

THE EFFECT OF CAREER PATH ANCHORS AND CAREER PLATEAU ON EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS OF ARDABIL PROVINCE

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Abstract. The current research seeks to examine the effect of career path anchors and career plateau on employee's performance in technical and vocational training centers of Ardabil Province. The research is applied in terms of objective, and it is a descriptive-correlative one in terms of methodology. The research population is comprised of all employees in the technical and vocational training centers in Ardabil city, which the size of population is equal to 330. Morgan table was used to determine the sample size, and based on the table; the sample size was calculated to be 177. Results suggest that the dimensions of career plateau (structural and content plateau) has a significant negative impact on employee's performance and dimensions of the career path anchors have significant direct impacts on employee performance.

Keywords: Career Path Anchors, Career Plateau, Performance, Technical and Vocational training centers

1 Introduction

Various perspectives have been presented on the performance. Employee's performance is a set of behaviors shown by individuals associated with the job, or it is the product or efficiency which by virtue of employment in the profession (including services, education, and manufacturing) can be obtained. Job performance is individual efficiency in terms of the duties prescribed by law, and it is the impact of human activities on the task that is assigned to him, and it expresses the amount of effort and success shown by an employee in carrying out job duties and behavioral assignments. In addition, job performance is the nature and method of carrying out the duties and responsibilities assigned by the expert (Rahnavard, 2008).

Performance means state or quality, function, and the process to explain effectiveness and efficiency of past actions. According to this definition, performance can be divided into two components: 1- The efficiency that describes organization's method to use the resources in the production of products or services, i.e. the relationship between real and ideal combination of inputs for producing specified outputs; 2-Effectiveness that describes the extent of achievement of organizational goals (Memarzade et al., 2008).

Employee's performance is affected by many variables that can reduce or increase performance. One of these factors is career plateau. Career plateau is a trap ahead of organization employees, and 99% of employee may suffer from this problem in their working history. According to Bardvik (1986), most of people become skilled within three years, and then the work becomes steady and monotonous, and there is not anything new to learn. In this case, the person feels helpless and knows its work valueless and unpleasant than the past.

The individual may face the attitudes and behaviors that could not work and his physical and mental health also falters. A career plateau is a point in one's career where the likelihood of progression is reduced. You may feel you have hit a plateau for a wide variety of reasons, such as reaching the highest possible level in your company; feeling restricted in your role; or no longer feeling challenged or engaged by your work. According to Gines and Germier, limited opportunities for promotion and the presence of strict rules and regulations cause a person to feel that he is caught in an unfair system, then the person feels negative thoughts about its job. Reinforce negative chronic conditions, sense of lack of progress in the life and career,

ensorious behaviors, frustration, indifference and negligence are among the signs of job burnout (Saatchi, 2007).

Today's staff more than ever people think and worry about their careers, and they demand secure, long-term and satisfying job, and want to grow in their jobs. On the other hand, employees often start their careers with hope and specific expectations to reach the highest level in the organization, and most of them attach significance to progress, power, highest responsibilities and rewards, but unfortunately the staff before achieving their goals suffer from career plateau (Michael and Wills, 2004).

The concept of career path as the link between the organizations and the people who work for them is examined from both interior and exterior aspects. Exterior career path includes positions and situations by which one can progress, and it defined in the form of organizational criteria of career path. However, interior career path is workers' tendency toward career orientation or career anchor (Arizi Samani et al., 2009). Career anchor was first coined by Edgar Schein. This term means employees' self-conception and is comprised of three main categories: 1) The talents and abilities to perceive ourselves 2) fundamental and important values, and 3) the evolved feeling about the motives and demands that are relevant to career path. According to the logic underlying career anchors, the consistency between job tendencies and working environment leads to job satisfaction, further commitment, and increased performance, otherwise, the result would be dissatisfaction and change of job. Career anchors are conscious attempts made by an individual to be informed of its skills, tendencies, values, opportunities, limitations, choices, and achievements, and also it is capability to recognize the objectives relevant to career and assign a program to achieve such objectives (Bermlı, 2004). The researcher's aim to perform this research was to assist managers in technical and vocational training centers to use the results obtained from the current research to improve organizational goals and ways to assist organizations to enhance employee performance to be able to specify the fact whether is there any consistency between career tendency and suitable work environment. The overall goal underlying the current research is to find an answer to the question that: what would be the impact of career path anchors and career plateau on the performance of the staff in the technical and vocational training centers in Ardabil Province?

2 Research Methodology

A- Methodology: the research statistical is comprised of all employees in technical and vocational training centers in Ardabil, which their number amounts to 330.

B- Statistical population: the research statistical population is comprised of all employees in technical and vocational training centers in Ardabil, which their number amounts to 330.

C- Sample size and sampling: the sampling method was a simple random one. Morgan table was used to determine the sample size, and based on the table, the sample size was calculated to be 177.

D) Data collection and measurement tools: data collection was done based a field-based procedure and a questionnaire.

Career path anchors: this concept is defined in the form of the following dimensions and indicators (Shine, 2006).

Career plateau: it has two basic dimensions including structural plateau and content plateau, which are measured using Taleghani Plateau Questionnaire (2010), and is comprised of 20 items.

Performance: employee’s performance can be analyzed in three parts including 1-Anti-role performance (counterproductive), 2- role performance (task-based), 3-Eextra-role performance (organizational civic behavior) as follows.

1- Anti-role performance (counterproductive) is a score related to Bent and Robinson counterproductive Checklist, quoted from Bukhari et al. (2009), and has one dimension to evaluate behaviors, and 11 items and is measured based on a distance-oriented scale.

2- Role performance (task-based) is a score related to Williams & Anderson’s Questionnaire (2004), and has one dimension, and is measured based on Likert scale.

3-Eextra-role performance (organizational civic behavior) based on Netemeyer at al.’s Questionnaire (1997) is measured in terms of the four dimensions including sportsmanship, civic behavior, conscienceless, and altruism.

E) Validity and reliability: validity is ability to measure the relevant characteristics and attributes using measurement. To determine content validity, the questionnaire was distributed among the professors and experts practicing in the area of management and behavioral sciences, and they were asked to present their opinions on the questionnaire’s validity. In the current research, the questionnaire’s reliability for the dependent variable and each of the independent variables was calculated using Cronbach’a alpha, and alpha for all of them was higher than 0.77.

F) Data analysis method: in this research, to extract information and their analysis, the SPSS was used.

3 Findings

Table 1: A summary of the correlation regression model between career path anchors and employee’s performance

Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Adjusted Coefficient of Determination
0.683 ^a	0.557	0.631

Based on the results obtained from Table 1, the correlation coefficient between career path anchors and employee’s performance is 0.68, and the coefficient of determination is 0.55

Table 2: The results obtained from regression analysis model between career path anchors and employee’s performance

Components	Non-Standard Coefficients		Beta Standard Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard Deviation			
Constant Value	2.645	0.309		8.558	0.000
Career Path Anchors	0.208	0.189	0.683	11.098	0.000

To determine the impact of the variable namely career path anchors as the predictor variable and the variable namely employee’s performance as standard variable, these variables were analyzed using multi-variable regression analysis in an

inclusion manner. As it can be seen in Table 2, the value of observed p is significant, and the results indicate that its beta is 0.68.

Table 3: A summary of the correlation regression model between career plateau and employee’s performance

Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Adjusted Coefficient of Determination
-0.793 ^a	0.629	0.627

Based on the results obtained from Table 3, the correlation coefficient between career plateau and employee’s performance is -0.79, and the coefficient of determination is 0.62.

Table 4: A summary of the results obtained from regression analysis model between career plateau and employee’s performance

Components	Non-Standard Coefficients		Beta Standard Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard Deviation			
Constant Value	-0.247	0.150		-11.647	0.001
Career plateau	-0.885	0.051	-0.793	-17.240	0.000

To determine the impact of the variable namely career plateau as the predictor variable and the variable namely employee’s performance as standard variable, these variables were analyzed

using multi-variable regression analysis. As it can be seen in Table 4, the value of observed p is significant, and the results indicate that its beta is -0.79.

Table 5: A summary of the correlation regression model between career path anchors and career plateau

Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Adjusted Coefficient of Determination
-0.593 ^a	0.559	0.633

Based on the results obtained from Table 5, the correlation coefficient between career path anchors and employee's

performance is -0.59, and the coefficient of determination is 0.55.

Table 6: A summary of the results obtained from the regression analysis between career path anchors and career plateau

Components	Non-Standard Coefficients		Beta Standard Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard Deviation			
Constant Value	3.226	0.277		11.656	0.000
Career path anchors	-0.509	0.869	-0.593	-11.233	0.000

To determine the impact of the variable namely career path anchors as the predictor variable and the variable namely career plateau as standard variable, these variables were analyzed using

multi-variable regression analysis. As it can be seen in Table 6, the value of observed p is significant, and the results indicate that its beta is -0.59.

Table 7: The results obtained from Pearson Correlation Coefficient to determine the relationship between career path anchors and employee's performance

Dimension of Career Path Anchors	Statistics	Staff Performance
Technical-Functional Merit	r	0.546**
	sig	0.000
Management Competency	r	0.258**
	sig	0.000
Security and Stability	r	0.291**
	sig	0.000
Entrepreneurial Creativity	r	0.111
	sig	0.142
Independence and Autonomy	r	0.405**
	sig	0.000
Dedication and sacrifice	r	0.129
	sig	0.088
Mere Challenges	r	0.273**
	sig	0.000
Lifestyle	r	0.304**
	sig	0.000
Career Path Anchors	r	0.383**
	sig	0.000

*The test's significance at the level 0.05, ** The test's significance at the level 0.01

Based on the results obtained from Table 7, the significance level of the test error for confidence level is less than 0.99, and less than 0.01. Thus, it can be said that, other than the variables namely entrepreneurial creativity and sacrifice and dedication, other hypotheses are confirmed, and the correlation coefficient

between employee's performance and technical-functional competency is 0.54, management competency is 0.25, security and stability is 0.29, independence and autonomy is 0.40, mere challenges is 0.27, lifestyle is 0.30, and career path anchors is 0.38.

Table 8: The results obtained from Pearson Correlation Coefficient to determine the correlation between career path anchors and employee's performance

Variables	Statistics	Employee's performance
Structural Plateau	r	-0.713**
	sig	0.000
Content Plateau	r	-0.734**
	sig	0.000
Career Plateau	r	-0.793**
	sig	0.000

*The test's significance at the level 0.05

** The test's significance at the level 0.01

Based on the results obtained from Table 8, as the significance level of the test error for confidence level 0.99 is less than 0.01, thus, it can be said that, the ninth and tenth hypotheses and also the second hypotheses are confirmed, and there is a direct and

significant correlation between the dimensions of career plateau and staff performance. The correlation coefficient between employee's performance and structural plateau is -0.71, content plateau is -0.73, and career plateau is -0.79.

Table 9: A summary of the regression model of career path anchors in staff performance

Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Adjusted Coefficient of Determination
0.665 ^a	0.443	0.416

Based on the results obtained from Table 9, the correlation coefficient between career path anchors and employee's

performance is 0.66, and the coefficient of determination is 0.44.

Table 10: The results obtained from the regression analysis between the dimensions of career path anchors and employee's performance

Components	Non-Standard Coefficients		Beta Standard Coefficient	t	Sig
	B	SD			
Constant Value	3.340	0.359		9.293	0.000
Technical-Functional Merit	0.076	0.131	0.060	0.578	0.564
Management Competency	0.210	0.102	0.197	2.067	0.040
Security and Stability	0.323	0.104	0.229	3.111	0.002
Entrepreneurial Creativity	0.132	0.096	0.143	1.368	0.173
Independence and Autonomy	0.145	0.143	0.100	1.013	0.312
Dedication and sacrifice	0.158	0.085	0.248	1.860	0.005
Mere Challenges	0.498	0.161	0.366	3.088	0.002
Lifestyle	0.547	0.081	0.484	6.716	0.000

To determine the impact of the variables including technical-functional competency, management competency, security and stability, entrepreneurial creativity, independence and autonomy, dedication and sacrifice, mere challenges and lifestyle as predictor variables and the variable namely staff performance, multi-variable regression analysis was applied. As can be seen in Table 10, the value of p observed in all variables other than

technical-functional competency, entrepreneurial creativity, and independence and autonomy is significant, and the results indicate that the variables management competency (BETA=0.19), security and stability (BETA=0.22) dedication and sacrifice (BETA=0.24), mere challenges (BETA=0.36), and lifestyle (BETA=0.48) can predict the variable namely staff performance.

Table 11: A summary of the regression model between career plateau and staff performance

Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Adjusted Coefficient of Determination
-0.794 ^a	0.631	0.626

Based on the results obtained from Table 11, the correlation coefficient between career path anchors and employee's

performance is -0.79, and the coefficient of determination is 0.63.

Table 12: The results obtained from the regression analysis between career plateau and staff performance

Components	Non-Standard Coefficients		Beta Standard Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard Deviation			
Constant Value	-0.260	0.151		-1.716	0.088
Structural Plateau	-0.401	0.061	-0.404	-6.558	0.000
Content Plateau	-0.487	0.064	-0.466	-7.575	0.000

To determine the impact of the variables including structural and content plateau as predictor variables, and the variable namely employee's performance as standard variable, multi-variable regression analysis was applied. As can be seen in Table 12, the value of p observed at both variable is significant, and the results indicate that the variables structural plateau (BETA=-0.40), content plateau (BETA=-0.46), can predict staff performance, and content plateau (BETA=-0.46) can predict staff performance, and structural plateau with the BETA -0.40 is at its minimum level.

4 Discussion and conclusion

One of the organizational challenges in the area of careers is the lack of appropriate insight in relation to capabilities and incentives that can actualize potential professional success. In fact, people do not have a good understanding of their career anchors. Lack of attention to career anchors by managers leads to forced labor in the organization, i.e. managers recruit manpower without considering their skill, interests and motivations, and this creates a gap between individual and organizational goals, and the employees may show reluctance to their jobs. Under this condition, employees may have not proper performance in their job, and they may be indifference to success in their career and this can lead to career plateau. As we know, human resources are one of the most valuable assets of any organization, because other factors such as technology, capital, etc. are related to human resources. Despite modern

technological advances, there is no factor that can replace human power, and human is still a key factor within the framework of organizations, and management should identify this capital and nurture its hidden potential and utilize it to progress the organization for the effective achievement of goals. However, if such asset suffers from career plateau, it loses its performance and efficacy, and organization may encounter unexpected negative results in the future. Based on the results obtained, career path anchors including functional-technical merit, management competency, security and stability, entrepreneurial creativity, independence and autonomy, dedication and sacrifice, mere challenges, and lifestyle and the dimensions of career plateau (including structural plateau and content plateau) can significantly influence the performance of the staff in the technical and vocational training centers in Ardabil city. Based on these results, the following recommendations are presented:

1- Managers of the technical and vocational training centers in Ardabil are recommended to elect the managers who benefit from management anchor, are more willful and enthusiastic to accept the liabilities assigned for accomplishing relevant tasks, behave the issues in an effective and analytic manner and seek to find an opportunity to use their management capabilities.

2- Managers of the technical and vocational training centers in Ardabil city are suggested to provide a fertile context in which the employees can have more freedom, thus to nurture their creativity.

3- Another recommendation is to hold cultural seminars and development of ethical components such as truth, honesty, trustworthiness, and respect.

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