 3.792$, $P < 0.05$) and proactive personality ($\beta = 0.438$, $t = 6.198$, $P < 0.05$) that were significant. Career management behaviour had a positive but insignificant beta ($\beta = 0.102$, $t = 1.202$, $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis was thus supported. The results indicate that those individuals with proactive personality and appropriate career management behaviour when offered organizational sponsorship are able to achieve SCS.

Table 2. Regression Results for the Effect of the Joint Effect of Organizational Sponsorship, Career Management Behaviour, Proactive Personalities and Subjective Career Success

Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig.	F Change
1	.601	.361	.358	.62279	.361	113.526	1	201	.000	
2	.655	.429	.423	.59023	.068	23.792	1	200	.000	
3	.722	.521	.514	.54173	.092	38.415	1	199	.000	

Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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	Regression	44.034	1	44.034	113.526	.000
1	Residual	77.963	201	.388		
	Total	121.996	202			
	Regression	52.322	2	26.161	75.096	.000
2	Residual	69.674	200	.348		
	Total	121.996	202			
	Regression	63.596	3	21.199	72.235	.000
3	Residual	58.400	199	.293		
	Total	121.996	202			

a. Dependent Variable: Subjective career

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational sponsorship

c. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational sponsorship, Career management behaviour

d. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational sponsorship, Career management behaviour, Proactive personality

Beta Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standardized		T	Sig.	
		Coefficients	B	Std. Error			Beta
1	(Constant)	1.191		.242	4.930	.000	
	Organizational sponsorship	.681		.064	.601	10.655	.000
2	(Constant)	.449		.275	1.631	.104	
	Organizational sponsorship	.364		.089	.321	4.095	.000
	Career management behaviour	.509		.104	.382	4.878	.000
3	(Constant)	-.193		.273	-.707	.481	
	Organizational sponsorship	.311		.082	.274	3.792	.000
	Career management behaviours	.136		.113	.102	1.202	.231
	Proactive personality	.579		.093	.438	6.198	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Subjective career

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational sponsorship

- c. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational sponsorship, Career management behaviour
- d. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational sponsorship, Career management behaviour, Proactive personality

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that the joint effect of the three predictor variables to subjective career success was greater than their individual effect. The argument made is that organizational variables and personal attributes are proximal determinants of one's affective reactions to work and career. Personal attributes are associated with perceptual variables such as subjective career success while organizational sponsorship influence work and career attitudes. It generates positive feeling towards work and career thus employees are likely to exhibit high career satisfaction levels (Ng, et. al., 2005). The findings hence validate these propositions. The positive findings in this study advance knowledge by offering a more balanced approach to the study of career success by combining both individual and organizational predictors of career success at the same time. Previous studies had focused only on either individual or organizational predictors of career success separately. Among other studies reviewed, Yean and Yahya (2011) focused on proactive personality, career management behaviour and career success. Dodangoda and Arachchige (2015) studied the link between personality and CS and obtained support for this relationship. Barnett & Bradley (2007) focused on the link between OS and CS with positive findings. In addition to this, the study considered all the dimensions of the variables in the study as opposed to previous study carried out by Ogutu and Ougo (2016) who considered only one dimension of career management behaviour. A combination of both individual and organizational variables was shown to contribute more to the variance explained in subjective career success.

6. Conclusion, Recommendations and Implications

This study has established that organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour and proactive personality jointly contributes to the staff's subjective career success. This study therefore recommends that manufacturing companies should enhance their managers' subjective career success by providing them with organizational sponsorship programmes. This is because, apart from benefitting the staff, these companies also stand to benefit from the dedication and loyalty that comes as a result of the support offered. Secondly, for managers, there is need to adopt appropriate career management behaviour such as enhancing promotability, improving image with superior and strengthening external contacts to facilitate their career success. There is also need for the staff to be proactive to facilitate their achievement of career success. Thirdly, the study indicates that career satisfaction is a good measure of subjective career success hence shedding light on the argument of whether the subjective aspect should be estimated using career satisfaction or job contentment.

7. Suggestions for Further Research

This study used cross-sectional research design; it is suggested that further research in this area should make use of longitudinal design in order to examine this relationship. There is need for adequate time to fully understand the causal relationship that exist between these

variables (organizational sponsorship, career management behaviour, proactive personality) and career success. This is because career success is attained overtime since it refers to an experience that lasts in one's lifetime. Besides, individuals only gain sponsorship after being in the organization for a considerable amount of time. Similarly, CMB are initiated and adjusted in accordance with the way they prove to benefit the users towards realizing their career dreams.

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