

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF CAREER PLATEAU, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB PERFORMANCE; A CASE OF PRIVATE SECTOR UNIVERSITIES IN PESHAWAR CITY

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ABSTRACT

This research has conducted to investigate the effect of career plateau on organizational commitment and on job performance in the private sector Universities, located in Peshawar city. Data was collected from 115 employees, serving in ten universities with the help of questionnaires. It has found that career plateau has inverse relation with job performance and Organization commitment, however organizational commitment plays a significant role in improving job performance. The result further indicates that organizational commitment partially mediates the relation of career plateau and job performance. This is a unique research of its kind and meaningfully contributed to the existing literature on career plateau and job performance relationship. The study suggests that in order to improve the performance of faculty in time promotion, appraisal and reward is essential.

INTRODUCTION

American psychologist introduced the phenomenon of career plateau. Since that the phenomenon of career plateau remained a central issue for scholars and for business endeavors. Career plateau is a period in a profession where the chance of further upward movement / endorsement is considerably low .Career plateau is defined as permanent and impermanent discontinuation in the career success which causes irritation and psychological anxiety (Rotondo and Perrewe,2000).

Various scholars Rotondo and Perrew (2000) & Yamamoto(2006) have concluded that the crest of a career is plateau. It occurs when the upward movement, individual's duties, responsibilities and challenges of job comes to an end. It is a “stagnation” of an individual's career growth. The conventional careers which used to offer subsequent rise have reduced to minimum and recent flat organizational structure has given rise to career plateau. The chances of employees to become plateau are constantly increasing which ultimately affect occupational sickness and the expansion of organization.

Plateau has remained a burning issue for several years, therefore researchers have given serious attention to dig out the association between occupation stagnation and employees' performance. Suzanne K Stout (1988) plateaued workforce had minimum marketable value and had low level of commitment and performance as compare non-plateau. Similarly Yu Chen (2006) has founded that career plateau has negative impact on the performance of knowledge workers. This Study has generally analyzed the

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relationship of plateau with workers performance. It has not studied in-depth the inner mechanism and the potential intermediate variables. The focus of the paper is to carry out empirical study to bring out intermediate variable such as organizational commitment and to explore the consequences of plateau on organizational commitment and job performance in developing society of Pakistan. This is a unique study of its kind in the private sector Universities and will add to the existing literature of career plateau and Job performance relationship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Career Plateau

The concept of career plateau has not acknowledged a consistent view as it is multi-faceted phenomenon and researchers have defined it from different angles. Western intellectuals have linked it with promotion, upward mobility and with accountability and responsibility. The first scholar who defined it from promotion perspective was Ference. In the initial stage, he thought that the probability of employee's promotion was low. Veiga (1981) has stretched the perception of plateau and explained it from lateral movement in career. Plateau occurs when workers stay on the same position for a long period of time and their chances of job mobility include vertical and horizontal comes to an end. Feldman, D.C, Weitz, B.A, (1988) have offered a new approach of career plateau in his article, Career plateau in the sale force: Understanding and Removing Blockages to Employees' Growth. This definition of plateau is concerned with responsibilities which employees are receiving from time to time. Employees who are not receiving additional responsibilities face the phenomenon of plateau.

Types of Plateau.

Researchers have identified different forms of career plateau with the passage of time. Structural plateau happens when advancement opportunity within hierarchical structure institution comes to an end (Joseph, 1996). Content plateau occurs when employees know their job well and they face no more challenges. As a result further learning of the employees diminishes. Consequently employees become bored and plateau happens (Bardwick, 1986). Joseph (1996) suggested that voluntary plateau occurs due to the reason that employees do not want to take higher responsibilities to pass up stress. Mostly they do so due to family reasons. Professional plateau means to master new skills to enhance the chance of employability and marketability. Professional plateau is not related only with job contents but also related with whether job empowers employees to master new skills to enhance their employability and marketability (Lee Patric Chang Boon, 2002). Professionally well qualified employees are not outdated. Job plateau referred that point when the employee didn't get interest in his job, get bored and don't want to learn new skills and experiences (Lee and Boon, 2009).

Determinants of Plateau.

Different sources of plateau have identified by scholars in different era as Theresa Smith-Ruig (2008) proved that career plateau is a multi-faceted phenomenon i.e. objective career and subjective career. Actually objective career is related to flexible

achievements e.g. pay promotion and work-related positions etc. while subjective career is related with reaction of the employee about career experience and career satisfaction. Scholars of career plateau have forwarded various dimensions of plateau in various times. Some of these dimensions are related with organization and some are related with individuals. Near (1980) contended that the pyramids structure of organization become the source of plateau. The year's stage of the institution and the business model which is adopted becomes the source of plateau. Slocum et al., (1985) compared 'defender' organization with the 'aggressor' organization. Aggressor organization is in search of new segmentation and promptly reactstorenew the market. It also expands the market tender advancement opportunities to the employees and reduces the obstacles of progress. Lin Mayasari (2001) founded that if an organization does not give proper attention to the career growth of employees then they stuck on the same position and plateau occurs. Mayasari (2001) further suggested that the distance between boss and subordinate, and the internal policies and structure of an organization also support career plateau. Bardwick (1986) has presented the rule of 99% which stated that plateau is due to hierarchical arrangement of organizations. Bardwick (1986) stated that only 1% of supervisors reach to the top of an institution. This confirmed the Role of 99%, as plateau is almost expected. structural plateau is a critical form of plateau personnel. Feldman, Daniel.C, Weitz.Barton.A, (1988) stated that Stress ,Tension and Lack of extrinsic reward are the major organizational determinants of plateau. The prevalence of stress for a longer period of time and the intensity of stress cause inefficiency of the workers. As a result performance is suffered and job attitude becomes more negative which cause plateau. Similarly when a manager findshis pay minimum and the distribution system of pay unequal and unfair, it then causes plateau. In such cases their attitude and performance remain at the lowest level.

Feldman et al., (1988) further identified that individual skills, abilities and lack of intrinsic motivation are the barriers of upward movements in the organization. It is due to poor selection system, no emphasis on training, inaccurate perception of knowledge, past performance, insufficient skill and values. Poor job performance and poor job attitude is the result of insufficient skills and abilities of employees. Employees who find that their job is meaningless, having no challenge, no skill variety is required, similar tasks had to perform or work has no meaning for him leads to career plateau. Employees who face these phenomena remain low performers and declining job attitudes. Similarly Lin Mayasari (2001) has identified that personal experience, education, age, gender, family background and personal issues become barriers in career plateau. Tremblay and Roger (1993) documenteddemographic variables as age and credential as reasons of plateau. Stroh (1992) suggested that gender discrimination which causes plateau as 'glass ceiling' concept, which means a female cannot reach to the top in organization. Environmental factors and bad economiccondition of a country impact the development of organizations and leaves no opportunity for further promotion. Drivers of career plateau in the organization are the restructuring of the business, slow economic growth and technology. Theresa Smith-Ruig (2008) proved that career plateau is a multi-faceted phenomenon i.e. objective career and subjective career. Actually objective career is related to flexible achievements e.g. pay promotion and work-related position etc. while subjective career is related with reaction of the

the employee about career experience and career satisfaction. Career plateau affects staff positively and negatively alike. However the career plateau is a major contributor to the intention of the employee to leave in many organizations, and have a negative impact on the organization performance (Henry Ongori, and Joseph E. Agolla, 2009).

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

In 1990s *organizational commitment* was an important subject in the field of business administration and a need was aroused to develop a theory for it. Becker (1960) was the first to initiate the idea of commitment. He stated that employees left various incentives while shifting from one institution to another. Employees enjoyed benefits while staying in the same institutions. Grusky (1966) further elaborated that “*option of the employees to stay in the organization is commitment*”

Kanter (1968) affirmed commitment as the faithfulness of staff with organization. According to Mowday, et al., (1982, p. 27) *organizational commitment* is there cognition and contribution of workers in organization. Lee, et al., (2000) depicted OC as constant learning of the staff in organization. Reyes (2001, p. 38) told that commitment is the acceptance of institutional objectives not for the personal benefits but for the payback of organization.

The following are the different types of commitment:

Affective Commitment

Kanter (1968) referred affective commitment as “*consistency commitment*”. Porter, et al., (1979) explained Affective Commitment as to consider the organizational objectives as one's own goals and values and to struggle hard to accomplish them. Mowday, et al., (1982) told that honest sentiments and profound involvement in institutions is Affective commitment. Reily and Chantman (1986) elaborated that affective commitment is the “*the poignant attachment, detection and participation of the workforce in organization*”

Continuance Commitment

Becker's (1960) stated that continuance obligation is “steady lines of action” (p.13). In Meyer and Allen (1984) stated continuance commitment is the desire to be the part of the organization because of ‘*nontransferable investment there*’. Reichers (1985) supposed that *continuance commitment* is due to certain factors i.e. number of years which employee has spent in the organization and the benefits and incentives which employee has availed. Butiendach and Dewitte (2005) stress the tendency of employee's adherence and continuous commitment to an organization keeping in view the cost which they keep in mind and would have to bear in case they leave it.

Normative Commitment:

Meyer (1991) explained that normative commitment is a sense of responsibility. Weiner (1982) defined normative commitments “computation of internalized strain to proceed in a way which obtained organizational effectiveness”. Weiner explained that it is

because of folk background, spiritual feelings and marriage in the institution bound the employees to show commitment in the work place.

CAREER PLATEAU, JOB PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The arguments on career plateaus is clear by a variety of operationalization's (Andreas G.M. Nachbagauer, Gabriela Riedl, 2002). Different hypothetical arguments and empirical investigations found a direct association between a career plateau, job performance and organizational commitment (Samuel O. SALAMI ,2010), Job plateau significantly minimize job performance (Lentz,2004), reduce job satisfaction (Jung &Tak,2008; Lentz & Allen,2009) and decrease level of commitment (Jung &Tak, 2008; McCleese & Eby,2006). Samuel (2010) found that career plateau was negatively connected with job pleasure, performance and with organizational commitment. job performance rating showed a significant role in inducing an employee's chances for promotion (MagidIgbaria,. Baroudi, 1995). Marie-Eve, Tremblay & Simard, (2009) investigated the data of 557 hospital personnel and found significant association of two kind of plateau, supervisory support and with the level of OC. However Samuel (2010) found the negative linked with organizational commitment. Despite of the dysfunctional belongings of career plateauing, there are indications that such negativities may clue to optimism from view of employees. For instance some studies have concluded that plateaued workforce sustain the same level of job performance, productivity and are highly satisfied because of getting new skills place them in better position for other career opportunities elsewhere (Ongori &Agolla, 2009). The above mention literature proved that plateau has positive and negative connectivity with job performance and with organizational commitment.

The mediating role of OC

The employees who suffer from plateau in the organization, have low Millian (1992) founded that content plateau was inversely related with employees performance. Lentz (2004) reported that content plateau had negative impact on work performance and on organizational commitment. Kims., Jinyoun., Kyungro, (2013) found that plateau has negative crash on professional and on organizational loyalty. However, Van concluded the positive correlation of commitment and performance Ji-Hyun and Jinkook (2008) stated that career plateau is opposite to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. level of Organizational commitment, such staff members have pessimistic feeling and well prefer to quit the organization.Examining the association between plateau and performance it was concluded that career plateau has negative impact on job performance (Chen and Li,2011).

As discussed that career plateau is indirectly linked with job performance and organizational commitment. Further, organizational commitment is directly associated with job performance. Here the question arises that by knowing the said relationships it is possible to undertake a psychological mechanics (organizational commitment) as mediator. As the predictor is indirectly related with the dependent variable and mediating variable is directly related with dependent variable. It is assumed that by adding the organizational commitment the indirect relationship of career plateau and

job performance will remain indirect and would be mediated. By keeping in view the above mention discussion the following hypothesis are developed to be tested:

- H1:** Job performance is correlated with hierarchical, content and centralizing plateau in private sector universities of Peshawar city.
- H2:** There is significant relationship between organizational commitment and different forms of career plateau in private sector universities.
- H3:** Organizational commitment has significant impact on performance.
- H4:** Organizational commitment affects the relationship between career plateau and Performance.
- H5:** organizational commitment mediates the relationship between career plateau and job performance

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

The targeted population for the study was the ten private sector universities in the vicinity of Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa. Data was collected from all universities and atleast ten percent faculty of each university was touched in the data collection process. The total faculty members in these ten universities are approximately 673. Because of wide spread geographical location of these universities from each other, non-probability convenient sampling technique was used to select the respondents and get data for this study. Questionnaires were distributed by personal visits and the respondents were requested to fill the questionnaire. Total 150 questionnaires were randomly circulated among the faculty and were received after a break of 10 days. Among the distributed questionnaire 115 were get back that was usable for further analysis, showed response rate of 76%. Majority of the respondents in the research was male (77.2%), female were (22.8%), Master degree holders were (79%), MS/M.Phil. degree holders were (15%) and only (6%) were Doctors. Majority of the respondents were young at the age of 30 years or less.

Measures

Measures for this study were selected from previous studies and were in original English Language. English is widely used as mean of instruction and communication in the Universities; hence, there were no need to translate it into negative language. Three different types of questionnaires were used to collect the data regarding career plateau, organizational commitment and job performance. Data regarding plateau was collected by using the questionnaire designed by David and Rong (2008). Likewise data in relation to job performance was collected through the questionnaire developed by Combell, Scotter, and Stephen (1994). The questionnaires employed in this research were developed by Allen and Meyer (1991) and were used in various studies to calculate the level of commitment. There were two parts in the questionnaire. The first part included the demographic while the second part included item regarding the variables of the study. All the tools were on 5 point Likert scale where 1 represented strongly disagree, 2 represented disagree, 3 was for neither, 4 represented agree while 5

presented strongly agree.

Reliability

Nunnally (1978) recommended the best level of co-efficient of reliability 0.70 for social sciences in psychometric theory. The reliability of the scales are mention below. Table 1 Alpha Reliability Coefficients of Composite Scales of plateau (N=115)

Table 1: Alpha Reliability Coefficients of Composite Scales career plateau (N=115)

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
.751	08

The above table 1 is showing the reliability of the scale used for the plateau. The result indicates that reliability is inacceptable range. As the researches proved that reliability above 0.6 is quite acceptable in social science study. The reliability showing 0.751 alpha value, which indicates that the data used for the purpose of this variable is consistent and reliable.

Table 2: Alpha Reliability Coefficients of Composite Scales job performance (N=115)

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
.767	8

The above results indicates that reliability is in acceptable range as it is .767 and acceptable in social sciences.

Table 3: Alpha Reliability Coefficients of Composite Scales OC (N=115)

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
.754	6

The above table 3 indicate that the reliability of the scale OC is .754 which is in acceptable range.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Spss 13.0 software was used to study the correlation analysis among occupation plateau, organizational loyalty and job performance. The analysis results are as below in Table 4.

Table 4: The Correlation Analysis Among Career Plateau, Organizational Commitment And Performance

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations and Reliabilities

	Mean	SD	Gender	Age	Exp	CP	OC	JP
1 Gender	1.31	0.53	1					
2 Age	2.3	0.56	-.11**	1				

3	Career Plateau	2.43	0.2	-0.09	-0.43	0.56	0.751		
4	OC	3.28	0.76	0.34	0.34	0.19	-.468	0.754	
5	Job Performance	2.67	0.43	0.4	0.19	0.39	-.381	.483	0.767

N=155 Cronbach's Alpha presented in parenthesis

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation between career plateau and organizational commitment was negatively correlated ($r = -0.468$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly career plateau and job performance is also negatively correlated ($r = -0.381$, $p < 0.001$) with each other. However the relation between organizational commitment and job performance is positively correlated ($r = 0.483$, $p < 0.001$) with each other. This provide the initial support to establish the hypothesis.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

To compute the variation in independent variables caused by dependent variable regression analysis was applied. According to the model independent variables i.e. career plateau was causing changes in job performance and while organizational commitment was mediating the relationships between career plateau and job performance.

Regression results as shown in table II belowdemonstrations that three kind of career plateau has negative and significant impact on job performance where ($B = -.201, -.133, -.300$ respectively and $p = 0.000$), and the overall beta value was found $-.212$ where $p < 0.05$. The value of beta is $-.212$ indicate that a 1 unit change in career plateau bring about $-.212$ changes in performance and the value of R-square is $.148$ which means that 14% changes in job performance is because of plateau. Career plateau is also negatively related to organizational commitment whereas ($B = -.241, -.131, -.424$ and $p = 0.000$), however the overall value of beta is $.262$, where $p < 0.05$. The value of beta is $-.262$ indicate that a 1 unit change in career plateau bring about $-.262$ changes in the level of OC and the value of R-square is $.223$ which means that 22% changes in the level of OC is because of plateau.

The result further indicate that the value of R-square is $.234$. it means that 23% changes in commitment is because of Career plateau. However the table explain that organizational commitment has positive and significant impact on Job Performance where ($B = .241$, $p = 0.000$)

Table 5: Regression Analysis Among Career Plateau, Organizational Commitment, Job Performance

<i>Dependent</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>BETA</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>R²</i>	<i>Adjust R²</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Performance	Content plateau	-.204	.000	.148	.129	18.752	.000
	hierarchical plateau	-.133	.023				
	Centralizing plateau	-.300	.000				

Organizational commitment	Content plateau	-.241	.000	.234	.233	35.252	.000
	Hierarchical plateau	-.132	.010				
	centralizing plateau	-.424	.000				
Performance	Affective Commitment	.501	.000	.301	.285	42.928	.000
	Continuance commitment	.124	.013				
	Normative commitment	.187	.000				

Verified Mediation Effects:

To check the mediating effect the Barron and Kenny (1986) technique was used. In the last step the predicting variable (career plateau) and mediating variable (organizational commitment) was regressed with dependent variables (job Performance). Barron and Kenny (1986) suggest that a variable is mediating if: 1. the impact of variable is significant for mediation relation; 2. Analyzed whether mediation effect is vital for dependent variable; 3. Testing (Independent, mediating) variables jointly influence dependent variable; judge the collective effect of variables on dependent is minimize or not. The mediation analysis of the study are mention in below table.

Table 6: The Mediation Analysis Of Organizational Commitment between Career Plateau And Job Performance.

		Job Performance			
		R²	B	t-value	P-value
Step 1					
	Career Plateau	0.148	-0.41	11.56	.000
Step 2					
	Career Plateau	0.41	-0.30	10.43	.000
	OC	0.47		13.18	.000

The table 6 above shows that the effect of career plateau has been significantly changed (B = -0.41, P < .01). It shows that the effect of career plateau on Job Performance due to the addition of organizational commitment has been changed. The indirect relationship between career plateau and job performance has been mediated by the intervention of organizational commitment. To make it simple it can be said that before adding the organizational commitment as mediator the beta value was -0.212 and when the mediator was added the variation caused by Career plateau in the regression model has been significantly changed to -0.41, however the effect was found significant (P = .000. i.e. P is smaller than .05). It is concluded that organizational commitment partially mediates the relationship between career plateau and Job performance.

DISCUSSION

Most importantly the study has found the dependency and signifiency of the three dimensions of career plateau with job performance and organizational commitment and has extended the previous work. The findings are important because it raise question on

the idea of secret career plan for promotion where everyone knows when a promotion is due, and if promotion does not happen and plateau occurred then it obviously affects the level of job performance and organizational commitment. This interpretation highlights that private Universities in Peshawar do not have strict policy for promotion, which ultimately effects the performance and loyalty of faculty.

The study found that career plateau and organizational commitment was negatively correlated with each other. Different kinds of plateaus significantly influence organizational commitment. The research proof that consequence of Centralizing Plateau is much higher than the others. Past research revealed the same results. Chen and Li, (2011) confirmed the same inverse relationship between career plateau and organizational commitment. Kims., Jinyoun., Kyungro, (2013) also found the same inverse relationship. This reveals that less chances of promotion and uncertainty of job in private sector universities will lead to low level of organizational commitment.

Career plateau and job performance is also negatively correlated with each other. All the three kinds of plateau have significant impact on employee's job performance. The effect of Centralizing Plateau is much higher than the content and hierarchical Plateau. Similar studies in the past had shown similar connection in different cultures and in occupational setting. Lentz (2004) found the same inverse relationship. Millian (1997) also found that different kinds of plateaus are inversely related to job performance. This discloses that less chances of promotion and doubt of job in private sector universities will lead to low level of job performance. It is advisable that the Universities in private sectors must have a strict promotion policy to enhance the level of commitment and job performance among faculty members. The relation between organizational commitment and job performance is positively correlated. Samuel (2010) found the positive link between plateau and organizational commitment. The research further proof that OC partially mediates the relation between career plateau and job performance. It means when the loyalty is being observed toward their organization, it makes sense that while adding OC as mediating variable the performance of the employees will not be affected by plateau. For the first time this aspect has been investigated among the faculty members of private sector Universities and meaningfully contributes to the existing literature on Career plateau and Job performance.

CONCLUSION

Empirical research technique is used in this study to develop a model to explain the association of career plateau, OC and job performance.

1. Career plateau has negative knock on OC and the faculty has pessimistic approach towards their institutions and prefers to quit the organization.
2. Similarly plateau is inversely correlated with performance while the negativity of centralized plateau on performance is much higher than content and hierarchical plateau. It proposes that the universities should redesign recruitment policy, evaluation system, reward performance and training to update their knowledge.
3. Results further indicate that organizational commitment mediates the relation

of plateau and job performance. Two parts of organizational commitment i.e. affective commitment and normative commitment are significant for performance as compared to continuance commitment. Excepted hierarchical and centralizing plateau are significant for performance. The study suggested that cooperative culture and in time promotion is important to enhance the performance of faculty members.

4. Less chances of promotion and uncertainty of job in private sector universities has led to low level of organizational commitment and job performance. It is advisable that the Universities in private sectors must have a strike promotion policy to enhance the level of commitment and job performance among faculty members.

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