

CAREER ASPIRATION AND CAREER SATISFACTION **AMONG INDIAN EMPLOYEES**

Rumman Khan*

N.U.K. Sherwani**

Abstract

The present work environment requires career satisfied employees, for such employees eventually contribute to organizational success. It has been hypothesised that career aspiring employees perceive greater career satisfaction. The study examined the association of career aspiration and its components with career satisfaction among employees working in organizations in India. The study progresses with the idea that there can be variations in the levels of career aspiration and career satisfaction due to the differences in the work experience and educational qualification of the employees. The results reveal positive correlation of overall career aspiration, achievement aspiration and educational aspiration with career satisfaction and insignificant correlation between leadership aspiration and career satisfaction. Significant variations in career satisfaction level have been observed across work experience and educational qualification. The findings produce implications for organizations to prioritize the recruitment of career aspiring employees with higher educational qualification possessing 5-10 years of work experience.

Keywords:

Career aspiration;

Career satisfaction;

Indian employees;

Work experience;

Educational qualification.

***Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Commerce and Business Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delh.**

****Professor, Department of Commerce and Business Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.**

1. Introduction

Career satisfaction is an area of interest not only for the employees but also for the organizations because employees' individual success can ultimately benefit organizational prosperity (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999). Several researches have been conducted in the past to determine the antecedents (Gaertner, 1999; Hochwarter, Kiewitz, Gundlach, & Stoner, 2004; Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz Jr, 1995; Poon, 2004; Renee Barnett & Bradley, 2007) and outcomes (Egan, Yang, & Bartlett, 2004; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Peluchette, 1993; Wright & Bonett, 2007) of career satisfaction. Turnover intention of employees has negative association with career satisfaction (Joo & Park, 2010) signifying the importance of high career satisfaction which would result in low turnover intention among employees. Low employee turnover leading to talent retention and high productivity leading to increase in profits are the two important objectives of organization, both of which are the positive outcomes of career satisfaction. Considering the significance of career satisfaction, it is necessary to identify the factors which positively or negatively affect career satisfaction. On the basis of literature survey, one such factor i.e. career aspiration has been selected and attempts have been made to explore the relationship between career aspiration and career satisfaction.

Goal orientation is considered as the predictor of career satisfaction (Joo & Park, 2010) where goal orientation refers to the aspiration pursued by an individual to achieve desired goals. To conduct a detailed analysis, the subscales of career aspiration – Achievement aspiration, Educational aspiration and Leadership aspiration developed by Gregor and O'Brien (2016) have been used to explore their relationship with career satisfaction. The study included two human capital factors – Work experience and Educational qualification to discover the discrepancy in the level of career aspiration and career satisfaction among the employees. It has been hypothesised that career aspiration is significantly related to career satisfaction carrying significant variations across work experience and educational qualifications.

The results of this study disclose that career aspiration and career satisfaction are positively correlated denoting that rise in career aspiration will increase the perception of career satisfaction among employees. Significant differences in mean career satisfaction and insignificant differences in mean career aspiration have been found. On conducting post hoc analysis, it was

detected that employees with higher educational qualification have higher career aspiration and career satisfaction. Across the work experience subgroups, employees with 5-10 years of work experience score the highest mean career aspiration and career satisfaction. The findings suggest the organizations to recruit employees with high career aspirations and prefer the candidates with higher qualifications possessing 5-10 years of work experience for such employees will perceive greater career satisfaction and eventually contribute to organizational success.

2. Theory and Hypotheses

Career Aspiration- Career aspiration is defined as career related desires and ambitions that provide impulse for career-related behaviors leading to career success (Rojewski, 2005). Several terms such as “interests”, “choice”, “preferences”, “goals”, “plans” and “expectations” are interchangeably used in the literature to describe the concept of career or vocational aspirations (Crites, 1969). Yun and Min (2015) referred career aspiration as the desire to achieve success by fulfilling career related goals. Under this study, career aspiration is considered as the antecedent of career satisfaction.

Career Satisfaction- Career satisfaction can be regarded as the subjective evaluation of the satisfaction derived by an individual from one’s career accomplishments (Judge et al., 1995). Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990) refer career satisfaction as the employees’ perception of satisfaction with their overall career goals, goals for income, skill development, money-making, recognition and work-life balance (Baruch, 2004). In this study, career satisfaction is assumed to be the outcome of career aspiration.

Hypothesis 1- Career aspiration is significantly related to career satisfaction.

Schein (1987) explains the inclusion of a wide variety of career interests within an individual in relation to career aspiration. The three classifications of career aspiration – Achievement aspiration, Educational aspiration and Leadership aspiration developed by Gregor and O’Brien (2016) have been used in the study to conduct in-depth analysis of the association between career aspiration and career satisfaction. Feldman and Bolino (1996) identified the importance of studying combination of career aspirations as they enable better understanding of individual careers. Therefore, this study attempts to explore the relationship between the three integrants of career aspiration and career satisfaction individually.

Hypothesis 2a- Achievement aspiration is significantly related to career satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2b- Educational aspiration is significantly related to career satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2c- Leadership aspiration is significantly related to career satisfaction.

It has been found that human capital factors affect career satisfaction levels (Yap, Cukier, Holmes, & Hannan, 2010). Several literature reporting ambiguous association between education and career satisfaction (Hetty van Emmerik, Euwema, Geschiere, & Schouten, 2006; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001; Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999) and negative association between tenure and career satisfaction (Armstrong-Stassen & Cameron, 2005; Hochwarter et al., 2004; Judge et al., 1995) pose difficulty in clear interpretation of the correlation between human capital factors and career satisfaction. The present study comprises educational qualification and work experience as the human capital factors and hypothesises that there is a significant variation in the level of career aspiration and career satisfaction across educational qualification and work experience.

Hypothesis 3a- There is a significant difference in the mean career aspiration of employees between the work experience groups.

Hypothesis 3b- There is a significant difference in the mean career satisfaction of employees between the work experience groups.

Hypothesis 4a- There is a significant difference in the mean career aspiration of employees between the educational qualification groups.

Hypothesis 4b- There is a significant difference in the mean career satisfaction of employees between the educational qualification groups.

3. Research Method

Procedure and participants

A cross-sectional study was conducted using self-administered questionnaire as a tool for data collection. The questionnaires were distributed and collected using the online mode. The participants of the study constitute employees working in the organizations operating in India categorized on the basis of their work experience and educational qualification. The three categories determined on the basis of work experience were – employees having work experience of (a) Less than 5 years, (b) between 5 to 10 years and (c) more than 10 years. And

the classification on the basis of educational qualification also resulted into three categories – employees holding (a) Bachelor’s degree, (b) Master’s degree and (c) PhD degree. For the purpose of analysing the research problem, a total number of one hundred and thirty-two questionnaires were utilized.

Measures

Career aspiration- In order to assess career aspiration of the employees, the revised version of career aspiration scale devised by Gregor and O’Brien (2016) was used. This scale comprises of 24 items segregated into three sections – Achievement aspiration, Educational aspiration and Leadership aspiration. Five items were selected considering their relevance for study. The reliability of the five-item scale was ascertained using Cronbach’s alpha which was found to be high ($\alpha = 0.83$). The employees responded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5).

Career Satisfaction- Career satisfaction of the employees was evaluated using the scale developed by Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990). Three items of this scale found most suitable for the study were chosen and utilized. The reliability of the scale in the present study was determined to be high ($\alpha = 0.88$). The responses were collected on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5).

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using tests of correlation and one-way ANOVA depending upon the requirement of hypothesis testing. The hypotheses 1, 2a, 2b and 2c were subjected to Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation in order to explore the relationship between the variables. The hypotheses 3a, 3b, 4a and 4b were tested using one-way ANOVA to determine the variation in level of career aspiration and career satisfaction between the groups of employees classified on the basis of work experience and educational qualification.

4. Result and Analysis

Table 1 Correlations of study variables

Pearson Correlation	Career aspiration	Achievement aspiration	Educational aspiration	Leadership aspiration
Career satisfaction (correlation coefficient)	0.22*	0.23*	0.24*	0.07
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.012	0.008	0.006	0.433

*. Correlation significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis 1 proposes that career aspiration is significantly related to career satisfaction. As shown in Table 1, career aspiration has significant and positive correlation with career satisfaction ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$) which implies that the employees who possess greater career aspiration perceive higher satisfaction towards their career. The result goes consistent with the previous researches where it was indicated that higher assessment of career aspiration among the managers lead them to perceive greater subjective career success (Igbaria, Kassiech, & Silver, 1999; Rasdi, Ismail, Uli, & Noah, 2009).

Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c suggested that the three subscales of career aspiration – achievement aspiration, educational aspiration and leadership aspiration are significantly related to career satisfaction. Table 1 shows that achievement and educational aspiration have positive correlation with career satisfaction whereas leadership aspiration has insignificant relation with career satisfaction. This indicates that employees with achievement and educational aspiration sense higher satisfaction towards their career whereas the employees with leadership aspiration are indifferent towards perception of career satisfaction. The cause behind insignificant correlation between leadership aspiration and career satisfaction can be the low availability of opportunities to display leadership skills as majority of the respondents in this study have less than five years of work experience. It is obvious that in the initial years of career the focus of employees is on the establishment of career rather than indulging in leadership.

Table 2 Results of ANOVA

		Work experience groups			Educational qualification groups		
		df	F	Sig.	df	F	Sig.
Career aspiration	Between groups	2			2		
	Within groups	129	2.93	0.057	129	1.69	0.189
	Total	131			131		
Career satisfaction	Between groups	2			2		
	Within groups	129	14.86	0.000	129	8.87	0.000
	Total	131			131		

Hypotheses 3a and 3b propose that there is a significant variation in the mean career aspiration and mean career satisfaction of employees between the work experience group. Table 2 shows that work experience has a significant impact on the level of career satisfaction ($F(2,129) = 14.86, p < 0.05$) whereas insignificant impact on career aspiration ($F(2,129) = 2.93, p > 0.05$). On conducting post hoc analysis as shown in Table 3, it was found that employees with 5-10 years of work experience have significantly higher career satisfaction compared to employees with less than 5 years of work experience (Mean difference = 0.76858, $p < 0.05$). Though insignificant difference can be seen in the level of career aspiration, yet if we compare the mean career aspiration between the work experience groups presented in Table 3 we found that employees with 5-10 years of work experience have more career aspiration compared to employees with less than 5 years of work experience (Mean difference = 0.24729, $p > 0.05$).

Table 3 Result of Post Hoc analysis

Tukey HSD		Multiple comparison			
Dependent variable	(I) Work experience	(J) Work experience	Work experience	Mean difference (I-J)	Sig.
Career aspiration	Less than 5 years	5-10 years		-.24729	0.095
		More than 10		.16414	0.683

		years		
Career satisfaction	5-10 years	Less than 5 years	.24729	0.095
		More than 10 years	.41143	0.130
	More than 10 years	Less than 5 years	-.16414	0.683
		5-10 years	-.41143	0.130
	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	-.76858*	0.000
		More than 10 years	-.36858	0.268
Career satisfaction	5-10 years	Less than 5 years	.76858*	0.000
		More than 10 years	.40000	0.261
	More than 10 years	Less than 5 years	.36858	0.268
		5-10 years	-.40000	0.261

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4 Result of Post Hoc analysis

Tukey HSD	Multiple comparison		Mean difference (I-J)	Sig.
Dependent variable	(I) Educational qualification	(J) Educational qualification		
Career aspiration	Bachelor	Master	-.17306	0.249
		PhD	-.25692	0.415
	Master	Bachelor	.17306	0.249
		PhD	-.08386	0.911
	PhD	Bachelor	.25692	0.415
		Master	.08386	0.911
Career satisfaction	Bachelor	Master	-.06955	0.862
		PhD	-1.04615*	0.000
	Master	Bachelor	.06955	0.862
		PhD	-.97661*	0.001
	PhD	Bachelor	1.04615*	0.000
		Master	.97661*	0.001

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Hypotheses 4a and 4b propose that there is a significant difference in the mean career aspiration and mean career satisfaction between the educational qualification groups. Table 2 depicts that educational qualification significantly affects career satisfaction ($F(2,129) = 8.87, p < 0.05$) whereas insignificantly affects career aspiration ($F(129) = 1.69, p > 0.05$). On conducting post hoc analysis as shown in Table 4, we found that PhD holders stand out by having significantly higher career satisfaction than master's degree holders (Mean difference = 0.97661, $p < 0.05$) as well as the Bachelor's degree holders (Mean difference = 1.04615, $p < 0.05$). Though educational qualification did not significantly affect the level of career aspiration yet it is noticeable from Table 4 that employees with PhD have higher mean career aspiration than employees with master's degree (Mean difference = .08386, $p > 0.05$) and employees with Bachelor's degree (Mean difference = 1.04615, $p > 0.05$).

5. Conclusion

This study entails practicable implications relevant for both individual employee's and organizational prosperity. It determines career aspiration and career satisfaction as important contributors to employees' and organization's objectives. The positive correlation between career aspiration and career satisfaction infer that high aspiration in employees elevate their perception of satisfaction towards their career. Among the three components of career aspiration, educational and achievement aspiration demonstrated positive correlation with career satisfaction. Significant variation in career satisfaction across work experience and educational level provides strength to the recommendation that while recruitment, organizations should give preference to career aspiring candidates with higher qualification and 5-10 years of work experience for such employees will be more satisfied resulting in low employee turnover and increased productivity of the organization.

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