

Career Plateau: A Barrier to Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment: A Case of Public Sector Hospitals

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Career Plateau, Job satisfaction, Organizational Commitment

The objective of this study was to examine the relationships between career plateau (CP), organizational commitment (OC), and job satisfaction (JS) within the employment levels of Nowshera's government hospital. The conceptual model has led to the formulation of two hypotheses, both of which are derived from the concept and the existing literature. A survey questionnaire has been administered to a group of 158 doctors now employed in class "D" hospitals that are CMH and Qazi Hussain Ahmad in the territory district Nowshera. The sample size for this selection was determined using the Sekaran technique. The surveys were sent to the diverse medical experts. In order to conduct a more detailed analysis, data from 120 out of the 158 surveys that were completed accurately was employed. Initially, SPSS was used to perform tests on the scale's reliability, as well as to filter the data and identify any missing values. The evaluation of hypotheses was conducted in the next phase by the use of correlation analysis and regression analysis tests. Observations were made about the presence of reciprocal connections between career plateau and organizational commitment. Furthermore, a negative association between career plateau and JS has been identified. This research is unique since it is the first time that clinical practitioners working at hospitals designated as "D" have been examined for career plateau, organizational commitment, and JS. This research not only adds to the existing knowledge but also aims to enhance the previous studies conducted by career plateau, organizational commitment, and JS. Therefore, it urges policymakers to provide a suitable structure for employment and advancement, ultimately aiming to enhance the degree of organizational commitment and job satisfaction (JS).

INTRODUCTION

Organizational structures are now becoming more horizontal. Professional progress has also turn out to be more challenging and complicated in terms of vertical promotion (Jung & Talk, 2008). Thus, majority of the employees face the issue of plateau before the height of their employment. Career plateaus certainly not contemporary issue, but the high pace at which it is getting common in many organizations' is a matter of concern (Ongori & Agolla, 2009).

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Khan et al. (2023) performed a study that found that career plateauing has a negative link with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The outcomes of that study is based for the current study and presented in the form of a research investigation. Career plateauing is related with decreased job engagement and increased intents to quit the position, according to Lee and Kim (2023), who came to a similar conclusion that career plateauing has a destructive relationship with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. They discovered that career plateauing is connected with these two factors.

Additionally, the concept of career plateauing has been explored in a number of scenarios, such as the impact that career plateauing has on the well-being of workers (Rahman et al., 2024) and the role that leadership plays in preventing career plateauing (Javed et al., 2024).

Moreover, research has been conducted to investigate the role of career plateauing with job satisfaction and the connection between career plateauing and organizational commitment. According to the results of a study that was carried out by Singh and Singh (2023), high levels of job satisfaction have the ability to reduce the impact that career plateauing has on the amount of commitment that an individual has to their business.

The career plateau is likely to become the most critical problem of the next decade due to shifts in the market climate Ahn et al. (2024), downsizing, employment equity, restructuring, etc. The first indication of a career plateau occurred in 1970. The researcher Ference et al. (1977) describes career plateau as a stage where the probability of further hierarchical advancement is unlikely. Career plateau also alludes to the feeling of dissatisfaction and mental exhaustion that workers appear to encounter in progress of their careers (Lemire, Saba & Gagnon 1999; Rotondo & Pervecde 2000). Due to career plateau, the job of the employee is stagnating with the same routine job and obligation. It is like a trauma to workers and has been adversary effects on job performance, satisfaction, commitment & motivation. It is because of diverse factors for the hierarchical structure of the organization, the climate of the organization, & some time the employee may not have the chance to prove himself or herself, and the consequence is career plateau. This critical matter has attracted the researcher's attention to examine the influence of (career plateau) on job satisfaction (JS) and organizational commitment among public sector hospitals. Scholars have argued that employees feel less devoted to the institution because of (career plateau) (Chay et al. 1995; Allen et al. 1998; Nachbagauer & Riedl 2002).

Workers with a plateaued career often display a low uncertainty of tasks, & also when the job duties are not evident, then there would be a low level of JS. McCleese et al. (2006) affirms a negative relationship among career plateau & job satisfaction. Hence, investigating, the phenomena of career plateau of doctors performing job in category D hospital is thus a very attracting area of examination, since the dilemma of career plateau is now more obvious in the medical career this will also assist management to gain more awareness into such practices. This is distinctive research of its sort in the public sector hospitals & will contribute to the present literature on career plateau & the association with organizational commitment & JS.

Gap and Problem Statement

Based on previous studies, there is a lack of understandings about career plateau as most of the studies from 2028-2022 provides negative effects (Ahn et al., 2024). In this connection, there is a need to understand a more detailed literature (Smith, 2023; Lee & Kim, 2024). Similarly, the previous studies more emphasized on negative impact of career plateau in the content of job satisfaction and commitment with organizations, however, further research is needed to explain the enormosity and magnitude in different context of these associations (Cheng & Li, 2023; Park & Cho, 2024). Career plateau, an emerging phenomenon refers to the situation where an individual feel that their career is no longer growing and developing. It is a negative emotion where an employee feels like blocked and unproductive. In this situation, and individual reached a point where he or she feel that no longer development is seen. These negative feelings influencing job outcomes and commitment toward organization (Judge, 2020). According to the study of Lee (2018), when experiencing career plateau, employees feel undervalued, underestimated and unchallenged, leading to unproductive, low in job satisfaction and commitment. In the prior studies of Kim (2020), Li (2019) and Cheng (2020) that there are growing issues related to career plateau which is a significant predictor of job commitment and job outcomes including satisfaction.

Career Plateau organizational commitment

Career Plateau is characterized as a profession point where the possibility of additional hierarchical promotion is very small, impossible or unlikely (Ongori & Angolla, 2009). A study has been carried out to examine the impact of career plateauing on work satisfaction and the relationship between career plateauing and organizational commitment. Singh and Singh (2023) conducted research which found that elevated levels of work satisfaction might

mitigate the influence of career plateauing on an individual's commitment to their organization.

Career plateau has been used as a possessor for much of the deficit work, such as dissatisfaction, anxiety, deprived results, low organizational commitment & more turnover intent (Heilmann, Hult & Rilovick, 2008). Career plateau tends to generate discomfort among employees because of lack of vertical career advancement, while career advancement is seen as a benchmark for evaluating employee success (Ongori & Angolla, 2009). Although there is no proof in the literature which supports the negative effects of career plateau on the work attitude of workers, e.g. Palmero, Roger & Tremblay, (2001) have not revealed any major shift in satisfaction among individuals who are at the career plateau level & who have not reached this point. Likewise, Clark ((2005) stated that at some point career plateau positively affects workers so that they have a sense of security, that they don't face ambiguity in the form of varied & additional responsibilities. The career plateau is not a fresh concept or concern since the matter of career plateau remains a pertinent issue (Burke & Mikkelson, 2006; Allen, Russel, Poteet & Dobbins, 1999). The idea of career plateau began in 1970 & continued in 1980. The career plateau stems from the internal competitiveness for upward advancement, which is the reason each worker focus on having more tasks to expand obligation & thereby gain promotions. Researchers have described career plateau phenomena from various perspectives, since it is a multifaceted phenomenon. While Ference was the first scholar to explain career plateau from a promotional aspect. Khan et al. (2023) conducted a study that revealed a negative correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment and career plateauing.

The current study is based on the results of that study and is presented in the form of a research investigation. According to Lee and Kim (2023), career plateauing is associated with decreased job engagement and increased intentions to resign from the position. They also concluded that career plateauing has a detrimental impact on organizational commitment and job satisfaction. They found that these two factors are associated with career plateauing. Nexus to other factors related with career plateauing, a study was conducted to find out the association between leadership and career plateauing, Javed et al. (2024). After concluding the research, it was shown that transformational and empowering leadership styles may reduce the adverse impact of career plateauing on workers' attitudes and actions. Based on prior studies, career plateau is thus a significant contributor to employees' plans to leave the company & adversely impact organizational efficiency (Ongori & Agolla, 2009).

Organizational commitment (OC)

Organizational commitment is a consistent mechanism in such a way that it focuses not just on the micro scenario Lee and Kim (2023) but also on the macro scenario & includes corporate principles, organizational objectives, success standards & an eagerness to remain in the organizations (Vanderberg & Lance, 1992). Career plateauing is associated with lower levels of work satisfaction and organizational commitment, according to research by Khan et al. (2023). This study builds on the findings of the previous one and presents them in a research investigational format. Career plateauing has a negative correlation with work happiness and organizational dedication, as shown by Lee and Kim (2023), who also found that it is associated with lower levels of involvement in the job and more intentions to leave the post. They found that these two variables are associated with reaching a professional plateau.

Organizational commitment does not form with the company at once, but it may continue for a certain period of time when it is established. This is why organizational commitment is significant variable for evaluating and exploring employee behavior within an organization. The definition of organizational commitment was described & explained by American scholar Becker (1960) as the desire of employees to contribute their efforts to the organization & to increase their unilateral input into the corporation. Numerous definitions are provided by researchers to describe organizational commitment. In summary, there seems to be no unified organizational commitment agreement or premise between scholars. However, many scholars (Meyer et al., 1993) accept that organizational commitment is a worker emotional deal with the company & also that the aspects of organization commitment are more scientific than job satisfaction. Whereas Allen & Mayer in 1990 presented the 3 dimension, component model of organizational commitment to incorporate the multiple interpretations of organizational commitment. Allen & Mayer's study indicates that there are "3 mindsets" in corporations that reflect the commitment of employees to organizations so these 3 dimensions are 1) Affective commitment is a "desire" aspect identified as the positive emotional attachment of employees to workplaces. 2) A continued commitment is the "need" component or "gains versus losses" in organizations (Lai, 2009). 3) The normative commitment is when persons choose to be & remain in an organization due to sense of duty & loyalty. The mixed results with respect to the dimensions of OC & the earlier studies indicates that under the components of OC sentimental assurance has the strong association with job allied variables as liken to normative & incessant commitment (Meyer et al., 2012).

Job Satisfaction (JS)

Hoppock (1935), argued the notion of JS. As indicated by Hawthorne (1924-1932) in his book "JOB SATISFACTION" he describes JS is a mix of mental environmental conditions that make people honestly claim that I'm pleased with my job is Job Satisfaction. With the emergence of JS over time, businesses are increasingly seeking to increase the degree of satisfaction of their workers by fulfilling their social requirements in order to enhance efficiency. According to Newstrom & Davis (1984), job satisfaction is a compilation of emotions, favorable & unfavorable behaviors of the workers they have with their work. It demonstrates how much consensus exists among the workers' perceptions of the job & the expectations of remunerations that the company really offers. A man will be happy with their profession however not with their present work, which implies that there is a distinction between job satisfaction & career satisfaction (Rhodes & Doering, 1993). Grusky (1966) argues that there are two types of factors influencing job satisfaction: one is personal factors, including character, age, sex, qualification, intelligence; & the other is work qualities, including organizations and management, pay, occupational safety, work monotony, supervisory practices & communication. Job satisfaction is influenced by the work themselves, the relation with the supervisor, economic rewards, advancement chances, the working atmosphere & the working team, according to Arnold & Feldman (1982). Friedlander (2006) believes that the different aspect of job satisfaction comprises the social & technical environment, self-realization, & the need to be accepted from the viewpoint of the social environment & the psychosomatic inspiration of employees.

Career Plateau and Organizational commitment

The studies & results on career plateauing are not often accordant. But the plateauing was associated with negative results. Facing negative job dysfunctions, certain workers retain the same degree of production or output & contribute to optimism. They don't improve place for potential open doors & have a serious level of organizational commitment, job satisfaction (Ongori & Agolla, 2009). While Samuel (2010) reported a negative correlation between career plateau & organizational commitment & job performance. He considered a negative correlation between career plateau & organizational commitment. Likewise, Lentz (2004) point out that the content plateau had a negative effect on organizational commitment and also on the work performance of workers. Kims, (2013) figure out that career plateau has an undesirable effect on organizational commitment & organizational loyalty. Thus, by analyzing the association between career plateau & oc, it was concluded that career plateau had a negative

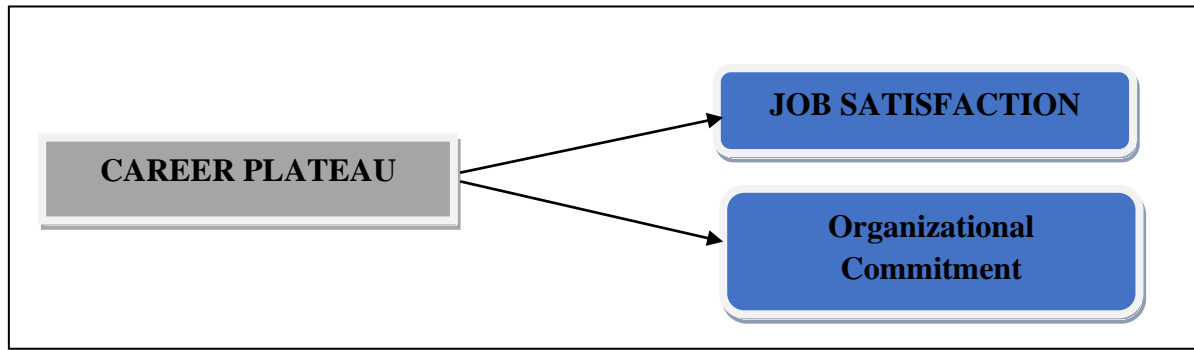
effect on organizational commitment (Chen & Li, 2011). Most of the findings of the studies indicate that career plateau is negatively linked to OC. There is no general consensus in literature on the adverse effects of career plateau on workers' job performance as most workers retain the same JS & OC level, either plateaued & non-plateaued (Palmero, Roger & Tremblay, 2001). Many empirical studies have shown that career plateau & organizational commitment have direct relationships (Samuel & Salami, 2010). The flat hierarchy decreases the possibility of upward promotion & less senior level positions (Chao 1990; Evan, Gunz & Jalland, 1997; Burke, 2002) & has a negative effect on organizational commitment.

Career Plateau & Job Satisfaction (JS)

The individuals & organizations viewed career plateau to be an adverse event with negative effects. If organizations & individuals view career plateau as a negative event, then career plateau will lead to negative & low job satisfaction levels (Rahman et al., 2024). Some researchers claim that career plateau does not affect job satisfaction, & different studies have been performed to support this theory. Khan et al. (2023) observed that career plateauing lowers work satisfaction and organizational commitment. The current study uses that study's findings as a research inquiry. According to Lee and Kim (2023), career plateauing decreases work engagement and increases desire to resign, as well as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. They linked these two criteria to career plateauing.

For example, Veiga (1981) carried out research at a similar job satisfaction level between plateaued & non-plateaued workers, but does not acknowledge similarity between plateaued & non-plateaued occupations, but assumes that plateaued executives adapt to status & profession. Evan & Gilbert, on the other hand, noticed some variations in job satisfaction dimensions & claim that executives whose career is plateaued are dissatisfied with the compensation factor. Similarly, Near (1985) held that plateaued executives are highly satisfied with their job, but the research findings were not substantial. But other research revealed the opposite outcome among career plateau & job satisfaction (Tremblay et al, 1995). For instance, Chao (1990) noticed a reduction in job satisfaction degree in his research among workers whose career was perceived to be plateaued. So, job satisfaction is an attitude that indicates how pleased or dissatisfied workers are towards jobs. Like wisely job satisfaction can be described as a pleasant emotive response resulting from one's work score; an emotional response to one's occupation. Although in relation to career plateau Nachbagauer & Riedl (2002) discovered a clear negative association between career plateau & job satisfaction. In view of the discussion referred to above, the following hypothesis are established to be tested:

Conceptual framework



Source: (Author, 2024).

H1: Career plateau has significant impact on organizational commitment.

H2: Career plateau has significant impact on job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

The population of this investigation are doctors serving in category D hospital in the district Nowshera (KPK). Category “D” is district level medical complex where all the senior doctors are serving. These hospitals are frequently located at the territory of each district of the province where most experienced doctors and medical staff are appointed. Two district level hospitals doctors are selected as population. Convenience sampling is used for the aggregation of data from participants. This technique is too relaxed to carry due to with insufficient instructions leading how to get sample. A minimum amount of time and cost is needed to perform. Total 158 questionnaires were distributed through Sekaran (2006) method for sample size, out of which 120 properly filled questionnaires were used for study. This response rate was 76 percent. Questionnaires were distributed in district Nowshera KPK to two category D hospitals that is CMH and Qazi Hussain Ahmad Hospital. The survey questionnaire was circulated at duty time in Nowshera district. Participants were contacted to complete the survey questionnaire & to gather the completed questionnaire for further procedure at a secure venue. At no point was anybody given access to the raw data other than the researcher.

Measures

The questionnaire is widely used and important tools to collect the data. There are different types & styles of questionnaire, but it depends on the studies that have been carried out. In this study, the Milliman (1992) questionnaire was used to gather data for the career plateau, the Schriesheim & Tsui (1980) questionnaire for job satisfaction, & the Allen & Mayer (1991)

questionnaire for organizational commitment was adopted. The questionnaire were in English language for better comprehension. In the questionnaire, there were two sections. The first part contained demographics, while the second part covered the variables of the analysis. All the tools were on 5 point Likert scale where 1 represented strongly disagree, 2 represented disagree, 3 was for neutral, 4 represented agree while 5 presented strongly agree.

Reliability

The reliability of an instrument is its capacity to generate reliable outcomes each time. In order to obtain better outcome, the information should be at least 70 percent reliable as per (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Reliabilities are mention below.

Table 1: Alpha Reliability of Career plateau, Organizational commitment & job satisfaction

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale adopted from
Job satisfaction	.81	Schriesheim & Tsui (1980)
Organizational commitment	.82	Allen & Mayer (1991)
Career plateau	.88	Milliman (1992)

Table 1. Demonstrate the reliabilities. Nunnally & Bernstein, (1994) indorse 0.70 value for further analysis. The Cronbach's Alpha value for job satisfaction is .81 and for career plateau it is 0.88 & for organizational commitment it is recorded as .82 explain the reliability of data. So for better outcome, the data must be at least 70 percent reliable. The reliability criteria is fulfil here.

ANALYSIS

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

SPSS 21.0 software was utilized to examine the correlation among organizational commitment, job satisfaction and career plateau.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis among, JS and career plateau.

Variables	OC	JS	CAREER PLATEAU
OC	1		
JS	.304**	1	
CAREER PLATEAU	-.447**	-.421**	1

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

Correlation shows the relationship between variables. The Pearson coefficient of correlation was employed to inspect the inter-relationship between the study variable. It demonstrates

that the correlation of career plateau & JS is -.42, explain inverse connection. Career plateau is also negatively linked to organizational commitment with a coefficient value -.44.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

To calculate the variation in independent variables induced by dependent variable regression analysis was performed. According to the model independent variables i.e. career plateau was contributing variations in job satisfaction & organizational commitment.

Table 3: Regression Analysis among Career plateau, Organizational commitment & Job satisfactions

Variables	Career plateau		
	Beta	T	Sig
Job satisfaction	-0.32	-3.9	0.00
Organizational commitment	-0.34	-4.1	0.00

Overall model N=120, R2 .30, sig 00.00

Table 3 exhibit multiple regression investigation. Results indicates that career plateau has a diverse influence on employee's job satisfaction. The beta value is -.32, express that a unit variation in career plateau will decrease job satisfaction by 32%. Similarly, career plateau has diverse influence on OC, the value is -.034. Furthermore, R square value is .3, it means that 30% change in job satisfaction & organizational commitment is because of career plateau. All the values are significance.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed the dependence & significance of the three dimensions of career plateau with job satisfaction & organizational commitment plus expanded the literature. Career plateau has inverse impact on job satisfaction and consequently on oc. this analysis highlights the fact that public sector hospitals do not have a clear promotion policy that eventually affects the efficiency & loyalty of workers. This study investigated the effects of career plateau on job satisfaction & the degree of organizational commitment of public sector doctors and have contextual contribution in the field. Career plateau occurred when the employees' expectations of career advancement will no longer occur & when the tasks of a job to workers won't change later on. Likewise, zero opportunities open for advancement, then career plateau takes place in professionals' career & has a strong effect on the workers level of organizational commitment & job satisfaction. The research also shows that when one reaches the career plateau one feels less loyal to the organization & also displays a lower degree of JS which affects the overall organizational efficiency. The findings of the study displays a negative association between career plateau, organizational commitment &

job satisfaction As the possibility of hierarchical advancement of workers becomes minimal or unlikely then creates anxiety, & leads to a career plateau (Ongori & Angolla, 2009). The career plateau also results in poor performance, a decrease in organizational commitment, a rise in the removal of workers & also a sewer type of anxiety in workers (Heilmann, Holt & Rilovick, 2008). A worker feels much comfortable in altering & growing accountability for the existing work, which in return contributes to job satisfaction (Clark, 2005). This study reinforces the notion that, as workers consider themselves at career plateau then their attitudes to less organizational commitment & job satisfaction improves. The analysis therefore indicates that career plateau is a relevant concept, & the organizations should agree that concept of career plateau are substantial as workers perceive it to be an essential factor in deciding their behaviour at the work. The outcome of the hypothesis tests indicates that career plateau is negative in comparison to job satisfaction also has a negative correlation with organizational commitment.

CONCLUSION

Career plateau, job satisfaction and organization commitment is a serious issue face by many organizations. The same is true for the government hospitals, where lack of promotion avenue and job insecurity have diverse impact on organizational commitment and job satisfaction. On the basis of results, it is recommended that policy makers should give attention to frame appropriate job structure, focusing to eliminate career plateau, hence to improve JS and organizational commitment. Brain drain is a thoughtful issue of health sectors as majority of doctors prefer to resign and get job in Middle East or in some western countries (Farooq, Rehman et al. 2020). One of the major causes of this brain drain is career plateau, so the policy makers must take it on priority basis to retain the life savers.

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