

Moderating Role of Work Experience on Career Progression and Work Attitude

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Abstract. The present study was conducted to examine the moderating role of work experience in the relationship between career progression and work attitudes (job satisfaction and organizational commitment) among bank workers in Ogun State, Nigeria. The design adopted for this study was ex-post-facto survey design. A sample of 150 employees was chosen through stratified random sampling technique. The population was divided into three strata, which are the senatorial districts in Ogun State, namely, Ogun East, Ogun Central, and Ogun West. Simple and multiple regression analyses were employed for data analysis. Results showed, among other things, that there was a significant contribution of career progression to job satisfaction ($t = 9.228$, $p < .05$) and organizational commitment ($t = 7.008$, $p < .05$) and that work experience does not significantly moderate the influence of career progression on work attitudes.

The outcome of this study reveals that work experience had no significant moderating role in the influence of career progression on job satisfaction and organizational commitment which may be an indicator of the influence of career progression being so strong as to overshadow and render insignificant the influence of length of time spent in the organization. It was recommended, among other things, that organizations should formulate policies and create enabling environment that can foster career progression prospects among employees.

Keywords: Work-experience, career-progression, work-attitudes, job-satisfaction, organizational -commitment.

1. Introduction

Globally, scholars in allied fields focus more attention on work attitudes because of its centrality to organizational success. Indeed, it has been conclusively shown that work attitudes influence organizational outcomes such as employees' performance and organizational productivity (Levy, 2006). An organization with unfavourable (favourable) employee attitudes can expect to have poor (good) sales growth and other negative (positive) organizational performance indices. Negative attitudes of employees themselves drive away customers or clients and are injurious to business prospects.

An attitude is a learned feeling which determines, to a considerable extent, how an individual responds to other individuals, institutions, objects, events, or situations. Robbins (2003) affirmed that attitudes are evaluative statements, which can either be favourable or unfavourable, concerning objects, people, or events as the case may be. Therefore they reflect an individual's likes and dislikes towards other people, objects, phenomena, and activities in his or her physical or social environment. Favourable statements made about individuals, objects or events may have positive effects regarding the concerned target whereas, refers is the case for unfavourable statements. Four important characteristics are apparent in

this definition: First, attitudes are a product of experience; that is, they are learned. Second, attitudes reflect one's perception and also influence one's inclination to think or behave in a particular manner. Third, attitudes make one more or less emotionally involved in interacting and identifying with others. Fourth, attitudes are an important element of personality; and, as such, they are relatively stable although they are also subject to change.

Work attitudes have influence on the behaviour of a person. Employees demonstrate positive or negative attitudes towards superiors, subordinates, peers, supervision, pay, working conditions, promotions, etc. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are the most important attitudes that influence human behaviour in the workplace and they will form the focus of this research.

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a positive emotional state arising from the cognitive appraisal one gives his/her job or job experiences. In other words, it is the perception or feelings of individuals, which could be positive or negative, about their jobs. It is the emotional response that an employee has about his/her job and the socio-physical environment of the workplace. It refers to the amount of pleasure or gratification an employee derives from his/her job. Employees will experience high job satisfaction when they have favourable attitudes toward their jobs and there are opportunities for recognition and advancement.

Job satisfaction has also been defined as the extent to which people like (are satisfied with) or dislike (are dissatisfied with) their jobs (Spector, 1997). A person is said to have job satisfaction when he or she is fulfilled by his or her work or attain what psychologists refer to as self-actualization on the job. However, job satisfaction can also be negative when somebody is dissatisfied with his/her job. Extensive research on job satisfaction shows that personal factors such as an individual's needs and aspirations determine this attitude, along with group and organizational factors such as relationships with co-workers, supervisors, working conditions, work policies, and

compensation. Job satisfaction can also be referred to as an employee's general attitudes toward his or her job. A person with a high level of job satisfaction holds positive attitudes toward the job while a person who is dissatisfied with his or her job holds negative attitudes about the job (Robins, 2003).

Organizational commitment is also regarded as an attitude which relates to an employee's mind-set about the organization or the degree to which he or she identifies with or attaches to the organization and wants to continue active participation in it. Thus, organizational commitment is an indication of an employee's willingness to remain with, and not leave, an organization as a result of his or her belief in the mission and overall objective of the organization and is ready to put in his best toward organizational success. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), there are three dimensions of organizational commitment: Affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment is an employee's emotional connection to his/her organization. Continuance commitment arises as a result of an employee's perception of the costs and risks involved in leaving the organization, while normative commitment is the moral obligation an employee has to remain with his/her organization. A committed employee will doubtlessly identify with the organization by viewing himself or herself as a member of the organization, and will do all within his limit to ensure that organizational goals are achieved. Committed employees expend time and energy in their work which they consider as a crucial part of their lives. These employees are ready to exceed their normal job expectations. On the other hand, an uncommitted employee will most likely see himself or herself as working in the organization just to earn his or her salary; such a person will show no interest in or concern about the progress of the organization and will be reluctant to involve in organizational affairs.

Empirical researches discovered this relationship between work attitudes and employee job performance (Galup, Klein, & Jiang, 2008; Voon, Lo, Ngui, & Ayob, 2011) and the conclusion is that work attitudes are likely to

affect employees' behaviour and job performance, and ultimately organizational productivity; and this makes effort to study the factors that could influence this type of attitudes a worthwhile venture. However, most of these studies were conducted in the western context. As at present, there is dearth of research on the influence of career progression on work attitudes in the Nigerian banking sector. This research is an effort toward filling this gap, and thereby contributing to the existing body of knowledge on work attitude theory.

Robbins (2003) described career as a series of positions occupied by a person during the course of a lifetime. He argued that career is any work, paid or unpaid, that an employee pursued over an extended period of time. In addition to formal job work, career may include school work, homework or volunteer work. As used in this study, the term *career* refers to an occupation or a profession that usually involves some form of training or formal education as the case may be, and is considered to be a person's lifework (Hooley, 2012). In other words, career refers to series of related jobs undertaken by an individual.

According to Robbins (2003), career progression assists individuals to identify their major career goals. Through career progression, an employee focuses on sustaining an existing job and broadening his or her career possibilities in the labour market. Career progression as a construct is concerned majorly with upward movement in one's area of specialization. Adeboye (2015) observed that lack of career progression is one of the reasons why employees decide to move to other jobs. Until recently, many young people in Nigeria aspired to work in the banking sector because of its relatively high take-home pay and the prestige attached to it. Since the economic recession that started in 2008 which disrupted operations in the Nigerian banking sector and led to the downsizing of staffs, career progression among bank employees has become very difficult and it appears to be taking a turn for the worse. In recent time, a lot of bank employees in Nigeria have lost their jobs.

It is plausible that work experience will moderate the relationship between career

progression and work attitudes as it could contribute to the variation in work attitudes. Workers in senior positions in the bank would have longer work experience, have more at stake in the organization and are therefore more likely to show greater positive work attitudes than junior employees with less experience. New employees do not have the same favourable or unfavourable attitudes already observed among employees who have been in the organization for sometimes. They either tend to align their work attitudes with those of employees who have spent longer time in the organization or quit if they cannot reconcile their work attitudes with the attitudes they met on ground. Thus, the attitudes of new employees gradually come to resemble the attitudes of other employees with longer work experience. Work experience should therefore moderate the relationship between career progression and work attitudes among bank employees. But to what extent can this be proved scientifically, particularly among bank workers in Nigeria; and what is the exact contribution of career progression to employees' work attitude?

The following hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance were raised to determine these:

- There is no significant contribution of career progression to job satisfaction of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.
- There is no significant contribution of career progression to organizational commitment of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.
- There is no significant moderating effect of work experience in the contribution of career progression to job satisfaction of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.
- There is no significant moderating effect of work experience in the contribution of career progression to organizational commitment of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents a comprehensive review of relevant literature, following the introductory part in Section 1. The research methodology is discussed in Section 3, while Section 4 focuses

on the presentation and interpretation of the results. Section 5 discusses the implication(s) of the findings, while Section 6 concludes with some recommendations.

2. Literature Review

2.2 Work Attitudes

Work attitude refers to one's feeling toward, beliefs about and attachment to one's job. An attitude refers to our beliefs, dispositions, feelings or opinion about aspects of our environment. As human beings, our work attitude depends on how we feel about being there. Thus, making sense of how people behave is a direct function of understanding their work attitude. Arguably, job satisfaction and organizational commitment have the greatest potential to influence employees' work behaviour and by extension work attitude. According to Robbins (2003), attitudes are favourable or unfavourable evaluative statements concerning people, objects, or events. They are learned positive or negative dispositions toward an object, person or event and they reflect a person's response to the object, person or event.

2.2 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept which refers to an employee's general feelings about his/her job which could be positive or negative. An employee that is high on job satisfaction will manifest positive attitude towards his/her job as against his counterparts who is low on job satisfaction (Robins, 2003). It refers to a combination psychological, physiological and environmental job related issues that make a person truthfully satisfied or dissatisfied, as the case may be, with his/her job. However, there is no consensus on the definition of job satisfaction. For example, Ucar and Otken (2010) define job satisfaction simply as a worker's positive or negative predisposition toward his or her job. Miao (2011) describes job satisfaction as an employee's overall sense of well-being at work.

2.3 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has been defined differently by scholars. Lyon (2006) defines it as the degree to which an employee identifies with an employer, wants to remain in the organization, and is willing to use extra effort to stay with that organization. Krishnaveni and Ramtumar (2008) define organizational commitment as a psychological state that characterizes an employee's relationship with an organization and that drives him or her to continue membership in the organization. It is the degree of an employee's identification with and involvement in a particular organization (Levy, 2006). Highly committed employees have high performance as compared to less committed employees. It is the degree of strength of the employee's identification with the goal and vision of the organization. Employees that are committed to the organization make extra efforts to ensure that the organization achieve its set goal and objective; such individuals desire organizational membership and protect jealously, organizational assets and share organizational goals and values. According to Meyer and Allen (1997), there are three dimensions of organizational commitment: Affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. Affective commitment refers to psychological attachment of employees to an organization; continuance commitment is prompted by the costs that will be incurred by an employee should he or she decides to leave the organization; normative commitment represents an employee's perceived obligation to remain with the organization.

2.4 Career Progression

Career progression can be conceptualized as advancing in one's career path. It is the reverse of career stagnation or retrogression. No employee wishes to be stagnant; rather everyone wants to move up the ladder in his or her job or career. When career progression opportunities are available in an organization, it makes employees more satisfied with, and committed to the organization, due principally to their perception that they are growing with the organization. The Cambridge Business English Dictionary describes career progression as the

process of making progress to better jobs. Investors in People (2018) define career progression simply as formal promotion at one's place of work which may necessitate increase in both responsibilities and salary.

Career progression can also be described as an employee's upward movement from one level to another within an organization until the employee gets to a position of advantage where he or she can be actively involved in policy formation and participates in decision making process.

2.5 Career Progression and Work Attitudes

Levi (2006) views growth opportunities as a group of factors that can affect job satisfaction. For example, an employee's perception of opportunities to grow and advance within the organization enhances job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Previous studies (e.g. Fanimihin and Popoola, 2013) reported a significant positive relationship between career progression and job satisfaction. Qingxiong, McElroy, Morrow, and Liu (2010) established that the four dimensions of career growth are positively associated with affective commitment, and that three of these dimensions have significant and positive relationship with continuance and normative commitment. There is an almost universal consensus among researchers that career progression increases job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and therefore contributes to the achievement of organizational objectives and goals.

3. Research Methodology

Here, the adopted methodology is briefly described, which entails the research design, the target population, selected sample, instrumentation, data collection methods and analysis.

The design adopted by the researchers for this study was *ex-post-facto* survey design. The population consisted of all employees of commercial banks in Ogun State, Nigeria. In this study that was conducted in May 2018, a sample of 150 employees was chosen through stratified random sampling technique. The population was divided into three strata, which comprises the

three senatorial districts in Ogun State, namely; Ogun East, Ogun Central, and Ogun West. Five branches of five commercial banks were then chosen from each stratum through simple random sampling technique, and from each branch, 10 employees were chosen through convenience sampling technique. The participants consisted of 48.7% male (73) and 51.3% female (77).

3.1 Instrumentation

Demographic Data Inventory (DDI)

The Demographic Data Inventory (DDI) was developed by the researchers to collect data on demographic characteristics of the participants including work experience.

Career Progression Scale (CPS)

The Career Progression Scale (CPS) developed by Chase, Macaskill, and Pakerson (2005) to assess an employee's perception of progress in his or her current job and career was used for data collection. It consists of 13 items with responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Examples of items on the scale are *I feel I have already achieved all I want to achieve in my career* and *I want to work in a higher-level position*. Fanimihin and Popoola (2013) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .83 for the CPS, showing that the items on the scale are internally consistent with one another. Factor analysis was also used to establish the dimensionality and construct validity of the instrument.

Job Satisfaction Sub-Scale of the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (MOAQ-JSS)

The Job Satisfaction Sub-Scale of the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (MOAQ-JSS) was developed by Camman, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979). The Job Satisfaction Sub-Scale consists of three positively and negatively worded items on a 7-point Likert-type format with responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Samples of items on the scale are *'In general, I don't like my job'* and *'In general, I like working here'*. According to Bowling (2008), the internal

consistency and test-retest reliabilities of the MOAQ-JSS yielded acceptable levels of reliability with Cronbach's alpha being .84 and a test-retest reliability coefficient being .50. The construct validity of the scale was affirmed by significant positive relationships with skill variety ($r = .28, p < .05$), task identity ($r = .28, p < .05$), task significance ($r = .17, p < .05$), autonomy ($r = .35, p < .05$), and feedback ($r = .46, p < .05$). On the other hand, role ambiguity ($r = -.42, p < .05$), role conflict ($r = -.32, p < .05$), organizational constraints significant and negative relationships with the MOAQ-JSS.

Organizational Commitment Scale

The Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) was utilized by the study. The scale measure the three dimensions of organizational commitment - Affective, continuance, and normative commitment. It is a 17-item Likert-type instrument with 7 points with options ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Sample items in the scale are: 'I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it' and 'Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to

me'. According to Meyer *et al.* (1993), the Cronbach's alphas of .82, .74, and .83 were reported for affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment respectively. Other studies by Coetzee, Schreuder, and Tladidyane (2007), Ferreira (2009), and Lumley (2010) affirmed the reliability and validity of the OCS and its applicability to African countries.

3.2 Data Collection and Analytical Method

The instruments were administered on the participants personally by the researcher after meeting and obtaining permission from their respective branch managers. The subjects were briefed on how to fill the questionnaires and an appeal was made for frank and sincere responses, with assurance that information given would be treated as strictly confidential and used only for the purpose of this study. The instruments were then distributed and later collected and scored. A 100% return rate was achieved. Data collected were tested by means of linear regression analysis. Tests were carried out at the .05 significance level. All analyses were carried out with the aid of the IBM SPSS Version 22 software.

4. Result and Discussion

Findings from this study were arranged according to the hypotheses earlier stated:

Hypothesis One

Ho₁: There is no significant contribution of career progression to job satisfaction of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Coefficient of the Regression Analysis for the Contribution of Career Progression to Job Satisfaction

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	10.559	6.218		15.203	.000
Career Progression	.605	.381	.316	9.228	.000

Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Predictors: (Constant), Career Progression

Table 1 revealed significant results ($t = 9.228, p < .05$) leading to the conclusion that there is a significant contribution of career progression to job satisfaction of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria. Job satisfaction can therefore be expressed as a function of career progression by the equation:
 Job Satisfaction = (.605 x Career Progression) + 10.559.

Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: There is no significant contribution of career progression to organizational commitment of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Coefficient of the Regression Analysis for the Contribution of Career Progression to Organizational Commitment

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	7.225	10.604		9.854	.000
Career Progression	.916	.597	.229	7.008	.000

Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

Predictors: (Constant), Career Progression

Table 2 revealed significant results ($t = 7.008$, $p < .05$) leading to the conclusion that there is a significant contribution of career progression to organizational commitment of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria. Organizational commitment can therefore be expressed as a function of career progression by the equation: Organizational Commitment = (.916 x Career Progression) + 7.225.

Hypothesis Three

Ho₃: There is no significant moderating effect of work experience in the contribution of career progression to job satisfaction of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Coefficients of the Regression Analysis for the Moderating Effect of Work Experience in the Contribution of Career Progression to Job Satisfaction of Bank Employees in Ogun State, Nigeria

Work Experience		B	Beta	t	Sig.
Less than 10 years	(Constant)	32.148		9.492	.000
	Career Progression	.276	.147	6.280	.000
	Model Summary	R = .249, R ² = .062, Adj. R ² = .054, F = 7.172, $p < .000$			
10 years & Above	(Constant)	24.375		9.004	.000
	Career Progression	.384	.228	10.603	.000
	Model Summary	R = .245, R ² = .060 Adj. R ² = .056 F = 9.839, $p < .000$			

Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Table 3 revealed that, for employees with less than 10 years' work experience, there was a significant contribution of career progression to job satisfaction ($t = 6.280$, $p < .05$). The Table also showed that, for employees with 10 and more years' work experience, there was also a significant contribution of career progression to organizational commitment ($t = 10.603$, $p < .05$). Hence, there is no significant moderating effect of work experience in the contribution of career progression to job satisfaction of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Four

Ho₄: There is no significant moderating effect of work experience in the contribution of career progression to organizational commitment of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Coefficients of the Regression Analysis for the Moderating Effect of Work Experience in the Contribution of Career Progression to Organizational Commitment of Bank Employees in Ogun State, Nigeria

Work Experience		B	Beta	t	Sig.
Less than 10 years	(Constant)	18.740		9.874	.000
	Career Progression	.305	.207	8.185	.000
	Model Summary	R = .226, R ² = .051, Adj. R ² = .048, F = 6.503, $p < .000$			
10 years & Above	(Constant)	20.447		11.395	.000
	Career Progression	.185	.	6.603	.000
	Model Summary	R = .205, R ² = .042 Adj. R ² = .041 F = 5.593, $p < .000$			

Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

Table 4 revealed that, for employees with less than 10 years' work experience, there was a significant contribution of career progression to organizational commitment ($t = 8.185$, $p < .05$). The Table also showed that, for employees with 10 and more years' work experience, there was also a significant contribution of career progression to organizational commitment ($t = 6.603$, $p < .05$). Hence, there is no significant moderating effect of work experience in the contribution of career progression to organizational commitment of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.

5. Discussion of findings

According to the main objective of this study which is to determine how work-experience could moderate the relationship between career progression and work attitudes among bank employees. The finding revealed that there was a significant contribution of career progression to job satisfaction of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria. The null hypothesis of no significant contribution of career progression is hereby rejected. Thus, Job satisfaction can therefore be expressed as a function of career progression.

In the same vein, there is a significant contribution of career progression to organizational commitment of bank employees. Organizational commitment can therefore be expressed as a function of career progression. This finding is in line with the submissions of other researchers. For instance, Qingxiong, McElroy, Morrow, and Liu (2010) stated that the four dimensions of career growth, which is closely related to career progression, are positively associated with affective commitment, and that three of these dimensions were significantly and positively related to continuance and normative commitment.

However, the null hypothesis of no significant moderating effect of work experience in the contribution of career progression to job satisfaction of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria was considered to be true, since career progression contributed significantly to both job satisfaction and organizational commitment of

bank employees with less than 10years and above respectively. Hence, regardless of employees' work experience, career progression exerts positive influence on their work attitude.

6. Conclusion

Previous studies have failed to examine the moderating role of work experience in job progression and work attitudes (job satisfaction and organizational commitment) among bank workers in Ogun State, Nigeria. An attempt was therefore made to investigate this in the current study using a sample of bank employees in Ogun State, Nigeria. Results revealed significant contribution of career progression to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This indicates that career progression opportunities within an organization increase employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Managers should therefore ensure that career progression opportunities are made available for employees in the organization in order to foster positive work attitudes in them. This will improve their motivation and overall effectiveness, thus enhancing organizational performance and goal achievement.

The finding that work experience had no significant moderating role in the influence of career progression on job satisfaction and organizational commitment may be an indicator of the influence of career progression being so strong as to overshadow and render insignificant the influence of length of time spent in the organization.

However, the limitation of this study is that the sample size was rather too small for the parametric statistics used. This imposes a limit on the generalizability of the findings. Thus, future researchers should use an enlarged sample size in order to improve the external validity of their studies. Furthermore, the administration of the questionnaires on selected bank employees was very challenging because of their extremely busy and stressful schedules. Future researchers in this area of study should make use of other methods of data collection other than the physical administration of questionnaires to

bank employees calculated to ease the data collection process and reduce attrition rate.

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