POLITICAL SKILLS AND CAREER SUCCESS OF DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between political skills and career success of Deposit Money Bank in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey. Primary data was generated through structure self-administered questionnaire. The study focused on middle, lower management and their support staff of the eighteen (18) Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. The population was one thousand, one hundred (1,100). A sample size of 293 was determined using Taro Yamen's formula. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The result showed that there is a significant relationship between political skills and career success of Deposit Money Bank in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study therefore recommended that the management of Deposit Money Banks should sharpen their political skills as it makes it easier to achieve better results.

Keywords: Political Skills, Career Success, Job Status, Career Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

It is the desire of every employee who joins an organization to experience a sense of achievement in his or her career as the year's progresses. This is generally referred to as career success and traditionally conceptualized as an upward movement on the career ladder (Sturges, 1999). Being upward mobile requires the possession of basic knowledge skills and abilities with respect to any given job and an understanding of the organizational environment. In situations where several employees at a lower job level have to compete for an opening at a higher level, a lot of factors usually come into play ranging from an interplay of forces from colleagues, superiors and stakeholders.

It is at this stage of jostling for supremacy amongst potential occupants of a vacant position that the determinants or predictors of career success come to bear. Individuals deploy different strategies in their ascendance of the career ladder in order to reach; their goals. Every year companies lose employees who feel that they are static on a given job position or have been passed by during promotion exercise for other organizations 'where they can experience career progress. The importance of employee career success if not recognized and well managed by organizations can result in high labour turnover.

Career success has attracted research from many scholars and management practitioners. Its importance lies in the notion of employees having a sense of achievement about their careers which will in turn breed commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour. Several correlates of career success have been examined in the extant literature (Bridgstock, 2011). For example, organizational

support in the form of training, mentoring, career counseling have been indicated as contributing to career success. Ng, Eby, Srensen and Feldman (2005) in Ballout (2007) reported that "career sponsorship, supervisor support, training and skills development opportunities and organizational resources were related to career success.

Research done by several authors found that opportunity for career progression or promotion was associated with organizational politics (Gandz & Murray, 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Studies done by Madison, Allen, Porter, Renwick, and Mayes, (1980) found that promotion which is an aspect of career progression was one of the most political processes in organizations. Wayne and Liden (1995) state that individuals who become proficient at playing politics may realize greater job and career related rewards. Yukl and Falbe (1990) reiterate this observation when they state that effective use of political skills can enable one to achieve promotions and pay increment. Based on the fore discussion, it is reasonable to presume that employees who may not possess political skills may face a challenge in getting career rewards since the skills are key. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship political skills and career success of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

Furthermore, this study was also be guided by the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between political skills and job status of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt?

- What is the relationship between political skills and career satisfaction of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt?
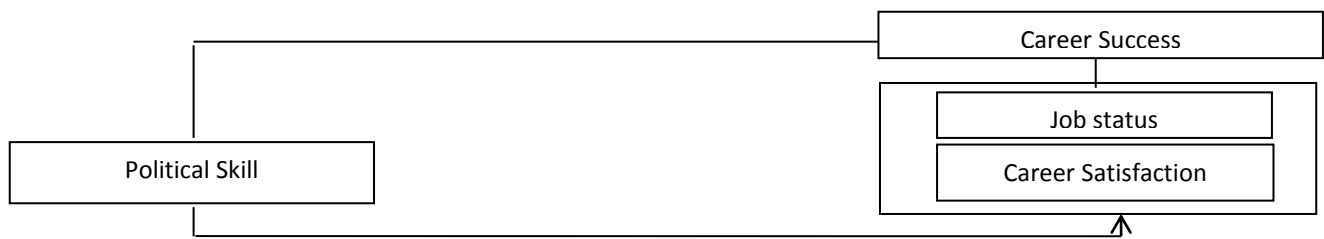
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the relationship political skills and career success
Source: Author's Desk Research, 2019

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

The baseline theory to be used in this research is the social exchange theory and is also known as exchange theory, Ahiauzu and Asawo (2016). The social exchange theory posit that all human relationships are of cost-benefit rewards and as such talent retention and organizational growth falls in the domain of social baseline theory because it characterize an employer and employee relationship. Accordingly Martocchio (2001), assert that what employee's needs from organization is mainly monetary and non-monetary rewards while organizations seek to maximize revenue through the utilization of the employees talent.

Homans, (1961) in Ahiauzu and Asawo (2016) explains that social exchange theory holds that human actions and social relations is fundamentally an exchange of both tangible and intangible action while Pfeffer (1982) in Ahiauzu and Asawo (2016) opines that in social exchange, "behavioral compliance is in exchanged for either extrinsic or intrinsic reward which is perceived to be conditional on the individual's behavior". However, social exchange is intended for exchange of benefits, most importantly employers are in the habit of giving the employee bait in exchange of something that is more valuable to the employee. Thus, it can be said that employees in organizations engulf in an egocentric exchange process with their business organization and in this kind of relationship they strive to utilize the gains derived from such exchange process.

Political Skill:

Political skill is the ability to understand others at work and use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that build up one's personal and organizational objectives (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, and Ammeter 2004). Politically skilled employees are distinguished as being socially astute, capable of influencing others, sincere in interactions, and thus are good at networking. Such employees are deeply aware of the social environment within which they operate and are capable of making accurate judgments regarding the social motives of others. That social awareness enables them to select the appropriate influence behaviors for a given situation and interaction since their influence attempts are more likely to be seen as genuine rather than driven by personal ambition. The politically skilled individuals are capable of building broad and strong networks which in return facilitate their attainment of personal goals and objectives (Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, Kacmar, Douglas, and Frink, 2005)

Political skill is a relatively new construct that taps an individua1's ability in influence situations (Ferris, *et al.,* 2005). Formally defined, political skill is "the ability to effectively understand others at work and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives (Ahearn, *et al,* 2004). At first glance, political skill may sound similar to other social effectiveness measures such as self-monitoring, social intelligence, or social skill. However, political skill has been shown to be conceptually distinct from these

constructs, as it relates specifically to interactions at work. Other social effectiveness constructs relate to more general skills and social interactions in all aspects of a person's life. Thus, political skill is a more precise construct, appropriate for examining workplace interactions and the ability an individual has to use his or her understanding of other people at work to his or her advantage.

According to Madison Allen, Porter, Renwick & Mayes (1980) because politics is about power it is crucial for an employee to understand who has power in an organization and how those with power can impact one's career goal. In organizations, people engage in politics to progress their careers (Robbins, 2001). Research done by Madison *et al.,* (1980) reported that politics was as equally or more instrumental than job performance in achieving promotions and increased earnings. According to Robbins (2001), one can improve political adeptness in the organization by: framing one's arguments in terms of organizational goals, developing the right image, gaining control of organizational resources, avoiding tainted members and supporting one's boss. To frame one's arguments in terms of organizational goals an employee should match his or her career goals and plans consistently with the organizations future staffing needs (Ball, 1997). This is because the needs of an organization in many cases may come before the employee needs as far as the management may be concerned.

Career Success

A career is an individual's journey through learning, work and other aspects of life (Conklin, *et al,* 2013). There are a number of ways to define a career and the term is used in a variety of ways. The word career is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as a person's "course or progress through life (or a distinct portion of life)".   In this definition career is understood to relate to a range of aspects oil an individual's life, learning and work. Career is also frequently understood to relate to the working

aspects of an individual's life e.g. as in career woman. A third way in which the term career is used to describe an occupation or a profession that usually involves special training or formal education, and is considered to be a person's lifework (Conklin, *et al,* 2013). In this case "a career" is seen as a sequence of related jobs usually pursued within a single industry or sector e.g. '"a career in education" or "a career in the building trade". It can also be viewed as an occupation or profession, especially one requiring special training, followed as one's lifework:

Career success is a cumulative outcome, the product of behaviors aggregated over a relatively long period of time. A number of competing approaches have been identified to explain career success predictors. The three well-known approaches are according to Ackah and Heaton, (2004):

- The individual,
- the structural, and
- the behavioral perspectives

Measures of Career Success
Job Status
Job satisfaction is one of the most researched areas of organizaticna1 behaviour and education. It is perceived as an attitudina1 variable measuring the degree to which employees like their jobs and the various aspects of their jobs (Stamps, 1997). This is an important area of research because job satisfaction is corre1ated to enhanced job performance, positive work values, high levels of employee motivation, and lower rates of absenteeism, turnover and burnout (Tharenou, 1993). Strumpfer, Danana, Gouws and Viviers (1998) indicated an encouraging but complex correlation between positive or negative dispositio4s and the various components of job satisfaction. When satisfaction is measured at a broader level, research has shown those organizations with more satisfied workers are more effective than those with less satisfied workers (Robbins, 1998). Buitendach and de Witte (2005) proffer the view that job satisfaction

relates to an individual's perceptions and evaluations of a job, and this perception is in turn influenced by their circumstances, including needs, values and expectations. Individuals therefore evaluate their jobs on the basis of factors which they regard as being important to them (Sempane, Rieger & Roodt, 2002).

Career Satisfaction

Employees are the central actors in managing their own careers (Dc Vos & Seers, 2013). Career satisfaction is "a person's subjective attitudes about a lifetime of work. It represents the extent to which individuals perceive career progress as consistent with their personal career goals (Chiaburu Diaz & De Vos, 2013). Career satisfaction has been regarded as a key factor for individual and organizational success (Joo & Park, 2010). Whereas people who have a sense of career satisfaction need to remain in their profession and also contribute to career growth, people who lack career satisfaction may leave their profession (Mariani, 2007).

Since, career self-management is related to individuals' proactive behaviors and self-control (Raabe, Pathak, Depaul-Haddock, Gotlib & Merbedone, 2007), a study by Converse *et al*. (2012) contends that proactive personality and self-Control are the predictors of career success. Similarly, the studies by Joo and Ready (2012) and Prabhu (2013) found that individuals' proactive personality can promote their career success.

Proactive employees are likely to engage in improvement opportunities and innovative behaviors that are significantly related to career success (Owens, 2009). People who focus on career self-management gather information, plan for solving career problems, and make a decision in their careers (Converse *e al.,* 2012). They are self-directed or self-managed people who are actively involved with lifelong learning (Muja & Appelbaum, 2012). Self-directed or self-managed career attitude of' employees is important to their career success (Dc

Vos & Soens, 2008). Career Success measurement is the process of collecting, analyzing and/or reporting information regarding the performance of an individual, group, organization, system or component (Jamil & Mohamed, 2011). It can involve studying processes/ strategies within organizations, or studying engineering processes/ parameters/phenomena, to see whether output are in line with what was intended or should have been achieved (Jamil & Mohamed, 2011).

Relationship between Political skill and Career Success

Empirical evidences that investigated impression management and career success are reviewed in this section. Phathara *et al,* (2014) reviewed Organizational and Individual Career Management using dual Perspective. The study views career management as a combination of both organizational & career management (OCM) and individual career management (1CM). It highlights the important impact of career management on personal and organizational successes. It also emphasizes on the effective career management which fosters personal career growth and sustains organizational competitive advantages. At the personal level, the notion of career management brings forth the employee's capability to develop a career in the workplace. Likewise, it provides organizations with the ability to proactively respond to the rapidly changing organizational environments. This study differentiates between OCM and 1CM that could lead to a clearer understanding of the two terms. The concept career management is important to academics and practitioners who are involved in this area.

Sebnem and Demet (2014) examined the effects of impression Management and Organizational Affective Commitment Citizenship Performance. This study is carried out in order to investigate the effects of impression management and organizational affective commitment on citizenship performance. Throughout

the research, five hospitals in the province of Konya, Turkey were selected and the scaled performed with 200 health care employees. In this research, impression management scale, organizational affective commitment scale and citizenship performance scale were used. As a result of the study, it is found that organizational affective commitment had a low positive effect on citizenship performance. It is found that impression management had a low negative effect on citizenship performance.

Seibert *et al.,* (2001) built on Crant's (1995) proactive personality framework: and on the interactional psychology perspective, they argue that proactive individuals receive greater career outcomes and are more effective in shaping their own work environments than less proactive individuals. They found support for the hypothesized positive relationship between proactive personality and career success. Although previous approaches to career success were driven by the strong belief that career success was rationally and predictably determined by a set of human, structural, and behavioral variables, recent approaches to careers have been by the new realities of organizational restructuring and the alterations in the psychological employment contract (Hassan, 2907).

Study by Alvesson (2001), has analyzed managerial and organizational practices regarding career prospects from the perspective of "cultural matching" and knowledge management. For example, Alvesson (2000, 2001) suggested that, through the active participation of individuals in knowledge-intensive firms, the identi4 of career actor is reconstructed and his/her loyalty is reinforced by top management to fit into the norms and values prescribed by the corporate culture of the organization (person- culture fit). The reconstruction of corporate identity constitutes the individual as a product of the social techniques of power relations. The prospects of career success involve a commitment to hard work

and of being "professional" according to local standards. Individuals are encouraged to define themselves as the kind of people who are influential in creating and maintaining a particular career identity that ban fit to a community of people. Consequently, social identity and "cultural matching" at work in terms of person job fit and person-organization fit become crucial to employee commitment and career advancement in knowledge-intensive firms (Alvesson, 2001).

Empirical evidence supports the idea that persona' and socio-demographic characteristics are strong predictors of career success (Ng *et al.,* 2005). Research evidence indicates that human capital variables have a significant impact on career success because they explain a Large proportion of the variation in salary as well as in the number of promotions. Chenevert and Tremblay, (2002) found personal investments in education and experience to be the strongest and most consistent predictors of career progression. The study found work experience and tenure to be strongly related to objective and subjective career success. As careers become more uncertain, these personal and portable characteristics become more critical, perhaps more than ever, for career actors that are facing different models of career success.

Kristof-Brown *et al.,* (2005) investigated Person-job (RJ) fit as a determinant of career success. Person-job fit is defined as the fit between the abilities of a person and the demands of the job or the needs/desires of a person and the attributes of the job. Kristof (2005) considered PJ fit s one of the well-studied forms of person-environment (PE) fit that it concerns the compatibility between individua1 and the specific jobs or tasks they are required to perform in a given contractual relationship. She added that the assessment that individuals make concerning the match between their abilities and those of job requirements are likely to determine the fit.

Tharenou (1997): found that individual traits and managerial skills to be important: in career advancement and that "individual qualities and work environment factors combine to facilitate individuals entering and advancing in management in hierarchical organizations". Individuals who advanced in their career were ambitious; motivated, intelligent, and "suited to the task demands of managerial jobs" (Tharenou, 1997). Similarly, Anackwe*et al*. (2000) found that the acquisition and utilization of knowledge-related skills to be positively related to career management strategies such as personal learning, goal setting, career strategies, and career decision making.

From the foregoing discussion, the following hypotheses were stated:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between political skill and career success, of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between political skill and job status, of deposit money in selected manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between political skill and career satisfaction, of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Test of Hypotheses

Table 1: Correlation matrix for political skills and measures of career success

			Political Skills	Job Status	Career Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Political Skills	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.756[**]	.894[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	333	333	333
	Job Status	Correlation Coefficient	.756[**]	1.000	.874[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	333	333	333
	Career Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.894[**]	.874[**]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	333	333	333

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

Source: Research Data, 2019 (SPSS output, version 23.0)

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between political skills and job status of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a significant relationship between political skills and job status. The *correlation coefficient* 0.756 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at p 0.000<0.05. The

correlation coefficient represents a strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between political skills and job status Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between political skills and career satisfaction of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a significant relationship between political skills and job status. The *correlation coefficient* 0.894 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represents a very strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between political skills and career satisfaction of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examined the relationship between political skills and career success of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. This buttresses prior studies that confirm the views of Phathara *et al,* (2014) who reviewed organizational and individual career management using dual Perspective. The study views career management as a combination of both organizational & career management (OCM) and individual career management (1CM). It highlights the important impact of career management on personal and organizational successes. It also emphasizes on the effective career management which fosters personal career growth and sustains organizational competitive advantages. At the personal level, the notion of career management brings forth the employee's capability to develop a career in the workplace. Likewise, it provides organizations with the ability to proactively respond to the rapidly changing organizational environments. This study differentiates between OCM and 1CM that could lead to a clearer understanding of the two terms. The concept career management is important to academics and practitioners who are involved in this area.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study examined the relationship between political skills and career success of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. Based on the findings, this study concluded that political skills significantly influence career success of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. The study recommends that that the management of Deposit Money Banks should sharpen their political skills as it makes it easier to achieve better results.

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